Conferences

The Court routinely issues its Notice of Scheduling Conference after the Answer is filed. If there is more than one named defendant the Court will typically await the filing of Answers by all defendants, unless to do so would involve a significant delay. The parties are required to submit a Rule 26(f) plan no later than one week prior to the initial scheduling conference. If a dispositive motion is filed in lieu of an Answer, the court generally will hold the initial scheduling conference after the judge issues his ruling on the motion.

At the initial scheduling conference the parties are expected to be prepared to discuss the case and the issues, the Court's subject matter jurisdiction, the possible value of state court case evaluation and/or facilitation, and all other standard scheduling/procedural issues. **The parties are encouraged to commence significant discovery before the scheduling conference, and to be prepared to report on their progress at the conference**. The court adheres to the model order relating to the discovery of electronically stored information (ESI) and expects the parties to follow the model order at their Rule 26(f) discovery conference, if applicable. The Court expects the parties to agree to some sort of alternative dispute resolution. The Court's standing Scheduling Order, ERISA Scheduling Order or Patent Scheduling Order is completed at the initial scheduling conference based on counsels' input. Typically, the parties are required to exchange witness lists 45-60 days before the discovery cutoff, which is usually set at 90 or 120 days after the conference. The deadline for the filing of dispositive motions is typically set at 30 or 45 days after the discovery cutoff. The final pretrial order is usually due approximately three months after the dispositive motion cutoff. The final pretrial conference is scheduled to occur one week after the final pretrial order is due, and trial is scheduled to begin two weeks after the final pretrial conference.

Subsequent status conferences and settlement conferences will be held as needed or requested. The Court will conduct settlement conferences in jury cases if requested to do so. Settlement conferences requested in non-jury cases are referred either to a different Judge, or to the Magistrate Judge assigned to the case.