

Football Playoff Proposal

The CHSCA is requesting the CIAC move to a 6-division format for playoffs.

Rationale:

Currently the CIAC football tournament has 4 divisions of 8 teams making the playoffs - 32 teams. In comparison, girls' and boys' basketball tournament there are 32 teams per division and there are 5 divisions. That is just over 150 teams in the playoffs in a fill the bracket model. Most basketball programs in our state can qualify to participate in the basketball playoffs.

Example: In recent seasons, there were teams that were 3-17 that made the tournament in basketball. Other sports have a 40%-win percentage to get into the tournament. Football programs must win 70-80% of their games to even have a possible opportunity.

CHSCA football committee believes football student athletes do not receive the same consideration/opportunity that other student-athletes do that participate in a postseason tournament experience.

Proposal:

Presently, there are 11 leagues which all use different scheduling formats. The epicenter of the issue is that teams and leagues are concerned about scheduling "good matchups" in fear that some of the best teams in the conference will be left out of the playoffs. We propose by increasing the number of teams in the playoffs this may alleviate the "anxiety" that comes at schedule building time.

We propose by expanding to 48 teams this will be the most practical and equitable way to increase access for more quality programs to experience the tournament without disrupting Thanksgiving traditional rivalries. This proposal will not interfere with the season limitations calendar.

The addition of 2 divisions will then have four schools in addition to the eight schools that are playing in a final the first week of winter sports. We believe coaches, athletic directors, and/or principals would embrace the opportunity to continue their tournament opportunities and delay winter sports a day or two so their school could play for a football state championship.

Student athletes who play football will not be the only students who greatly benefit from the addition of 2 divisions and the participation in the tournament. Cheerleading Teams, Dance Teams, Spirit Groups, School Marching Bands, student body, parent groups and the community at-large will also share this experience as well. Football tournament games are truly a wholesome community experience.

The growth of high school football is an important consideration. Football in our state needs a boost of confidence and subsequent growth. Single school rosters are diminishing, and the growth of co-op football programs continue to increase. We need to grow our sport. The assault on the sport of football by those interests undermine the very fabric of the game. This needs to be challenged by those who know and understand the life-long lessons instilled by the participation in football.

We believe that this proposal will enhance the CIAC football tournament experience. Additionally, the result will be increasing the exposure of high school football as a foundation to heighten the tournament experience for more student-athletes.