

CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

TO: CIAC Board of Control
FROM: CIAC Football Committee
RE: **Proposed Changes to the Format for the Championships**
DATE: November 19, 2009

As you are all aware the CIAC Football Committee has been reviewing various changes in the Football Championships to address several concerns expressed by coaches, athletic directors and the public. The committee's goal is to design a championship format that would increase the number of schools that qualify to come closer to other sports and to increase the likelihood that schools with a good record in a competitive division would qualify for the championships. Additionally, at the directive of the CIAC Board of Control and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) any proposal considered must not impact the regular season schedule nor interfere with the traditional Thanksgiving Day match-ups.

The Football Committee, with its goals in mind and the directive from the Board and CAPSS, presents the following proposal for consideration by the CIAC Board of Control.

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE CIAC FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS TO 32 TEAMS IN FOUR DIVISIONS

1. The number of teams that qualify will increase from twenty-four (24) to thirty-two (32).
 2. The number of divisions will decrease from six (6) with four (4) teams in each division to four (4) with eight (8) teams in each division.
 3. The playoffs will increase from two to three rounds – quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals.
 4. Playoffs will begin the Tuesday after Thanksgiving with the quarter-finals (site of the higher ranked team).
 5. The semi-finals will be played the following Saturday (site of the higher ranked team or possibly neutral sites)
 6. The finals will be played one week later (neutral site(s)).
 7. The playoff season would be extended one week further than present for the eight (8) final teams.
 8. The present point system remains in place.
 9. The new format will remain in place for at least five years.
- Increases the number of teams that qualify for the championship from twenty-four (24) teams (17%) to thirty-two (32) teams (23%). Over 60% of the schools qualify in other CIAC team sports.
 - Reduces the number of divisions to four (4) from six (6) which is more in line for states our size and the other major sports sponsored by CIAC.
 - Maintains the regular season schedule.
 - Maintains Thanksgiving Day Games.
 - Maintains the present football playoff qualifying point system.
 - Assures all games played during the season count for qualifying.
 - Increases the number of qualifiers in each division to eight (8) thus increasing the likelihood that the best teams will qualify.
 - Expands the playoff to three rounds – quarters-finals, semi-finals and finals. The quarter-finals and semi-finals will play on the present schedule. Tuesday after Thanksgiving and the first Saturday in December. The finals will be played one week later thus addressing any health and safety issues for the final eight (8) teams.

- Requires the CIAC Board of Control to extend the championships by one week for the final eight (8) teams which creates further overlap with the winter season for some athletes. The exact impact is hard to determine, however, data from the past two years can be used to estimate the potential impact in the sports of basketball, ice hockey and wrestling.

* In the 12 team finals in 2007 a total of 87 players in grades 10-12 participated in those sports.

Basketball – 39	– 33%	26
Ice Hockey – 7	– 33%	5
Wrestling – 41	– 33%	27

Moving to an eight team final would potentially reduce these numbers by 33%.

* In the 12 team finals in 2008 a total of 100 players in grades 10-12 participated in those sports.

Basketball – 48	– 33%	32
Ice Hockey – 9	– 33%	6
Wrestling – 43	– 33%	29

Note: 9th grade students generally do not participate in the football championships and can start winter practice on the first day.

- Requires extension of the playoffs by one additional week thus increasing the risk of inclement weather.
- Adds sixteen quarter-final games which should have a positive financial impact. The quarter-final games would help offset any weather related problems with the finals.
- If approved the Football Committee agrees the format will remain in place for at least five years without changes.

Proposed Dates:

		<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>
Quarter-finals	32 teams - 16 sites	November 30	November 29	November 27
Semi-finals	16 teams - 8 sites	December 4	December 3	December 1
Finals	8 teams - 1 or 2 sites	December 11	December 10	December 8
Start of Winter Practice		November 29	November 28	November 26
Start of Winter Season		December 15	December 14	December 12

The Football Committee believes the proposal before the Board for consideration is the best possible solution given the directive of the Board and CAPSS. We encourage the Board to approve the proposal with implementation for the 2010 championships.