**Football Playoff Proposal**

The CHSCA is requesting the CIAC move to a 6-division format for playoffs for the 2021 season.

**Rationale**:

The CHSCA football committee proposes that the sport of football is quite different from other sports due to the administration and nature of the game. Currently the CIAC football tournament has 4 divisions of 8 teams making the playoffs. That is 32 teams.

Whereas, in girls and boys basketball 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. A remarkably high majority of basketball programs in our state can qualify to participate the basketball playoffs. There were teams that were 3-17 that made the playoffs in basketball. Some other sports have a 40%-win percentage to get into the playoffs.  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 to participate in a post-season tournament experience.

In the past, if a team were to lose more than two games their chances to move to the playoffs are slim to none.  Losing three games in a season is more than likely a death sentence to a team’s playoff hopes. A team with seven wins not in the playoffs?  That would be the equivalent win percentage wise of a 14-6 basketball team getting left out of the playoffs. We suggest that is not acceptable for any football team with a positive winning percentage to get left out of the playoffs.

Presently, there are 11 leagues which all use different scheduling formats.  The crux 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.  By increasing the number of teams in the playoffs this may alleviate some of the “anxiety” that comes at schedule building time.

Our proposal has statewide support, and we believe it is the most practical and equitable way to increase access for more programs to experience the playoffs without disturbing Thanksgiving traditional rivalries.  The new schedule format will not change the season calendar.

The addition of 2 divisions we 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 playoff opportunities and delay winter sports a day or two late so their school could play for a football state championship.

Student athletes who play the sport of football will not be the only students who greatly benefit from the addition of 2 divisions.  Cheerleading Teams, Dance Teams and High School Marching Bands will also share this experience as well.  Football games are truly a community experience.

Finally, the growth of high school football is an important consideration.  Football in our state need a boost of confidence.  Rosters are shrinking and team co-ops are growing.  We need to grow our sport. The assault on the sport of football by those whose interests undermine the very fabric of the game need to be challenged by those who know what football teaches: teamwork and problem solving just to mention a few.

We believe that this proposed change can and will enhance the CIAC football tournament experience, grow interest across our state, and enable additional teams to join in the chase for a state championship with the result of keeping more student-athletes in the game.

CHSCA Football Committee