**Steve Trifone
Cheshire High School LL**

I would prefer the 40 % Threshold - almost embarrassing making the tournament with 6 wins

**Jim Buonocore**

Athletic Director and Assistant Principal

Ledyard High School MM

Hi Gregg. I was a school that would not have qualified under the 40% threshold this past year (we finished 5-15). However, we were a very young team (1 senior on the roster) who started a freshman, 2 sophomores, 1 junior and 1 senior. We played a tremendous schedule (NFA, New London, Bacon Academy, Stonington to name a few) and we were very thankful to have the opportunity to extend our season by 2 weeks to practice and play competitively.  We went and played an 18-2 team (ranked #2) in round 1 of the MM tournament (Nonnewaug) and were very competitive in that contest. We were only down 4 points at the end of 3 quarters and ended up losing 47-33. However, my coaches and players felt they belonged in that game and I personally felt our team belonged in a tournament after the schedule we played all year. I liked the concept of "fill the bracket".

I had no problem with the fill the bracket philosophy and believed our team benefited this year, and will benefit in the future due to the ability to extend our season in 2019-20, practice longer and had the opportunity to play another game in a tournament setting. Thank you.

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| **Debra Spinelli Tourtellotte S** |

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Gregg This year it so happens by luck of the draw that we were competitive with the team we were matched against.  However, in the past, we have extended our season to be matched with a powerhouse and have traveled great distances to be beaten soundly.  After a disappointing season, to add a heavy loss, does not help the mindset of the players and coaching staff for the next year.  We are desperately trying to keep number to keep the programs going.  We presently have 15 players in total.  We lose 3 to graduation 2 of which are starters and our best players. Hopefully we can gain a couple from the 8th grade class.  But continually having a losing season and then culminating with a heavy loss at the end of the season dose not attract or maintain players

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| **Jack Phelan Farmington L** |

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Farmington was very happy to be playing in the Girls Basketball State Tournament this year. We finished the season with a record of 6 wins and 14 losses. We have trouble getting out of league games so this year out of league we played at Hand OT loss, Sheehan HS is Finals of Christmas Tournament close at halftime but lost and then played poorly and lost to a good Canton HS.

As you know regular season CCC is a real Challenge. Our crossovers were against Berlin ( we won ), EO Smith ( lost ) , Rham ( we won ).

I know some schools in Division 3, 4 and 5 did not like it at all.

Question - Is their any thought to having the Bracket filled at Division 1 and 2 kinda of like Boys in Division 1.

We were happy to make it however Wethersfield beat us pretty easy. We would absolutely say YES again to being in it this way.

**Dan Trudeau RHAM L**

As RHAM was a 3 win team that made the tournament, we are not in favor of continuing with the "fill the bracket" system. It was an ugly season for RHAM that included multiple parent-coach meetings due to unreasonably high parental expectations, low spirits despite our best effort, as well as some negative team conduct by disengaged seniors. I realize these are normal problems, but the dynamic of being a 3 win team to qualify the tournament was frankly kind of odd and really brought out a sarcastic and further disengaged approach from students on the team for two extra weeks.

**Michael James CREC School Coach S**

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to coach a team into the postseason my first year.The environment was amazing and something we can all learn from.The girls program last post season appearance was 2016 I believe.The girls never played in an environment like that.It was a good experience.

“We could have done better but we ain't have much practice but overall I love this season so far looking forward to next year SENIOR SEASON!”

Feedback from one of the student athletes

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| **Michael Santangeli Joel Barlow**  |

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My coach and athletes were happy to extend their season but they all felt like they really didn't deserve to be in the tournament.  So we will do whatever is decided, but we feel the 40% should be the standard.

**Jeff Farrell Vernon Public Schools MM**

Hope all is well. I see both sides for the bracket format. Personally, I feel that moving to 5 divisions ultimately eliminates the need to fill the bracket. In our situation this year we were the 32 seed with only 36 teams in the MM division. I was happy for our girls to have the experience of playing in a state tournament but realistically we were not a state tournament caliber team. I would be in favor of requiring 8 wins to qualify, and perhaps filling the bracket to 24 if less than 24 qualify. With 24 teams the top 8 would get byes and then play down to 16 teams. That would solve the problem of possibly having a double bye and avoiding big mismatches the first round.

My coach was very excited to have made the tournament and have that opportunity. However, some of the athletes did not share that same enthusiasm. That's something I am going to work on with the coaches but many of the girls were ready for the season to be over after going 4-16. They felt defeated before the game even started. Again, that's something that we have to work on, but I'm sure we weren't the only team that felt that way.

**Brittany Huggins Hall Coach LL**

Well - We beat the #3 seed so it worked out great for us! :)  I mean in our particular case we had injuries which is why we happened to only have 7 wins. However teams with 2 and 3 wins - kind of a nightmare to play a higher seed.

**Bryan Luchsinger Oxford M**

I hope this email finds you well. We were one of the teams that made the tournament with under the 40%. Being that we are a smaller school, any additional playoff type games will only help us get more numbers to come out an participate. We have had really low numbers the past few years. I think any success that we do have will only help our case with getting more girls to come out. I have to be honest, if we only won two or three games, I do not know if we would feel the same way.

That being said, why can't the boys and the girls seasons start at the same time? What my coach and I have talked about is the difference in time between the start date of the tournament and the end of the season. There is such a difference in time that if we don't make the league tournament to the start of the state tournament. The finals are both played at the same time, we can eliminate all of those teams that do not qualify with 40% like the boys. It now does not give schools the option of being one of the 32 if they only have a few wins. There just seems to be so much down time for the girls as opposed to the boys. That is the one thing my coach has said she does not like.

She would rather play at the same time as the boys and would be OK if she did not make the tournament if she did not win 40% of games.

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| **Dan Nemergut Wamogo MM** |

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Hi Gregg - I hope you are well.  As you could probably tell from my tone when I forwarded your email to my coach, we, at Wamogo, are not in favor of the tournament as it was run this year.  The fact that we are a class S school in enrollment, were 5-15 in our league, were moved up to division MM because, two years ago we won a wonderful 16-17 game at Portland, and then beat a number one seed that would have been hard-pressed to beat any other public school in its class, were not factors that benefited our girls.  The only positives that came out of the tournament game were the grit and determination of our team and the class shown by the Sheehan High coach as the end result could (32 points) could have been much worse.

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| **Sytulek, David South Windsor L** |

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It is both my opinion and that of my head girls basketball coach that we should return to the 40% criteria to qualify for the state tournament.

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| **Baldwin, Stephen Brookfield MM** |

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I think it was good this year for Brookfield because we were young and it gave those athletes to experience the State tournament and help them grow.  We got in with 7 wins and won a game.  It was a good experience for the kids this year.

**Coach Sparks Immaculate M**

I agree with the current format. Some teams in specific divisions play in tougher leagues than others. This, in fact, skews the data of each team's capability to compete or be successful in their respective division.

I believe if the CIAC uses any type threshold, 5 wins should be the least amount of wins possible to make the tournament.

I don't agree in filling the Bracket when we have teams getting in with 3 or 4 Wins. I would rather see teams get Byes, Teams should win at least 40%.

**Caroline Hincks Coach Hartford Public High School L**

The fill the bracket system was great for the girls this season for many reasons...

- Brought life back to our program. We had not made it in 25 years I was told....

- Allowed the players to see what high school basketball culture is all about.  Being in Hartford the girls are very limited to their athletic experiences....

- Gave players something to work towards/accomplish for next season.

-next level competition. Players will come back next year with more expectations of growth.

-good for building our program, we don’t  have a JV team... now that we changed the environment/culture more girls will come out and they will need to see what “high school ball” is all about.

I do not want this rule to change.

**David Chevarella Derby Coach S**

As a coach I completely support teams making the tournament even  without winning 40% of their games.  I support anytime when more teams/athletes can experience the excitement of the post season tournaments.  Also, we are a good example of a school that played it's entire schedule against teams in higher classes than us.  We should be given the opportunity to compete in a post season with just schools in our class.

**Teg Cosgriff Westbrook S**

Some feedback for you on the GBB tourney as invited to offer. As a non qualifying standard team at 6-14 we filled this bracket at #23 in Class S.

Some interesting things to think about.5 divisions with 160 teams qualifying vs the 4 division model with 40% rule meant the average # of teams from 2016-19 was 120 qualifiers. 5 divisions of 24 would give you 120 qualifiers.

In all 5 divisions there were only a total of (4) upsets where a fill the bracket team beat a higher seed that met the qualifying standard. LL had a 30 over a #3 NL squad!

Tech schools went 1-10 in the first round and 1-11 overall. I provide this as a deeper context to the input from one of our senior captains (below) - as our tech school #10 seed opponents coach told our coach in the post game handshake line we did not deserve to be in the tournament, only teams that earn wins should be in the tournament. She then expressed this in post game comments in the Rep-Am game article. Westbrook won this game by 18 with a 28-7 run in the 4th quarter.

AD input: Many ways to look at it.... our experience in Class (S) saw the fewest qualifiers of all divisions & demonstrates that some more tested teams may come out of the bottom (20 over 13, 23 over 10). It also was a great experience for our team and many younger players to help build excitement in our program and provides an experience to build upon.

Both myself and my coach could support a fill the bracket with 32 or worst case 24 qualifiers and fill to 24 if needed. This year that would have meant I believe FTB teams in S, 1 in M, 0 MM, 1L, 0 in LL if you needed to get to just 24.

**Mark Fowler Terryville S**

 It is the feeling of our girls' coaching staff, players, principal and myself that it was not a good idea at all for our 2-18 team girls team to "qualify" for the tournament.  After enduring a difficult season of lopsided losses and fighting to keep enough players healthy and on the team, we did not believe it was in the best interest of our student athletes to play a state tournament game.  We all hope the committee will take this into consideration when planning for future tournament formats.  If you have any questions, please let me know and I will be happy to have a conversation with you as the representative for our program.