



# Kentucky High School Athletic Association

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## MEMO

TO: Julian Tackett, Commissioner

FROM: Asst. Commissioner Michael J. Barren  
Assoc. Commissioner Butch Cope

DATE: July 12, 2013

RE: Seeding for State Tennis Singles & Doubles Tournaments

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Following the 2013 Tennis Seeding meeting held at the KHSAA, we shared our concerns with you about the process and final work product that has evolved over the years here at the KHSAA. Both of us felt strongly that the situation needed review, particularly in light of our recent changes where we place a higher priority on the team championship. Our State Tennis Manager, Kathy Johnston, shared our concerns about the process, especially in light of the fact that little change in final positioning in the top seeds changed from the draft coming into the meeting through the conclusion of consideration by the schools.

At your direction, we discussed this issue at the Tennis Forum held at the National Federation Summer Meeting with the many other states in attendance, and found some interesting information:

- First, there is not necessarily a national norm relating to seeding.
- For example, the following state associations that were in attendance do not seed their State Championships: Indiana, West Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Florida, Utah and Washington.
- Other states in attendance such as Ohio, place the Sectional Champions vs. a runner-up from another Section.
- Minnesota seeds only the top four.
- Some states, such as California, do not offer a championship.
- Kentucky had by far the most extensive seeding plan, paying a group from across the state to come to a central seeding meeting and seeding a total of 16 participants in each draw.

With the data, we also examined whether or not seeding to the extent we have been seeding is truly necessary to the fair conduct of the championships, particularly in light of the costs, and reach the following conclusions:

- Upon review of our prior State Championship results ( 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013), we see that of the Boys Singles, Girls Singles, Boys Doubles and Girls Doubles finals, thirteen out of the 20 finals matches the number one seed won.
- During that time period, a majority of the time the top four seeds meet in the Semi finals with only one time a “non top four” seed made it to the finals.
- Our current seeding protocol has each Region sending a representative for both boys and girls to a meeting in Lexington the Monday prior to the State Championships.
- A predominate number of these representatives are coaches. With that said, there tends to be a lot of “gamesmanship” to the process. Many Coaches decry the fact that some players will not play others in the regular season to set themselves up for a chance at a higher seed.
- This past year’s seed meeting cost the Association just over \$1,600.00 and lasted for six hours.
- The “preliminary top four” seeds that the Tournament management listed as a starting point for the discussion was not debated and tournament results show that each of the finals match ups included members of that top four.
- Most of the time and discussion was spent on the other seed placements.

- Before we moved to a Team Championship format, each match victory, regardless of round of play, would gain your school points towards a “team Championship”. Therefore it was very important to seed as far as you could. Today the Championships are separate and individual or doubles match victories do not impact the Team championships.

Based on the information gathered, it is our recommendation that the Association revise its protocol to seed only the top four positions of the Singles and Doubles Championship brackets while continuing the practice of placing participants from the same school in opposite brackets. These four seeds would each be placed in a separate 16-person section of a 64-person bracket, with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> seeds in one bracket, and seeds 2 and 3 in the other. The seeding would be done by the Tournament management based on the published criteria, and would not require the convening of a statewide committee.