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Effects of Class Basketball

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Here are some FACTS about the change from single to multiple class: an accounting firm was hired and led by Randy Effner (who did outside audit for Wisconsin High School Athletic Association and also Illinois High School Athletics for 7yrs.) Indiana, Kentucky, Delaware and Hawaii all had single class tournaments but NONE had nearly the same attendance and revenue Indiana had. None of them but Indiana had the tournament televised statewide and occasionally nationwide (Hoosier Dome Damon Bailey largest attendance at a single high school game EVER). The IHSAA had a 10yr. million dollar per year TV contract at that time. Since then, a new partner has picked up the games for only \$50,000 per year. The multi-class tournament was supposed to be an "experiment" for two years. So, after the two years the audit was done and found that the state lost \$550,000 total and annually lost \$185,000 (not including the lost revenue because they lost their TV contract too) Yes the TV contract was canceled and a total of 350,000 fans were lost in the process too. So, you cannot say it was all revenue but fans too.....nearly half a million fans in a two year period gone. The TV was lost because ratings went from 14.4 to 4 during this period to show the lack of interest. I do not blame the kids for this or the schools but I blame the IHSAA for not admitting it's mistake. After the two year "experiment" the coaches were asked to vote and voted 83% to go back to the single class format which was ignored. They then had a poll among students and the students voted 65% to go back to the single class format....ignored by the IHSAA. Attendance at the boys [state finals \(#\)](#) declined sharply from 54,030 in 1997, the last year for the single-class tournament, to 29,189 in 1998 and 27,878 in 1999. The girls state finals attendance declined from 25,502 in 1997 to 19,185 in 1998 and 15,723 in 1999. In 1990, more than 40,000 fans – a national high school attendance record -- watched Bailey lead Bedford North Lawrence High to the state championship. In 2004, about 16,000 fans watched Lawrence North High beat Columbia City for the Class 4A state championship. The IHSAA tried to sue WNDY for 35 million dollars and lost due to the switch and lost ratings from single class to multi-class. WNDY officials in 1998 released Nielsen Media Research overnight ratings for the Indianapolis market that showed viewership of the boys state basketball finals fell about 50 percent from 1997 to 1998. Here is a quote from [Purdue coach Matt Painter \(#\)](#)....."It was something very, very special," said Purdue coach Matt Painter, who grew up in Muncie, Ind., and played for the Boilermakers. "There's no doubt it's lost a lot of its mystique. It was everybody against everybody, and David versus Goliath. It's not what it used to be." Gary Donna, the publisher of Hoosier Basketball Magazine had this quote. "Changing to class basketball hurt the tournament in general and the state finals in particular," said Garry Donna, founder and publisher of Hoosier Basketball Magazine. "It's been a financial disaster, a TV disaster and a radio disaster. TV ratings have plummeted and, as a result, coverage has plummeted." "The IHSAA has to file this lawsuit to save face," Donna said. "But this is not the state tournament WNDY contracted to cover. There really isn't a state finals anymore, and fans are staying away in droves. These four teams are class champions, they're not state champions." Here is a list of profits for the state tournament that show the decline since the inception of multi-class basketball Year Boys Girls

1990 \$1,329,280

1991 \$1,255,204

1992 \$752,843

1993 \$788,488

1994 \$822,483

1995 \$910,616

1996 \$802,774

1997 \$924,016 * Last year of non-class tournament

1998 \$494,867 * First year of four-class tournament

1999 \$531,545

2000 \$475,734

2001 \$439,720

2002 \$470,719

2003 \$448,405

2004 \$520,486

2005 \$633,288 *(a loss of 3.5 million dollars in revenue for the boys and \$721,000 for the girls which equals \$4.2 million dollars)*

