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## Arizona High Schools Face Postseason Participation Fees (</budgeting/arizona-high-schools-face-fees-for-postseason-participation.html>)

The price of success is oftentimes categorized by hard work, but high school athletic departments and their athletes in Arizona will soon have to rethink this ideology. The Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) will enforce teams to pay a fee ([http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/varsityextra/article\\_9bbeb882-030e-11e4-ad39-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/varsityextra/article_9bbeb882-030e-11e4-ad39-0019bb2963f4.html)) if they are a participant in postseason play. The new fee is slated to kick in this fall.

While some sports like football and basketball will be exempt, it hits hard for others. Of the six sports that are incorporated under this jurisdiction, spiritline and golf face the steepest postseason price. Spiritline teams will be charged \$250 to play in the state qualifier and another \$350 if they qualify for the finals. In golf, teams have to pay \$250 for the whole team of five members, or \$50 per player.

Other sports that will have to pay to play include wrestling, cross-country, tennis and badminton.

For the sanctity of the sport, the athletes are not held responsible individually for their portion of the fee, but that only means there's a heavier burden on high school athletic departments. In fact, the outstanding reason why Arizona decided to put in place the exchange of a fee for postseason participation was for the AIA to simply try and break even from the smaller sports. Even more troublesome is the \$519,000 budget shortfall that AIA spokesperson Brian Bolitho acknowledged the non-profit organization faces.

"Those football and basketball tournaments just aren't enough to sustain the needed revenue to cover those expenses," Bolitho said. "Really, the individual tournaments is there just to cover the expense of that tournament and make it so we're breaking even on those."

By imposing this fee, the AIA is going down a slippery slope with the possibility of widening the economic and financial resources between high schools of large and small student population. At least that's what one high school coach thought when asked about the new change.

"There's already a gap between the big schools and the small schools and ... this is only going to make it worse," Campo Verde football coach Max Ragsdale said, whose school boasts under 500 students.

So what do you think? Is this a necessary evil in today's budget-crunched era? Or does this postseason fee take things too far? Tell us what you think in the comments section.

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After raising high school pay-to-play fees from \$50 to \$625 per high school sport, and \$425 for middle school, New Albany saw a 16 percent drop in athlete participation even with financial help for 100 students. The fee increase came after a levy failure a year ago forced the district to cut 53