



# Kentucky High School Athletic Association

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TO: Members of the Board of Control

FROM: Commissioner Julian Tackett  
Assistant Commissioner Darren Bilberry

RE: State Qualifiers for Swimming and Diving

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Since the time of Board of Control approval of the expansion of regions from five to nine for 2015-2016, we have worked diligently to address concerns expressed by the loss of automatic qualifiers for the State meet. On several occasions, we have met with the primary meet administrators to see if the field could be expanded to 40 competitors, thereby replacing the at-large qualifiers lost with regional expansion.

Through that diligent effort, we have been able to streamline the time schedule and all involved feel that we can move the number of at-large qualifiers back to 22 (for a total field of 40) in each of the swimming events and still not jeopardize either our existing issues with the fire marshal and seating capacity, or the ability to contain the meets to two days. We have looked at a variety of formats and feel for this year we can continue to have all preliminary races on Friday and all finals on Saturday, even with forty qualifiers in all swimming events. We believe we can closely monitor the situation and have an alternative solution for the future (swimming the prelims and finals of a gender on the same day) if we need to make further revisions.

However, the number of state qualifiers for diving combined with the manner in which we conduct our finals (number of rounds prior to cutting the field, etc.) does not yet support an expansion to 40 entrants. It was the feeling of our Swimming Advisory Committee that based upon research from the previous two seasons, there was not enough divers participating throughout the state to necessitate bringing 40 to the state meet and the time format does not allow our current number of dives and an expanded field within the time allotted to us for use of the state facility on Thursday. This information was the united conclusion of the Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee when it met in Lexington on December 10. It was the recommendation of that group (of coaches, administrators and meet personnel) that we do a more in depth census of participation during this year and perhaps bring back to the committee alternatives for expansion of the field in the future if the numbers justified the expansion. It is hoped that the expansion of regions will lead to an increase in the number of divers throughout the state as we move forward with future planning.

One of our more successful diving coaches and an unabashed supporter of the event has proposed two alternatives in separate pieces of communication. Proposal 1 would leave the number of divers at 32, but bring only one automatic qualifier per region and the remainder of the field (23 divers) would be at-large. This proposal would work within the time schedule but changes the number of automatic qualifiers for each region making it different than swimming.

Proposal 2 suggested an expansion to forty divers and the implementation of a provision in the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules book that allows for the sponsoring organization to

reduce the field of divers back down to thirty-two after only three rounds of diving preliminaries instead of five rounds if there are more than thirty-two divers entered. This provision would significantly alter the way the diving portion of the state meet has been conducted from the past and has not yet been vetted or discussed by the Advisory Committee. As a result it is our belief that Proposal 2 should be considered for the 2016-2017 state meet after it has been reviewed by the Advisory Committee so that they can then make an informed recommendation to the Board of Control based upon the additional research with regards to the number of divers.

While we are sincerely appreciative of the concerns expressed by individual members of the committee and in particular those with a strong passion for the diving event (and their peer coaches), it is our feeling that this is better served going through a more thorough membership review process prior to implementation. With the expansion to nine regions, the current plan is to bring two automatic qualifiers from each region in diving for a total of eighteen automatic qualifiers and fourteen at-large divers keeping the field at thirty-two. Additional research from the previous two state meets also reveals that had the number of qualifiers in the event of diving been increased from thirty-two to forty it is not likely that the additional eight at-large bids would have scored in the top eight thereby receiving a medal. It should be noted that the past results have been analyzed and no at-large qualifying diver in the ranked positions that would be brought under the current system (14 divers) has placed in the last two state meets per our meet results (attached).

It is our recommendation that the Board consider Proposal 1 (contrasted with the original planned setup for 2015-16) and defer consideration of Proposal 2 until a future time with additional data.