

The 'NEW' Look To High Sports – IMG Academy



By Dave Schmidt April 13, 2016 1:31 PM



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(4-13-16) While the **Illinois High School Association (IHSA)** is looking at possible reforms to changing transfer by-laws, a boarding school in Florida may be changing the direction of high school sports for the future.

IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida, has stirred up some controversy according to some recent stories on **MaxPreps**, including Texas High School football coaches encouraging their athletes to remain in the state. The issue picked up steam on Twitter when IMG Academy Quarterback/Offensive Coordinator Richard Bartel shared tweets with several Texas football coaches.




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@Matt_Stepp817

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Richard Bartel
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This is a portion of a letter that appeared in the February edition of "Texas Coach" magazine:

Texas High School Coaches Association president Glen West

“At the current moment, IMG Academy has actively recruited three of our top Texas high school football players to play their senior season for their traveling football team,” West wrote. “The reason given for these young athletes to attend this academy is to better prepare for the next level of competition. I adamantly disagree with the reasoning.”

That letter started a 'frenzy' of tweets around Texas and the US.

IMG Academy is a member of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) as an independent, but are not a part of a district and do not compete in the FHSAA playoffs, due to their recruiting of athletes around the US.

As part of IMG's agreement with the FHSAA, IMG Academy cannot actively recruit Florida high school players. Florida players must first approach the school.

The tuition at IMG is said to be over \$70,000 a school year and various media reports is that some athletes do receive 'scholarships'.

On the **IMG Academy web site**:

“ An innovator in the arena of elite football training, IMG Academy produces bigger, stronger, faster, and smarter football players.

The Head Coach is **Kevin Wright**, who has been at IMG since April 2015, Wright was top-ranked Carmel (Indiana) High School's head coach for five seasons. With Carmel, the program was ranked as high as #19 in USA Today's Super 25 national high school football rankings and led the Greyhounds to three state championship finals, including a Class 6A title in 2011, ending the year ranked #8 in the country by USA Today.

The coaching staff includes former Dallas Cowboy 1st round draft pick **Steve Walsh**.

The Ascenders in 2016 will play 12 games in 2016, with seven of the games against out-of-state opponents from Georgia, California, Oklahoma, Washington DC, Louisiana and Maryland.

2016 IMG Academy Ascenders

8/20TBA	Carol City (Miami, FL) Game Details: Kickoff Classis
8/27TBA	@ Grayson (Loganville, GA) Game Details: ESPN
9/37:30p	Centennial (Corona, CA) Game Details: Mission Viejo HS
9/10TBA	Washington (Tulsa, OK) Game Details: Battle of the Border
9/17TBA	St. John's (Washington, DC) Game Details: Armour Bowl
9/23TBA	Boyd Anderson (Lauderdale Lakes, FL) Location: IMG Academy
10/7TBA	Southern Lab (Baton Rouge, LA) Location: IMG Academy
10/13TBA	@ Oxbridge Academy (West Palm Beach, FL) Location: Oxbridge Academy
10/217:30p	@ Trinity Christian Academy (Jacksonville, FL) Game Details: @ Trinity Christian Academy
10/28TBA	@ Long Beach Poly (Long Beach, CA) Location: Long Beach Poly High School
11/5TBA	@ Chaminade-Madonna (Hollywood, FL) Location: Chaminade-Madonna High School
11/12TBA	St. Frances Academy (Baltimore, MD) Location: IMG Academy

2016 IMG Academy Football Schedule

The 'cherry' on top of the sundae is IMG's facilities, that would make many college programs jealous. (see below)

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There is also a school in Canada, **Canada Prep Academy**, that is much like IMG and the focus is on American football, with a schedule against US teams.

According to their web site:

“ Canada Prep Academy's football program (aka Canada Prep Football Academy) is the only high school football program in Canada that teaches American rules football and plays a full U.S. football schedule. In addition to practicing and playing American football, our football team spends time in-class studying highlight footage both of our own games as well as of our opponents. Each player receives his own recruiting package and highlight film that is sent to major American and Canadian universities.