

KHSAA

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To KHSAA Basketball Officials:

I am enclosing a copy of my proposal to improve the post season play in Kentucky high school basketball. This proposal was outlined on March 6 on the Talk of the Town radio show in Mt. Sterling Ky. Danny Manley, a hall of fame broadcaster, was the host as I outlined the plan.

I feel that this plan has merit and would greatly increase the effectiveness of the tournaments if adopted. My phone number and e mail address are at the end of the document.

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PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE THE POST SEASON TOURNAMENT PLAY FOR KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

INTRODUCTION: The format for post season play in Kentucky high school basketball has been pretty much the same for the last 50-60 years. The only significant changes have been that district winners must draw a runner up other than their own, and a technique to deal with the 3 team districts. But changing times require fresh thinking and this proposal will make proposed changes at all 3 levels of the post season tournament: the district, the regional, and the state tournament. Before evaluating these changes, get rid of the notion that we have to keep something just because we have always done it this way. Changing times require different approaches.

DISTRICT TOURNAMENT: Years ago many districts had 7-8 teams in them. As I recall the Pulaski County area had 11-12 teams. It made sense to have a week to play the district tournament and for both the winner & the runner up to advance to the regional tournament. Today's districts generally have 3-5 teams and to play a week to eliminate 1-3 teams no longer makes sense.

Districts are given the option to seed or to draw their brackets. Bad idea. Any time you play the same game with different rules, inequality & inconsistency is certain to follow. Look at the current mess the primaries used to select our next president have become: open vs closed, caucus vs regular, & winner take all vs proportional. The designated hitter in baseball causes all kinds of adjustments and rule changes. Playing for the same goal should employ the same rules.

Some districts are far stronger than others. Yet each gets 2 teams in the region. The goal of a regional tournament should be to select the 8 best teams.

Lastly, as I noted before, districts range from 3 to 6 teams. Who wouldn't want to be in a 3 team district rather than a 6 team district? Unfair again.

This proposal will address each of the above problems.

THE PROPOSED SYSTEM: Any region could be used for an example, but I'll use the 10th since we in that broadcasting area. This region has 17 teams in its 4 districts—a package that will illustrate well. Districts would still be named districts but there would be only 2 of them. While the geography of the 10th region makes it fairly easy to divide the teams, some other regions may have to be more creative. Here is how the break down would likely look.

NORTH

Augusta

Bishop Brossart

Bracken County

Calvary Christian

Campbell County

Mason County

Saint Patricks

Scott High

Silver Grove

SOUTH

Bourbon County

George Rogers Clark

Harrison County

Montgomery County

Nicholas County

Paris

Pendleton County

Robertson County

During the regular season, every team competing for the state tournament, would have to play every team in their district in a designated seed game. This is similar to the present football system. The sub district standings could be published in local & state papers. This would add interest to the regular season. The season would end at the same time

as now. Teams could, at their option, add a 31st game on the Monday or Tuesday, but this must be a non district game. The teams are seeded in the order they finish. Two way ties are broken by the results of the seed game between the 2 teams. Three or more way ties are broken first by one team having beaten the other 2 teams in the tie, & then by a coin flip.

Once the seeding has been done, the pairings can easily be set. The 1 seed from the north plays the 8 seed from the south, the 2 seed from the north plays the 7 seed from the south and so on. The higher seed gets the home game. Girl's games are on Friday and boy's games are on Saturday (or vice versa). By Sunday you have your 8 regional teams.

Special Situation: If the schedule calls for both the girls' & the boys' teams of a school to play at the same school, the visiting team can opt to create a double header. This would save travel expenses for the school and their fans. In this situation, the home team gets to set the night, the game time, and the order of the games. They must be 30 minutes or so apart.

Notice how this solves all the problems I listed above. No more seeding versus drawing. No more guaranteed 2 teams per districts. No more advantages from being in smaller districts. It also solves the relatively minor problem of having a team host the district tournament and receiving an unfair advantage. Also this creates a truly tournament atmosphere—1 loss and go home. No more runner up teams advance.

But you're are saying some regions have more than 16 teams. What then? Notice I left Wednesday and Thursday or district week open. If there are say 10 teams in a region, play in games are necessary on those 2 days. Again girls on one night and boys on the other. Seed 10 would play seed 7 and seed 9 would play seed 8. The higher seed gets the home game. If the lower seed wins, it assumes the seed of the higher seeded team. By Friday you would have your 8 teams all properly seeded. No matter how many teams there are, this method would accommodate the situation.

If small, particularly religious schools choose not to compete for the state title, they can opt out. Byes would be given to the number 1 seeds if this reduces the number of competing teams below 16. A bye to the regional? They've earned it.

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT: The regional tournament has fewer problems and therefore needs fewer adjustments. The 8 teams are seeded in the usual manner. The upper bracket is 1 vs 8 and 4 vs 5. The lower bracket is 2 vs 7 and 3 vs 6. The surviving 8 teams retain their regular season seed. They are therefore ranked and seeded by their sub district seed number. A problem arises when 2 teams have the same seed—a very likely occurrence. If the 2 districts placed 4 teams each in the regional tournament, ties are broken by draw. If one district placed 5 or more teams in the regional, that district is considered the dominant district. All ties are then broken in the favor of the dominant district.

The 1st round of the regional would be played at the home of the higher seed. Girls on Monday night & boys on Tuesday night. The last 2 rounds of the regional would be played at a single suitable site. The semifinals would be played on Wednesday (girls) and Thursday (boys). The final would be on Friday. Both champions would be crowned on the same night.

STATE TOURNAMENT: If you think some of the district and regional tournament proposal are radical, hold on to your hat. I'm going to shake up the state tournament too.

I'm proposing that both the boys' and the girls' state tournament be played in one week at the same location—Rupp Arena. It would be a complete celebration of Kentucky basketball to begin on the Monday following the regional tournament and ending on Sunday with the crowning of both champions in one glorious double header. All sessions would be double headers leading off with a girls' game and concluding with a boys' game. Here's the schedule.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
Monday	2:00	Opening round
Monday	7:00	Opening round

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Tuesday	9:00 am	Opening round
Tuesday	2:00	Opening round
Tuesday	7:00	Opening round
Wednesday	9:00 am	Opening round
Wednesday	2:00	Opening round
Wednesday	7:00	Opening round (concluding)
Thursday	2:00	Quarter finals
Thursday	7:00	Quarter finals
Friday	2:00	Quarter finals
Friday	7:00	Quarter finals (concluding)
Saturday	2:00	Semi finals
Saturday	7:00	Semi finals (concluding)
Sunday	2:00	Finals

What a week of basketball! The 32 best teams in the state playing for the championships in one location in one week.
Two champions crowned in a single afternoon!

There would be contract arrangements to be made with the present site of the girls' tournament. But I think this would be a huge advancement and increase attendance dramatically as well as press coverage for the girls.

As an added twist, the state tournament could be seeded also! We would calculate the won lost record of each region for the past 10 tournaments. This would be a rolling average. The oldest year would be dropped each year & the most recent added. Ranking would be by win % & ties broken by the most wins & then by who won the most recent game between the 2 regions. This could well serve to create better match ups in the later rounds. The seeding technique would be the same as the 4 regions of the NCAA tournament.

SUMMARY: Besides solving many of the present problems related to post season play, this system has the added advantage of taking only 17 days to play instead of the present 28 days. This translates into only 10 instructional days instead of the present 20 days. This should help reduce the fairly legitimate complaints about interference with instructional time.

It is not possible to think of every contingency that can come up in making such major changes to a long entrenched system. I'm sure additional changes and modifications will be needed. However, this is, I believe, an excellent framework to begin the necessary alterations to post season basketball play in Kentucky.

I will be happy to discuss this system with anyone involved in the process.

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