

How Conference USA could change the TSSAA girls basketball state tournament schedule

[Tom Kreager](#) | Nashville Tennessean 12:32 p.m. EST Jan. 11, 2019

Riverdale celebrates 77-50 Class AAA title win over Houston

Riverdale won its third straight Class AAA girls basketball state championship on Saturday with a 77-50 win over Houston.

Tom Kreager

The TSSAA may need to alter its Division I girls basketball state tournament schedule due to a new Conference USA men's basketball format put in place this year.

The girls tournament is scheduled to be held March 6-9 at MTSU's Murphy Center.

Conference USA, of which MTSU is a member, has created a new schedule format in hopes of getting more teams in the NCAA

tournament.

The 14 Conference USA teams play each other once and their travel partner twice. After that, teams are seeded and placed in one of three groups — 1-5, 6-10 and 11-14 — based on conference standings.

During the final three weeks of the season, teams will play within that group for the last five games of league play. Two of those dates fall during the girls tournament — March 6 and March 9. The conference has a predetermined plan on how it will decide who is at home.

The last MTSU men's game before bonus play begins is Feb. 16.

MTSU won't know its schedule and home dates until after that. Previously, MTSU had been able to work around the state tournament, playing on the road or before it began.

"When we talked to (MTSU on Wednesday), that they could have two home games, but they felt like that it's a possibility that they could be on the road," TSSAA executive director Bernard Childress said. "That's the best-case scenario."

Childress said at least one day of the state tournament affected by the new plan.

The TSSAA released alternative girls tournament schedules to its Board of Control.

Those changes could include playing two games on Tuesday, March 5 if MTSU is scheduled to play on March 6. It could also include moving the start of the March 9 championship games up to 10 a.m. if the Blue

Raiders have a night game scheduled.

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