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Julian Tackett, Commissioner  
Butch Cope, Associate Commissioner – Director of Championships, Officials and Student Services  
Joe Angolia, Communications Director  
The Kentucky High School Athletic Association  
2280 Executive Drive Lexington, KY 40505

Dear Mr. Tackett, Mr. Cope and Mr. Angolia:

I'm writing in to express concern over the recent format change to the KHSAA State Golf Tournament. I've taken some time to think consider the changes and wanted to send you a written letter so this is not perceived as impulsive or just making noise. I have no stake in the system other than the good of the game and the critical role KHSAA can play it.

My exposure to high school golf in Kentucky is as a player and a parent of a former player. I have volunteered numerous hours toward introducing golf to young people and helping grow the game. I've attended youth golf events for all ages and levels of competitiveness.

My own son played as the number five player on a team that finished third in their regional tournament. In writing this letter I'm aware of how this change would have negatively affected student athletes like him. He practiced, traveled and competed as part of a five person team. In this case we're asking a regional champion and runner-up to leave a teammate behind. It seems cruel and outside the nature of the sport to not allow this student athlete to finish their season with the team if their school were fortunate enough to qualify. Does any other sport change rules for the marquee event of the season? It may speed games to make the state champions three on three in basketball, or seven on seven in football, but nobody would consider changing those regular season the rules for the championships.

In golf four scores counting out of five players reduces team exposure to injury, illness, disqualification or even a bad day on the course. Under the proposed changes a team would be eliminated from winning in the event a player on their team is unable to post a score. The remaining three players are automatically excluded from contending as a team. Without the traditional format another player is denied the opportunity to contribute to the team while keeping their school in the tournament.

If the goal is to improve the pace of play through a reduction of the overall number of players there are likely less harsh solutions. An idea for making the average participant better idea that comes to mind is to reduce the number of regions to 10:

- 10 Regions X 2 Qualifying Teams = 20 Teams

- 20 Teams X 5 Players Each = 100 Individual Players
- Plus 10 Regions X 5 Individual Qualifiers = 50 Individual Players
- That would total 150 players

Another alternative would be to add a round to the tournament. There could be district tournaments, larger regions than currently configured and then a state tournament. The number of qualifying teams and players competing in finals could be reduced to meet the goal of faster play. That also would reduce the situation we have now where some schools dominate their region and effectively eliminate other schools from ever having the opportunity to qualify. It would allow more teams the opportunity to actually reach the championship and still provide wide geographic representation.

- Districts would compete to have qualifying teams and individuals advance to a Region
- 5 Regions X 5 Teams = 25 Qualifying Teams
- 25 Qualifying Teams X 5 Players Each = 125 Individual Players
- 4 Regions X 5 Individual Qualifiers = 20 Individual Players
- That would total 145 players

Both these options reduce the current field size, provide an improved quality of teams, increased quality of the average player and maintain the season long team aspect of the sport. In any case there are alternative options that could meet the desired outcome of the KHSAA without compromising the nature of the sport. I'm sure there are many qualified individuals that could devise other alternatives.

The sponsors, stakeholders and the KHSAA itself deserve better. This decision seems to go against the role sports should play in education, individual effort and school achievement. My parents are retired public schools educators. I feel fortunate to have had a lifetime of exposure to teachers, coaches and administrators trying to make a difference in the lives of young people. In the spirit of education I hope you have the willingness and willpower to reconsider the proposed system.

Sincerely,

Joe Brumley

Cc: Board of Controls