

FHSAA holds emergency meeting to determine changes in football classifications

The FHSAA's Board of Directors will vote on a proposal to return to seven classifications and adding a new elite Open Division

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Another potential change looks to be on the way for high school football classifications in the Sunshine State.

After just two years of the Metro-Suburban-Rural classification system for football, the Florida High School Athletic Association's (FHSAA) Board of Directors is holding an emergency meeting to consider a new proposal for 2024.



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Tuesday afternoon at 2 p.m., the board will vote on the new proposal and many head football coaches around the state will either be on hand for the meeting or listening virtually from afar.

Ending the Metro and Suburban classifications and moving back to seven classification determined by enrollment, along with the existing rural classification, is the core of the proposal, as is the addition of a new Open Division, which would syphon off the top teams from the other classifications, based on a ranking system, to play for their own state championship.

Districts would be still be created with a new district tournament format taking place over the

final two weeks of the regular season. There would be a 12-game schedule, in which teams would schedule eight games over the first nine weeks of the season with a floating bye week included.

Week 10 would become a universal bye week for every team within the FHSAA and the final two weeks of the season would be for a district tournament to include the top four teams in each district. For districts that have more than four teams, those teams would have to find games during the period after their eighth game and universal bye week.

The teams that do not make the district playoffs, after a two week layoff, will be free to schedule two additional games, after the district tournaments, if they choose to do so, but that is easier said than done. Teams that cannot schedule those games, will lose two games off the traditional 10-game season for their players, in addition to the loss of revenue from the revenue generated by those games.



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The Open Division proposal, which would be for all sports and not just football, would be determined by the top eight teams in the final regular season rankings. Those teams will be placed in a separate postseason bracket.

A [report by USA Today's Jon Santucci](#) touched on the concerns from teams, expressed to FSHAA Executive Director Craig Damon, on the difficulty of scheduling opponents without mandatory district games.

"This is a concern we looked at extensively. For most of our teams depending on the size of the district, they had to schedule anywhere from five to eight non-district games to fill a 10-game schedule for quite some time," said Damon. "The Rural classification the past two years have searched for 10 games since that classification didn't have districts. Member schools may continue to use the classified ads to solicit games on our website."

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