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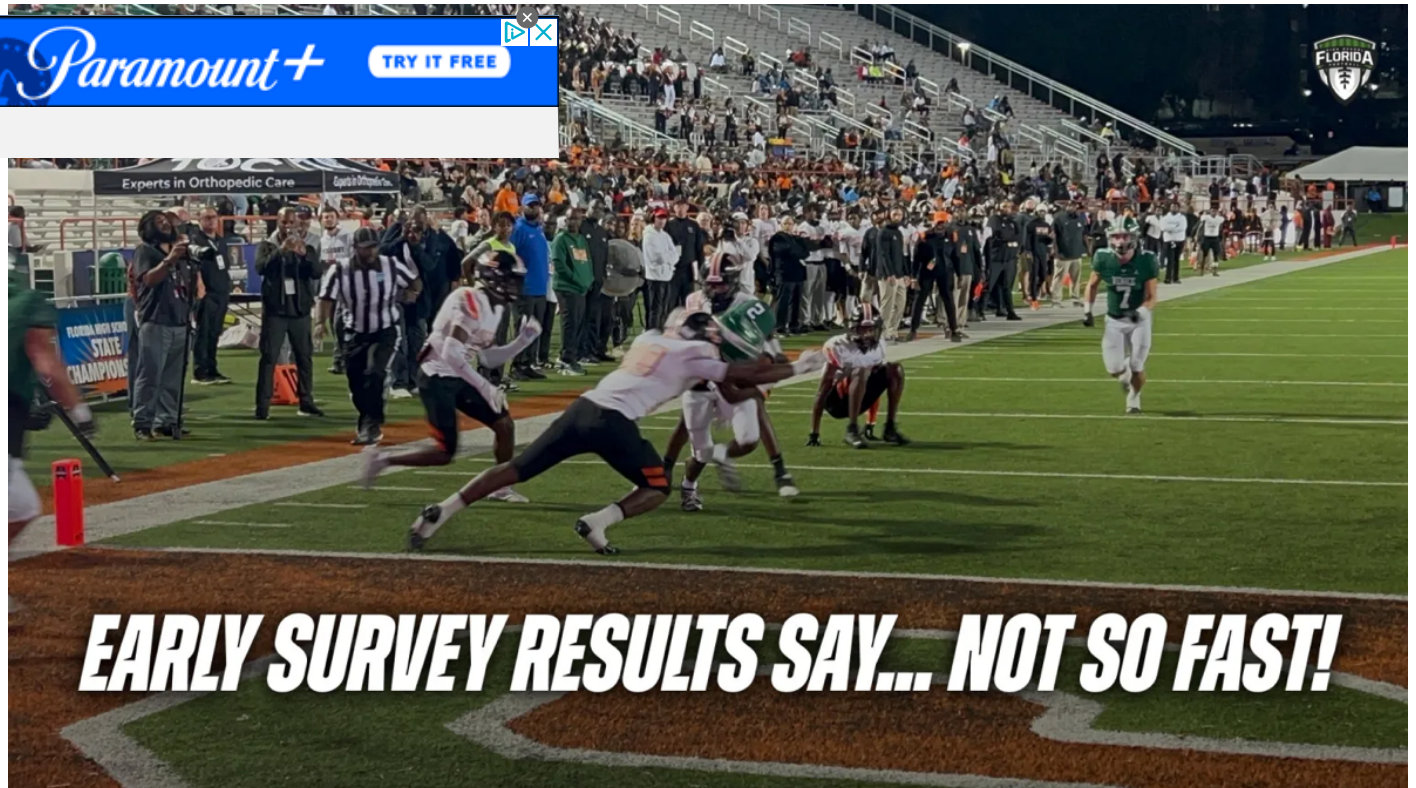
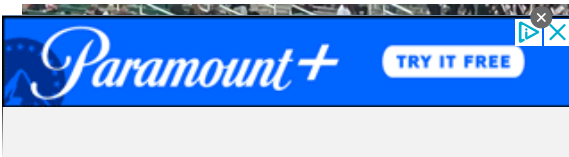


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Early poll results show FHSAA has fumbled the ball with classification changes

Coaches expressing frustration and anger with yet another change in classifications after two years

by Joshua Wilson — December 15, 2023



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GAINESVILLE, Fla. – When Tuesday rolled around most expected one of two things to come from the FHSAA Board of Directors meeting – either to have Metro/Suburban classifications go for at least another two years or there would be a change in classifications with an open division attached and what kind of rankings would be used to decide playoff teams.

Instead, many were left with more questions about what the next reclassification cycle could look like as the Board of Directors voted 9-4 to abandon Metro/Suburban and go back to the the classification setup previously with eight classifications with one classification being called Rural while there will be seven additional classifications strictly based enrollment. Class 1A would be for the smallest schools all the way up to Class 7A being for the largest schools.

In another 9-4 vote, the Board of Directors voted to keep mandated district play intact for football with the exception being for the Rural class. The proposal brought forth initially called abandoning district play entirely and creating a district tournament for football which would be determined by a power ranking, most likely that from MaxPreps, but that idea was abandoned with the vote.

After the meeting we sent out a survey to head football coaches around the state to gauge their thoughts on four questions, with an option provide additional comments which some have agree to allow us to share which we will do in an upcoming article with our final poll results as well as on a show to talk about the results and more.

The move away from Metro/Suburban unpopular so far

So far in over 130 surveys sent in by head coaches around the state from the Panhandle to South Florida show a most coaches are not happy with Metro/Suburban being abandoned which sits above the 60% threshold line for a majority.

A lot of the surveys questioned why the FHSAA would abandon something just after two years when they felt the system should have been given another two years with the data being studied to see if changes were warranted including potentially moving to another classification system.

Mandate for district games resonates strongly

So far of the coaches surveyed, over 65% of them agree for the mandate for district play. This aligns mostly with what we have heard from most coaches around the state as a lot of programs struggle to complete a full 10-game schedule. However, there is a sector of coaches that want the freedom to build their own schedules and not be told who they should be required to play, with some citing the difference between schools that build up talented rosters compared to those that do not have the talent to compete against powerhouse programs.

Coaches do not see the competitive nature of games improving compared to the last two years

Over the last two years the competitive nature of games, especially those in the playoffs have drastically improved compared the years prior under the old classification system and another thing brought up by some coaches around the state.

So far – and pretty overwhelmingly – over 80% of coaches feel the competitive nature of games will not improve with the changes to the classification system. That number stands out amongst all the data collected so far indicating that coaches feel we could be seeing more lopsided games, especially when it comes to the playoffs and state championship games.

Coaches are not satisfied with the plans and voting by the FHSAA Board of Directors

Half the coaches who have taken the survey so far are not satisfied at all how the Board of Directors voted or even went to plan on the initial proposal. Another 22% are very close to not being satisfied at all based on a scale of one to five with five being completely satisfied with the way how things went. One common theme that coaches mentioned was how disorganized the Board of Directors looked and that it felt like the Board of Directors did not know what they were discussing or potentially voting on.

Our thoughts

So far a lot of coaches are unhappy and they are going to continue to express displeasure for as long as they can. With the number of comments that have been sent to us by coaches around the state indicates one thing – the biggest stakeholders impacted by the decision to move away from

Metro/Suburban were never consulted or asked their opinions before a decision was made. Some coaches brought up points that the plans and proposals were never brought to the proper committees before a vote was taken and so far through research of our own indicates that initial plan and what was ultimately voted upon were not vetted by the FHSAA's own sport advisory committees or the Athletic Directors Advisory Committee which indicates multiple steps were bypassed in the process.

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Joshua is the Owner & Publisher of FloridaHSFootball.com. He oversees many different things on the website and keeps a tab on what is going on around the state in both Football and Girls' Flag Football.



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