

KHSAA Board of Directors

Subject: Proposal for Seeding Top 16 Teams in the State Lacrosse Tournament

Dear KHSAA Board of Directors,

On behalf of the Kentucky Girls Lacrosse Coaches Association (KYGLCA), I am writing to formally propose a change to the current state lacrosse tournament format: seeding the top 16 teams (with 2 advancing from each regional tournament) based on the Ratings Percentage Index (RPI). We believe making this adjustment before any games have been played as a KHSAA sanctioned sport, will significantly enhance the competitive balance, fairness, and overall experience of the tournament for all participating teams.

Currently, the proposed state tournament structure of pairing regions 1-4 and 5-8 places a significant emphasis on geographic location instead of the merit of the teams involved. This format significantly undermines the value of regular season performance and does not accurately reflect the relative strength of teams across the state. It also creates a situation where the best teams are eliminated prematurely, reducing the overall quality and excitement of the tournament. While we understand the reasoning is traditionally based on reducing distance to travel, we have many years of competitive data to understand the drawbacks that a seeding system would address:

- **Enhanced Competitive Balance:** Seeding based on RPI will create more competitive matchups throughout the tournament, both in the early and later rounds. The goal of any championship should be to allow the possible matchup of the two best teams and any “upsets” can happen along the way.
- **Accurate Reflection of Team Strength:** RPI provides a more objective and comprehensive measure of team strength than the current regional system, ensuring that the best teams have a better opportunity to advance.
- **Increased Fairness:** This system rewards teams for their performance throughout the entire season, not just their regional placement.
- **Greater Excitement and Fan Engagement:** More competitive matchups will create a more thrilling tournament experience for players, coaches, and fans.
- **Addresses Regional Imbalance:** By using RPI, the inherent advantage or disadvantage of being in a particular region is neutralized. This directly addresses the issue of the significant historical difference in strength between teams located in regions 1-4 and 5-8. To emphasize this imbalance, the currently projected top 2 teams (KCD and EHS) both reside in Region 4 with Sacred Heart (historically top 1-3) in Region 3. In the last 12 years, these 3 teams have only lost a combined total of 3 games to other teams in the state. (*please see attached)

To address these issues, the KYGLCA proposes seeding the 16 teams that advance from their regional tournaments using RPI. This comprehensive approach provides a more objective and accurate assessment of team strength than simply relying on regional placement.

Our specific proposal is as follows:

- **RPI Calculation:** RPI will be calculated using regular season results per the normal formula.
- **Seeding Process:** The 16 qualifying teams will be seeded 1-16 based on their calculated RPI.
- **Tournament Bracket:** A standard bracket will be used, matching 1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, and so on, ensuring that the highest-ranked teams are not scheduled to meet until the later rounds. The first round will be considered sectionals, followed by quarterfinals, semi-finals, and then the final championship game. This will still allow for the opportunity for play across the state, but not prohibit the top teams from facing each other in the finals just because they were placed in the same region.

The primary concern we have heard regarding seeding is the potential for increased travel distances for some teams. While we acknowledge this is a factor to consider, we believe the benefits of implementing RPI-based seeding far outweigh this concern.

Here's why:

- **Minimal Impact on Overall Travel:** While some teams might experience slightly longer trips under a seeded format, the overall increase in travel time and expense is likely to be minimal. The majority of teams will still be playing within a reasonable distance, especially considering the relatively small size of Kentucky.
- **Prioritizing Competitive Integrity:** The current system sacrifices competitive integrity for a marginal reduction in travel. We believe that ensuring fair matchups and a true test of the best teams in the state should be the paramount concern. A few extra miles on a bus should not dictate the structure of the state championship.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** If travel becomes a significant issue in specific instances, mitigation strategies can be implemented, such as:
 - Geographic bracketing within the seedings (e.g., keeping teams from extreme ends of the state from meeting in the first round unless they are significantly different seeds).
 - Exploring neutral sites for some early-round games to minimize travel for both teams.

Furthermore, we want to emphasize the strong support for this proposal among regional representatives. In a recent meeting of regional representatives, with 12 of 16 representatives present, a vote was conducted on the issue of seeding versus regional placement. The result was overwhelmingly in favor of seeding, with 10 representatives voting in favor and only 2 opposed. This clear majority demonstrates a strong consensus within the regional structure that a change is necessary. Distance to travel was not considered a significant factor among the representatives. The issue of growth of the sport was also addressed. We feel that using a seeding system overwhelmingly urges growth in the sport versus a system that allows teams to advance deep into a state tournament because of their geographical location and not necessarily because of the strength of their season.

We firmly believe that using RPI to seed the state lacrosse tournament is the best way to ensure:

- A more equitable and competitive tournament experience.
- Accurate reflection of team strength and rewarding regular season performance.
- Increased fairness and excitement for players, coaches, and fans.
- Addressing the significant regional imbalances that currently exist.
- Creates a system that addresses an immediate need, as well as one that can stand the test of time as teams throughout the state continue to grow and improve.

Given the minimal impact on travel, the potential for mitigation strategies, and the overwhelming support from regional representatives, we urge the KHSAA Board of Directors to approve our proposal for RPI-based seeding. Previous public comments have insinuated that changes to the season and format would be looked at after season completion based on feedback. Since this is the inaugural sanctioned season, we are urging the committee to adopt this proposal before the post season begins. It is especially urgently necessary to the current Senior class that have put in so much hard work for their fair chance at playing in, and for, the state championship. We respectfully request your adoption of this proposal and, if necessary, the opportunity to discuss this further with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

KY Girls Lacrosse Coaches Association

TOP 3 VS. ALL OTHERS IN KY

KCD has not lost to a team not named SHA or Eastern since 2009

SHA has not lost to a team not named KCD or Eastern since 2012

Eastern's only 3 non-KCD or SHA losses were to Manual in 2013 and 2022; and
Collegiate 2016

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS SINCE 2021 (TOP 3 VS LEXINGTON & REGIONS 2/5/6)

***Commonwealth League champs: Sayre (2022, 2024), Henry Clay (2021),
Lexington Catholic (2023)**

3/23/21 KCD 16, Sayre 1 (Lexington)

3/19/22 KCD 18, Henry Clay 1 (Lexington)

4/20/23 Sacred Heart 15, Sayre 2 (Lexington)

4/22/23 Eastern 13, Sayre 4 (Lexington)

3/6/24 KCD 17, Sayre 2 (Lexington)

3/14/24 Sacred Heart 19, Sayre 1 (Lexington)

4/12/24 Eastern 15, Henry Clay 6 (Lexington)

4/17/24 Eastern 14, Sayre 1 (Lexington)

4/18/24 KCD 14, Sayre 4 (Lexington)

4/20/24 Sacred Heart 12, Sayre 0 (Lexington)

3/6/21 KCD 19, Notre Dame Academy 2 (Region 5)

3/8/21 SHA 19, North Oldham 0 (Region 6)

3/17/21 Eastern 13, South Oldham 2 (Region 6)

3/20/21 Eastern 11, Manual 5 (Region 2)

3/20/21 KCD 14, South Oldham 1 (Region 6)

3/21/21 Eastern 19, Oldham County 1 (Region 6)

3/21/21 SHA 16, Manual 4 (Region 2)

3/22/21 SHA 16, South Oldham 5 (Region 6)

4/8/21 Eastern 9, Manual 7 (Region 2)

4/12/21 KCD 19, South Oldham 3 (Region 6)

4/14/21 Eastern 11, Manual 1 (Region 2)

4/14/21 SHA 10, South Oldham 1 (Region 6)

4/21/21 SHA 19, Mercy 1 (Region 2)

4/26/21 KCD 19, Oldham County 1 (Region 6)

4/29/21 KCD 18, North Oldham 2 (Region 6)

5/3/21 Eastern 19, Collins 1 (Region 6)

5/10/21 Eastern 20, Collins 1 (Region 6)

5/10/21 SHA 19, Mercy 0 (Region 2)

5/11/21 KCD 19, Oldham County 0 (Region 6)
5/12/21 KCD 17, Notre Dame Academy 1 (Region 5)
5/15/21 Eastern 12, Notre Dame Academy 5 (Region 5)
5/18/21 KCD 12, Manual 1 (Region 2)

3/5/22 Eastern 17, Notre Dame Academy 2 (Region 5)
3/8/22 Eastern 17, Manual 6 (Region 2)
3/10/22 Eastern 16, South Oldham 7
3/15/22 KCD 19, Notre Dame Academy 2 (Region 5)
3/24/22 Eastern 20, Collins 2 (Region 6)
3/29/22 KCD 19, North Oldham 2 (Region 6)
4/12/22 SHA 16, Mercy 0 (Region 2)
4/18/22 KCD 17, Manual 5 (Region 2)
4/19/22 KCD 16, South Oldham 3 (Region 6)
4/20/22 SHA 8, Manual 7 (Region 2)
4/20/22 KCD 16, South Oldham 2 (Region 6)
4/23/22 Eastern 17, South Oldham 1
4/23/22 SHA 17, South Oldham 2
4/23/22 Eastern 11, Manual 2
4/24/22 KCD 13, Manual 1 (Region 2)
4/26/22 KCD 18, Oldham County 2 (Region 6)
5/4/22 Eastern 18, North Oldham 3
5/9/22 Eastern 20, Collins 1
5/10/22 KCD 19, Oldham County 2 (Region 6)
5/11/22 KCD 19, South Oldham 3 (Region 6)
5/14/22 SHA 17, South Oldham 2 (Region 6)
5/17/22 SHA 13, Manual 6 (Region 2)

3/6/23 KCD 18, Notre Dame Academy 2 (Region 5)
3/14/23 Eastern 8, Manual 6 (Region 2)
3/24/23 KCD 7, Manual 4 (Region 2)
***3/25/23** Manual 7, Eastern 1 (Region 2)
3/27/23 Eastern 17, Oldham County 2 (Region 6)
3/28/23 Eastern 19, Collins 1 (Region 6)
3/29/23 Eastern 15, South Oldham 6 (Region 6)
4/11/23 SHA 19, Mercy 1 (Region 2)
4/12/23 SHA 17, South Oldham 2 (Region 6)
4/13/23 KCD 19, North Oldham 4 (Region 6)

4/17/23 KCD 17, South Oldham 3 (Region 6)
4/20/23 Eastern 7, South Oldham 6 (Region 6)
4/20/23 KCD 10, Manual 4 (Region 2)
4/22/23 SHA 14, South Oldham 1 (Region 6)
4/23/23 SHA 10, Manual 4 (Region 2)
4/24/23 KCD 19, Oldham County 1 (Region 6)
5/1/23 SHA 13, Manual 6 (Region 2)
5/3/23 KCD 16, Manual 3 (Region 2)
5/9/23 Eastern 21, Collins 3 (Region 6)
5/9/23 KCD 18, Notre Dame Academy 1 (Region 5)
5/10/23 SHA 17, Mercy 2 (Region 2)
5/13/23 Eastern 16, Mercy 2 (Region 2)
5/16/23 Eastern 11, Manual 9 (Region 2)

3/1/24 Eastern 18, Manual 4 (Region 2)
3/6/24 SHA 16, Manual 5 (Region 2)
3/7/24 Eastern 19, South Oldham 3 (Region 6)
3/14/24 KCD 19, Notre Dame Academy 1 (Region 5)
3/21/24 KCD 19, South Oldham 1 (Region 6)
3/22/24 KCD 16, Mercy 0 (Region 2)
3/23/24 KCD 18, Manual 2 (Region 2)
3/28/24 KCD 19, Shelby County 0 (Region 6)
4/11/24 KCD 19, North Oldham 1 (Region 6)
4/17/24 SHA 14, Manual 2 (Region 2)
4/18/24 Eastern 13, Manual 2 (Region 2)
4/21/24 KCD 16, Manual 1 (Region 2)
4/23/24 Eastern 19, Ryle 0 (Region 5)
4/24/24 Eastern 19, Collins 0 (Region 5)
4/24/24 SHA 16, Mercy 1 (Region 2)
4/23/24 KCD 19, Oldham County 2 (Region 6)
5/2/24 SHA 1, Dixie Heights 0...forfeit (Region 5)
5/7/24 KCD 17, North Oldham 1 (Region 6)
5/9/24 Eastern 18, Ryle 4 (Region 5)
5/9/24 KCD 18, South Oldham 1 (Region 6)
5/11/24 Eastern 17, South Oldham 5 (Region 6)
5/11/24 SHA 18, Manual 3 (Region 2)