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Fambrough: What's the deal with LHSAA convention? More to it than you know

BY ROBIN FAMBROUGH | Staff writer

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Central Baton Rouge's Lander Smith holds the trophy after his team shut out Ruston, 42-0, to win the Division I state football championship at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans, Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024. (Staff photo by Scott Threlkeld, The Times-Picayune)

STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT THRELKELD

Another LHSAA convention has come and gone, without much fanfare for the most part.

With that said, I did receive a couple of questions from coaches about one proposal that passed Thursday. So, I went through LHSAA channels to affirm the interpretation I previously received.

No, the proposal by West Ouachita's Rusty Farrar that keeps Class 4A schools from being required to play up to Division I in football and the LHSAA's other split sports –basketball, baseball and softball – does not unite Class 5A teams for football and does not eliminate a championship game at the Prep Classic.



Like I say, there's always something with the LHSAA. And that is not a bad thing in every instance. I know some people, including coaches and parents, often view the organization as archaic and disagree with its rules and rulings.

The convention can be tedious, but there is always one thing I keep in mind. Though folks may try to paint the LHSAA in a corner, the annual convention is a reminder that it has a life of its own.

Louisiana is one of the few states that assembles principals, or stakeholders if you will, from across the state to vote on its policies. Many states, including Mississippi, use an elected board similar to the LHSAA's executive committee to do all the policy-making.

Sometimes, it gets messy to have so many voices sounding off. Or it can be exceedingly quiet like it was this year before the vote.

Sure, there was outside noise as concerns about a possible one-time transfer rule were voiced. That 273-66 vote against the one-time transfer rule is proof the system not only can surprise some of you, but it also works to provide some checks and balances.

Does everyone get what they want? Never. When items approved don't work out, the group can approve more changes with future votes.

A short meeting and decisive votes do indicate there is some balance and unity in Eddie Bonine's 10th convention as LHSAA executive director.

Of course, I do expect Classes 3A, 2A and 1A to follow with their own proposals to mirror what Farrar did.

Now to see what next year brings.

Executive notes

Ryan Gallagher of Brother Martin was elected the LHSAA's president/head of executive committee on the final day of the convention. Franklinton's Shane Smith is the new vice president.

Micah Coleman of Natchitoches Central (Class 5A) and Vermillion Catholic's Stella Arabie (1A) were reelected to the committee. Farrar of West Ouachita (4A) and Rosepine's Jeffrey Odom (2A) rejoined the committee after previously serving as principals at other schools.

Albany's Sammie Lacara (3A), Jason Jagneaux of Hathaway (Class B) and Hackberry's Paulette Campbell (Class C) also join the committee for two-year terms.

Thursday's general assembly vote ended the two-year tenure of Sam Houston's Shannon Foolkes as president. Foolkes, a former Zachary High star athlete, is only the second female LHSAA president.

Prep notables

Two schools in the Baton Rouge metro area, Class 4A Lutchter and 1A North Iberville, received two of Louisiana's National Football Foundations High School Academic Awards of Excellence for 2024-25.

Other Louisiana schools recognized were Class 5A Mandeville, Class 3A Patrick Taylor and Class 2A Ouachita Christian.

- Mississippi recently approved girls flag football as a sanctioned high school sport. The New Orleans Saints have been part of an NFL flag football initiative for Mississippi and Louisiana for approximately two years now.

In Louisiana, girls flag football has been a club sport and has sent several teams to sanctioned national competitions. A push to add it as a sport could come next.

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