

# KHSAA to revisit transfer rules after legislation proposed to shake up system

By [Jared Peck](#) February 19, 2025 6:47 PM

The Kentucky High School Athletic Association Board of Control took initial steps Wednesday to respond to discussions in the state General Assembly regarding its restrictions on the transfer of athletes from one school to another.

Earlier this month, state [Rep. Nick Wilson, R-Whitley County](#), introduced [House Bill 292](#), proposed legislation that would allow any high school athlete a one-time transfer to another school without restriction.

The KHSAA's [current rules](#) provide for it to review all transfer requests and require transferring athletes who do not meet certain requirements, such as a legitimate change of address, to sit out one year of varsity play.

Tuesday, after talks with KHSAA staff in the wake of his proposed legislation, Wilson offered a different proposal in the form of [House Joint Resolution 49](#) calling for a report from the KHSAA detailing the due process of the last two years of transfers and seeking a presentation on ways the KHSAA can modernize and expedite the transfer process and potentially revise those rules with input from its entire membership.

"We'll have to submit some data on a couple of years — how long it

took, what the ruling was — it's stuff that we don't have already encapsulated somewhere," Tackett told the board during its morning work session about the requested study. "We're going to have to do this by hand. And it will be a chore. They (the Legislature) want it by December. Our goal is to have it ready for your July meeting."

Wilson confirmed Wednesday that Joint Resolution 49 would take precedence and his original bill would be shelved this legislative session.

"Our ultimate goal is to get everyone on the same page and ensure school athletes know that a consistent, transparent process will be applied when a student transfers. HB 292 was our initial attempt to address concerns raised by athletes, families, and school administrators," Wilson said. "I've decided to put that legislation on hold and move forward with a resolution that allows us to work with KHSAA and other organizations to better understand what contributes to this issue and how we can best address it."

Regardless of whether the joint resolution passes, the board authorized KHSAA staff to begin drafting ways to clarify its transfer rules and offer potential changes for its entire membership to consider at its annual meeting in September. The board could consider a first reading of such draft proposals at its May 6-7 board meeting.

"The whole plan for the last seven or eight months has been to get something ready for the annual meeting that the delegates can give their thoughts on," Tackett said during a break in the work session. "And if (a proposed change) doesn't pass there, it can still be lived with if the legislature did it."

The proposed revisions to the transfer rules and procedures the KHSAA could consider at future meetings could include:

- Shortening deadlines for schools to respond to transfer issues. Current deadlines allowing 15 days to respond date to the snail-mail era, Tackett said;
- Unspecified improvements to the appeals process;
- Consideration of allowing a free transfer to ninth graders since that's where the bulk of transfers come from;
- A specific prohibition to in-season transfers to avoid inevitable postseason controversies.

High school athlete transfers have long been a controversial issue for the KHSAA. Commissioner Julian Tackett has noted the dramatic increase in transfer requests the association has seen in recent years at any number of past board meetings, including Wednesday's at the KHSAA's office in Lexington.

The issue has become an even greater topic of debate in the wake of the complete relaxation of restrictions on transfers at the collegiate level since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its February meeting, Tackett told the board KHSAA staff had processed 827 transfers for the 2024-25 school year and that's not counting locally agreed transfers that didn't require KHSAA review. Wednesday, Tackett estimated 70-75 percent of all transfer requests are ultimately approved initially or on appeal.

But the issue is complicated by the diverse interests of the KHSAA's

membership schools, Tackett said. Resolving the issue in a way a majority can agree on will be difficult. And resolving it in a way that won't have unintended consequences such as creating a greater disparity in the level of play in various sports will be more challenging still.

"It's hard to get true consensus when you look at a board member here from a small rural school compared to an AD (athletic director) in an urban area at a magnet school," Tackett said. "They're not going to see the same picture. So, how can we make it where it's better for the student without it being just anarchy?"