

What to know about a potential new private school athletic league for Alabama high schools

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- Updated: Jul. 14, 2026, 6:01 a.m.
- Published: Jul. 14, 2026, 6:00 a.m.

Macon East Academy football coach Glynn Lott during the River Region Sports Prep Media Day at Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery, Ala., on Tuesday July 22, 2025. (Photo by Mickey Welsh | Montgomery Advertiser)Mickey Welsh / Advertiser

A longtime Alabama high school football coach and administrator believes the time is right for independent schools in Alabama to form a new association for athletics separate from both the Alabama High School Athletic Association and the Alabama Independent School Association.

Glynn Lott, who has been the head football coach at Macon-East Montgomery in the AISA for 30 years and is also the school's headmaster, told AL.com on Sunday night he thinks a new association with a fresh start is what many of the state's private schools are looking for right now.

"I've been doing this a long time," Lott said. "I don't think it's good that any one group has a monopoly over anything, and I feel like that is what is going to happen if we don't form something else. We are all going to play either in the AHSAA or the AISA and I don't know if either group would play in the other, so I have stuck my neck out there. I'm the one that has gone to the different places and talked and tried to get people together."

The possible move to form a new association for athletics comes in the wake of the [AHSAA Central Board vote in January](#) to separate private schools from public schools in that organization for championship play for the first time in the 100-year history of the Association.

Lott said the goal is to start the new association for the 2027-2028 school year.

"The AISA schools are possibly doing this for next year, breaking into a new association," he said. "We do reclassification every year. I think most AISA schools will join along with some

schools who aren't happy in the new format of the Alabama High School Athletic Association.”

Lott said schools from the AISA would still be members of that group academically for accreditation, professional development and other needs but play in the new league athletically.

Using football as an example, the AISA is scheduled to have 20 11-man teams this season. That includes Autauga Academy, [which announced it was leaving the AHSAA last week to rejoin the league](#). The AISA also has eight schools who will play 8-man football.

Following the Central Board's 13-2 vote to separate in January, the AHSAA is divided into two private school leagues for championship play. The larger league (Double-A Private) has 16 teams which play football. The Single-A Private league includes 29.

The AHSAA reclassifies every two years. The next reclassification would go into effect prior to the 2028-2029 school year.

“We understand that the AHSAA teams might not join right now,” Lott said. “Some of them feel like they made a two-year commitment and want to see how it goes. But we are letting them have input now. ‘If you were to join this, what would you want, how would you want to see it done?’”

Lott said any independent schools interested in the new league are invited to an important meeting July 24 in Montgomery. The location has not been set yet. At that meeting, Lott said he hopes the new association will be officially named.

“It will start with the AISA schools breaking off first,” he said. “The boards will vote on that. We’ve talked with (AISA executive director) Michael (McLendon), and he’s good with moving forward. We have a meeting scheduled to name the Association, and that will be the day it starts.”

McLendon did not immediately return a phone call from AL.com about the new league.

Following the AHSAA's restructuring of championship pathways, executive director Heath Harmon promised to form a private school advisory committee and hire an assistant director for the independent schools. Both are now in place with the hire of Lee-Scott's Buster Daniel earlier this summer, and Harmon praised both when speaking with AL.com on Monday.

“We provide outstanding benefits of membership,” he said. “We recently hired an assistant director, Buster Daniel, who is our liaison with private schools in addition to other duties. We are very excited to have him on board. He has hit the ground running.

“We’ve also established a private school advisory committee, which I think has already met

three or four times. I'm excited about the opportunity we have to work through Buster Daniel as our private school liaison and our private school advisory committee. As far as maybe hearing other things going on out on the periphery ... I choose to go by what I get through our proper channels of communication."

AHSAA private school coaches at media days in Birmingham and Huntsville on Monday said they were mostly unaware of the idea for a new association.

It's unknown how many, if any, AHSAA schools would try to leave for the new league, though St. Paul's athletic director and private school committee member Shane Sullivan said last week he was not aware of any schools in the Mobile area currently talking about joining a new organization.