

This week in HS Sports: Big decisions ahead for Heath Harmon, AHSAA Central Board

By

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UMS-Wright plays St. Paul's in Game 3 of the prep baseball series Saturday, April 25, 2026, in Mobile, Ala.

This is an opinion piece.

On my way to the home office in Birmingham this week for a few AL.com sports meetings, I was able to stop through the Alabama High School Athletic Association offices in Montgomery.

Heath Harmon's staff was hard at work on a number of things I'm sure, most notably preparing for next week's summer conference and All-Star Sports Week downtown.

It's the group's biggest and busiest week of the year as North and South All-Stars converge in Montgomery in multiple sports. The week also is filled with meetings for coaches and school administrators, including an important meeting with Harmon a week from today which every school is required to be represented.

"We have a mandatory session on the 24th where we go over legal issues, medical advisory board information, basically anything as executive director I feel schools need to know ahead of the year," Harmon said.

I also met briefly with the new director of communications, [long-time Birmingham TV sports personality Scott Griffin](#), who is already hard at work in the office. It's the first time since I've been covering high school sports at AL.com that there will be someone other than Hall of Famer Ron Ingram in that job. Scott is eager, has been around Alabama a long time and will do a great job in the role.

I was able to touch on a few different topics in a brief conversation with Harmon. He didn't say much about the potential of a new private school athletic league separate from the AHSAA or the AISA [that AL.com reported on earlier this week](#).

He reinforced that he is happy with the AHSAA's new private school advisory committee and

[recently hired associate director Buster Daniel](#), who will serve as private school liaison.

These are the other topics we hit on this week:

Private school playoff expansion

We have reported in recent weeks that the private school advisory committee has lobbied for an increasing number of teams (and rounds) in most of its playoffs. Harmon seemed to indicate that was in the works and would start this year.

“That has been a good example of our process. In our first meeting, that really kind of dominated our conversation -- the pathways to the playoffs. We had a meeting after that with our Central Board so I could kind of explain to them where I thought we were and get some direction from them. We took that information and got our staff to work through different scenarios and went back and got some more feedback from the private school committee. We are looking within the next few weeks to get private school pathways approved across the board to work more in line with some of the requests or feedback we got back from that committee.”

The Central Board of Control meets July 29 in Montgomery.

More on that later.

Transfers in DragonFly

[Until the public/private school split in January](#), the primary issue in Harmon’s 2-plus year tenure as executive director was non-compliant transfers.

A transfer task force committee was formed to help address that issue. Prior to the 2025-2026 athletic year, schools were required to mark any student-athlete who transferred to their school in the past 365 days as a transfer.

Through the legislative process, that changed again this year.

“Member schools came back and felt like that wasn’t the totality of what they were asking for,” Harmon said. “They wanted to know what transfers look like according to the definition of a transfer. In our Association, you establish your eligibility after the third day of your seventh-grade year. Anything that happens after the third day, if you go to another school, you are a transfer.”

Schools are now required to mark any student-athlete who transferred to their school after the third day of their seventh-grade year as such in the AHSAA’s data system, DragonFly.

“I think it will put us in a better position to get some good data on transfers,” Harmon said. “It

is going to put us in a position to support our member schools, to make sure they have the appropriate documentation. Transfer is not a bad word in itself. If students transfer and do it the right way, we want them to be eligible to participate.”

Harmon said the rosters, with transfers appropriately marked, will be available to the public in DragonFly.

“We consider rosters in and of themselves to be a component of sportsmanship,” he said. “You need to have a complete roster with accurate information. Now a part of that will be whether a student is marked as a transfer.”

Mary G. Montgomery plays Ocean Springs in a spring football game Thursday, May 7, 2026, in Semmes, Ala. (Mike Kittrell | preps@al.com) Mike Kittrell | preps@al.com

Mary G. Montgomery/Pell City

The AHSAA placed both the [Mary G. Montgomery](#) and [Pell City](#) football programs on restrictive probation in May.

The probation in both cases includes a year-long suspension for the head coaches and a postseason ban for the upcoming season.

Both schools are expected to meet with the Central Board on July 29.

“We want to support schools in doing everything we can to make sure they are following rules,” Harmon said. “That is an opportunity for schools to come in and address the board and basically talk about things they’ve put in place moving forward. That’s not unique to these situations.”

Could there be some relief in one or both cases?

“There is an opportunity there that, if that school is making a request to come off a particular probation, they can make that request and that would be something we would discuss at that time,” Harmon said.

Busy year for Mobile?

In December, Mobile is scheduled to host the five-day AHSAA football championships as well as the North-South All-Star Game and the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Game.

There has been at least some discussion about moving one or both All-Star Games this year to another city since Hancock Whitney Stadium at South Alabama is scheduled to host all three.

Harmon said, as of now, there have been no changes. He said he is looking forward to

bringing the football championships, formally the Super 7, to Mobile.

“Mobile is a great city. This is a big event. It’s a statewide event,” he said. “I think the opportunity to have it in a city like Mobile, a city hungry for championship events, is big. We are lucky in Alabama. We don’t have to beg and plead people to have our events. They understand the importance of providing this opportunity for our young people. For some kids and schools, it’s a once in a lifetime experience and you want it to be top level. I think Mobile is committed to that and I think it’s a great opportunity.”

Thought for the Week

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” – Isaiah 40:8