April 21, 2026

RE: Counterarguments to "Proposal to Upgrade Golf State Championship Advancement Guidelines"

Mr. Angola and KHSAA Board of Controls,

In response to the "Proposal to Upgrade Golf State Championship Advancement Guidelines" sent to the KHSAA Board of Controls, below are some counterarguments for why this proposal should not be implemented by the Board. The Proposal has been discussed with various families, coaches and stakeholders in the high school golf community, and below is a summary of the collective thoughts of those that oppose the Proposal. We would appreciate it if the Board took the time to consider these counterarguments.

Proposal's Goal:

- It is believed that the real intent of the Proposal is to: "**advance a competitive team from the deeper regions**", i.e., certain regions of the State with stronger golf teams want to be able to bring more teams to the State Championship

Consequences of Implementing Proposal:

- Directly detrimental to talented individuals across the entire State who are not afforded the same means or opportunity to be on a competitive team.

- Heightened focus on "teams" will result in more schools recruiting and more kids transferring schools to be on a better team since their avenue to State as an individual is being weakened.

- Weaker overall field in State Championship because 3-4 individuals with low scores in the First Round State will be replaced with a 4th team whose 3,4,5 men/women, on average, presumably shoot significantly lower scores than those individuals (supporting data from prior years in example below).

- All individuals on teams will have a stronger advantage to make it to State because even the better players on the teams can afford to have a bad round and make it to the State Championship on the coattails of their team, whereas individuals without strong teams are required to play exceptionally well in Regionals and First Round State to make it to the Championship (no ability to ride on the coattails of a team)

- The winner of the 2024 Boys State Championship would not have advanced to the State Championship under the proposed format.

    - The INDIVIDUAL winner of the State Championship is given an exemption into next year's State Amateur and earns the most points toward becoming Kentucky's Mr. and Mrs. Golf, the highest honor in high school golf. The most deserving individual should have the opportunity to receive these accolades.

Proposal Insinuates that Individual Golfers Don't Matter as Much in KHSAA Tournaments:

- Proposal states: "The individual golfers in the state know who the best individuals are – they play against each other in the other 10 months of the year. The Team Championship should take on a higher priority at the State Championship."

- This comment is simply untrue and is most likely not supported by any player or school in the State of Kentucky, especially those schools with fewer resources to field a competitive team. Every single player across the State is representing their HIGH SCHOOL in the State tournament and wants to win for their School.

- Every individual boy and girl, including those on strong teams, want to make it to the State Championship. It should never matter if a certain subset of kids play against each other in non-high school golf tournaments throughout the year -- every single kid wants the opportunity to Win a State Championship.

- There is no support to show that the State Championship field is comprised of boys/girls who play in 10 months of non-high school tournaments. Many high school golfers play other sports and actually DO NOT participate in golf the other 10 months of the year.

Very Little Support for the Proposal from High School Golf Coaches:

- Only 38 coaches out of 215 boys/girls coaches on 2025 KGCA member roster signed the proposal.
- Many of the coaches represent strong teams that have a chance of placing 1st - 3rd in Regionals and/or 1st - 4th team in First Round State (based on boys data from 2025 season)

Summary of what teams support the Proposal and indication of how many coaches did not agree:

Region	Boys Coaches	Girls Coaches	Notes
1	1	1	Same school
2			
3			
4	3	1	Same coach signed for boys/girls teams at 1 school Boys – all potential 1st -3rd place teams in this region
5			
6	6	4	Louisville area teams
7	3		2 are potential top 3 teams in region
8	2	2	Same school for 1 boys/girls team
9	8	2	Central KY / Lexington teams; Same school for 2 boys/girls teams
10	4		All potential 1st -3rd place teams in this region
11			
12	3		All potential 1st -3rd place teams in this region

Reference to Format in Ohio and Tennessee is Inapplicable:

- Ohio and Tennessee High School Athletic Associations operate their Golf State Championships in separate divisions, not a single-class format like Kentucky.
  - **Ohio High School AA** – Three (3) separate divisions of State Championships.
  - **Tennessee High School AA** – Four (4) separate divisions of State Championships - Class A, Class AA, Division II-A, and Division II-AA

Examples of Results at Previous First Round State Under Proposed Format:

2025 Boys First Round State @ Winchester CC

- If Hazard had made it as 4th team, 3 of these 4 individual boys who shot (+4) would not have otherwise made it to State (due to tiebreaker) - Samuel Collins, Carter Denton, Winston Zhuang, Ben Rickey

- Instead, these players on Hazard's Team would have advanced to State:
  - Eli Johnson (+3) – would have otherwise made it as individual
  - Waylon Clutts (+3) – would have otherwise made it as individual
  - Noah Mullins (+9)
  - Brayden Baker (+10)
  - Havok McClean (+26)

This is a big difference in the scores of players making it to the State Championship and demonstrates how unfair this is to the 3 individuals who shot (+4) and would have been cut under the Proposal.

2024 Boys First Round State @ Eagle's Nest

- If North Laurel had made it as 4th team, these 4 individual boys would not have otherwise made it to State, **including the eventual State Champion, Charlie Spiller**:
  - Wyatt Merkins (+3)
  - Brady Parker (+4)
  - Seth Hickerson (+4)
  - Charlie Spiller (+5)

- Instead, these players on North Laurel's Team would have advanced to State:
  - Brady Hensley (-1) – would have otherwise made it as individual
  - Jaxon Jarvis (+9)
  - Kole Jarvis (+11)
  - Todd Sizemore (+11)
  - Evan Woodlee (+18)

4/5 of the North Laurel players shot 6-15 strokes worse than the individuals who would have been cut under the Proposal.

On behalf of those who did not sign the Proposal and who disagree with the proposed changes, thank you for taking the time to consider the counterarguments.