

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

MINUTES

RECLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE

March 18, 2019

A working meeting of the Reclassification Committee of the Georgia High School Association was called to order at 10:00 a.m., on March 18, 2019, at the GHSA office in Thomaston, Georgia, by Glenn White, President.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President Lisa Moore Williams. The invocation was given by Associate Director Carror Wright. Present - 16; Absent - 0

Gary Long
Greg Tillery
Earl Etheridge
John Kelly

Dexter Wood
Curt Miller
Wade Marchman – sub

Britt Adams
James Jackson
Shawn Peek

Jasper Jewell
Myron Newton
Jesse Crews

Donnie Drew
Glenn White
Lisa Moore Williams

Note: This was a working meeting and no binding votes were taken on any proposals.

After President White called the meeting to order, he turned it over to Chairman Miller.

Miller: This is our third meeting and I think we need to start taking some straw votes to see what direction we are going in. This doesn't have to be finished by the April meeting, but we need to see where we are.

Miller then asked the committee if the GHSA office should send out a survey to member schools asking if they favored six or seven classifications. Drew added that the survey should ask what concerns the schools have. Executive Director Robin Hines said the office would do the survey and added that a mock-up of what the alignment of schools would look like under six classes and under seven classes would be included with the survey.

Miller then said that some different proposals had been sent to him and he called upon the authors of the proposals to speak on their ideas.

Justin Brown, from Trion High School, spoke of his proposal to split Class A schools into separate playoffs using a combination of existing regions and "wild card" power rated regions. (See [Addendum No. 1](#))

No one was present to speak on proposal No. 2 (See [Addendum No. 2](#)) so Miller asked the committee to read it and voice any questions. There were none.

Adam Lindsey from Gainesville High School, then spoke on his proposal to use GADA points to create "competition-based" classifications instead of the traditional classes based on school enrollment size. (See [Addendum No. 3](#))

Miller then spoke on the fourth proposal, which was his idea. (See [Addendum No. 4](#)). He said he worked on the idea of combining two regions into "Super Regions" for the purpose of scheduling cross-over football games to help alleviate the issue of smaller regions several schools complained about with seven classes.

Miller then started a discussion on whether or not to go back to the two-year reclassification cycle or stay with the current four-year plan. Crews and several long-time committee members pointed out that reclassification was basically a never-ending process with a two-year cycle, but the committee agreed that the majority of member schools wanted to return to the two-year cycle regardless.

Miller asked for a show of hands to return to the two-year cycle among committee members and this straw poll was unanimous to do so.

(more)

Miller then started a lively discussion about the pros and cons of the 3% Reclassification Attendance Zone Restriction currently being used or the GHSA office proposal for a true multiplier on all students from outside a school's designated attendance zone.

Several members of the audience joined in this discussion, with opinions ranging from using no multiplier at all to staying with what we have to using the GHSA office's idea. Discussion also took place about what exemptions would be included, such as not penalizing a school for students from outside their attendance zone if their parents were certified teachers anywhere within that school system.

Miller asked for another straw poll, this one on whether or not children of certified teachers within a school system would be exempt from the multiplier. The committee unanimously agreed they would be.

Wood pointed out that, in the current system, Buford and Bremen were disadvantaged by having to designate one county as their attendance zone despite the fact the two city schools actually reside in parts of two counties. Wood: We had to choose Gwinnett County despite the fact there are kids living in Hall County who are mandated to attend Buford. That's not right.

Miller asked for another straw poll on allowing Buford and Bremen to use their actual attendance zones for the purposes of any GHSA multiplier instead of having to choose just one county. The straw vote was unanimous to allow those two schools to do so.

The discussion also included whether or not Class A private schools could be forced up into a higher class by whatever multiplier is ultimately decided upon (currently this is NOT allowed to happen).

A lively debate ensued after which Miller asked for a straw vote on the issue. It was 15-1 to keep things as they are and NOT allow Class A schools to be bumped into a higher class by whatever multiplier is adopted.

The discussion returned to the difference between the 3% Attendance Zone Restriction currently being used or the idea of a true multiplier. White then asked the committee if any of them were opposed to staying with the 3% Restriction. None raised their hands, but several mentioned that the criteria for making exemptions to the restriction needed to be reviewed and well documented this time.

Adams: It was sort of ad-hock last time. We need to write down exactly what the exemptions are this time around so people will know what their appeals can be based on.

White then asked the committee if they were willing to show hands on whether they currently favored staying with seven classifications or returning to six. The straw vote was 13-3 in favor of staying with seven.

A member of the audience from Sandy Creek HS spoke up: I want to stress my concern about the small size of regions with seven classes having a huge impact on my school, and I am sure I am not alone.

Miller said the committee understood there were problems with smaller regions. He added: We have more meetings to have and more discussion. Please understand that nothing that happened today is set in stone.

Miller then adjourned the meeting.

ADDENDUM No. 1

Class A Public/Private Proposal

- Class A Public and Private Schools will be completely separated and placed in Regions (all regions will have a minimum of 4 teams that compete in all sports)
- Class A Public and Private Schools will still be allowed and even encouraged to compete against each other in all sports
- Power Ranking will be kept for all Class A Public and Private Teams, however PR will only be calculated by similar Class A vs Class A competition (Public vs Public and Private vs Private). This will allow Publics to compete against Privates without penalty and assure that Class A playoff and wildcard teams are picked based on Class A competition only.
- 32 Class A Public Schools and 32 Class Private Schools will make the playoff field in all sports eight of these slots which will be wildcard teams (if the complete bracket in any sport cannot filled for any reason bye rounds will be awarded to #1 seeds)-Bonus more revenue and participation
- Two Wildcard Playoff Regions will be established for both Public and Private: The Wildcard Regions #1 Seeds will be determined by taking all #2 Seeds for the remaining 6 Regions and placing them in order according to Power Ranking 1 to 6. The two highest PR will claim the coveted #1 Seed in each proposed Wildcard Region. This will also have the benefit of awarding stronger regions regardless of sport with more playoff teams and more opportunities to host. In the event that a #2 Seed is removed from your region all teams will bump up one spot (Example: #3 would go to #2, #4 would go to #3, and #5 who was out now gets in based on region strength).
- Best Option to complete playoff field (discuss and choose)

Option One: Fill Remaining 6 Slots in both Public and Private based solely on new Class A Power Ranking System of those remaining teams not in the Playoff Field

Option Two: In Public and Private take remaining #2 Seeds that have previously been ranked 1-6 in both Public and Private according to PR and place the #3 and 4 ranked 2 Seeds into the Wildcard Regions as #2 seeds (see chart for example). The reason for this is to assure at this point the final 4 Public and Private Wildcard Slots (3s & 4s) are picked solely by the PR will have to travel. We believe this should create a more fair system and once again this will award strong regions with more playoff teams and more opportunities to host. In the event that a #2 Seed is removed from your region all teams will bump up one spot (Example: #3 would go to #2, #4 would go to #3, and #5 who was out now gets in based on region strength).

- Please Note at this time It is imperative that we come to some compromise, because if we do not there is a strong probability that the decision making process will be taken from us. If this happens I want all Class A schools and Schools in all other Classifications to realize the impact this would have on sports in the State of Georgia, it would be forever changed. We can stick our head in the sand and pretend nothing will happen and we could be right but is that really a gamble that we should take. This Class A Proposal we strongly believe would put this issue to rest and has numerous benefits for both Public and Privates.
- IF WE DO NOTHING PLEASE LOOK BELOW TO SEE WHAT THE LEGISLATIVE NUMBER 640 DOES JUST TO CLASS A ALONE IF ENACTED.....This legislation had enough support to be sent out of committee for discussion on both the Senate and House floor at the Capitol
First ALL Privates Below the 640 number are removed placed in separate regions and will not play public schools at all (Totally Separate)
Second with the 640 number, comes in our opinion a huge competition issue across Class A as well as a large unneeded expansion of teams in all sports. Bacon Co, Bryan Co, Metter, Dublin, East Laurens, Josey, Laney, Sceven, Heard Co, Breman, Social Circle, Armuchee, Dade County, Kipp Atl, BEST, Brooks will all fall into Class A and forever change the landscape of Class A Sports.

ADDENDUM No. 2

To: Georgia High School Association
CC: Dr. Ralph Swearngin
Date: 2/21/2012
Re: Playoff System Class A Public Schools and Private Schools

This memo is to propose a separate public school and private school playoff system. Class A is comprised of approximately 98 Schools (47 Private Schools, 48 Public Schools, 3 Charter Schools). Here are the basic parameters of the proposal. I will use the sport of football as an example.

- No changes will be made to the existing 8 Regions. I.e. public schools will play private schools based upon region alignments and drafted region schedules.
- Every school will fill non-region games based on openings in a ten game schedule. Non-region games can be public schools or private schools from any classification.
- Subsequent to the last game of the season. The top twenty private school teams and the top twenty public school teams will be ranked 1-20 based on a ranking system. The Louisiana High School Athletic Association lhsaa.org currently uses a ranking system for all sports in every classification. The LHSAA ranking system is a great resource to develop the GHSA ranking system.
- The twenty schools would be matched based on their ranking in a 5 week championship playoff bracket. A thirty two team bracket for public and private schools would dilute the quality of games in the first round since virtually every team would make the playoffs therefore twenty four school or less would be appropriate for a playoff bracket.
- All sports would play championships in a comparable venue. In the case of football both public and private school championship games would be played at the Georgia Dome along with the other classification championship games.

Below is a hypothetical list of private and public schools ranked 1-20

Class A Rank	Private School
1	First Presbyterian Day
2	Athens Academy
3	Brookstone
4	Prince Ave Christian
5	Darlington
6	George Walton
7	Holy Innocents
8	Aquinas
9	Eagles Landing Christian

Public Rank	Public School
1	Lincoln Co
2	Wilkinson Cty
3	Dooley Cty
4	Willcox Co
5	Marion Cty
6	Wash-Wilkes
7	Calhoun Cty
8	Seminole Cty
9	Charlton Cty

10	Landmark Christian
11	Savannah Christian
12	Savannah Country Day
13	Mount Paran Christian
14	Fellowship Christian
15	Calvary Day
16	Athens Christian
17	The Walker School
18	Mount Pisgah Christian
19	King's Ridge
20	Our Lady of Mercy

10	Mitchell Cty
11	Clinch Co
12	Miller Cty
13	Commerce
14	Portal
15	Truetlen
16	Johnson Cty
17	ECI
18	Greenville
19	Bacon Cty
20	Gordon Lee

- The only potential issue created would be from a few teams ranked outside of the top 20 however this issue is minimal compared to the current situation.

NOTES:

- Creating separate playoff brackets would level the playing field for all sports within the public school and private school divisions especially in sports such as tennis, golf, and soccer.
- Public and private schools would have a chance to compete against each other during the season and in unique game situations such as a kickoff classic or tip-off tournament (pairing top teams from the previous year).
- Separate playoff brackets will keep all schools under GHSA governance. Again no changes would be made regarding GHSA rules and regulations.
- Separate playoff brackets would be for Class A schools only. The Georgia High School Association would not consider separate playoff brackets unless the percentage of private schools within a classification reached 35% of the total schools in the classification. I.e. if Class AA had 100 schools they would not consider a separate playoff system until 35 or more private schools were in Class AA.

OBSERVATIONS:

- Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Football, Softball, would be easily manageable with the vast number of public and private school teams competing in these sports.
- Golf and Tennis could be played on separate dates or at separate venues. These sports are dominated by private schools. The public school playoff bracket would be a smaller less talented pool of schools.
- Lacrosse could be played together (public and private) with no changes to the existing alignments or separate with a public and private school playoff bracket.
- Soccer is a predominant private school sport. There are approximately 49 soccer playing schools in Class A (33 Private, 16 Public).

- Track and Field could be expanded at the Albany and Jefferson venues. Essentially you would have 7 divisions – Class A Public, Class A Private, Class AA through Class AAAAAA would remain the same.
- Volleyball is dominated by private schools. The Class A/AA private school playoffs would thrive. The Class A/AA public school bracket may suffer.
- A separate public/private school championship in wrestling could be perceived as diluted due to the number of schools wrestling in Class A (23 private, 24 public).

ADDENDUM No. 3

Competition Based Reclassification Proposal

When reading this proposal one must first understand that enrollment is **NOT** a successful way of predicting the athletic performance of a school. You must abandon any thoughts about enrollment to truly grasp the intentions of this proposal. The goal of this proposal is to create more level playing field for schools while also creating more competitive classifications.

This proposal recommends using the current GADA points system over a 4 year cycle to gauge the athletic performance of our schools. At the end of the cycle, the top 5 schools in GADA points would be moved up a classification and the bottom 5 schools would be moved down in classification. Over time, the largest classification would be the most competitive athletic programs in the state competing with each other week in and week out. This also creates a level playing field in each classification that will create a better athletic environment for our students and more competitive games every week. Having studied the GADA points for many years, it is clear that there is consistent data to prove the top 10 schools in GADA points are almost always the same top 10 every year with very little variance. The same can be said about the bottom 10. This proposal would argue that moving the top 5 performing schools up a classification would not stop the success of those schools. Moving the bottom 5 down would increase the likelihood that those schools might be able to achieve some success in their programs. When you look at the top 10 schools in GADA points it is very clear that those schools have incredible athletic programs across the board, most winning multiple state titles and the other sports having very deep runs into the playoffs. The bottom 10 schools have had very little success with some not making the playoffs in any sport. The 4 year cycle is suggested to ensure that those top 5 schools have been able to maintain athletic programs performing at an extremely high level consistently over time.

This proposal also recommends that we move to a power ranking system across all sports to ensure that the top 32 teams make the playoffs. While using a power ranking can be controversial, it ensures that the best 32 teams make the playoffs instead of simply having to be best of 4 teams in a region. Using a power ranking system for all sports will make non-region scheduling that much more important and make every game on the schedule important. How this can be done in each sport can be explained separately.

REGIONS

Due to using a power ranking system to determine playoff spots, the purpose/need for Regions decreases which allows for many different options when it comes to regions.

The first suggestion would be to do geographically based Regions that could combine more than one classification. This thought would allow for schools to combine with schools much closer to each other to allow for easier scheduling.

The second thought is leave the regions system as it is currently because then it would not matter whether you had 4 teams in a region or 12 teams because the playoff spots are determined by the school power ranking therefore the 4 team region has no advantage over a 12 team region.

The third thought is to abandon regions all together and let schools create "Conferences" on their own. Seeing that the purpose of this is almost solely for scheduling purposes this is a viable option.

Important notes about this Proposal:

- Eliminates the need for a multiplier –
- Eliminates need to identify an attendance zone for private schools-
- Any appeals being moved up or down would be heard by the reclassification committee
- A school could deny being moved down and that would then provide the next lowest school the option to be moved down a classification
- Schools would not have the option of not being moved up if over the 4 year cycle they prove to be one of the top 5 best athletic programs in their classification.
- New Schools and the schools they pulling from would propose to the reclassification committee as to what classification they should go in and the reclassification committee would make a determination to place those appropriately based on the proven success of the schools they are pulling from.

ADDENDUM No. 4

7 classification "Super Region" idea to help alleviate football scheduling concerns

Purpose: To stay with 7 classifications but add a safe guard for schools in smaller regions (5 schools or fewer) that have problems finding football games due to the nature of football scheduling (dates and number of games).

Impact: This is a minimal change to our current reclassification process to address some concerns without changing everything about reclassification.

- Place schools in classifications and regions as you normally would
- Once in regions, pair regions in order from 1 to 8 based on geography
 - 1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8
- You now have 4 "Super Regions"
 - 1 & 2 = Super Region A
 - 3 & 4 = Super Region B
 - 5 & 6 = Super Region C
 - 7 & 8 = Super Region D
- Those regions will meet and decide whether they need a certain number of mandated crossover games or not.
- If one region decides that they need games, both regions will come to an agreement on the number of games.
 - They could be required to fill their schedule to get at least 70% of their games. (Reclass would set that number or the region can decide)
 - There could only be a few teams in each region that need games and they could work that out.
 - If they cannot work it out, all teams will play 1-2 crossovers or up to 70% of their schedule. (Reclass would set that number)
 - Some regions may agree not to do crossovers to help fill their schedule.
 - Those "Super Regions" will break back out into their individual region and complete their schedule however they see fit.
- Once crossovers are decided, all "Super Regions" will then be dissolved and schools will resort back to their initial Regions 1-8.
- These crossover games would not count against your region record
 - For Example: Super Region A- Region 1 would only count games vs. other region 1 schools to get their top 4 for the state tournament.
- All regions will play their normal schedule as they have been to determine their top 4 seed to send to state.

1 negative to this is that you could play one of your crossover teams again in the state tournament before the final 4 but that could happen with your normal non-region games anyway.