
Sherry Bryant,

I am reaching out to share my support of the current playoff structure and system that the MIAA employs with a particular focus on football.

Some Points in favor of the Current 16 Team Playoff System:

- It keeps more teams having a chance to make the playoffs for longer into the season keeping more kids engaged in the season, benefitting the smaller programs that may not always be near the top 10 in each division. If we are concerned about participation, making it harder to make the playoffs doesn't help. (This is part of the reason MLB expanded to 3 wild card teams and the NFL added another playoff team to give more fanbases more hope of the playoffs for longer into the regular season).
- Keeps Football close to other sports in terms of percent of teams that make the playoffs. Here is the 2023 Fall Sports Data of Percent of Teams that made the playoffs: Field Hockey 66% of Teams, Boys Soccer 64% of Teams, Girls Soccer 66% of Teams, Football 53% of Teams (Football is still the lowest)
- One argument being made against the 16 team playoff system is the lack of upsets in the first round, so some are using that data to imply the first round is unnecessary. I decided to look at the data of other first rounds in 2023 (round of 32s for field hockey, boys soccer and girls soccer across all divisions). Field Hockey out of the 64 first round games, only 4 upsets (6.25%), Boys Soccer out of 80 first round games, 14 upsets (17.5%), Girls Soccer out of 80 first round games, 12 upsets (15%) and Football out of 64 first round games, 10 upsets (15.625%).
- Another argument against the current format are the consolation games. The first round of consolation games provide a great opportunity to allow teams to play similar teams that they may not have been able to schedule prior to the season, ideally creating more competitive games, which benefits all programs. In terms of the second round of consolation games, teams currently have the flexibility to opt out of them, if they desire.
- The Thanksgiving Game is another point mentioned against the current format. At most every year, 16 games might be impacted (about only 13%) due to teams that make the super bowl. A counterpoint, there are many Thanksgiving Games no longer on Thanksgiving (whether on Tuesday or Wednesday night) which impacts the meaning of the Thanksgiving day game. The Thanksgiving game is a community event and for many areas it is still strong with good turnout and importance. There were plenty of Thanksgiving games under the old system that didn't have league or playoff implications and that didn't impact support at that time either.

Lastly, there are two points that I would like the TMC to consider. One, in terms of the power ratings, I do think overtime games should have a different margin of victory cap. For example, losing a game by 8 in OT is different from losing a game by 8 in regulation in which the team that was trailing scored a last second TD to cut the score to 8. Particularly, if wins/losses are going to gain their own category in the power rating calculations teams should be rewarded (even if minimally) for making and losing in OT.

Second for football the 3 win minimum to make playoffs should be eliminated. There is no minimum number of wins needed in other sports to make the playoffs as a top 32 team, I do not understand why it is different in football. You could have a team that has a really tough schedule go 2-6, yet the 3-5 team with an easier schedule gets in, despite that 2-6 team arguably being a better team. What is more

important, playing a harder schedule or playing a schedule where you know you can find 3 wins. I know people are afraid a 0 win team could make the playoffs, I wonder how many times that has actually been the case over the last 3 years. Just by the way, a 0 win Georgetown volleyball team made the playoffs and won a playoff match, not the end of the world if it does happen once in a while.

I appreciate your attention to this email and the time and effort you and the TMC community put in for the benefit of the student-athletes across the state. Have a great holiday season!

Thank you,

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Edward Blum
North Reading High School
Mathematics Teacher, M.Ed
Head Varsity Football Coach
Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach
Freshmen Basketball Coach
Social Activism Club Advisor
National Honors Society Co-Advisor