

## Activity Advisory Committee Recommendation to the MSHSL Board of Directors

Submitted on Wed, 10/12/2022 - 9:31 AM

### Activity/Activities (Check all that apply)

Football

### Indicate the category of the proposed recommendation

State Tournament Recommendations regarding Format and Non-NFHS Rules or NFHS Experiments

### Authors of the Proposal

Minnesota Football Coaches Association Seeding Committee on behalf of the MFCA Football Advisory Committee to the Minnesota State High School League:

Clay Anderson-Activities Director and Head Football Coach-Kimball (2A), Nick David-Assistant Principal and Head Football Coach-Mound Westonka (4A), Tom Develice-Head Football Coach-Andover (5A), Mat Mahoney-Activities Director and Head Football Coach-Fairmont (3A), Rob Nielsen-Activities Director and Assistant Football Coach-Detroit Lakes (4A), Ribsby Petermeier-Activities Director and Head Football Coach-Browerville(1A), Brent Schimek-Activities Director and Head Football Coach-Deer River (1A), Gary Sloan-Activities Director and Head Football Coach (Retired)-Grand Meadow (9M), Ron Stolski-MFCA Executive Director (ex officio member), Will Wackman-Activities Director and Assistant Football Coach-Spring Lake Park (5A), Jeff Williams-Head Football Coach-Owatonna (5A) (Chair), Ryan Jensen-Superintendent of Schools-Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, Andrew Traetow-Superintendent of Schools-Fairmont, Mike Rowe-Superintendent of Schools-Maple Lake

## Current Rule/Policy

State the rule/policy as it appears in the current MSHSL Handbook or Activity/Sport Specific Rules and Policies.

Sport and Activity Rules and Policies  
Football Information-Postseason  
Class AAAAA, AAAA, AAA, AA, A, and 9-Man

### FUTURE PAIRINGS

#### Quarterfinals

2022: Section 1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4, 5 vs. 6, 7 vs. 8  
2023: Section 3 vs. 1, 4 vs. 2, 7 vs. 5, 8 vs. 6  
2024: Section 1 vs. 4, 2 vs. 3, 5 vs. 8, 6 vs. 7  
2025: Section 2 vs. 1, 4 vs. 3, 6 vs. 5, 8 vs. 7  
2026: Section 1 vs. 3, 2 vs. 4, 5 vs. 7, 6 vs. 8

#### Semifinals

2022: Section 3 vs. 4 Winner vs. Section 7 vs. 8 Winner Section 1 vs. 2 Winner vs. Section 5 vs. 6 Winner  
2023: Section 3 vs. 1 Winner vs. Section 8 vs. 6 Winner Section 4 vs. 2 Winner vs. Section 7 vs. 5 Winner  
2024: Section 6 vs. 7 Winner vs. Section 2 vs. 3 Winner Section 5 vs. 8 Winner vs. Section 1 vs. 4

Winner

2025: Section 6 vs. 5 Winner vs. Section 2 vs. 1 Winner Section 8 vs. 7 Winner vs. Section 4 vs. 3 Winner

2026: Section 5 vs. 7 Winner vs. Section 2 vs. 4 Winner Section 6 vs. 8 Winner vs. Section 1 vs. 3 Winner

## Proposed Recommendation

**Submit your proposed change to the above-stated rule/policy.**

1) Beginning in the Fall of 2023, Class 9-Man through Class 5A would begin seeding State Qualifying Teams 1-8.

2) Section Championship games would be required to be completed by Friday night so that the seeding process can occur Saturday morning.

3) The Head Coach and Activities Director of each competing school in a Class will utilize the established MSHSL seeding process and submit their seed votes by 9:30 AM Saturday. Each participating team will have the opportunity to seed each of the other seven teams. Schools shall not seed themselves. MSHSL tie-breaker rules shall apply.

4) Upon receipt of all votes, the MSHSL shall communicate seeds to the participating schools, set the Quarterfinal matchups, and begin to assign sites. Matchups will be communicated to the participating teams Saturday morning.

5) Sites will be determined and communicated by Noon on Monday following all Section Championship games.

The MFCA believes that seeding State Qualifiers 1-8 is very feasible and is the proposal we wish to move forward for implementation beginning in 2023. However, we are cognizant of the fact that securing Quarterfinal venues be difficult in centrally located areas that could help to reduce travel; i.e. the Metro area. The MFCA pledges to assist the MSHSL in the procurement of host sites for Quarterfinal games.

**Include any other policies that are impacted by this proposal.**

No other policies will be impacted by this proposal.

## Rationale

**What is the history of the proposal?**

Seeding MSHSL State Tournaments has a 15 year precedent dating back to the 2007 State Hockey Tournament. Since that time, virtually all team sports (Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys Wrestling, Boys and Girls Hockey, Boys Baseball, Girls Softball, and Boys and Girls Lacrosse) seed their respective State Tournaments.

In the past several years there has been increased interest among football coaches in seeding our State Tournament as well.

In January of 2022, a motion was made to form a committee to formulate a proposal to bring to the MSHSL. The committee worked through the spring, including bringing a preliminary proposal to our MSHSL Advisory Meeting with Bob Madison in April. Much discussion occurred, feedback was given by Bob, and the committee continued to work on fine-tuning the proposal.

In September of 2022, a final proposal to seed the Football State Tournament was approved by the MFCA Executive Board and by the MFCA Representative Assembly. Both votes were unanimous.

The proposal was then forwarded to the MFCA Football Advisory Committee and shared with Bob Madison and the Minnesota State High School League in September. The Advisory Committee voted unanimously to formally submit the proposal for consideration by the MSHSL for adoption in the 2023 Football Season.

**How does your proposal benefit education-based opportunities and MSHSL Mission and Beliefs for all Minnesota students?**

1) Class 6A Football has been utilizing a seeded State Tournament format for a number of years. A precedent has been set. Extending seeding to Class 9-Man through Class 5A is a natural next step.

2) The majority of Minnesota "Team Sport" State Tournaments are currently seeded. This includes Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys Wrestling, Boys and Girls Hockey, Boys Baseball, Girls Softball, and Boys and Girls Lacrosse. Again, precedent has been set and Football will no longer be an outlier among MSHSL sponsored sports.

3) This proposal calls for the seeding of all participating teams 1-8 rather than seeding 1-5 with 3 random draws. Upon listening to the reports of each Sport Association at the most recent MSHSCA meeting on 3/25/2022, it appears that most sports will be seeking a seed of 1-8 as they make their future recommendations to the MSHSL. This proposal would be consistent with the direction in which seeding seems to be headed at MSHSL sponsored State Tournaments.

4) This proposal would continue to protect the importance of regional representation in the Football State Tournament. Section playoffs and the State Tournament qualification process would remain unchanged.

5) Unlike many of the other team sports, the Football Quarterfinals are played at a variety of sites throughout the state, rather than at a big venue in a central location. The process of seeding the State Tournament may provide the most competitive teams an opportunity to play at US Bank Stadium.

6) We acknowledge some obstacles must be overcome in order to implement this proposal. Chief among them will be the securing sites for Quarterfinal games in a timely manner, with geographic proximity to the participating teams in mind. The MFCA pledges to assist the MSHSL in the procurement of sites.

**What other policies are significant in this proposal?**

No additional policies would be impacted by this proposal.

**Provide evidence of support for the proposal from other groups**

This proposal has been approved by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association Executive Board and Representative Assembly.

This proposal was presented to the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association Spring Meeting on 3/22/2022 and again at the Fall Meeting on 9/10/22 and was received positively by the other sport associations in attendance.

At our most recent Football Advisory to the MSHSL Meeting, the group unanimously voted to

forward this proposal to the MSHSL for approval.

As you can see from the list of committee members, we have involved a large number of Coaches, Activities Directors, Principals and Superintendents in the drafting of this proposal. It is unanimously supported by this diverse group of educators.

## **Impact**

### **How does your proposal affect this activity, including its impact on all classes, areas of the state, and variety of schools**

The Minnesota Football Coaches Association is supportive of regional representation in the Football State Tournament through geographic Section assignment. Our proposal to seed the State Tournament would not change that in any way. However, because Section matchups in the Quarterfinal round are set in advance on a rotating basis, there is a feeling amongst coaches that sometimes the best teams in a Class are paired in the first round. Examples of these types of matchups are manifold. This can be particularly difficult as the atmosphere of the Football State Tournament is amplified significantly once the Semifinals begin at US Bank Stadium. Unlike many other sports, the Quarterfinal Round is not played at a “destination” stadium, but rather take place in many sites across the state. This can result in a lack of a “State Tournament feel”. The MFCA would like to provide a greater opportunity for the most deserving teams to have a chance to play at US Bank Stadium.

## **Administration**

### **How does your proposal impact section and state tournaments?**

This proposal would not change the actual administration of the State Football Tournament. However, the Committee recognizes that procuring sites for Quarterfinal games that are geographically appropriate for the competitors and assigning them in a timely manner will make for a busy weekend in advance of the Quarterfinal Round. The MFCA pledges its support in helping secure potential venues in advance in order to speed up procurement and assignment by the MSHSL.

The MFCA also recognizes that the process of seeding, and subsequently assigning sites, will bring some uncertainty to the participating schools. In the current format, a team qualifying for the State Tournament would know immediately who they would be matched against (Section matchups are published three years in advance) and the location of the game (sites procured and assigned to games usually by September). We do not see this as a significant obstacle. Matchups will be determined by Saturday morning and, with the video exchange procedure well-established, coaches can begin preparing for their upcoming opponent by Saturday afternoon. As for the location of the contest, designation of sites will occur by Monday leaving plenty of time for scheduling of transportation, purchasing tickets, and developing the travel itinerary.

## **Length of Tournament**

### **How does your proposal impact the needed competition time for section and state tournaments?**

This proposal would not impact competition time during the Football State Tournament.

It would, however, require that Section play is concluded by the Friday of the first week of November. In recent years, there have only been a handful of Section Final games that have been

held on Saturday so ensuring that everything is completed by Friday should not prove to be a hardship.

## **Participants**

### **How does your proposal impact the number of participants/teams?**

This proposal would not change the number of competitors/teams who qualify for the State Football Tournament.

### **How does your proposal impact the percentage of participants/teams that would qualify for the state tournament?**

This proposal would not affect the percentage of competitors/teams who qualify for the State Football Tournament.

## **Facilities**

### **How does your proposal impact the facilities needed to accommodate your recommendation at both the section and state level?**

The adoption of this proposal would not alter the total number of sites that must be secured by the MSHSL in order to administer the State Quarterfinals of the Football State Tournament. The Committee, however, recognizes that seeding #1-8 could result in an increased number of matchups between schools who are geographically separated by many miles. This could potentially put a strain on the number of sites that could be secured in centrally located areas such as the Metro and the St. Cloud area. We do not wish for this possible roadblock to be a reason for outright rejection of the concept of seeding the Football State Tournament. Therefore, the MFCA pledges its help in securing sites to host Quarterfinal matchups.

## **Awards**

### **How does your proposal impact the number of awards at both section and state?**

This proposal would have no impact on the number of awards provided by the MSHSL.

## **Other**

### **Provide any other pertinent information not included in this proposal**

This proposal appears to have no other impact on MSHSL governed sports or activities.

## **Primary Author and Contact for Proposal**

### **Proposal submitted by**

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on behalf of the MFCA Seeding Committee

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