



A New Look at Tournament Design

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OR, WHAT WAS ONCE THOSE THAT JUST WANTED TO REVISE THINGS AND NOW IS
“WE ARE ALL IN THIS BOAT TOGETHER”

Introductions and Disclaimer



- ▶ This workshop was originally scheduled prior to COVID-19.
- ▶ The intentions of the workshop was to talk about refreshing current tournaments.
- ▶ COVID-19 has all state associations looking at the design of the their state tournaments.
- ▶ This workshop is not designed to tell any state association how to run a state tournament or how to respond to COVID-19 as it relates to running state tournaments.
- ▶ This workshop will discuss the various obstacles and ideas out there for state considerations and provide a roundtable discussion at the end related to maximizing participation opportunities.

Can Covid reaffirm a change in philosophy

- ▶ Philosophical Approach must be different
- ▶ If you were starting over, what would you change
- ▶ Change is uncomfortable, but necessary
- ▶ If you pull back, are you stuck in the “that’s the way we have always done it” mode?
- ▶ Are you listening to the vocal minority of your membership at the expense of needed change?
- ▶ Are there things that could be changed, and simply use Covid as an excuse?

Fundamental Thoughts

- ▶ Originally, thought was to give an old tournament a new look
 - ▶ MD- Revised Bracketing
 - ▶ Creation of State Quarterfinal Round
 - ▶ Football - 10 to 9 game regular season and doubled playoff eligible teams.
- ▶ KY- Football Only, Revised Bracketing using RPI
- ▶ Both states had as a goal, “quit changing the date and keeping things the same, refresh needed”
- ▶ Both states are fairly “open” entry
- ▶ But Covid has changed it all. Or has it? We are being forced to review EVERYTHING

CDC Youth Sports Risk Level

- ▶ According to several sources, the risk of COVID-19 spread increases in youth sports settings as follows:
 - ▶ Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members.
 - ▶ Increasing Risk: Team-based practice.
 - ▶ More Risk: Within-team competition.
 - ▶ Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.
 - ▶ Highest Risk as far as what we know now: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.
- ▶ Each of us has to decide, given our own situations, how to weight these risk levels.

Covid Planning Challenges



- ▶ Conflict between “staying safe” and “you can’t live in a bubble”
- ▶ Data changes daily
- ▶ Media has taken number of cases and given it 100% authority as it generates “clicks” on web stories and drama on the air.
- ▶ In fact, scientists seem to now be saying that positive testing rate might be key indicator. But that is today, this could change.

Covid Planning Challenges

- ▶ Will you be able to re-imagine what we know as equitable participation and standards to maximize participation opportunities?
- ▶ How quickly can you change bracketing / pairings / entry standards and keep your membership satisfied? Tough conflict between “planner types” and “just get it done types”
- ▶ Must be responsive, not reactive. Analysis of options is difficult with so many influences

Fundamental Thoughts

- ▶ State associations have been built on trying to keep “level playing fields”.
 - ▶ Must we set that aside for 2020. i.e. some schools being able to field a team and others declining. Do we have to live with the premise that hopefully 2021 will look a lot like 2019 but 2020 will be different than anything we have seen?
 - ▶ Big question for some. Can we have some sports and not others? Golf, slightly modified cross country seem to be possible. But field hockey, soccer, volleyball (indoor challenges) and of course, football seem to be problematic

Reimagining Tournament Structure

- ▶ Open Tournaments have the ability to minimize regular season requirements.
 - ▶ All Schools make the tournament
 - ▶ Random draw in regions and additional reseeded rounds.
 - ▶ Seed only top two, four, or half of a bracket.
- ▶ Regional Tournaments - Geographical Structure
 - ▶ Set brackets in small geographic areas. Instead of 32-line seeding, start with 8 separate 4 team brackets designed by geographic area.
 - ▶ Expansion to larger geographic areas through small geographic area play.

Reimagining Tournament Structure

- ▶ Individual Sports - Example Golf, Cross Country, Indoor and Outdoor Track.
 - ▶ Set times schools show up and compete. Example School A runs the State Cross Country Course at 10:00 a.m. School B at 10:10 a.m. Group by geographic areas.
- ▶ In KY, working with coaches and others on this concept, even for region qualifying. Several schools run state course and submit virtual times, etc. Could be monitored for use. Limited numbers of teams in meets. Gradual ramp-up. Staggered starts.

Reimaging Tournament Structure



- ▶ As you consider changes, some have found it better to break into Stages (some say avoid using phases, too many entities use that term)
- ▶ Stages could include conditioning, pre-season, regular season and post season, with post season broken up into segments
- ▶ Risk levels, at least as of June, appear to be higher as you go forward into postseason.
- ▶ Presenters will share their own considerations as of now but this is in no way advice or recommendation.

Current Considerations (which could change at 3:05 today)

- ▶ Likely our options are/were same as most-
 - ▶ Play on
 - ▶ Start late, play on
 - ▶ Swap spring and fall
 - ▶ Move fall between winter and spring, shorten all (shared pain)
- ▶ Likely emphasis points in next steps
 - ▶ Much slower to start soccer, field hockey and volleyball
 - ▶ Anticipated indoor event guidance from CDC will clarify volleyball
 - ▶ Explicit Board of Education for travel beyond mileage radius
 - ▶ Reconsider all previously approved NFHS sanctioned events, especially to particular states
- ▶ In no hurry to make postseason decisions!!

Current Considerations (which could change at 3:05 today)

- ▶ Reality is that some teams will be shut down at some point due to hot spots (already happening)
- ▶ Postseason EARLY discussions-
 - ▶ Don't play anything postseason
 - ▶ Modify postseason financial model to minimize travel
 - ▶ Geographic questions, KY is 7 and ½ to 8 hours west to east. Lots of variations in Covid impact and travel issues.
 - ▶ Altering RPI and rankings (likely to consider out of state variable for both teams in cancelled game)
 - ▶ Eliminate any game minimums to qualify for postseason

Questions?

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