

2020-2021 Post Season Proposal

On 2/17/21 the KHSAA board of control met and released their plan for the wrestling post season. This plan includes the addition of 4 separate 8-man semi state competitions, and reduction of the state championship to 8-man brackets. The major goals of this proposal were the following:

- To reduce the amount of overnight travel to post season events.
- To increase the number of fans able to attend the event (4 per kid).
- To increase KHSAA revenue generated by these events.

I can confidently speak on behalf of the wrestling community when I say that this proposal is unacceptable. An 8-man state tournament simply is not an adequate representation of the athletes in this sport. Especially not when the geographical biases are magnified in the way this setup causes. With the current proposal, mathematically 46 of the top ten ranked wrestlers in the state are already eliminated and will not have an opportunity to participate in the state championship. This number is appalling. Those are 46 kids that spent years of literal blood, sweat, and tears to get on the podium; only to have the door shut in their face by the KHSAA.

For the sake of those kids, I urge you to strongly consider the alternative postseason solution presented in this proposal. If you will approach this with an open mind, I believe we can absolutely come to a solution that gives every kid a fair shot at what they have been working for possibly their entire lives.

Concerns with Current Proposal

The first and most significant issue with this solution is the 8-man bracket at state tournament. 8-man brackets are simply not enough to adequately represent all the wrestlers in the state. This issue is even worse when you look at the breakdown of top 10 ranked wrestlers in each of the proposed semi-states. With the semi-state divided as proposed (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, & 7-8), there is a large discrepancy in the number of ranked wrestlers in each of these qualifying events.

Regions	% of top 10's
1&2	35%
3&4	13%
5&6	31%
7&8	21%

This breakdown, as you can see, is not even close to the ideal scenario of 25% in each semi-state. When you look at this data at the individual weight class, since wrestling is an individual sport, these numbers are even worse. Keep in mind that only 2 kids from each of these will qualify for the state championship. So every time you see a number over 20% in these tables that is a wrestler who is ranked in the top 10 but will not be allowed to compete at the state championship because of this proposed solution.

106		126		182	
Regions	% of top 10's	Regions	% of top 10's	Regions	% of top 10's
1&2	60%	1&2	50%	1&2	40%
3&4	0%	3&4	10%	3&4	10%
5&6	20%	5&6	30%	5&6	10%
7&8	20%	7&8	10%	7&8	40%
113		138		220	
Regions	% of top 10's	Regions	% of top 10's	Regions	% of top 10's
1&2	50%	1&2	40%	1&2	30%
3&4	10%	3&4	10%	3&4	10%
5&6	20%	5&6	50%	5&6	50%
7&8	20%	7&8	0%	7&8	10%

The other major concerns have to do with the 3 goals of this proposal I mentioned earlier.

First is overnight travel to these competitions. This is something that I can understand attempting to limit, however every program in the state understands and expects multiple day events in the post season. This has always been the case in our sport, and it is something that we have come to expect. I find it very hard to believe that the travel expenses or logistics are a major concern for any programs in this state. Especially when compared to their athletes not getting to compete at the state level. If this is a real concern I would like to understand how it is being handled/dismitted for other winter sports such as basketball?

Increasing the number of fans is always a good goal and should always be considered. However, it should never be priority over the participation of the athletes. I understand the financial aspects of having more fans at the event, however I am going to present two alternate solutions that I am confident will generate more revenue for the KHSAA than the current one. The KHSAA mission statement says the KHSAA will promote participation in scholastic sports, it never once mentions their responsibility to promote families and fans ability to attend. It is a shame that this proposal shows that there is more priority in letting fans attend the event than other athletes who are deserving competitors.

The current proposal not only is not ideal for the wrestling community. It is also not going to generate nearly the revenue that the other solutions I am going to propose could.

Alternative Proposal

The alternative proposal that I would like you to consider is as follows.

1. Region Tournament: 3/12-13

No changes need to be made to regional events.

Place out to 4th Place.

2. Semi-State Tournaments: 3/19-20

2-Day 16 Man Bracket

Regions 1-4 & 5-8

Top 4 from each region qualify for this event.

Random draw by region into bracket. Same way state is done typically.

Place out to 8th place.

3. State Championship: 3/26-27

2-Day 16 Man bracket

Top 8 from each Semi-State qualify for this event.

Place out to 8th place as usual.

The most important factor in this proposal is the increase to 16-man brackets for the state championship. This will allow us to gather a much better representation in each weight class, giving many more wrestlers an opportunity to achieve their goals at the state level.

The second biggest change is restructuring the semi state into 2 groups of 4 regions as opposed to 4 groups of 2. By doing this we are able to distribute the number of ranked wrestlers much more evenly. Regions 1-4 hold 48% of the top 10 wrestlers, while regions 5-8 hold 52% of the top 10 wrestlers. This results in a much more fair qualifying event.

The biggest concern with this proposal is that each event would require a 16-man bracket as opposed to an 8-man bracket requiring the event to be ran in two days. I do not consider the overnight travel to be a major concern. Again, it has come to be expected in this sport, and it is not being treated as a major concern in other winter sports. A 16-man bracket can easily be broken into 3 sessions as to still allow for

4 fans per wrestler at each session. The total number of people in each session would be no more than 800 at any given time. There are several high school gyms in the state that can accommodate these numbers even at the reduced capacities we are dealing with. Below is an image of a standard 16 man bracket along with a breakdown of how the tournament could be ran to minimize exposure with other athletes as well as the number of people in the facility at any given time.



COVID Friendly 16-Man Bracket:

Day1 – Session 1:

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Weights: 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, & 145 (112 kids)

4 Mats (2 weights per mat, mopped between each weight)

Winners Round 1&2

Consolation Round 1&2

Day1 – Session 2:

3:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Weights: 152, 160, 170, 182, 195, 220, & 285 (112 Kids)

4 Mats (2 weights per mat, mopped between each weight)

Winners Round 1&2

Consolation Round 1&2

Day 2 – Session 3

10:00 AM – Finish

All Weights (112 kids)

4 Mats (2 weights per mat, mopped between each weight)

Consolation Round 3

Winners Round 3

Consolation Round 4 & Placement Round

Finals

Attendance with 4 guests/kid < 800 people at any one time (athletes, coaches, workers, and fans).

Advantages of the Alternative Solution

There are a few major advantages of this solution. The most important being the better representation of our athletes. With the current proposed solution 46 of the top 10 wrestlers will mathematically be left out of the state championship. With this new solution that number is cut to 0. That's 46 wrestlers that still have a chance to achieve their goals, 46 wrestlers that don't have to miss out on their chance to be a state medalist.

The other major advantage is financial. Since we would be increasing the total number of participants and fans, we will be seeing an increased revenue as well as a decreased expense for officials and other workers. These are rough numbers that I generated based off of some general assumptions, but I do believe they represent the significant opportunity for increased revenue that the KHSAA has with this solution.

Current Proposal				New Proposal 1			
4x 8-man SS & 8-man State				2x 16-man SS & 16-man State			
	Semi-State	8-Man Bracket	Total		Semi-State	16-Man Bracket	Total
Wrestlers	112	112	560	Wrestlers	224	224	672
Coaches	48	192	384	Coaches	48	96	192
Fans	448	448	2240	Fans	896	896	2688
		Total	3184			Total	3552
		Income	\$ 67,200.00			Income	\$ 80,640.00
	Semi-State	8-Man Bracket	Total		Semi-State	16-Man Bracket	Total
Refs	5	5	25	Refs	6	12	24
Trainers	1	1	5	Trainers	1	1	3
		Expenses	\$ 22,750.00			Expenses	\$ 20,040.00
		Profit	\$ 44,450.00			Profit	\$ 60,600.00

Conclusion

I assure you that I am not alone in my discontent for the current proposal. Our athletes have worked too hard for this to be their reward at the end of a difficult season. After reviewing the goals and vision of the KHSAA I see no way that we can allow the current proposed post season to go on. It would be an absolute travesty for this sport and for these kids.

I realize that wrestling is not the premier sport of this state, and that we are often not afforded the special treatment or attention that other sports require. However, that does not decrease the worthiness of our athletes to be recognized on the stage that many of them have been pursuing their entire lives. Please do not dismiss this as too much work to change or not worth the KHSAA's time, our athletes have worked too hard to have the door shut in their face like this.