



What? Who? Where?  
When? Why? How?  
and What's Next?  
with Classification  
Systems

A discussion without intended directives



## Know your history

- Need to know your evolution
- Like it or not, impulsive, one-off problem solving approaches or results-based changes seldom work
- Know your demography
- Know your calculation factors
- Watch for hidden agendas and special interests hiding behind subterfuge
- Know your regulatory process
- Know your judicial system
- Know your language and definitions



## What is our history? MN

- Prior to 1970's - established geographical "regions", made up of districts. Schools participated in conferences and playoffs in Regions.
- Each Region had a region committee that managed and governed both district and region championships.
- The Region managed all activities and athletics in its membership.
- Region Champs moved on to state. (Not 8 best in state, but 8 regional champions)
  
- In 1972, MSHSL created a state championship in football with four classes.
- 1970's: other sports quickly followed in adding classes.
- Later on, a 40% reduction to enrollment was added as an equalizer for determining classification.



# What is our history? MN

- When basketball established A and AA classes in 1971, the League also created 16 regions to administer the two different classes.
  - Boys Basketball is the most populous sport
- Classification policies were established in the early 90s to provide options for more than two classes .
  - Growth to up to four classes in sports (non-football)
  - Boys Hockey - Tier I and Tier II Experiment (1992)
- We still have 16 Regions - 8 A and 8 AA
- Classification policy modified in 2019.
- Classification is no longer by Regions, but by sport. Sections is now the classification title for determining state qualifiers.
  - A school is only in one region, but may have programs in many different classes A through AAAA.
  - FB has 7 classes A - AAAAAA plus 9 player

# What is our history? KY

- 1917-18 -Started as a basketball-only association in 1916-17 with the first tournament
- 1919-20-First track meet, 1919-20, but it was not an official championship
- 1920-21 -First Girls' State High School Basketball Tournament
- 1926-27 Basketball districts, regions and state classified in A and B
- 1930-31 -A and B Classification Discontinued for State Basketball Tournament
- -Boys' Tennis and Boys' Track and Field sanctioned
- 1931-32-Girls Basketball Discontinued
- 1932-33-A and B Classification Discontinued for all tournaments
- 1945-46-First Swimming Meet
- 1949-50 -Classes for Swimming Adopted



## What is our history?

- 1949-50-Classes for Swimming Adopted
- 1958-59-1st Football Championships, 3 Classes, one for Louisville, two for the rest of the state
- 1965-66-Three Classes Adopted for Track, First Girls Championship
- 1966-67-Three Classes Adopted for Cross Country
- 1975-76-Football Expands to Four Classes
- 1978-79-Swimming Classes Eliminated
- 1987-88-Jefferson County schools opt to play in proper class in football and not have separate divisions within the largest class
- 2006-07-Football Expands to Six Classes
  - Various iterations since that time, with only substantive change being multiplier for non-public school



## Why?

- Why are we doing classes?
  - If answer is “fair”, what is “fair”?
  - If answer is “new blood”, are we penalizing those that have built success legitimately?
    - Is classifying really addressing the issue?
    - Or is it just distracting from other real issues and what are those issues?
  - If the answer is to give all schools a more equitable chance at postseason success, is it working?



# What?

- What do we want to accomplish?
  - How will we measure success of our efforts?
    - What metrics?
  - Should we classify by school types? (LA)
  - Should we classify by school or sport?
  - How do we measure societal involvement that is sometimes demographically based?
  - Can we, and should we try to account for the many factors impacting success?
- What add-ins do you employ to increase fairness?
  - Success Factors, Opt ups, Appeals, etc.
- Is the process we desire a sustainable process?



# Who?

- Who do we listen to?
  - The disgruntled?
  - The perennial next level down?
  - The strong trying to maintain their position?
  - Can we avoid latest shiny object syndrome?
  - Where do other states fit in?
    - How much do you trust plans that are always changing?
    - Could it be they are not asking the Why, Who, What, Where, When and How questions?
    - Options
      - Legislative
      - Legal and Judicial Challenges



# Who?

- Who executes?
  - Are we really listening to member feedback or using them to justify our desired conclusions?
  - What should our reliance be on staff?
    - Are they the true conduit?
    - Are they perceived as neutral?
    - Do they have the knowledge and skillsets to effectively implement your process?
  - Advisory group role?



## Where?

- Where do we start?
  - Are we always doomed to start from where we are now, or can we re-think?
  - Where do we find data for enrollment and other factors that is neutral?
    - Do we really trust school submitted, unverifiable data?
    - Does state data provide all the data desired?



## When?

- When is the best time?
- What do our schools need and when to they need it?
- When do we evaluate?
- When do we re-do and can we manage that process repetitively?



# How?

- How to start?
  - You circle back through the who's
    - Can you truly find objectivity?
      - Can we the deciders, be objective?
    - Confirm your Why's and What's
    - Move to your Where's, When's and How's
    - Never stop looking at what's next



## What's Next?

- Is enrollment still a golden measurement or just a starting point?
- Is success really just a temporary measure?
  - What is success?
- Should participation rate in athletics be a factor (using empirical, verifiable data)
- How important is consideration of playing up or down
  - Do we reward teams for historical failure or are we trying to fix an unfixable problem?
  - Are there inherent issues with those ups and downs?
- And remember, if someone had it perfect, we would have all copied it by now