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Multiple Entry Format For State Tournament Works In California

NYSWCA Research Finds Concept Has Been In Use Since 1973

This month, a sub-committee of the NYSPHSAA's Wrestling Committee, chaired by Mark Hoyt (Section 5), is scheduled to make its recommendations regarding multiple entries within the two-division format for the 2005 NYS Wrestling Tournament.

The NYSWCA has offered its own two-division multiple-entry proposal based on proportionality where the sections with the most schools send more qualifiers to the state tournament than the sections with least number of schools. Understandably, true proportionality can not be achieved because the number of schools with wrestling programs in each section varies so much. After all is said and done, even though one section may have ten times more the number of schools than another section, they won't get ten times the number of entries. Instead, the goal of the NYSWCA proposal was to accept the NYSPHSAA wrestling committee's decision to continue the two-division format but offer a multiple-entry proposal within the two-division format that would be more fair to the wrestlers than the current format and improve the tournament.

In offering our proposal, the NYSWCA also looked at how other states conducted their state wrestling tournament. Not surprisingly, of the six states we looked at, five employed a divisional classification system based on school size with multiple-entry qualifiers from similarly sized sectional, regional, and/or district qualifying tournaments. In these states, sections or other geographic groupings seemed to exist primarily as a way to equally divide schools and organize fair competition. But it was clear that these geographical groupings were also represented in the organization's policymaking and followed the democratic principle of "one man - one vote" - where each representative represented roughly the same number of schools. And it was also clear that sections in these states were not independent entities influenced by parochial concerns and motivated by organizational self-preservation.

Interestingly, only the state of California (California Interscholastic Federation) bore any resemblance to what goes on in New York. California's CIF, like New York's NYSPHSAA, is a collection of semi-independent sections unequal in size and unable or unwilling to abandon their differences and boundaries. But that's where the resemblance between New York and California ends.

Unlike New York, California remains committed to a single class tournament but California differs from New York in two other more important ways.

First, over 30 years ago, the CIF adopted a multiple-entry format for their state wrestling tournament. This year's CIF State Wrestling Tournament will have a total of 38 entries per weight distributed across ten sections based proportionally on the number of schools with wrestling in each section.

Second, this principle of proportionality also exists in the organization's policymaking as well. In California, sectional representatives on CIF's policymaking bodies cast a weighted vote based on the number and size of schools in their respective sections. Weighted voting is accepted by some authorities on democracy as a way to achieve fair representation where there are unequal districts or sections.

So for those who are skeptical about a multiple-entry tournament based on proportionality - they only need to look to California where it has worked successfully for over a generation.

And for those who wonder why New York has been unable to do what other states have done decades ago - they may want to look at the NYSPHSAA system of unequal voting for at least part of the answer.

The NYSWCA sincerely hopes that, absent fundamental reform of the NYSPHSAA, a fair and reasonable multiple-entry format will be adopted for the 2005 and 2006 state tournaments.