



PIAA CLASSIFICATIONS

It's time to provide the PIAA Board of Control with the ability to conduct separate public and private/charter school championship tournaments

Spring, 2010

Background

- When PIAA was formed in 1913, it was a voluntary association of public high schools. Private schools were not eligible to join PIAA.
- In 1972, almost 59 years after the formation of PIAA, legislation was passed and signed into law that required the PIAA to admit applying private schools as members.

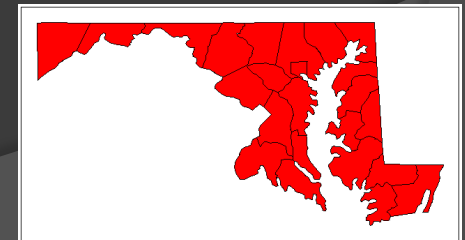
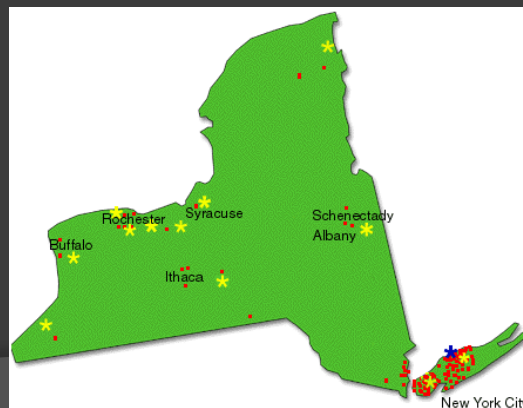
“Private schools shall be permitted, if otherwise qualified, to be members of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.” - Section 511 (b.1) of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.



2004 Memo from Principals

Proposed Classification Changes

- After clear evidence showed that private schools were winning a disproportionate number of championships in basketball, a group of principals sent a memo to PIAA asking that the association adopt separate tournaments for public and private schools.
- The memo noted that neighboring states New Jersey, New York and Maryland conduct separate championship tournaments for public and private schools.



PIAA Answers Memo from Principals

- ◎ In his reply to the principals, the PIAA's Executive Director, Bradley R. Cashman, said,

“We believe that the primary obstacle to substantial reform is the language of the existing legislation. Should you desire to effectuate substantial change, you may want to consider contacting your legislators and seeking an amendment of Section 511 (b.1) of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.”

Current Method of Classification

- ⦿ All members schools are classified for each sport they feature.
- ⦿ All member schools are classified according to size into groups, and the number of classifications vary from sport-to-sport. Some sports have four classifications (A, AA, AAA and AAAA – with Class A being the smallest schools). All classifications contain approximately the same number of member schools.

Private School Domination in Basketball

- Private schools have dominated the PIAA basketball championship landscape for many years.

Consider:

Since 2000 (11 championship seasons), 10 private schools and 1 public school have won basketball championships in the Girls Class A division. Over the same time span, 11 private schools and 0 public schools have won basketball championships in the Boys Class A division.

Thus, 22 Class A titles have been contested, and private schools have won 21 of them. Mathematically, private schools have an approximately 44% chance of winning a Class A state title. Despite these odds, over the last 11 seasons private schools have captured over 95% of the PIAA State Class A Basketball Championships.



More Statistics on Private School Domination in Basketball

Class AA:

Since 2000 (11 championship seasons), 10 private schools and 1 public school have won basketball championships in the Girls Class AA division. Over the same time span, 7 private schools and 4 public schools have won basketball championships in the Boys Class AA division.

Thus, 22 Class AA titles have been contested, and private schools have won 17 of them. Mathematically, private schools have an approximately 18% chance of winning a Class AA state title. Despite these odds, over the last 11 seasons private schools have captured over 77% of the PIAA State Class AA Basketball Championships.

More Basketball Title Figures

Class AAA:

Since 2000 (11 championship seasons), 8 private schools and 3 public schools have won basketball championships in the Girls Class AAA division. Over the same time span, 3 private schools and 8 public schools have won basketball championships in the Boys Class AAA division.

Thus, 22 Class AAA titles have been contested, and private schools have won 11 of them. Mathematically, private schools have an approximately 10% chance of winning a Class AAA state title. Despite these odds, over the last 11 seasons private schools have captured 50% of the PIAA State Class AAA Basketball Championships.

More Basketball Title Figures

Class AAAA:

Since 2000 (11 championship seasons), 4 private schools and 7 public schools have won basketball championships in the Girls Class AAA division. Over the same time span, 0 private schools and 11 public schools have won basketball championships in the Boys Class AAAA division.

Thus, 22 Class AAAA titles have been contested, and private schools have won 4 of them. Mathematically, private schools have an approximately 7% chance of winning a Class AAAA state title. Despite these odds, over the last 11 seasons private schools have captured 18% of the PIAA State Class AAA Basketball Championships.

Classify according to “Type of School”

- Schools are already being classified according to size parameters. If the public and private/charter schools were involved in separate championship tournaments, all member schools would simply be classified according to “type” of school first. This would “level the playing field” for all schools.

Classification

Problems/Inequities

- Public schools have no problem with private schools being members of the association. It is the playoff structure that creates the problems.
- Public schools are limited in that only students from a defined area can attend public schools. Private schools are capable of drawing students from a large geographic area. Currently, private schools are only required to provide a raw “head count” of students in determining their classification.
- If two or more public schools combine to offer a sport (football, for example), all students from both schools must be counted when determining the classification for the team. For instance, School “A” and School “B” combine to offer a single football team – with School “A” sponsoring the team. School “B” only provides 5 students for the football team, but there are 140 male students in School “B.” Instead of counting just the 5 athletes who are participating from School “B,” School “A” must count all 140 male students from School “B” in determining its enrollment numbers for classification purposes (in addition to all of the male students from its own school).

Anatomy of the Current Situation

- ⦿ The PIAA points to the state Legislature, saying the legislators created the current situation.
- ⦿ At the same time, many legislators note that the PIAA is an association that can do what it wants with its championship tournaments.
- ⦿ The PIAA's legal counsel believes that without new legislation, the PIAA would be sued if it tried to create separate tournaments for public and private schools. The PIAA is not sure if it could win in court, and the costs to fight a suit would be high.



A Proposed Solution

- To remedy this situation, the state Legislature can enact legislation that would ALLOW (or permit) the PIAA to conduct separate public and private/charter school championship tournaments in any sport where the PIAA believes it is appropriate.
- The legislation would not MANDATE that the PIAA Board conduct separate tournaments – it would simply ALLOW the Board to do so at its discretion. The Legislature would not be dictating action – it would merely be allowing the PIAA Board to conduct separate tournaments if it wished to do so. The PIAA Board would then have a law that backs any such decision.

