



February 1, 2024

# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

## Same Season Competitive Equity Playoff Groupings

On Tuesday, January 30, the CIF Southern Section Council passed the Same Season Competitive Equity Playoff Grouping bylaw revision by a vote of 79-8. With the revision of this bylaw, the CIF Southern Section has solidified its place as the leader in Competitive Equity for high school athletics throughout the country. All schools and teams affected by the bylaw who qualify for post season competition will now be guaranteed placement in a playoff group or division that is comprised of similarly ranked teams based solely on data from the current season. No longer will the success or struggles from past seasons affect team rankings and divisional placement. Schools will now be placed in divisions based solely on the competitiveness of their team during the current season.

The CIF Southern Section office has been doing research over the last year in each sport to evaluate ranking systems to determine which system best suits each individual sport. Once adopted, these systems will continue to be evaluated and reworked as necessary each year to ensure the best rankings and the most competitive playoff groupings. Regardless of the system, the primary factor determining the accuracy of our ranking systems will be schedule and score reporting. Schedules for each sport affected by this bylaw change will need to be accurate and remain up to date throughout the season. Also, scores of each contest in each sport must be entered into the CIFSShome system as outlined in bylaw #3519.3. The CIF Southern Section Office will provide information on ways to make this process easier and more convenient in the coming months, to ensure that all data is entered accurately.

This is an exciting time for the member schools of the Southern Section. If the last three years of the football playoffs are any indicator, we are likely to see schools having the opportunity to win championships that have not had the ability to do so in the past. This is one of the reasons that makes this system such an exciting one. I want to thank all of our member schools and leagues for their help in the adoption of this new system and I look forward to your continued support as we implement this system as well.

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## Health Related Bylaw Changes

The State CIF has introduced several Non-Action Items for your review in the next couple of months. Three of these are recommended changes coming from the State CIF Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and influenced by State Laws that have recently been passed and signed by our governor.

The proposed revision to Bylaw 503.K.(1) – Heat Illness Protocol will require schools to determine the safety of fall outdoor practices and mandatory adjustments to practices using WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT). WBGT is different from Heat Index in that WBGT takes into consideration temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover. Heat Index only takes temperature and humidity calculated for shady areas into consideration. Another factor involved in these readings is where your school is located. If you are near the ocean, your school is likely to be classified as Category 1. If your school is in the desert areas, it is likely to be classified as Category 3. If your school is somewhere in between, your school may be considered Category 2. Practice modifications will vary depending on the WBGT temperature in your given area. Resources will be made available to determine the Category in which your school is located as well as the guidelines established for your area. Best practice will be to have a WBGT unit at your campus and on your practice fields daily during the hot months in the summer and early fall. Also recognize that there will be acclimatization accommodations necessary at the beginning of the fall season. Football specifically will have their first three days in helmets only followed by two days of helmets and shoulder pads before full practice can commence.

The proposed revision to Bylaw 503.K.(2) – Air Quality Index Protocol will establish a rule stating that schools must refrain from outdoor practices and contests when the Air Quality Index is 151 or higher. This has been an established standard for schools to go by but had not been codified in the Blue Book rules previously.

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And finally, the proposed revision to Bylaw 503.L – Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and AED Protocols would change the rule from just requiring a school to have an EAP to specifying what needs to be included in the venue specific EAPs and that the EAPs must be rehearsed at least once per season. It would also require schools to have Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) located at each athletic venue within three minutes of a possible Sudden Cardiac Arrest. This may require schools to purchase additional AEDs for their site and to place them in reasonably accessible locations.

These bylaw changes, should they be approved for next year, will be easy to implement for schools that have a full time Certified Athletic Trainer on their campus. For schools who do not have an Athletic Trainer on their staff, complying with these new rules as well as the other health and safety provisions in the Blue Book can be much more challenging. If you have an interest in hiring an Athletic Trainer but do not know where to start, we have added some resources onto the Sports Medicine Page of the CIF Southern Section Website to include a sample job description, information on where and how to advertise a new or existing position to a national audience of potential candidates, and links to other information related to the hiring of Athletic Trainers. Find the tab titled “Resources” on the CIF Southern Section Website and scroll down to “Sports Medicine.”

## Winter Sport Championships

The winter sports season is coming to a close and the CIF Southern Section-Ford Championship tournaments are underway. Already completed are the Traditional Competitive Cheer Championships which took place on Saturday, January 20 and the Wrestling Dual Meet Championships which came to its conclusion on Wednesday, January 31st. Playoff bracket seeding for Basketball, Soccer, and Water Polo will be released this weekend. I wish all member schools participating in the Winter Championships the best of luck in the coming weeks.



**Mike West**

