



DATE June 23, 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Competitive Equity Playoffs – Spring Sport Review

In January 2024, the CIF Southern Section Council voted overwhelmingly (79–8) to amend the bylaw governing playoff division placement, shifting from a two-year historical data model to using current-season performance data. This decisive vote sent a clear message: schools across the Section wanted a more accurate and competitive playoff system.

With the 2025 spring playoffs complete, the data confirms that this change is having the desired effect. We've seen closer contests, more evenly matched teams, and increased competitive balance. Below is a summary of three-year comparison data highlighting several spring sports:

Baseball Run Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	Average
22-23	4.7	3.7	4.9	3.1	4.6	3.0	3.8	3.2	4.1	4.4	5.4	6.5			4.4
23-24	5.5	4.0	3.8	3.0	2.8	4.3	4.3	3.6	4.4	3.5	4.3	4.9	7.8		4.6
24-25	4.2	4.2	3.5	3.2	1.8	3.2	4.1	3.1	4.1	3.2	3.3	4.3	3.8	6.7	4.0

The data for baseball was based on the run differential of all games in the playoffs, and comparisons were made by playoff round and by division. The average run differential for the entire playoff season was 4.0 this year, compared to 4.6 last year and 4.4 in 22-23. Interestingly, the run differential of all championship games this year was only 1.8 runs per game, which made for some very exciting contests.

Softball Run Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	Average
22-23	7.1	5.9	5.5	5.4	4.4	5.5	4.0	4.2	4.6	6.6	8.4	10.9		6.3
23-24	6.7	5.6	6.2	5.3	5.6	5.4	4.0	4.4	5.5	5.8	6.5	9.0	10.1	6.2
24-25	6.4	5.7	4.8	4.2	3.3	4.8	4.7	5.7	3.9	5.1	5.6	6.9	9.5	5.8

Softball was evaluated the same way as baseball by using run differential per game to make comparisons. As you can see, most of the divisions this year had closer games than in the previous two years with the final round having a run differential of 3.3 runs per game. The overall run differential this year was 0.4 runs closer than the prior year.

Boys Lacrosse Point Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	D1	D2	D3	Average
22-23	9.9	6.6	4.9	6.7	3.3	6.2	4.5	8.4	6.8
23-24	5.4	7.4	5.8	3.7	1.0	7.0	4.4	6.1	5.8
24-25	6.5	5.4	5.4	4.0	5.0	5.6	5.4	5.7	5.6

Boys' and Girls' Lacrosse were evaluated based upon the point differential per game in the playoffs, with comparisons made by round and division. Boys' Lacrosse did not see a significant improvement in overall point differential, with games only being 0.2 points closer this year than last year on average. We also saw a large average margin of victory in the finals this year compared to the last two years.

-MORE-



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Girls Lacrosse Point Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	D1	D2	D3	Average
22-23	6.1	7.0	7.3	5.0	4.0	7.7	5.0	8.2	6.4
23-24	6.2	7.0	5.3	4.5	4.3	7.5	4.3	6.3	6.1
24-25	5.3	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.3	4.8	4.7	5.7	5.1

Girls' Lacrosse, on the other hand, saw some significantly closer games this year, especially in Division 1, where games were, on average, 2.7 points closer throughout the playoffs. The average goal differential for all divisions throughout the playoffs was 1.0 goals per game, closer than the previous year.

Boys Tennis Game Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	Open	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	Average
22-23	7.2	6.3	4.8	3.3	2.7	5.7	5.3	5.1	5.7	7.4	7.0			6.1
23-24	7.1	6.0	6.9	5.1	3.6	8.3	7.4	4.4	7.6	5.2	5.9	7.9		6.5
24-25	6.3	4.4	4.3	4.5	2.3	5.1	4.1	4.2	5.2	4.1	6.6	4.5	6.6	5.1

Boys' tennis in the chart above was evaluated based on the difference in the number of games won in a match. A total of 18 games are played in a CIF Southern Section High School Tennis match, and a close match might have a score of 10-8. That would equate to a 2.0 game differential. As you can see, this year's matches were much closer than previous years. On average, matches were at least 1.0 games closer than they were the previous two years and second-round matches were 1.6 games closer than last year.

Boys Golf Team Score Differential - 3 Year Review

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	Average
22-23	40	49	69	81	95	165	203	100
23-24	68	55	52	104	110	191	241	117
24-25	45	34	45	43	86	39	196	70

The above data regarding boys' golf shows the differential between the lowest and highest scores in each divisional tournament. Golf Divisions have between 18 and 20 teams playing with six golfers each, counting their five best scores. In Division 1 this year, the lowest score was 360 and the highest was 405, with a score differential of 45 strokes overall. The goal is to make each division as competitive as possible so that every team in the division has a chance to compete. The higher this differential, the less competitive the match was. As you can see, the score differentials in all but Division 1 were closer this year than the previous two years, and the average differential across all divisions was 30 strokes closer than in 22-23.

-MORE-



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Boys Volleyball Set Differential Summary - 3 Year Review

	1st Rd	2nd Rd	Qtr	Semi	Final	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	Average
22-23	2.5	2.3	2.3	1.9	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.6			2.4
23-24	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.5		2.3
24-25	2.3	1.8	2.4	1.8	2.0	2.4	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2

Boys' volleyball is challenging to evaluate due to the small data set we have available. Matches have 1, 2, or 3 game differentials, as we do not keep game scores. That being said, the data for this year's playoffs shows that matches were closer on average than the previous two years in almost all divisions and rounds. The championship games this year had far fewer 3-0 matches than in years past, and anecdotally, when speaking with coaches, they felt the playoff games this year were more competitive than in the past.

The data confirms that moving to current-season data to establish divisions has resulted in more competitive playoff experiences across nearly every sport where it has been applied. As we move forward, the CIF Southern Section will continue to monitor our new system and make refinements to ensure fairness and provide opportunities for all schools that qualify to participate in our championships.


Mike West

