



Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.

## **Report on the Study of the IHSAA Boys' and Girls' Basketball Tournament Formats**

### Introduction

During the Indiana General Assembly Session of 2012, Senate Bill 236 was introduced by Senator Mike Delph (R) of Carmel. Contained within the original text of this comprehensive education bill was a stipulation that would have provided for a school corporation to participate in an interscholastic athletics association only if the association did not conduct boys' or girls' interscholastic basketball games in which the teams are divided into classes.

The bill was assigned to the Committee on Education and Career Development. On January 11, 2012, Senate Bill 236 received its initial hearing before the Committee. As author, Senator Delph provided an overview of the bill to the Committee followed by testimony from those individuals in support of the proposed legislation followed by those in opposition to the bill. Representatives from the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc., including Commissioner Bobby Cox, Superintendent Scott Bess of Indianapolis Metropolitan Charter School and Athletic Director Steven Wild of Fort Wayne Blackhawk Christian School all testified in opposition to the bill.

Approximately one week after the Committee hearing, Senator Delph contacted Commissioner Cox and asked whether the IHSAA would be willing to study the class basketball issue publically in exchange for a removal of the portion of Senate Bill 236 speaking to class basketball. The Commissioner consented to such a study and the Senator removed said portion of the bill.

Toward the end of January 2012, the Senator and the Commissioner met to discuss the specifics of a comprehensive study of the basketball tournament series. Initially a series of public meetings allowing interested Hoosiers an opportunity to express their sentiments about the IHSAA basketball tournament format was agreed upon. Additionally, the Commissioner also consented to survey the membership of the IHSAA to capture current attitudes from school administrators, basketball coaches and student athletes participating in basketball regarding the tournament format. A schedule of eleven (11) meetings crisscrossing the state was decided upon and the tour began on April 10, 2012 in Fort Wayne at Northrop High School. Subsequent meetings were conducted in Vincennes, Plainfield, Seymour, Pendleton, Merrillville, Milan, Plymouth, Marion, Connersville and Gary. Concurrently, the Association surveyed its membership and the results of these collective efforts are reflected in the following section of this report.

### Data Collection

Beginning on April 10, 2012 and concluding on May 24, 2012, the IHSAA with the assistance of its member schools hosted eleven town meetings to allow the Association to receive input from the general public regarding the IHSAA basketball tournament series formats. During these sessions, spirited conversation arose from those individuals in support of a return to a single class format as well as a smaller group of respondents in favor of the current multiple class formats. The meetings were conducted in a spirit of understanding and those that chose to speak were respectful yet passionate about their positions. In a rare instance did a speaker either violate the established protocol or speak derogatorily about the Association or the Senator. At the conclusion of each meeting, the attendees were asked to cast a straw ballot indicating their preference of a single class basketball tournament or the current multiple class system. In total, 514 straw ballots were collected at the eleven meetings. Three hundred and fifty (350) of the ballots cast were in favor of a return to the single class format (68.09%) while 164 ballots were tendered supporting the current format (31.91%). The following table reflects the responses at each town meeting:

Site	Single Class	Multiple Classes	Total Votes	% of Ballots in Support of Single Class
Fort Wayne Northrop	28	14	42	66.67%
Vincennes Lincoln	16	32	48	33.33%
Plainfield	33	18	51	64.71%
Seymour	21	10	31	67.74%
Pendleton Heights	30	20	50	60.00%
Merrillville	5	32	37	13.51%
Milan	67	4	71	94.37%
Plymouth	55	21	76	72.37%
Marion	52	6	58	89.66%
Connersville	34	7	41	82.93%
Gary Roosevelt	9	0	9	100.00%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>68.09%</b>

Simultaneously, the IHSAA surveyed member school principals, athletic administrators, boys and girls basketball coaches along with boys and girls basketball players. This balloting produced the following results:

Category	Votes in Favor of Multiple Classes	Votes in Favor of Single Class	Percentages in Favor of Multiple Classes
Principals	232	70	76.82%
Athletic Directors	291	76	79.29%
Basketball Coaches	343	281	54.97%
Student Athletes	4315	1628	72.16%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5181</b>	<b>2055</b>	<b>71.60%</b>

## Conclusions

While there still exists a segment of Hoosier citizens that would support a return to a single class basketball format for the Indiana High School Athletic Association and its membership, that same membership has once again demonstrated strong support for the current multiple class format. Member school administrators that hold the responsibility for school programming and implementation collectively support the current tournament structure by a percentage of 78.18%. Additionally in an interesting yet telling statistic, 72.16% of this year's varsity basketball student athletes that responded to the question are in favor of the current system. It is also noted with interest that a smaller majority of basketball coaches are in favor of the current multiple class system; however 45.03% of those coaches prefer a single class tournament. In any measurement; principals, athletic administrators, coaches or student athletes, not one response group favored a return to single class basketball.

During the eleven stop town meeting series tour, an assortment of individuals from both the general public and the media presented and spoke to a sundry of compromise formats. These offerings attempt to incorporate various components of both the single class tournament and the multiple class tournaments in efforts to satisfy both constituencies. To that end those suggestions will be forwarded to the Indiana Basketball Coaches Association for consideration and potential proposals originating from this organization to the IHSAA Executive Committee.

The Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. is a private non-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation consisting currently of 408 voluntary member schools which was created in 1903. The founding principle and rationale for the formation of this organization at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to establish rules and guidelines to govern interscholastic athletics. For 109 years, this organization has met those challenges with excellence and humility. Funding for the Association comes directly from gate receipts received from IHSAA tournament events, the licensure of contest officials, radio and television revenue and corporate support. The IHSAA receives no federal, state or local tax support whatsoever.

The membership of this corporation elects representation from each of its legislative districts to serve as members of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. This group is charged with the oversight of the administration of the corporation and is bound by its members to execute the wishes of the membership. This body has faithfully executed its duties on behalf of the membership for over 100 years, sometimes to the displeasure of the general public yet never forgetting who they serve.

In light of the results of this latest analysis, there is a lack of compelling evidence that if present, would cause the Association to consider plans to alter the existing tournament structures for boys and girls basketball. The staff's continued focus will be to make administrative improvements to the current format that will best serve the member schools and their patrons. If the membership of the IHSAA or affiliated coach or administrative associations wish to forward proposals that may modify the current formats, the Association's Executive Committee and staff will entertain those submissions. As has been the case with recent changes accomplished at the Association, the established conventions have once again proven

valuable. Members through representation in concert with affiliated organizations have acted in the best interests of Indiana student athletes and will continue to toil selflessly on behalf of young Hoosiers. Professional educators have fashioned intelligent and important decisions regarding education based athletics in our state for over 100 years. These leaders should be afforded the continued opportunity to serve the young people of our state with the sincerity and enthusiasm they deserve void of governmental intervention and pressure.

Respectfully,

*Bobby Cox*

Bobby Cox

Commissioner

Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.