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State Regional Tournament Proposal December 10, 2007

In the past four years, the New York State Wrestling Tournament has changed for the better. Many more student-athletes now participate in the event and some progress has been made in getting more deserving athletes into the tournament. At the same time, concerns about the tournament and the qualifying process continue to exist.

New York's Current Format

Currently, the qualifying process for the NYS Tournament does not give every competitor at least a similar chance to qualify for the championship event. Sectional tournaments to determine who goes to the state tournament are as small as two schools and as large as fifty-two schools. As the recent addition of at-large entries to the state tournament showed, the single-entry per section format has kept many of the state's best wrestlers out of the tournament for decades.

Other States

A state-by-state survey was taken to see where the New York State Tournament process stood in comparison to other states and to assess how other states addressed similar concerns.

The survey results showed that in every state – except New York – multiple wrestlers advance from the final qualifier to the state tournament based on their placement in the qualifying event. New York remains a single-entry tournament – advancing only one wrestler from twelve very unequal sectional tournaments in each division (New York recently added “at-large” or “wildcard” entries to fill out the four remaining slots on a 16-man state championship bracket). It is the only state in the country where some wrestlers advance to the championship tournaments without wrestling a single qualifying bout.

The results also showed that state regional tournament systems, much like the highly successful Pennsylvania State Tournament system, offered the best working model to address concerns about New York State's tournament.

State Regionals For New York

A New York State Regional Tournament system would establish state regional tournaments as part of the “play-off” format for the New York State Wrestling Championships. As is currently the practice with NYSPHSAA Championships for sports like football and basketball, the state tournament would begin at the regional level.

This proposal is believed to be a more viable alternative to other past proposals that would have expanded the field in the state finals tournament.

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The State Regional proposal seeks to do the following:

- Bring some numerical balance to the qualifying process
- Give every wrestler a similar opportunity to reach the state finals tournament
- Enable the best wrestlers in the state a path to the state tournament regardless of geography
- Require the competitors to qualify by wrestling their way into the state tournament

The proposal was developed under the following guidelines:

- Avoid state regional tournaments that would require the expense of an overnight stay
- Do not expand the state tournament's 16-man bracket
- Preserve the sections' ability to determine how their wrestlers qualify
- Avoid disrupting individual sectional tournament traditions
- Retain the "two tournaments in one" design – NYSPHSSA and Federation

Proposal Summary

This draft proposal would establish state regional tournaments as part of the "play-off" format for the New York State Wrestling Championships. It does not require the sections to alter their current sectional tournaments and the "two-tournaments-in-one" design has been retained. It was organized – as much as possible - to avoid regional tournament formats that required an overnight stay.

In Division I, this format would send three to six entries from the state's Division I sections to four regional tournaments. Regions are proportionally allocated entries to the state finals tournament based on fourteen positions in the 16-man state tournament bracket. The remaining two positions in the bracket are allocated to the qualifiers from the federation "regional" tournament.

The Division I Long Island Region would cover Sec 8 and Sec 11 with both sections sending six entries each to their regional tournament from which the top four would advance to the state finals tournament. The Capital Region would include Sec 1, Sec 2 and Sec 9 with five, four and three entries respectively for a regional tournament field of twelve and the top four advancing. Sec 3 would send four entries, Sec 4 would send three, and there would be one entry from Sec 10 to make up the Central Region tournament field of eight with the top three advancing. The Western Region has Sec 5 and Sec 6 sending four entries each to their regional tournament and the top three advancing to the states.

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In Division II, there are also four regions. The Long Island Region has Sec 11, Sec 1 and Sec 9 at two entries each and Sec 8 and the PSAL small school(s) with one entry each for an 8-man tournament bracket and the top three advancing to the state finals tournament. The Capital Region has Sec 2 with five entries and the five schools from Sec 7 with one entry for a 6-man field with the top three advancing. The Central Region would have five entries from Sec 3, four entries from Sec 4, and one entry from Sec 10 for a regional tournament field of ten with the top five advancing. Sec 5 and Sec 6 make up the Western Region with six and five entries respectively and the top five advancing. Regions are proportionally allocated entries based on the 16-man state tournament bracket and the number of schools.

In Division I, forty wrestlers would advance to the “state regionals” in this proposal. A wrestler’s chance of making it to the state finals tournament in this proposal ranges from 1-in-15 to 1-in-21 as compared to the current system where a wrestler’s chances range from 1-in-4 to 1-in-44.

In Division II, thirty-five wrestlers advance to the state regionals. The chances of reaching the state finals tournament range from 1-in-13 to 1-in-17 as compared to current ranges of 1-in-1 to 1-in-52.

Generally speaking, the size of the field and the number of entries from each section in the regional tournaments is intended to reflect the number of schools in each section. Similarly, the number of entries from each region to the state finals tournament is intended to reflect the number of schools in the region. Except for the Federation Regional, no less than three and no more than five are advancing out of any qualifier in either division.

Attached please find an overview and draft spreadsheets detailing a regional tournament proposal.