

PIAA adopts football playoffs starting next season

By Frank Lawlor
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Pennsylvania yesterday became the 45th state to sponsor high school football playoffs. The PIAA's Board of Control voted, 12-6, to begin crowning state champions on each of four enrollment levels following the 1988 regular season.

Only 16 teams will participate, beginning with a semifinal round of eight games on Dec. 2-3 and concluding with the four title games Dec. 10-11.

The teams will be chosen according to a system that awards four

points for a victory, two for a tie, and additional points for the size of the opponent a school defeats.

A victory over a Class AAAA opponent would net a team eight points, a victory over a Class AAA team seven points and so on. The board rejected a system that would have rewarded small schools for merely scheduling larger opponents.

"The one selected is based on head-to-head competition, one school beating another," PIAA associate executive director Bradley R. Cashman said. "The other proposal had an aspect of scheduling that this doesn't."

Each team's final point total will be based on 10 games. All losses and ties count, regardless of an opponent's size, but extraneous victories will be thrown out, with those over smaller opponents going first.

Thanksgiving games will not count in the point totals as they will be played after the regular-season cutoff date of Nov. 19.

The PIAA will begin publishing rankings based on point totals in late October. Representatives of the state school boards and secondary school principals opposed the playoff plan, as did District 7 (suburban Pitts-

burgh) representative Michael Arbuthina, who said the measure may endanger his district's decades-old playoffs.

In other action, a group of Central League administrators asked the board to send its District 1 Committee back to the drawing board to better locate four Chester County schools presently without an athletic league for the 1988-89 school year.

The district committee decided in November to break the Central League in two and to distribute the so-called "orphan" schools — West

Chester East, West Chester Henderson, Coatesville and Downingtown — in either camp.

In their appeal to the Board of Control, Central League principals said that the plan would cut into class time for student-athletes and teacher-coaches who would spend up to twice as much time as they are accustomed to traveling to the Chester County schools.

The principals also said that the additional cost of providing transportation could top \$100,000 per school.

Upper Darby principal Gil Minacci

said his coaches have already inquired about extra pay for the increased road time. Haverford High principal Mel Drukin said that an athlete traveling to an evening game at Coatesville may not get home until 11:30 p.m.

Administrators from the orphan schools addressed the board, but none endorsed the Central League realignment outright.

Bob Fithian of West Chester Area School District said: "We have no bone to pick with the Central League. We simply want something done. We don't particularly care what it is."