

No major changes

Making playoffs involves luck

By DAVE SAUNDERS

Just how does your favorite football team qualify for the Michigan State High School Athletic Association (MSHSAA) playoffs this fall?

With a lot of hard work, sweat, dedication, and a little luck. Qualification is based on the number of points a team accumulates during the regular season, but sometimes that's not enough.

"There haven't been any major changes in the playoff system," said Lonnie Lowery, assistant director in charge of coordinating the playoffs. "The only change is that this year a team can dress 50 players instead of 44."

That may sound like a minor change, but not to Al Fracassa, head coach at Brother Rice. Fracassa took the Warriors to the state Class A championship last year, but he was not able to dress his entire team for the big game.

But, with that minor change aside, here is an explanation of how a team can qualify for the state playoffs. This year's championship game will be played at the Silverdome in Pontiac for the third straight year.

According to Lowery, the point system isn't that difficult.

First of all, teams compile both playoff and bonus points during a game. Playoff points, however, are the only points a team can earn by itself.

Eighty points are awarded for beating a class A team, 40 points if you tie. Sixty-

four points are awarded if you defeat a class B team, 32 for a tie. Forty-eight points are awarded upon beating a class C team, 24 for a tie. And, for defeating a class D team, 32 playoff points are awarded, 16 for a tie.

Bonus points are what a team receives when a team they had defeated scores a win.

For example, if Brother Rice defeated Bloomfield Hills Andover in the first game of the season, the Warriors would accumulate eight bonus points for each team Andover defeats thereafter.

Consequently, if Brother Rice won all nine of its regular-season games against class A teams, it would earn 720 points. In addition, if Andover goes undefeated the remainder of the season, Rice would stockpile 64 more bonus points.

You then add all the points together and divide by number of games played, and you come up with a playoff point total.

In case a team you had defeated ties another team, your team earns four bonus points. One bonus point is also awarded when a team which has defeated your team, wins.

Eight teams from each of the four classes (A, B, C, and D) qualify for the post-season playoffs. Only two teams can represent one of the four regions across the state.

The four regions are basically divided geographically. The only exception is class A, since most of the larger schools are concentrated in the tri-county area which

comprises metropolitan Detroit.

Region I in class A, for example, has 41 schools, including the Flint, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, Traverse City and Upper Peninsula schools.

Regions II, III and IV are centered around Detroit. Region II (46 schools) includes Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Livonia and Garden City; Region III (43 schools) includes the Plymouth area, 10 Detroit schools, Grosse Pointe and the east side of Detroit; Region IV (42 schools) includes the northern part of metro Detroit, Birmingham, Rochester, Royal Oak, Warren, Sterling Heights and Romeo.

Most of the class B, C and D schools are distributed in regions more evenly across Michigan.

The quarterfinals will be conducted on Nov. 10 or 11, depending on when the competing teams can agree.

Sites for the quarterfinals are as follows in Class A:

- Region I, Lansing Sexton.
- Region II, Livonia Stevenson.
- Region III, Berkley.
- Region IV, Birmingham Groves.

Lansing Sexton will host the Class A region I and II semifinalists, and Groves will host the region III and IV winners. All semifinalist games will be played on Nov. 18 at 1:30 p.m. if no other arrangements are made between teams and host.

Quarterfinal sites for Class B teams are as follows:

- Region I, Kalamazoo Central.
- Region II, Alma.

- Region III, Hartland.
- Region IV, Riverview.

Class B semifinal action will occur at Grand Rapids' Houseman Field (region I and II winners), and at Brighton High School (region III and IV winners).

Quarterfinal sites for Class C teams are as follows:

- Region I, Grand Rapids Public Schools Houseman Field.
- Region II, Michigan Center High School.
- Region III, Durand.

Region IV, site will be at Marquette if teams are from upper peninsula. If both teams aren't from the Upper Peninsula the site will be Traverse City.

Class C semifinal action will be at Bay City Central for region I and II winners, and at Mount Pleasant High School for region III and IV winners.

Quarterfinal games for the Class D schools are as follows:

- Region I, Battle Creek Central.
- Region II, St. Johns.
- Region IV, Escanaba if both teams are from the Upper Peninsula, Petoskey if not.

Class D semifinal action will be at Eaton Rapids for region I and II winners, and at Traverse City for region III and IV winners.

There you have it...the sites and how to get there. Some people like it, some don't—especially the 32 teams who went undefeated last year but still failed to make the playoffs.

That's where luck comes in.



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Sept. 22 ALLEN PARK-A
Sept. 29 BELLEVILLE-H
Oct. 6 REDFORD UNION-A

Oct. 13 TRENTON-H
Oct. 20 EDELS FORD-A
Oct. 27 BENTLEY-H
Nov. 4 HARRISON-A
H-Home A-Away

PLYMOUTH-CANTON H.S.

Sept. 8 BENTLEY-A
Sept. 15 ANNAPOLIS-H
Sept. 22 NORTHVILLE-H
Sept. 29 CHURCHILL-A
Oct. 6 MOTT-H

Oct. 14 HARRISON-H
Oct. 20 WALLED LAKE-A
Oct. 27 GARDEN CITY-A
Nov. 3 DEARBORN-H
H-Home A-Away

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