

## **Middle School Committee Meeting Minutes**

11:00am CT, February 13, 2026

Stewarts Creek Middle School

- I. Welcome - Bryan Brown, Scott Carroll, Rob Cummings, Marty Moore, India Weaver, Chris Burgess, Jeff Curtis, Sarah Cope, Chris Poynter, Keith Young, and Chuck Whitlock were present. Richard McWhirter, Emily Crowell, Lamar Lee, Joe Blair, and EJ Wood represented TSSAA.
- II. The Committee was reminded that the Athletic Directors' Conference will be held on April 10-13 in Knoxville. The Middle School session will be held on Sunday, April 12 this year.
- III. Wrestling Postseason
  - a. The Committee reviewed a proposal from Lake Forest MS suggesting girls not be allowed to wrestle boys during the season, similar to the HS format. The Committee discussed that in some parts of the state, if girls don't wrestle boys, they won't get matches. Additionally, middle school girls need mat time and the best girls need to wrestle boys for experience. The Committee was not interested in changing regular season requirements, and does not want any changes for 2026. They may look at postseason restrictions after 2026.
  - b. The championship format for boys wrestling was discussed, specifically whether boys want to switch from a dual championship to an individual championship. The following were discussed:
    - i. There are multiple opportunities to participate in individual tournaments through AAU, and they can compete in those at the same time, though we don't want to push kids outside of schools. The Dual format fills numbers on teams - coaches have to go out and get kids to try the sport, which builds numbers at the middle school level (and trickles down to high school teams). If went to an individual only format, could still give a team award and would need to decide if still would have two classes for boys wrestling.
    - ii. The Committee was split, but decided to keep the Dual format for boys for one more year. The Committee would like MS Wrestling schools to be surveyed on this topic, because enough on Committee have appetite to explore an individual format.
    - iii. The Committee also decided to add a team award for the girls individual tournament for 2026.
- IV. Recap of recent District, Region & Sectional Basketball Tournaments
  - a. The Committee discussed weather challenges in getting tournaments completed with school closings, and suggested that MS needs to have a hard deadline that districts have to be completed. If not completed by that date, automatically go with #1 in regular season and move on.
  - b. Byes will rotate in future years and will be published on the postseason brackets on the website.
- V. State Championships for spring sports
  - a. Softball - May 12-13 at Warner Park in Chattanooga - turf fields
  - b. Baseball - May 12-13 at East Hamilton HS, Ooltewah HS, and Lee University - grass fields, have private schools as back up for turf fields if weather (bring shoes for both)
  - c. Soccer - May 13-14 at Richard Siegel Complex in Murfreesboro - turf for semis and consolations, grass field stadium for championship games

- d. Track & Field - May 18 at UT's Tom Black Track - Monday, new schedule on website
  - e. Golf - May 19 at Harpeth Hills Golf Course in Nashville
- VI. Cooperative Agreements
- a. The Committee discussed limiting Co-ops to 2 teams only. The TSSAA office provided data on how many schools participate in co-op teams comprised of more than 2 schools. A lot of the discussion was about increasing participation if encourage 2 smaller schools to form a co-op team instead of schools that are already in the largest classification forming a mega-team with all the small schools. **The committee agreed unanimously to propose a limitation of 2 schools per co-op to the TSSAA Legislative Council in April, but want an appeal process where schools can demonstrate why 3 or more schools in a co-op is necessary.** This will only apply to sports in which there is a state championship at the MS level.
- VII. Membership Deadlines
- a. TSSAA Staff will be discussing with Legislative Council in April - recommending that for a new member to be in district for the next school year, there is a deadline of the March Board of Control meeting to join the association. Others can still be a member, but cannot participate in postseason for one year.
- VIII. Classification Proposals
- a. Obion County Middle School will be open in 2026-26 and is combining Hillcrest, Lake Road, and Ridgemont, which impacts both A and AA basketball classification. (Need to look at classification in other sports as well)
    - i. Obion County Middle School will be in AA District 25
    - ii. Halls, Humboldt, Lara Kendall will move to Class A District 23
    - iii. Henry Co schools would like to move back with South Fulton geographically, but makes more sense to add a Class A District 22 for those schools for postseason (can still play with others in Region 6 for regular season)
  - b. Chuckey Doak MS requested to move from Class AA to A in boys and girls soccer, as their co-op with South Greene has pushed them to AA. The Committee voted to deny this request.
  - c. The Committee discussed whether a maximum/minimum number of schools in a district was needed, but decided it was better to look at cases individually.
  - d. New member schools for the 2026-27 school year were discussed for classification.
  - e. Chris Poynter presented a proposal for 3 classes in each sport. The state office will look at participation numbers in each sport and map out what 3 classes would like like in each sport before classification is discussed at the Fall 2026 meeting.
  - f. Greenback MS requests a move in districts within Class A for all sports to line up with their high school. Approved as follows:
    - i. Basketball - District 7
    - ii. Baseball/Softball - District 6
    - iii. Volleyball - District 4
- IX. District Requirements and Deadlines - The Committee discussed bringing to the Board of Control a proposal to require member middle schools to play all schools in their district during the regular season for the next classification cycle. There were concerns about teams that are too good not being able to find opponents, but also concerns that schools that cannot contend for championships might choose to withdraw their membership. Penalties removing a team from postseason for not playing all opponents in a district were discussed. The Committee also needs to look

at district size limits, so additional consideration is needed before discussing again at the Fall 2026 Committee meeting.

- X. Sports Calendar
  - a. Snowden MS proposed adding 2 games for basketball. The Committee feels the solution is allowing them to buy the 2 more benefit games, and making sure that the TSSAA Portal set up where benefit games apply to MS.
  - b. India Weaver submitted a proposal from her member schools for adding contests and increasing season for soccer and volleyball
    - i. The Committee determined this may only be a local problem because the season length is actually 10 weeks, but some schools do not play before school begins
  - c. Chris Poynter submitted a proposal for a unified Middle School Sports Calendar with a clear first contest date. Other Committee members expressed liking the way the MS Sports Calendar is worded now for flexibility.
- XI. Several proposals discussing a football postseason were discussed. The Committee felt a pilot for Football Sectional Championships might be the first step, similar to what several Committee members are already doing in their areas. Classification concerns and being completed by Fall Break were discussed. Committee members will talk to schools and bring back in fall
- XII. Officials' Associations and the Middle School Postseason
  - a. The Committee was notified of a new position in the TSSAA office with an emphasis on officials: Director of Officials - David Uyl
  - b. TSSAA office has emphasized/will continue to emphasize to officials' associations that MS postseason should be prioritized over HS regular season.
  - c. The Committee was reminded that middle schools do not have to use local officials association, but officials must be registered with TSSAA office.
  - d. The Committee requested that there be some training/efficiency around Arbiter and how assigns input games so schools are not having to submit differently in each sport.
  - e. The Committee also expressed concern that sometimes officials are missing games with no consequences, but if team doesn't show, they are expected to be paid.
- XIII. Middle School District Coordinators - a spreadsheet was shared with the Committee to ask for their recommendations for individuals who can help coordinate district postseason events for next school year.
- XIV. Middle School Bowling and Middle School Girls Flag Football were suggested as the next MS state championship. It was also discussed that perhaps the emerging sport rule in the Bylaws needs to apply to MS with a minimum number of schools that must be participating before a state championship can be added.
- XV. Next Middle School Committee Meeting
  - a. Wednesday, September 30th, 2026 at 9:30am in Middle Tennessee
- XVI. For the Good of the Order
  - a. An inning or time limit for MS Baseball and Softball has been brought up by officials associations, but the Committee expressed frustration with officials association about fees. At this time, the Committee is not in favor of making MS baseball and softball less than 7 innings, and any limits still need to be determined between local association and schools.