

MINUTES
2020 REGIONAL MEETINGS
All meetings were held online.

Wed., Nov. 4, 2020	9:00 a.m. CST	West TN
	11:00 a.m. CST	East TN
	1:00 p.m. CST	Middle TN

Member School Attendance

West

Total Number of Schools in West:	118
Total Number of Schools Present:	90
Percent Present:	76.3%

East

Total Number of Schools in East:	147
Total Number of Schools present:	120
Percent present:	81.6%

Middle

Total Number of Schools in Middle:	166
Total Number of Schools Present:	133
Percent Present:	80.1%

Overall

Total Membership (TSSAA):	431
Total number of Schools Present:	343
Percent Present:	79.6%

1. Call to order by Executive Director
2. Election of Board of Control and Legislative Council Members

Nominees were nominated electronically by member schools via an online form distributed to school administrators on October 1, 2020. Nominations were accepted through October 23, 2020.

- a. Board of Control members were elected from the 2nd, 5th, 7th (2-Year Term), and 8th Athletic Districts, and an independent school representative was elected from Middle Tennessee.

- 1) Board of Control – 2nd Athletic District:

The nominees were J.D. Lambert of Knoxville Central High School and Jody Wright of Fulton High School.

Jody Wright was elected by a vote count to 13 to 30.

- 2) Board of Control – 5th Athletic District:

Michel Sanchez of Cane Ridge High School was the only nominee and was elected.

- 3) Board of Control – 7th Athletic District (2 Year Term):

Dexter Williams of the West Carroll Special School District was the only nominee and was elected.

- 4) Board of Control – 8th Athletic District:

Greg Scott of Milan High School was the only nominee and was elected.

- 5) Board of Control – Middle TN Independent:

The nominees were Mike Ellson of Christ Presbyterian Academy and Dennis Goodwin of Donelson Christian Academy.

Dennis Goodwin was elected by a vote count of 49 to 80.

- b. Legislative Council members were elected from the 3rd, 4th, 7th (1-Year Term), and 8th Athletic Districts, and an independent school representative was elected from East Tennessee.

- 1) Legislative Council – 3rd Athletic District:

The nominees were Angie Cass of Ooltewah High School and Autumn O'Bryan of Cleveland High School.

Angie Cass was elected by a vote count of 25 to 9.

- 2) Legislative Council – 4th Athletic District:

Greg Wyant of Siegel High School was the only nominee and was elected.

- 3) Legislative Council – 7th Athletic District (1-Year Term):

Jonathan Kee of Huntingdon High School was the only nominee and was elected.

- 4) Legislative Council – 8th Athletic District:

The nominees were Dan Black of the Bradford Special School District and Jeromy Davidson of Westview High School.

Dan Black was elected by a vote count of 14 to 7.

- 5) Legislative Council – East TN Independent

Kenny Sholl of McCallie School was the only nominee and was elected.

4. Proposals for Changes in TSSAA Bylaws

- a. Proposed Addition to Article IV, Section 7 (Rules of the Game) of the TSSAA Bylaws:

Religious headwear is permitted, provided it is not abrasive, hard, or dangerous to the participant and any other player, and must be attached in such a way it is highly unlikely to come off during play. Religious headwear does not need to comply with any of the color restrictions defined in applicable sport uniform codes.

Religious headwear in wrestling must comply with the safety standards of the sport and be approved by the head coach and contest referee.

Hijabs, turbans, and yarmulkes are acceptable types of religious headwear.

Rationale:

On September 15, 2020, one of our Muslim female student athletes who wears a hijab was forbidden from playing in a freshman volleyball game due to a referee citing a rule from the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) handbook requiring state association approval for religious head coverings, with the rationale that it is a change in uniform that requires prior approval by TSSAA. We were not aware of this rule, and Valor student-athletes had in the past participated in TSSAA-sanctioned events while wearing a hijab.

This incident has caused tremendous harm in our community, and we ask TSSAA to come alongside us in taking steps to ensure that no Tennessee student-athlete faces an obstacle to exercise their religious freedom or engage in the joy of sports. TSSAA has the opportunity to join several other state associations in establishing a solution at the state level. The TSSAA may adopt a change in its bylaws recognizing that student-athletes may wear their religious headwear in TSSAA events, provided that the headwear is not dangerous to student-athletes.

Submitted by Valor College Prep

VOTE

	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
East	95	14
Middle	119	20
West	70	16
Total	284 (87.4%)	50 (18.9%)

- b. Proposed Change to Article II, Section 8 (Eighth Grade Participation) of the TSSAA Bylaws:

An eighth grade student is eligible to participate for a member school if he/she is enrolled at the school. A seventh grade student is eligible to participate for a member school in individual sports if he/she is enrolled at the school. Any student repeating the seventh or eighth grade shall not be eligible for high school participation during the year that the student is repeating the seventh or eighth grade. Participation as a seventh or eighth grader shall not reduce the number of semesters a student is allowed to participate after enrolling in the ninth grade.

Rationale:

Allowing 7th graders to become eligible for senior high sports could become a good resource for small schools that house grades K-12 or 6-12. This would allow more participation within the school for individual sports. There are situations where the school may have interest in a sport but they don't have enough students interested on a HS or MS level but they do have an interest with that sport as a whole. There are other cases where financially a school may be able to cover either a HS or MS team but if they are able to cover one, the school could add more sports to their program as a variety.

Submitted by Memphis Rise Academy High School

VOTE

	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
East	25	85
Middle	42	96
West	29	57
Total	96 (29.5%)	238 (89.8%)

- c. Proposed Changes to Article IV, Section 8 (TSSAA Sports Calendar Definitions) of the TSSAA Bylaws:

Off-Season

Begins with the school's elimination from the post season tournament play in a particular sport and concludes with the end of the school year. Coaches may deliver instruction in an individual or team setting to no more than the stated number of players allotted for each particular sport (Basketball-3, Baseball-5, Softball-5, Football-7, and Soccer-6).

Pre-Season Practice Rule

Begins the first day of school until the first official day of practice in that particular sport. Coaches may deliver instruction in an individual or team setting to no more than the stated number of players allotted for each particular sport (Basketball-3, Baseball-5, Softball-5, Football-7, and Soccer-6).

Rationale:

Eliminate confusion amongst coaches. There are coaches around the state who believe as long as they stay within the allotted number they can work with their players in a team setting.

Submitted by Pope John Paul II High School

VOTE

	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
East	81	27
Middle	93	43
West	61	24
Total	235 (72.3%)	94 (35.5%)