

ANDALE FOOTBALL SMOKE SIGNALS

November 26, 2018

When the changes for the new football classifications were announced, a great deal of confusion arose among the schools that were in the 4A classification. For three decades, the Kansas high schools ranked 65th through 128th in enrollment size were classified as 4A, with the largest 32 schools ranked 6A and the next 32 larger schools ranked 5A. The 5A and 6A schools had succeeded in abandoning the district system and instead based the playoffs on a system of seeding based on the regular season record. KSHSAA split 4A down the middle, creating two classes, 4A-I and 4A-II, for football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball. The 64 school 4A class was intact for track and field, wrestling, and cross-country. The district system continued for the two new football classes.

It remains a mystery to us exactly how the rational was applied, other than the renaming of the classes in the restructuring of the old 4A-I and 4A-II. The old 4A-1 got exactly what they were clamoring for. Districts were eliminated and seeding was used to determine the playoff brackets. Instead of equal treatment, the old 4A-II became an even more competitive class, beefed up with the addition of the 16 largest 3A schools. Five of the first eight games were committed to district play, with league play rendered meaningless in some cases.

The classes most profoundly affected by the change are the old 4A-II and the old 3A classes. Quite certainly adding the largest 16 schools of the old 3A to the 32 school 4A-II class could do nothing but make a competitive class more competitive. There are beneficiaries. The new 2A class got rid of its 16 largest schools along with a new name.

The non-football sports classifications also got a makeover. The system in place last year had 32 teams in 6A, 5A, 4A-I, and 4A-II and 64 teams in 3A and 2A. The new scheme equalizes 6A, 5A, and 4A at 36 schools and the remaining classes at 64 schools. This means that four 5A schools will be bumped up to 6A and eight 4A schools will move to 5A. Some of the schools moving from 4A to 5A are Hays, KC Sumner, Andover Central, Bonner Springs, Arkansas City, and McPherson. Most significantly, the smallest 20 4A schools will move to 3A. Included in this group are Wichita Collegiate, Hugoton, Jeff West, Concordia, Smoky Valley, Holcomb, and Marysville. Already one of the most competitive of the six classes, 3A will be competition on steroids. Andale will be 4A for non-football sports this year.

Saturday's 3A state 3A final at Hutchinson had last year's 3A champion Sabetha defeating Pratt 43-42 in overtime. The Frogs' Travis Theis rushed for 245 yards and 5 touchdowns, threw for 143 yards and a touchdown, and time after time was the stopper on defense from his linebacker position. The Sabetha repeat shows the parity of the 3A schools added to 4A-II to beef up the class. The Indians found out several decades ago, during a six year stretch in 3A in which they failed to make the state playoffs, that there were no gimmes in the smaller class.

With the same district schedule as this year, the Indians, with a solid number of experienced players expected to be returning, should be planning on another run at the title. Although Andale should certainly have high expectations, you can put your money on a bet that they will be the number one target of all of their opposition.

We have not yet seen the Eagle's All Metro team. All-state teams selected by newspapers and the football coaches association will be announced over the next two weeks.

The Andale basketball teams open play at home against Andover Tuesday, December 4. The remaining December schedule is at Maize South on December 7, home vs Clearwater on December 11, home versus Collegiate on December 14, and at Augusta on December 18.

The wrestling team will debut at the Pratt Tournament on Saturday, December 1.

Last week our Andale Trivia Question was: how many times have the Indians played in the state football semifinal game?

Sub-States in Football for Andale - 10 times

1997 - Sabetha home, Sabetha won state
2003 - Holton away, Holton won state
2005 - Ulysses away, Holton won state
2006 - Ulysses away, Andale won state
2007 - Ulysses home, Andale won state
2008 - Topeka Hayden home, Hayden won state
2014 - Holcomb home, Andale won state
2015 - Holcomb away, Holcomb won state
2017 - McPherson away, Bishop Miege won state
2018 - Pratt away, Sabetha won state

This week's Andale Trivia Question: How many times did the teams that eliminated the Indians from the playoffs go on to win the state football championship?

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