

October 11, 2017

TO: WPIAL Athletic Directors and Media  
FROM: Tim O'Malley, Executive Director  
SUBJECT: 2017 WPIAL Championship Football

The pairing meeting for the 2017 WPIAL football championships will be held in Salons C through E of the Grand Ballroom at the **DoubleTree Hotel – Green Tree** (located off Mansfield Road – Green Tree below the WPIAL offices) on Monday, October 30, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

Championship play will begin in week ten, Nov. 3 – Nov 4, 2017, with a eight-team bracket in classifications 6A, 5A, 4A, and 3A and a sixteen-team bracket in classifications 2A and 1A as detailed below and determined by **the WPIAL Tie-Breaker System**. **The tournament will** culminate with the four classification championships in 6A, 5A, 4A, and 3A at Heinz Field on Saturday, November 18, 2017. The 2A and 1A Championships will at Robert Morris University on either Friday November 24 or Saturday November 25, 2017. The **WPIAL Tie-Breaker System** will be used to determine section championship, play-off entry, and home-field assignment where applicable. If teams tie in section record for the section championship, they will be declared champions and each will receive a section plaque. The possibility exists that teams from the same section may play each other as early as the first round.

### **WPIAL CLASS 6A 5A and 4A FOOTBALL PLAYOFF SYSTEM**

- There are 8 playoff spots.
- Based on team records using all sections games, the top four teams in each section qualify for a playoff spot.
- The top two teams in each section will play home games in the first round of the playoffs.
- Semifinals will be played at neutral sites.
- The WPIAL will determine the playoff brackets.
- The official PIAA ball of the WPIAL playoffs is the Wilson GST WTF 1003

*In ties for playoff spots or home field, the following method is used.*

1. Head-to-head competition
2. Gardner Points system
3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or - )
4. Coin flip

(PLEASE REMEMBER, THE TIEBREAKING SYSTEM REVERTS BACK TO HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION WHENEVER POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. EXAMPLES ARE LISTED LATER)

### **WPIAL CLASS 3A PLAYOFF SYSTEM**

- There are 8 playoff spots.
- Based on team records using all sections games, the two teams in each section qualify for a playoff spot and also two third-place "wild-card" teams that will be determined using the 3A Wild Card System defined below.
- The top team in each section will play a home game in the first round of the playoffs.
- One second-place team will receive a first round home playoff game and will be determined using the 3A Wild Card System defined below.
- Semifinals will be played at neutral sites.
- The WPIAL will determine the playoff brackets.
- The official ball of the WPIAL playoffs is the Wilson GST WTF 1003

*In ties for playoff spots or home field, the following method is used.*

1. Head-to-head competition
2. Gardner Points system
3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or - )
4. Coin flip

(PLEASE REMEMBER, THE TIEBREAKING SYSTEM REVERTS BACK TO HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION WHENEVER POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. EXAMPLES ARE LISTED LATER)

### **CLASS 3A WILD-CARD SYSTEM**

The playoffs consist of the top two teams in each section and two third-place "wild-card" teams. The top team in each section, and the top second-place team will play home games in the first round of the playoffs.

To determine the two wild-card teams, and the second-place team that earns a home-field playoff game in the first-round games, the following system will be used:

All potential qualifiers and tiebreakers will be based on the results of the following games:

- a. Section 1 – 6 Section games + 1 game vs. 3A Section 3
  - b. Section 2 – 7 Section games
  - c. Section 3 – 7 Section games
1. Overall Record of the 7 games defined above.
    - a. If three teams are tied, head-to-head competition is applied, but only in the remote possibility that a team from the Section 1 played and defeated the teams in Section 2 and Section 3 that they are tied with for either second or third place.
  2. Gardner Point System based on 7 games defined above.
  3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or -) for the 7 games defined above
  4. Non-section head-to-head competition using 7 games as defined above is an applicable tie-breaker only in this situation: Team A, B, and C, all from different sections, are tied in records using the 7 games defined above. Either Garner Points or WPIAL point-differential system eliminates Team A, then head-to-head competition in a non-section game (if applicable) would determine the winner between Team B and Team C.
  5. Coin Flip

### **WPIAL CLASS 2A PLAYOFF SYSTEM**

- There are 16 playoff spots.
- Based on team records using all sections games, the top five teams in each section qualify for a playoff spot.
- A 16<sup>th</sup> team (a sixth-place finisher) will qualify as a "wild-card team" and will be determined using the 2A Wild Card System defined below.
- The top two teams in each section will play home games in the first round of the playoffs. Two third-place teams will also play home games in the first round. Those two teams will be determined by the "2A WPIAL wild-card system."
- Quarterfinals and semifinals will be played at neutral sites.
- The WPIAL will determine the playoff brackets.
- The official ball of the WPIAL playoffs is Wilson GST WTF 1003

*In ties for playoff spots other than wild-card or home field, the following method is used.*

1. Head-to-head competition
2. Gardner Points system

3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or - )

4. Coin flip

(PLEASE REMEMBER, THE TIEBREAKING SYSTEM REVERTS BACK TO HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION WHENEVER POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. EXAMPLES ARE LISTED LATER)

### **CLASS 2A WILD-CARD SYSTEM**

In Class 2A, the top five teams in each section make the playoffs, and also one sixth-place “wild-card” team. The top two teams in each section, and the top two third-place teams will play home games in the first round of Playoffs.

To determine the “wild-card” teams, and the two third-place teams that will earn home-field in first-round games, the following system will be used:

All potential qualifiers and tiebreakers will be based on the results of the following games:

- a. **Section 1 – 6 Section games + 1 game vs. Section 2**
- b. Section 2 – 7 Section games
- c. Section 3 – 7 Section games

1. Overall Record of the 7 games defined above.
2. Gardner Point System based on 7 games defined above.
3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or -) for the 7 games defined above
4. Non-section head-to-head competition is an applicable tie-breaker only in this situation: Team from section 1 is tied with and played a team from section 2 then head-to-head competition in a non-section game would break the tie.
5. Coin Flip

### **WPIAL CLASS A PLAYOFF SYSTEM**

- There are 16 playoff spots.
- Based on team records using all sections games, the top five teams in each section qualify for a playoff spot.
- A 16<sup>th</sup> team (a sixth-place finisher) will qualify as a “wild-card team” and will be determined using the A Wild Card System defined below.
- The top two teams in each section will play home games in the first round of the playoffs. Two third-place teams will also play home games in the first round. Those two teams will be determined by the “A WPIAL wild-card system.”
- Quarterfinals and semifinals will be played at neutral sites.
- The WPIAL will determine the playoff brackets.
- The official ball of the WPIAL playoffs is the Wilson GST WTF 1003

*In ties for playoff spots other than wild-card or home field, the following method is used.*

1. Head-to-head competition
2. Gardner Points system
3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or - )
4. Coin flip

## **CLASS A WILD-CARD SYSTEM**

In Class A, the top five teams in each section make the playoffs, and also one sixth-place “wild-card” team. The top two teams in each section, and the top two third-place teams will play home games in the first round of the playoffs.

To determine the wild-card teams, and the two third-place teams in each class that will earn home-field in first-round games, the following system will be used:

All potential qualifiers and tiebreakers will be based on the results of the following games:

- a. Section 1 – 7 Section games + 1 game vs. Section 2
  - b. Section 2 – 7 Section games + 1 game vs. Section 1
  - c. Section 3 – 8 Section games
1. Overall Record of the 8 games defined above.
    - a. If three teams are tied, head-to-head competition is applied, but only in the remote possibility that a team from the Section 1 played and defeated the teams in Section 2 and Section 3 that they are tied with for either third or sixth place.
  2. Gardner Point System based on 8 games defined above.
  3. WPIAL point-differential system (10 points + or -) for the 8 games defined above
  6. Non-section head-to-head competition using 8 games as defined above is an applicable tie-breaker only in this situation: Team A, B, and C, all from different sections, are tied in records using the 8 games defined above. Either Garner Points or WPIAL point-differential system eliminates Team A, then head-to-head competition in a non-section game (if applicable) would determine the winner between Team B and Team C.
  4. Coin Flip

### **Tie Breakers Defined**

*PLEASE REMEMBER THE TIEBREAKING SYSTEM REVERTS BACK TO HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION WHENEVER POSSIBLE THROUGH THE PROCESS. EXAMPLES ARE LISTED BELOW.*

- If teams A, B and C are tied for second place, and team A has a 2-0 record in head-to-head competition, then team A gets second. The system then reverts back to head-to-head competition to determine third and fourth place. If team B beat team C, team B would be third and team C fourth.
- If teams D, E and F are tied for third place and all three are 1-1 in head-to-head competition, the system goes to Gardner Points. If they tie in Gardner Points, the system goes to the WPIAL Point-Differential System. In this case, let's say that team D has more points in the “Point-Differential System,” and thus finishes third. The system then reverts back to head-to-head for teams E and F. Team E beats team F; Team E gets the fourth-place spot.
- If four teams are tied for second place in a section: In head-to-head competition among these teams, team A and team B are both 2-1, while team C and team D are 1-2. In this case, team A and team B then revert back to head-to-head. Team A beats team B, so team A is second and team B is third. Then, to break the tie between C and D for fourth place, again revert back to head-to-head. Team C beat team C, team C is fourth.

### **HOW THE GARDNER POINTS SYSTEM WORKS**

If head-to-head competition does not break ties among three or more teams, the Gardner Points System is used. Here is how the Gardner Points System works:

- Only section games are used with the exception of the AAAA wild-card process.

- Teams are awarded 100 points for each win.
- The winning team gets 10 points for each of the defeated team's victories. For example, team A beats team B. Team B has a 3-3 section record, so team A gets 30 points.
- Add up the Gardner Points for all teams that are tied for a playoff spot in a section. The team with more Gardner Points gets the spot. If there is a tie in Gardner Points, the WPIAL Point-Differential System is then applied.

### **HOW THE WPIAL POINT-DIFFERENTIAL SYSTEM WORKS**

If neither head-to-head competition, nor Gardner Points breaks the tie among three or more teams, then the WPIAL "Point Differential System" is used. Here is how the system works:

- Only section games are used with the exception of the AAAA wild-card process.
- A maximum of 10 points is earned in a victory and a maximum of 10 points is lost in a defeat.
- Points are based on comparative scores
- For example, a 14-7 victory is worth 7 points for the winner, and a minus 7 points for the loser. A 20-10 victory is worth 10 points for the winner and a minus 10 points for the loser. A 35-7 victory results in only 10 points for the winner, and a maximum minus 10 points for the loser.
- Add up the points in the "Point Differential System" and the team with more points breaks the deadlock among tied teams.
- If there is still a tie among three or more teams after head-to-head, Gardner Points and the Point-Differential System, a coin flip will be used.

### **HOW A REQUIRED COIN FLIP WILL BE CONDUCTED**

In the event that neither head-to-head competition, Gardner Points, nor the WPIAL Point-Differential System breaks a tie among three or more teams, a coin toss will be conducted. Here is how a coin toss will work:

- A representative from the tied teams will meet in the WPIAL office, or an agreed-upon site, to conduct the coin toss.
- All tied teams will simultaneously toss coins until one team's coin is "different."
- The team with the "different" coin is eliminated.
- The two teams left use head-to-head game competition to determine the winner.
- If the two teams left did not play head-to-head in a game, a third party will toss the coin. One of the teams will call the coin before it is tossed. If correct, they win. If incorrect, the other team wins.

All playoff teams **MUST BE REPRESENTED** at this meeting. It is required that all participating teams exchange game dvds of weeks eight and nine either physically or via HUDL. All 6A -3A schools may continue with the mandated online film exchange through HUDL. Since it cannot be established that ALL 2A and 1A schools are using HUDL, each of these schools must physically bring game dvds from weeks eight and nine. Once your opponent is announced, the involved schools may then decide to exchange game dvds online. All teams advancing through the tournament must continue to exchange game dvds either physically or online.

### **All schools must comply with this exchange.**

Those teams who will not qualify for entry into the 2017 football tournament are permitted to play a tenth week game provided they have not played 10 regular season games, but these must be scheduled on an individual basis. There will be no committee to assign the teams.