

## Break tradition and play over the holidays

Written by Scott Unash

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First of all, here's wishing everyone a very happy holiday season!

Each year at this time of season, my mind returns to the same thought: why can't we play high school basketball over the holiday break? Each year, I watch games and tournaments from Chicago and others around the country involving great teams getting together for Holiday Hoops.

It has long been a rule here in the state of Iowa that no games are played over the holiday break. I was told this goes back to the energy crisis of the 1970s, when schools shut completely down over break to save energy. Schools are now open and teams practice, but still no games over the holiday break.

While for the most part I think it's good for the players and coaches to take some time off, I also think we are missing out on a great basketball opportunity.

Why can't we play one game over the break? The players can still have the days around Christmas off, but then come back the week between Christmas and New Year to get a game in. It's no different than the scrimmages that are taking place all across the state during this period. But instead of just your run-of-the-mill regular game dates, let's make it exciting for the teams that want to play, or for the various groups that want to organize a game or tournament.

How exciting would it be to have an organized tournament or a doubleheader or some kind of day-long extravaganza at the soon to be renovated US Cellular Center or a college venue? You can bring in some of the top teams from Iowa or the Midwest. How about this for another idea: an MVC-CIML Challenge tournament at various locations?

I know the IHSAA and the IGHSAA will probably not go for this idea because it will not be fair for all the member schools across the state. Here's your solution to this situation: have the game played over the break not count toward a team's record or their seeding for the

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tournaments. You can have the option to play a game or attend a scrimmage, it's your school's call.

Think about the possibilities of potential great matchups. Plus, former players and students are back over the break from college or in town to visit family and friends for the holidays and are looking for things to do and activities to attend. And, if properly organized, something like this could be a money-maker for booster clubs in need of money to help all school programs.

I really believe it's time to re-evaluate having games over break. Times have changed since the decision to stop holding games over holidays came down and I think this can be a win-win situation for all involved if it is given a chance to start and grow.

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