

Let all prep teams into playoffs

Written by Bob Brooks

Thursday, 04 October 2012 13:30 - Last Updated Thursday, 04 October 2012 21:53



There's one thing we can say at the start with some surety: This state will never have a one-class basketball tournament in this millenium. And of course that goes without saying for football.

But as we come to the 24th of October with the start of the high school football playoffs, it is a wonder to yours truly how much leeway is given to losing teams making the playoffs.

With Xavier a certainty for postseason, there are other teams from eastern Iowa that have already qualified for playoff action in Class 4A with Iowa City West, Pleasant Valley, Cedar Falls, Muscatine, Dubuque Senior and Davenport Assumption.

That group does not have to win another game to make the postseason tournament. Where does that leave the rest of the Cedar Rapids/Marion Metro area? Let's just say you need some more wins, baby.

That would include Marion with its 5-1 record coming into the stretch drive, because the Indians are in Class 3A and a district setup instead of a points system like 4A. They certainly should get in, because even a fourth-place team in their district can qualify for tournament competition.

It would behoove Cedar Rapids Prairie and Linn-Mar, who clash Friday at Linn-Mar, to record a couple more victories in the next few weeks. For Kennedy, Washington and Jefferson, they need at least two more wins with their 1-5 records.

You see, the benchmark is usually three wins and six defeats to make the playoffs. So there will

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be several teams with losing records who reach the first round of the playoffs. We're emphasizing "first round," because they probably will get waxed right out of the box.

Which leads me to a conclusion: The Iowa High School Athletic Association might as well start again from zero and have a playoff format that includes every team in the state. After all, that would increase gate admissions, which in my view is the reason for this convoluted setup in the first place. And it would add just one more round to the current setup.

But we wish all of the teams that qualify well, and hope they have a good experience in football and sportsmanship.

THE CLASS 4A high school golf championship, featuring entries from Kennedy and Xavier, will be contested at the Arnold Palmer public fee course at the Tournament Club of Iowa Friday and Saturday. We certainly wish the Cougars and Saints good shooting this weekend.

Kennedy has been a regular customer at the state tournament, but Xavier is making its first trip to state since 1999. The Saints originally thought this was their first appearance at the state golf meet, but further researched uncovered their visit in 1999.

It's interesting how this course became a Palmer design in Polk City. It occurred when Arnie showed up for the Senior PGA Championship at the Des Moines Golf and Country Club a few years ago.

While he was appearing at the tournament, he also was meeting with Des Moines entrepreneurs about developing a golf course in the greater Des Moines area. And by week's end, Arnie with his charm had sold the investors the idea of building the Tournament Club of Iowa with the Arnold Palmer design logo.

Arnie had come to Iowa's capital city with his tremendous popularity and salesmanship. And in a few days he left with a top-notch public fee course that will host the state tournament this weekend.

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It will be a tough test for all of the state's best 4A golfers.

Keep it in the fairway.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)