

## We can 'Save The Valley' with football quotas

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 16:49 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 September 2011 16:59

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*(Editor's Note: This article is part of the Metro Sports Report's attempt to save the Mississippi Valley Conference as a football league and stop the move toward Class 4A district football).*

The Metro Sports Report thinks it has found a way to "Save the Valley" as a football league.

We think our solution would solve scheduling problems, let smaller schools play Class 3A football and protect the Mississippi Valley Conference as a football league.

It would keep 32 teams in the Class 4A playoffs and forestall the move toward Class 4A district football.

Our solution is fairly simple. It's called quotas, and we think it can be popular, successful and painless.

First, some background information.

There are four conferences for the Class 4A schools in Iowa with the Mississippi Valley, the Mississippi Athletic, the CIML and the Missouri River. We think our solution would help all four leagues - not just the Valley - and preserve the integrity and rich traditions of all four conferences.

Here are the highlights of our proposal:

1) Xavier and Dubuque Wahlert are excused from the Mississippi Valley and allowed to play football in Class 3A, as they seem to want, but would retain their membership in the MVC in all other sports. That would leave the Valley with 12 schools for football.

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2) Davenport Assumption and North Scott are excused from the Mississippi Athletic Conference and allowed to play in Class 3A, as they seem to want, but would retain their membership in the MAC in all other sports. That would leave the MAC with eight schools for football.

3) The CIML would retain all 18 of its schools and would add Ankeny Centennial as a 19th school for football in 2013.

4) The Missouri River Conference would retain all five of its schools.

5) Each of the four leagues would receive a guaranteed number of spots for the Class 4A playoffs according to the following plan:

-- A) The Mississippi Valley Conference gets nine automatic berths (out of 12 teams) in the 4A playoffs every year.

-- B) The Mississippi Athletic Conference gets six automatic berths (out of eight teams) in the 4A playoffs every year.

-- C) In addition, the MVC or MAC would get a Wild Card spot in the playoffs each year - either a 10th team from the MVC or a seventh team from the MAC - to retain the current system of 16 playoff teams from the eastern part of the state. The Wild Card would be determined by a select committee, reflecting the relative strength of each league in a particular year.

-- D) The CIML gets 12 automatic berths (out of 18 or 19 teams) in the 4A playoffs every year.

-- E) The Missouri River Conference gets three automatic berths (out of five teams) in the Class 4A playoffs every year.

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-- F) In addition, the CIML or Missouri River Conference would get a Wild Card spot in the playoffs every year - either a 13th team from the CIML or a fourth team from the Missouri River - to retain the current system of 16 playoff teams from the western part of the state. The Wild Card entry would be determined by a select committee, reflecting the relative strength of each league in a particular year.

Each conference would select its own playoff teams, based on criteria established by each league. The Wild Cards would be selected by a selection committee, perhaps supplied by the Iowa Football Coaches Association. Likewise, the committee would determine the seeds for the Class 4A playoffs.

The quota system outlined above comes remarkably close to reflecting what happened in the Class 4A playoffs last year when the CIML had 14 playoff teams, the Valley had nine playoff teams, the MAC had seven playoff teams and the Missouri River had two playoff teams.

Four of those CIML playoff teams had losing records last year. Marshalltown, Waukee and Urbandale all made the playoffs with 3-6 records and Indianola was 4-5, so sacrificing one or two of those playoff spots does not seem to be a great hardship.

Two of the Valley's playoff teams had losing records with Waterloo East (3-6) and Iowa City West (4-5). Likewise, two MAC playoff teams had losing marks with Burlington (4-5) and Davenport Central (4-5).

Each league would determine its own schedules. The Mississippi Valley Conference, for instance, could divide into two six-team divisions and proceed from there. Each team would play five games in its own division, each team could play two games against teams from the other division, and each team could play two games against teams from other leagues or from Class 3A districts.

Under this system, Kennedy and Linn-Mar could put Xavier on their schedules with no harm to anyone. Linn-Mar could play Marion, a 3A school, without any trouble. Kennedy, Washington and Jefferson could continue their round-robin series.

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Teams from the Mississippi Athletic Conference would continue to play a full round-robin within their league, but also could play Quad City schools from Illinois or face teams from the Valley.

Teams from the Missouri River Conference could play teams from Nebraska or South Dakota, or could face Class 3A schools from western Iowa.

We feel this quota system has something for everyone and solves many (if not all) of the problems facing teams around the state. It helps with schedules, helps with travel and preserves the leagues.

We feel strongly that our system is much better than harming the Valley, MAC, CIML and Missouri River leagues and eliminates any need for Class 4A district football.

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