

## **MVC votes for 4A district football**

Written by Jim Ecker

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Mississippi Valley Conference football died Tuesday morning.

The principals of the MVC schools voted Tuesday in favor of switching to Class 4A district football for the 2014 season, which means the Valley will no longer function as a football league.

The vote came at a conference meeting at Cedar Rapids Washington High School. The "vast majority" of principals supported district football, according to Iowa City West principal Jerry Arganbright.

The Mississippi Valley Conference will continue to have league schedules and crown league champions in the 20 other varsity sports, but not football.

The Iowa High School Athletic Association will assign 12 MVC schools to Class 4A districts and formulate schedules this winter. Two MVC schools – Xavier and Dubuque Wahlert – previously decided to play at the Class 3A district level next season.

The Mississippi Valley Conference was the last league in the state to vote in favor of district football. The Mississippi Athletic Conference voted for district football last month.

"I think it was inevitable," said Paul James, the athletic director and football coach at Washington.

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"It's unfortunate, because it's been an extremely good league for a long time," he said. "A lot of 1A, 2A and 3A conferences have gone by the wayside that have been around for a long period of time, too. I guess it's just the direction that high school football is going."

The Mississippi Valley Conference traces its roots to the 1927-28 school year.

There will be 46 schools at the Class 4A level for the 2014 campaign. There are currently 25 Class 4A schools in the West and 21 in the East, but James thinks the IHSAA will split them 23-23. The most likely candidates to switch from 4A West to 4A East are Ottumwa, Marshalltown or Mason City.

"I think they've got to send two out of those three this way," said James.

There will be eight districts with five or six teams apiece. Six of the districts will have six teams, and two of the districts will have five teams. The top four teams in each district will make the playoffs.

"I think the districts will come out by the end of the month and then probably around state basketball time in March they'll probably have the schedules done," said James.

Only district games will count toward the playoffs. Each team will play either four or five non-district games as well.