



INSIDE OHSAA SOFTBALL



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Tournament Edition

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The OHSAA Softball Tournament continues to be one of the best in the nation. However, most state tournaments (including Ohio's) are set up as "geographic tournaments", not 'best of the best' tournaments. This is primarily for travel reasons – it is difficult to send a team from Portsmouth to Cleveland to play in early rounds of the tournament. This document explains many misunderstood facts about the OHSAA Tournament.

Why Teams from One District play Teams in Another District at Regional Play

It gets complicated with the traditional method of OHSAA Tournament structure – why a Columbus team has to come all the way up to BGSU to play in a regional with 3 NW Ohio teams. It starts with these 3 simple facts:

- There are 4 Regions for each Division
 - There are 6 Different Athletic Districts set by the OHSAA
 - There are more teams in a division in 1 district than another
- So, trying to create equity in this is the challenge.

How do you get 4 Regional Qualifiers out of SIX different Athletic Districts? To answer, consider this first:

- Each Athletic District has a certain number of teams in its boundaries
- The number of teams that qualify to a Regional is in proportion to the number of TOTAL teams in that division.

Using Division I Softball as an Example:

- The Northwest has 17 Division I Softball Teams while the NE has 77 Division I Teams. Since there are 185 TOTAL Division I teams in Ohio, it stands to reason the NE SHOULD get a greater number of qualifiers to the Regional Tournament. IF the NW was permitted 4 qualifiers with 17 teams and the NE 4 with 77 teams, everyone would want change immediately!

Years ago, a formula was developed to create a fair

"Representation" – being explained here.

Total Teams in Division / total team in Regional (16) = "the ratio"

So, using the above example, $185/16 = 11.5625$ (the ratio)

Now, it is broken down by District in the following way:

Total teams in the District (per division) / the ratio.

So...using the **NORTHEAST** as an example in Division 1:

$$77/11.5625 = 6.6594 \text{ (rounds down)}$$

Voila...the NE gets 6 qualifiers to the Regional Tournament!

Compare that to the Northwest that has 17 teams. That 17

divided by the ratio of 11.5625 = 1.4702 (rounds to '1'). The

NW therefore, receives 1 qualifier to the Regional tournament.

Do the math...for every 1 Regional Qualifier, that means one

2017 State Tournament Schedule

Division I

Division IV

Division III

Division II

Jerry Snodgrass Assistant Commissioner
Lauren Prochaska Program Coordinator

ALL Districts Set Up Tournaments Following OHSAA Tournament Regulations

Despite the difference among districts on "Site and Assignment" information, the OHSAA's Board of Directors approves regulations that ALL districts must follow. The entire Board approved regulations can be viewed at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/sbrgltts.pdf>

Who Determines Which Regional's Match Up at the State Tournament?

A: Ditto from above. The drawing for state tournament pairings was also conducted in a draw held by OHSAA staff with the approval of the OHSBCA.

Why does one District run a "Super-Sectional/Open Draw" and the other not?

A: Each District Athletic Board has the authority to determine how tournaments are arranged at the Sectional/District level. It may be more conducive in one area of the state to do this than another...and "DAB's" are given that freedom.

Has any thought ever been given to playing on Home Fields?

A: There is no regulation prohibiting this. More and more District Athletic Boards are scheduling games on home fields of higher seeded teams – of which they are given that authority to do so.

How Many Players Can Dress for a Tournament Game?

A: In both baseball and softball, 22 are permitted in uniform for any contest. The individuals may change from game to game, but 22 is the maximum permitted.

How Is It Possible For 2 "Top 10" Teams to Match Up in The SECTIONAL?

A: Yes, it does happen. With '50' ESPN stations to choose from, fans are brought up visualizing the NCAA model. The NCAA does not care that an East Coast team is assigned to a West Coast Regional in mid-week. All in the name of a 'best of the best' tournament. The OHSAA tournament, for its entire life, has been set up as a geographic based tournament. Many long-time fans may remember the "County Tournament" that led to the District, and culminated in the State Tournament; all set up geographically. Not always popular, but the existence of District Athletic Boards (DAB's) are to organize tournaments on a geographic basis and develop seed procedures within the geographic boundaries.

District tournament. For every District tournament, that means two Sectional Tournaments. The NW has only 1 District tournament this year while the NE must have 7. Since only 4 teams make up a Regional Tournament, this is where it gets complicated. It is relatively 'easy' to set up a Regional tournament for FOUR of the NE District qualifiers. And...4 do 'go together' to play a Regional at the University of Akron.

But what about the other 3? OHSAA rules require the other 3 to combine with another district make up another Regional. So, where do you 'send them'? To Cincinnati? To Columbus? No, because as you notice below, the SW District and the Central District both have 4 Regional Qualifiers – enough for their 'own' regional. So....common sense says to 'send them' to the NW and combine with the single (1) regional qualifier from the NW based upon this 'representation formula'.

So, as you can see, the number is a ratio between the numbers of schools in that district in that division to the TOTAL number in the state in that division. So how many Regional Qualifiers does each Athletic District get?

	2016 & 2017 Boys Representation			
	Div. I	Div. II	Div. III	Div. IV
Central	4	1	2	2
East	0*	2	1	1
Northeast	7	5	4	3
Northwest	1	3	4	5
Southeast	0*	2	2	2
Southwest	4	3	3	3

	2016 & 2017 Girls Representation			
	Div. I	Div. II	Div. III	Div. IV
Central	4	2	2	2
East	0	2	1	1
Northeast	7	5	4	3
Northwest	1	3	3	5
Southeast	0*	1	3	2
Southwest	4	3	3	3

-Note all add up to 16 (aka the "Sweet 16").

When the ratio figures to "zero", the schools are combined with schools in another district at the sectional/district level. Those marked with an () in 2014 are combined with teams in other Districts for Sectional/District Tournaments. It simply is impossible to have a Sectional/District tournament for only 2-4 teams in these situations.

And yes...it works this way in all Team Sports in Ohio that have sectional and district qualifiers to a Regional.

Now, some of the more common questions answered:

“The 4 Best Teams in the State Are In Our District Tournament....Why Can't They Be Moved”?

No question, we have all grown up in the NCAA March Madness era where a team from the East Coast is sent to Provo, Utah to play in the NCAA First Round games on a weeknight to balance the NCAA Tournament. In fact, all 68 teams in the NCAA are 'seeded' for overall balance. It is the NCAA. Schools have Academic Advisors. Institutions have large travel budgets making this possible. Though fans often WANT this and (as a former coach I admit it), COACHES would travel across the state on a school night if it meant playing a lower seed – it is simply impossible to do this in school athletics. Hence, the assignment of schools to respective “Athletic Districts”.

Who decides where a Regional is played?

Most regional tournament sites are secured by contractual arrangements long before the Regional games. This is necessary to 'lock in' sites that make their facilities available for other events. Some Regional sites must wait to determine representation. In other words, it would make no sense to book a site in advance and then find no teams in that area of the state would meet for a regional. Booking a facility and then cancelling it at a later date creates issues as well. So, a few are determined as soon as “Representation” is determined (every 2 years). Keep in mind that at the time Regional sites are secured, NO one knows which teams will be participating in the Regional. And, not everyone is willing to host a regional on Memorial Day Weekend. So, when a regional is played and fans often look and say “who assigned THIS site when there are other places closer”.....that fact needs to be considered.

If there are 4 District Champions coming into a Regional Site, How is it Determined “Who Plays Who”?

Every February, a “Draw” is held to determine which District champion will play each other at the Regional level. In some cases, it is simple ‘luck of the draw’ (or BAD luck of the draw) that the same 2 district sites pair up year after year in the first game of the regional. The ‘draw’ is conducted at by OHSAA staff members and witnessed with the approval of the Coaches’ Association. Draws are made available publicly as soon as they are drawn.

What criteria are used for selecting a Regional Site?

A number of criteria are used; geographic location, size, parking, COST, quality management capabilities are among them.

Don't Regional Sites Make Considerable Amounts of Money Thereby Making “hosting” more attractive?

Actually, “no”. Regional sites do NOT receive a percentage of the gate receipts or any ‘bonus’ for hosting, regardless of attendance.

What DO Sites Actually Receive For Hosting OHSAA Regional Tournaments?

Regional sites receive a normal ‘rental fee’ charged by the institution. For most High Schools, this ‘rental fee’ is one that is established by the local school board. At the Regional level and at more and more Sectional/District sites – a ‘flat fee’ has been determined to cover the costs of the tournament and the site is paid that amount. For larger institutions/sites, rental fees are generally established by a governing board – of which the OHSAA pays. Personnel working a tournament also are paid from gate receipts – from scorekeepers, scoreboard operators to ticket sellers and takers. All receive a very modest sum for their employment – all subject to the same taxes anyone else pays for employment.

Why Do Some Areas Have “Open Draws” and Other Areas Do Not?

The 6 Athletic Districts in Ohio were originated with the sole purpose of organizing and conducting tournaments at the Sectional/District level for the schools assigned to their Districts. Since geography varies in all 6 Districts, there is no *overriding* regulation that dictates that each District conduct seed meetings and subsequent Sectional/District tournaments a specific way in respect to seed/draw protocol. In the Central District for example, travel by division is relatively less than the NW District thereby making it more feasible to conduct and open draw in one district than the other.

Who Decides Where Sectional & District Tournaments are Played?

This is also a responsibility for each of the 6 District Athletic Boards.

Why Do Districts Play Games on Different Nights?

While this is also a factor determined by each respective “DAB”, there is consideration for girls’ teams from a school playing in the tournament as well.

Why Are Some Districts Playing Games on Home Fields?

Currently 2 “DAB’s” in the state have exercised this freedom of choice to do so – by playing at least the first 2 rounds on the court of the higher seed. Each DAB is given that authority to do so.

Competitive Balance Bylaw Will Change Things Considerably in 2018

The Competitive Balance Bylaw that was passed in the spring of 2015 will affect the divisional alignments of schools. Where softball players on a team's 9-12 roster reside (inside the school district they play for or outside the district they play for) will have an effect on the enrollment count that will be used for determining divisional placement. Roster counts and ‘where athletes reside’ will be counted in the spring of 2017 for use in the 2018 and 2019 seasons. Much more will be forthcoming on this.

Current Enrollment Numbers/Divisional Alignment – SOFTBALL

<u>Division</u>	<u>Girls Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
I	330 or more	185
II	190 - 329	186
III	110 - 189	187
IV	109 or less	190

Current Enrollment Numbers/Divisional Alignment – BASEBALL

<u>Division</u>	<u>Boys Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
I	342 or more	193
II	189 – 341	193
III	110 – 188	195
IV	109 or less	192