

Small schools will split into two divisions

By Andy Heintz

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Small Kansas high schools have voted in favor of having two divisions for post-season playoffs in volleyball, basketball and scholar bowl, but not until the 2010-2011 school year.

Ballots were sent out by the Kansas State High School Activities Association on May 1, said Gary Musselman, executive director of the group. He said 57 schools voted in favor of the two divisions, 21 against and 23 did not vote.

After the schools have been as-

signed to all six classes, he said, half of the Class 1A schools with the larger enrollments will be assigned to Division 1 and the rest to Division 2. He said if Class 1A has an odd number of schools, Division 1 will be assigned one more school than Division 2.

Parker Christensen, girls basketball coach at Golden Plains High School, said his school will probably be one of the bigger teams in Division 2. He said he didn't think the new postseason format would have much effect on the level of competition his team will have to face.

"Sometimes the smaller schools have better teams than the bigger teams," he said,

The new format does away with regional tournaments in volleyball and basketball. All teams in Class 1A will have a chance to participate in state playoffs.

Laura Rush, activities director for Brewster High School, said that her school would probably be part of Division 2 also. She said with many smaller schools declining in enrollment, the two divisions should make these smaller schools more competitive.

Rush said no longer having a regional tournament would help Brewster schedule games with teams that are constantly switching from class 1A to 2A and vice versa due to fluctuating enrollment numbers, because they would have

an extra week for games. Schools they usually play that deal with this unstable enrollment situation include the county-seat districts of Atwood, Hoxie, St. Francis and Quinter, said Rush.

Kim Schriener, administrative assistant for Heartland Christian School, said she expects the school to be in Division 2 as well.

The splitting of 1A schools into two postseason divisions has forced the association to find new locations for state tournaments. Francine Martin, assistant executive director, said normally the state volleyball competition for 1A and 2A schools has been held at Fort Hays State University. This will have to change because there

will be two state tournaments for 1A schools, and there will not be enough room for all three tournaments in the same location.

Martin said either both Class 1A state tournaments will take place in Hays and the 2A state will find a different location, or one of the 1A divisions will compete somewhere else. She said the 1A basketball state tournament is normally in Hays, but with the new postseason format, one of the tournaments must move. The association has yet to set up locations, she said.

The substate tournaments will be run differently when Class 1A splits. Traditionally there have been eight locations, said Martin.

When the new format goes into

effect, she said, the No. 1 seed will host the first round of the class 1A substate, said Martin. After the first round, the substate tournaments most likely will be at one of the schools in the tournament. This means the 1A tournaments will be run the same 2A, 3A and 4A substate tournaments.

Travis Smith, activities director at Golden Plains, said the new format will give his school more flexibility when it comes to scheduling because they can schedule games during the week that used to be reserved for the regional tournament.

Playoffs this year will be under the old system, with a single division and regional tournaments.

K-12 baseball squad heads to Grainfield

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The Colby K-12 baseball team, for players under 12, will play in a round-robin tournament at 4, 6 and 8 p.m. Friday in Grainfield.

Other teams at the event will be Quinter, Grainfield, Norton and WaKeeney. The results will decide seeding at the zone tournament in WaKeeney on Saturday, said Coach Gary Slavens.

Slavens complimented Keagan

Morgan, Jaxon Haas and Brooks Curry for their pitching efforts this season.

"They are some of the best pitchers out there," he said.

He said two of the team's best hitters this season are Brady Holzmeister and Griffan Slavens.

The rest of the player include Jonah Thompson, Matthew Barnum, Shevin Martin, Garrett Rose, Andrew Voss, Kyle, Travis and Corey Finley and Clay Cassaw.

The team's record stands at 6-10.

Chiefs sign quarterback to a multiyear contract

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kansas City has not officially named Matt Cassel its starting quarterback, but there can be no doubt now.

After praising his leadership and work ethic through spring workouts, the Chiefs announced Tuesday they had signed the 27-year-old Cassel to a multiyear contract. Terms were not disclosed, but he will almost certainly be one of the highest-paid members of the team.

"We are excited to be able to reach a long-term agreement for Matt Cassel to be a Kansas City Chief for many years to come," owner and board chairman Clark Hunt said in a statement. "His proven leadership on and off the field will be a tremendous asset to the organization."

A lifelong backup until Tom Brady went down with a season-ending knee injury last September, Cassel was obtained from the Patriots during the offseason along with linebacker Mike Vrabel. The former seventh-round pick led New England to an 11-5 record and the Patriots made him their franchise player, meaning his salary for this season will be about \$15 million.

New head coach Todd Haley, taking over for Herm Edwards af-

ter a 2-14 season, refused to name a starter at any position during off-season workouts. But it was obvious to everyone the team belonged to Cassel.

"I go out there each and every day with that focus that I'm the starter," Cassel said during a June minicamp. "Competition brings out the best in everybody."

The signing will come as welcome news to Cassel's new coaches and teammates. Amiable and hardworking, he appeared to win over everyone at minicamp.

"I think he's got some unique leadership qualities. I think his teammates like him and have respect for him. I think he's doing a pretty good job on the field, too," Haley said last month. "He's doing everything that I'm asking him, that our coaches are asking him to do."

After one workout, wide receiver DevarD Darling declared Cassel "a breath of fresh air."

"He has a lot of swagger, a lot of confidence."

It's good for us," said Darling. "We trust in him that he's going to go out there and lead us all the way."

Unsettled quarterback play was a big factor in KC's franchise-worst, two-win finish last year.

Let's play ball



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Lauren Dempewolf whipped a throw back to her team's pitcher during a Bambino Girls League softball game between the red and yellow teams Tuesday evening at the Colby Recreation Complex.

Kansas State coach rebuilding program

MANHATTAN (AP) — Kansas State is putting football coach Bill Snyder at the head of the parade in its campaign to recapture the trust of angry donors and disillusioned fans.

"There is no better scenario in all human history than to come into a new presidency and a new athletic directorship and have the greatest coach in the history of the institution (be) a 'new' coach on the sideline," athletic director John Currie said while introducing a series of new initiatives on Monday.

"It couldn't be a more comforting or reassuring thing for both president (Kirk) Schulz and I."

Even though Snyder's name was mentioned in an audit that embarrassed the school and infuriated its fan base, the Wildcats have decided that he is nevertheless the most respected asset they have. He has not been accused of wrongdoing and steadfastly main-

tains he never received anything that was not due him.

"We have unbelievable confidence in coach Snyder and I've been really, really honored to spend time with him," said Currie. "I've already learned so much from him and have even more respect for him than I had when I first walked on the campus six weeks ago."

Snyder began his resurrection of Kansas State's long-moribund program in 1989 and tickets that year cost \$9. So, Currie announced, there will be 1,989 tickets go on sale for \$9 for the Sept. 5 home opener against Massachusetts, a game Kansas State has dubbed a "K-State family reunion" in a drive to sell out Bill Snyder Family Stadium and welcome him back to the sidelines.

After retiring following the 2005 season, Snyder agreed to return when Ron Prince was fired last winter.

Nuggets get players, but surrender draft pick

DENVER (AP) — The Denver Nuggets acquired Arron Afflalo and Walter Sharpe from Detroit on Monday in exchange for a future second-round draft pick.

The Nuggets also received cash in the deal. The Pistons freed up close to \$1.8 million in salary cap

space.

Afflalo averaged 4.9 points in 74 games last season. The former UCLA star scored a career-high 24 at Houston on March 18.

Sharpe played in eight games with the Pistons last season.

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