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UIL, sportswriters team up while pondering rules change

DENISON (AP) — Texas sportswriters and the University Interscholastic League have not seen eye to eye on several occasions, but the UIL made a rare request recently when it asked the Texas Sports Writers Association for help.

Two hotly discussed changes are on the drawing board, and the UIL is seeking the help of Texas' sports writers in gauging the sentiment of football fans across the state.

One of the changes would result in all six state championship football games being played in Austin over one weekend.

The other would involve some type of overtime to decide tie games instead of the present method of using penetrations, first downs and total yards.

A poll of superintendents and athletic directors in the Denison area indicates most of them oppose the changes.

The nearby states of Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas and Missouri play their state championship games at one site.

Oklahoma plays its games over two weeks. The others play on a Friday and Saturday.

The format has been successful in each state and has been responsible for spectacular crowds.

The biggest complaint about hosting all of the Texas title games in one site concerns geography and economics.

"It doesn't seem right to send two teams from North Texas to Austin for a state championship game," Denison athletic director Marty Criswell said.

"We almost had a championship game here in Denison this year with Lindsay and Fannindel. They wanted to play here if they met in the championship game."

"Would it be fair to make two teams like this play in Austin?"

However, it's rare that two schools from the same area meet in the finals because of the way teams are bracketed by regions.

Many sports writers love the idea of playing all the games at one site because of the opportunities it provides.

Such an event would bring college and high school coaches to Austin from all over the state.

This type of event also would be a special treat for the football fan.

Few gridiron fans in the big cities have ever seen six-man football.

"I think it would be a wonderful idea," said Sherman head football coach John Outlaw. "This sort of thing can really create some excitement."

"We did it in Arkansas, and it was a very successful thing."

Pottsboro head football coach Bo Jones said, "I have real mixed emotions. It would be good for the viewers, but ... I sort of think it should be left up to the two schools involved."

Bells head football coach Monte Pritchett said: "I wouldn't mind it as a coach, but it can be a negative. I coached in Kansas, and they do it successfully."

"Still, if I was involved, I probably would rather have a say in where I played."

Bonham head coach Loy Dean Clark opposes the idea. "The two people involved in the game should determine the site. Would it be fair if we played a team near Austin for the championship?"

There were more positive reactions to the possibilities of changing the methods of determining the winner in playoff games that end in ties.

Criswell would like things left the way they are.

"I think 48 minutes is enough time to decide a contest," he said. "High school kids don't need to play any longer. We still have the two-point play, and I personally like the present system."

Denison superintendent Jacobs agrees with his coach.

"It's not pro ball. It's high school kids playing a game," Jacobs said.

However, Outlaw is for a change. His team tied Fort Worth Tech in the playoffs last November and was eliminated because the teams also were tied in penetrations and Trimble Tech had more downs.

"I'm definitely in favor of overtime," Outlaw said. "They play overtime in basketball and extra time in baseball. Why not football?"

Bonham's Clark said he supports overtime for district and playoff games, but not for district games.

Pottsboro's Jones also dislikes current rule.

"I'm all for overtime," he said. "You've got to make it fair. Death may be the way to get there's a lot of good ideas."

"I'm totally against first downs and total yardage deciding the come of a game."

C.L. Chambliss, superintendent at Pottsboro, said he also thinks time for a change.

"They need to do away with flips, and there's always the threat of the officials messing up counting penetrations and downs. When you go home at night, you need to know who's lost," Chambliss said.

Former Texas A&M head coach Emory Bellard, now head coach of Spring Westfield, missed the playoffs this past season because of a mistake by the referees.

Bellard's team tied for second place in District 15-5A, but was edged to third place because of a referee's mistake — later confirmed by league officials — that cost Westfield a penetration.

Some coaches say they'd like to see more time in the state championship game, but nothing else.

Former Steelers lead Hall of Fame inductees

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — Art Shell of Oakland, Willie Wood of Green Bay and Pittsburgh teammates Terry Bradshaw and Mel Blount, key players for three of the game's most successful teams, were named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Tuesday.

"You've got representatives of the best teams of the '60s and '70s," Bradshaw said. "It speaks well for what athletes are taught. Athletes are told to win and they are judged on how many games they win. It's not personal accomplishments or statistics that matter most. America loves winners."

Wood spent 12 seasons as a defensive back with the Packers, who won five NFL titles and the first two Super Bowls, in 1967 and 1968.

"I was selected as a finalist a couple of years ago, but I wasn't chosen then," Wood said. "I started thinking that so many Green Bay Packers had gone in, maybe they might have used up their quota."

Shell played offensive tackle for the Raiders from 1968-1982 and participated in eight AFL or AFC title games and two Super Bowls.

He remembered that he had walked through the Hall of Fame a

decade ago prior to a Raiders exhibition game at Canton.

"I had no idea I'd ever be in there," he said. "You never think in terms like that. I was in awe walking through that building and reading about the people enshrined. It is hallowed ground. To walk through it was enough, but to be included in it is almost too much to believe."

Bradshaw and Blount were both inducted in their first year of eligibility.

Blount, a cornerback, and Bradshaw, a quarterback, each spent their 14 professional seasons with the Steelers, helping the club to an unprecedented four Super Bowl championships.

"This is a particularly good feeling because Terry and I came in together, we retired together and now we go into the Hall of Fame together," said Blount, 40, the director of player relations for the NFL.

Not selected from among the seven finalists were Bob Griese, quarterback of the Miami Dolphins; Ted Hendricks, a linebacker who played for the Baltimore Colts, Packers and Raiders; and defensive tackle Henry Jordan of the Packers.

Shell, Wood, Blount and Bradshaw will be enshrined Aug. 5.

Super Bowl gives NBC big ratings

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC's national ratings for the Super Bowl were up 4 percent over last year's game on ABC and exceeded the 120 million anticipated viewership, network spokesman Doug Kelly said Tuesday.

The San Francisco 49ers' 20-17 victory Sunday over Cincinnati drew a rating of 43.5 and a share, compared with 41.9 and a share last year for Washington against Denver.

The rating represents the percentage of TV's in the market while the share reflects the percentage of TV's on at the time.

NBC's postgame show had a 32.5 rating and 49 share, compared with 25.5 and 40 last year up 27 percent, Kelly said, making it obvious that "people are around for the end since it's decided in the final 34 seconds."

"We're very pleased with the ratings," he said.

The most-watched Super Bowl was NBC's 1986 game between Chicago and New England, set by an estimated 127 million viewers.



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