

Changes Coming For State Football Playoffs?

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There might be some changes concerning the state football playoffs. The North Carolina Coaches Association got together last week in Greensboro for their annual winter meeting, and the big issue concerned the new football playoff system. And to many of the coaches in attendance, the current

pod system that went into effect two years ago is a bust. The unanimous vote against the system does not guarantee that any changes will take place right away, or even at all. But it does open doors for discussion for the upcoming North Carolina High School Athletic Association Board of Directors meeting coming up this spring.

The pod system was basically created to alleviate travel concerns for schools making the state playoffs, especially with rising gas prices around the state. The biggest complaint, especially from coaches and fans, has been playing conference opponents in the opening-round of the state playoffs. And despite the goal of cutting travel concerns, teams were still making three or four hour trips to playoff games last season. In the past years, teams were divided into a western region and an eastern region with teams seeded 1-16. With the creation of the pod system, each region was split in half once again, creating a West, Midwest, Mideast, and East pod with teams seeded 1-8.

Another issue of discussion was the overall fairness of the pod system. As several coaches pointed out, teams that finished the season with the best record should be able to play a lower seeded team at home, regardless of travel. But under the current pod system, some of the top-seeded teams would have to play an eighth-seeded team that finished second or third in its conference, while another top seed found itself playing a team that barely made the state playoff. Coaches have argued that these conflicts have occurred because they've been based more on travel concerns than overall team records.

DAVIS JOINS BUCS COACHING STAFF

Butch Davis has been hired as a senior defensive assistant coach with the Tampa Bay

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Buccaneers. Davis, who was fired as head football coach at the University of North Carolina in July of 2011 following an NCAA investigation for violations and academic fraud, led the Tar Heels from 2007-10. He replaced John Bunting, who was fired in 2006, at Carolina. Davis has been a head coach with the Cleveland Browns (2001-04) and at the University of Miami (1995-00). He joins a Tampa Bay team that was 4-12 last season and closed out the year with a ten-game losing streak.