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HIGH SCHOOL

AHSAA announces public-private split for postseason competition starting fall 2026



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Key Points

- The Alabama High School Athletic Association will separate public and private schools for playoffs starting in the fall of 2026.
 - Public and private schools will still be allowed to compete against each other during the regular season.
 - This decision follows months of discussion, a lawsuit from the governor, and mediation involving the AHSAA.
 - Alabama joins four other states with a similar model for separating public and private school championships.
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The [AHSAA](#) will move to separate playoffs and championships for public and private schools through the 2027-28 school year, the organization approved in a 13-2 vote Friday, Jan 23.

The new Alabama High School Athletic Association structure will allow private and public schools to compete during regular-season play, but each

will have its own playoff and championships beginning for the fall sports in 2026.

Executive Director Heath Harmon announced that the AHSAA sees it as a restructuring of its postseason play between public and private schools. There will be six public school classes and two private school classes for football. Other sports will vary, but there will be eight championships for football.

Competitive balance and the multiplier have been scrapped — as private schools were reclassified by their enrollment numbers.

The announcement marks a major shift in Alabama high school athletics, changing the landscape of how member schools compete for championships.

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The [AHSAA reclassification committee](#) met twice in 2025, with the first meeting happening in June and the second in September. The meeting in June covered topics including eliminating the multiplier for private schools, applying competitive balance to both private and public schools and splitting coed sports when looking at competitive balance. The second meeting in September mainly centered around the current lawsuit the AHSAA was facing from Gov. Kay Ivey, who sued the AHSAA for its interpretation of the CHOOSE ACT on Sept. 4.

[A temporary restraining order](#) was placed on the AHSAA on Sept. 5, keeping it from enforcing any rule that makes acceptance of CHOOSE Act

funds the sole reason a student is ineligible to play sports.

On Dec. 10, the AHSAA announced that it was moving its reclassification announcement to Jan. 23, citing "current mediation." The AHSAA did not clarify what the mediation is over or who is party to that mediation. On Dec. 15, three AHSAA private school representatives were given 15 minutes to present solutions to problems facing private schools to the AHSAA Central Board of Control.

Days later, sources confirmed to the [Montgomery Advertiser](#) that the AHSAA was [discussing a split between AHSAA public and private schools](#) in reclassification.

[Alabama will be joining four other states](#) that have a model that allows private and public schools to compete during the regular season but split into separate divisions for championship play.