

Montgomery Advertiser

HIGH SCHOOL

Who won and lost new AHSAA reclassification in the Montgomery area?



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Key Points

- The Alabama High School Athletic Association will separate public and private schools for postseason play starting in the 2026 fall season.
 - This reclassification has created both benefits and new challenges for schools in the Montgomery area.
 - Some realigned regions, like Region 2-5A football, benefit from easier travel logistics and familiar competition.
 - Montgomery Catholic's football program faces a disadvantage due to significantly increased travel times for most of its new regional games.
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The [Alabama High School Athletic Association](#) made the biggest decision in the organization's history on Jan. 23, when a 13-2 vote by the Central Board of Control elected to split member private and public schools for postseason and championship play for the 2026-28 fall sports season.

The decision put public schools into [six classifications](#) and private schools in [two classifications](#) based on enrollment numbers, changing the landscape of Alabama high school fall sports in the upcoming years.

Reclassification has been received in different ways by both private and public schools. Some have benefited from the decision, while others have been presented with new challenges and disadvantages.

The [Montgomery Advertiser](#) is breaking down those that benefited, and those who might have disadvantages by the new [AHSAA reclassification in the Montgomery area](#).

Region 2-5A football: Benefited

Region 2-5A in football features eight teams, with five representing the Montgomery area. Logistically, it makes life easy for the Montgomery area teams because the three teams not in the River Region area are all under three hours away, with Benjamin Russell and Russell County under an hour and half away from the Montgomery area.

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Competitively, the region features a lot of familiar faces for the Montgomery area teams, but adds a Kirk Johnson-led Benjamin Russell team. Johnson coached Montgomery Catholic to two consecutive titles before leaving for Benjamin Russell, and the new alignment inserts his presence back into the Montgomery area. Five of the eight teams in Region 2 made the Class 6A playoffs in 2025.

Private A classification in the Montgomery area: Benefited

In both volleyball and football, the new Private A class logistically and competitively earned a big win when it came to the reclassification.

In football, Region 2-Private A features seven teams with five being directly in the city of Montgomery and the other two under an hour drive away. As for competition, it adds an extra something to in-city rivalries between private schools. Saint James, which was participating on the Class 4A level, will now compete against schools like Montgomery Academy and Trinity Presbyterian with similar enrollment numbers.

In volleyball, Area 4 is full of nothing but schools located in the city of Montgomery. For state runner-up Prattville Christian, it'll be put to the test with worthy adversaries like Montgomery Academy and other schools that were playing a class above.

Montgomery Catholic football: Disadvantage

Montgomery Catholic was classified in the Private AA, which houses private schools with bigger enrollment numbers, and the positives are that player safety was addressed. The Knights will still compete against schools that house talented football teams, but the issue here is logistics for the Knights.

Of the eight schools in Region 1-Private AA, only two are under a two-hour travel time away. The remaining five are in or around Mobile, which is about two and half hours away from Montgomery Catholic. The competition is

there, but the budget for travel could cut into things like gate revenue for the Knights.

Private school flag football: Disadvantage

As far as logistics go when it comes to area play for the private school flag football teams in the Montgomery area, it isn't bad. Teams can still fill the regular season with competitive AHSAA public schools. But what will hurt the Montgomery area schools is the competitive nature of the postseason in what is only 14 schools in the classification. With such a small pool of teams, the postseason could lose some of its glamour under the public school championships that feature more teams that made the postseason in 2025.