

## **Proposed State Regional Tournaments Will Be Fair *And Make Money***

Rarely these days, do policymakers find themselves presented with an opportunity to correct a long standing inequity that will at the same time generate much needed funds for the organization's programs. NYSPHSAA's Executive Committee is faced with just such an opportunity on October 20<sup>th</sup>. On that date, the committee will consider the proposal for a new state wrestling championship format. If approved, the proposal will establish a new format that will be fair to all the state's high school wrestling competitors and generate thousands of dollars in new revenue for the NYSPHSAA host sections.

Under the proposed new format for the state wrestling championships, state regional tournaments will become the first round of wrestling's state championship playoffs. These state regional tournaments will, first and foremost, level the playing field and give all the wrestlers in the state a similar path to the state finals. Multiple entries, based on the number of schools in a section, will advance to the regional tournaments and compete for berths in the state finals tournament. Secondly, because of the success of wrestling tournaments generally, the draw of a championship event and the fan base, these state regional tournaments will - as an added benefit - make money.

Unlike many other high school sports, wrestling tournaments have a long history - at every level - of making money. Evidence of this can be seen in a cursory review of school wrestling schedules across the state. More than 100 tournaments are scheduled annually. Schools these days could ill afford events that are a net financial loss. Generally speaking, from peewee tournaments to state championships, well-managed tournaments making a profit are more the rule than the exception. In fact, historically, NYSPHSAA's own championship wrestling tournament is the organization's third biggest moneymaker among all sports. Only football and basketball generate more revenue.

Not surprising for wrestling coaches and administrators is that the cost projections for the state regional tournaments show a real net profit. NYSPHSAA Sectional Wrestling Coordinators who have served for many years as tournament directors at school, league, class, sectional, and state levels developed these projections. They, by design, estimated higher costs and lower revenue to be conservative in their projections. Furthermore, to further ensure the financial success of these events, the plan is for these tournaments to be conducted at school sites rather than public arenas thereby avoiding expensive venue costs.

Finally, there are many people in the wrestling community who believe that, as an added benefit, the proposed new state tournament format will bring more fans and more revenue to NYSPHSAA's State Wrestling Championships. The new format will improve the competition thereby increasing interest and attracting more fans. New York's event has a lot of room to grow in this regard. The Pennsylvania State Wrestling Tournament averages 60,000 people in attendance - New York less than 20,000. It is worth noting that the new proposed state tournament format for New York is modeled after the highly successful Pennsylvania system.