Kansas makes changes to state basketball format

Press Release from the Kansas High School Activities Association

TOPEKA, Kan. – The KSHSAA State Basketball Tournament format and sites have been selected for the next two seasons. In 2026, the 1A Division I semifinals and finals will be played at United Wireless Arena in Dodge City. The 2A and 1A Division II semifinals and finals will be played at White Auditorium in Emporia while 3A and 4A semifinals and finals will be played at The Hutchinson Sports Arena at Hutchinson Community College.

In the largest school classifications, 5A and 6A semifinals and finals will be played at Koch Arena at Wichita State University. This will mark the first time since 1953 when state championship games of multiple classes were played at the same place.

In 2027, both Divisions of 1A semifinals and finals will be played at Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina. Class 2A and

Class 4A semifinals and finals will be played at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan. The 3A semifinals and finals will be played at The Sports Arena at Hutchinson Community College. The 5A and 6A semifinals will be played at White Auditorium in Emporia.

“The KSHSAA is an association of member schools, and the school leaders have asked for class consolidation of championships.” said KSHSAA Executive Director Bill Faflick. “This new format will achieve that result and provide a greater focus on the student athletes competing at the highest level with four state title games being played consecutively on championship Saturday. This modification allows basketball to follow the recently implemented format for championship soccer and football championship games. With more titles being determined at one location, the atmosphere in the championship arenas will be at an all-time high.”

The state tournament begins with the quarterfinal round which will be hosted at seven venues in five cities. To advance to the semifinals and finals sites, teams will need to win the state quarterfinal round games which will be played at United Wireless Arena, Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina, Mabee Arena at Kansas Wesleyan University, Koch Arena, Garvey Center at Friends University, White Auditorium, and the Kansas City Kansas Community College Fieldhouse in Kansas City.

2026 State Basketball Tournament Quarterfinal Schedule:

6A, 4A, 2A Girls, 5A, 3A, 1A Boys Quarterfinals – March 10 (United Wireless Arena, Koch Arena, Friends University, Tony’s Pizza Events Center, Kansas Wesleyan University, White Auditorium, KCKCC Fieldhouse)

5A, 3A, 1A Girls, 6A, 4A, 2A Boys Quarterfinals – March 11 (United Wireless Arena, Koch Arena, Friends University, Tony’s Pizza Events Center, Kansas Wesleyan University, White Auditorium, KCKCC Fieldhouse)

The quarterfinal round games are determined by proximity to the higher seed, not class. The highest four seeds of the state tournament will be placed as close to home as possible in the 28 quarterfinal round games across the state. If the distance from the lower seed is greater than 250 miles from where the game would be played near the higher seed, that game will be played at one of the quarterfinal sites centrally located. State brackets will not be reseeded after the state quarterfinals.

“With the top four seeds earning the right to play close to home, the quarterfinal rounds will provide a better environment and experience allowing more friends and family to attend the quarterfinal round,” said KSHSAA Assistant Executive Director and Basketball Administrator Kyle Doperalski. “This new format is a win for teams and school communities with an incredible atmosphere of four state championship games in the same venue on the same day. Fans and media along with non-advancing teams and coaches will have less decisions to make about what site to go to and watch the teams and players they want to see at the state tournament.”

The dates of the quarterfinal games are March 10-11, 2026 and March 9-10, 2027. The dates of the semifinals and finals are March 12-14, 2026 and March 11-13, 2027.

Two years ago, the membership expressed desire through the October Regional Administrator Meetings to combine classes at the state basketball tournament. Each class individually supported this concept. Working with the host sites to ensure top level tournament management, it was determined that the best course of action is the final four in each class advance to the site of the semifinals and finals with state quarterfinal games being played in proximity to the higher seed at neutral/college sites.