



High School Athletics Issue Brief

Issue Overview

Athletic competition is a vital part of public education. Whether a student is competing on the field or cheering in the stands, school teams provide a sense of community and purpose. Fair competition is the bedrock upon which public school sports are built. However, a disparity has emerged, especially at the 1A level. Unlike traditional public schools, which have defined geographic footprints, public charter and private schools do not have attendance boundaries. This clearly gives charter and private schools a huge competitive advantage because those schools can pull athletic talent from a far greater area than traditional public schools.

An analysis of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association database¹ shows inherent unfairness that is most evident in the sports listed below.

SPORT	TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL 1A TITLES	YEARS WITH AT LEAST 2 CHARTER/PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN FINAL 4
WOMEN'S SOCCER	0 of the last 9	8
MEN'S TENNIS	0 of the last 8	4
VOLLEYBALL	0 of the last 6	5
MEN'S SOCCER	1 of the last 6	5
MEN'S BASKETBALL	2 of the last 10	7

108 schools across North Carolina compete at the 1A level,²

- 67 traditional public schools
- 39 public charter schools
- 2 private schools

NCSBA Position

The competitive advantage charter and private schools obviously have over traditional public schools – as seen in the above chart – is simply not fair. Therefore, charter and private schools should be prohibited from competing in 1A playoffs.

Potential considerations include:

- Establish a second 1A playoff bracket for charter and private schools
- Bump 1A charter and private schools to 2A playoffs

¹ NCHSAA, Brackets, Championship Results & Record Books, <https://www.nchsaa.org/brackets-championship-results-record-books> (accessed January 20, 2023).

² NCHSAA, 2021-2025 Western and Eastern Region Schools, https://www.nchsaa.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2021-2025_ClassAlpha.pdf (accessed January 20, 2023).