More proof that Class 5A is broken in Kansas

By EARL WATT
Daily Leader

Last year I thought that Class 5A was grossly out of proportion when one private school one six state championships out of a possible 22.
That means one school out of 32, when the most any other school in any other class won was three, in Class 5A, St. Thomas Aquinas won six.
Let's say it was some fluke, that the stars magically aligned, that the school had coaching excellence in those specific sports, and that every exceptional athlete in those specific sports in the greater Kansas City, Kan., area just happened to attend one private Catholic high school.
So in one year one school had a miraculously great run.
Hold the phone.

Let's take a look at this year so far.
With two sports complete, girls tennis and girls golf, guess how many state championships Aquinas has already won?
Yep. Both of them.
Take a look at  the rankings of the remaining five fall sports:
Boys soccer: Aquinas is ranked No. 1.
Girls volleyball: Aquinas is ranked No. 1.
Boys cross country: Aquinas is ranked No. 1.
Girls cross country: Aquinas is ranked No. 1.
Football: Aquinas is ranked No. 3.
It must be a down year for Aquinas in football. That's the only explanation for the No. 3 ranking while every other fall sport has them either already with the state title or picked to win it.

Will someone at the Kansas State High School Activities Association continue to say that it just happened that way, that there's nothing peculiar about a school either winning or being projected to win every state title with the exception of one, and in that sport they are picked third?
I understand that rankings are not the final outcome, and we will continue to provide updates on

Aquinas and its second coming in terms of athletics.
The fact is the playing field in Class 5A is not even.
Public school attendance is based on the students' location of residence, private schools are not. Although some private high schools offer scholarships, they do not accept anyone and everyone who wants to attend. For public schools, it is required.
When comparing the athletic success of public schools vs. private, the true measure of a champion is to achieve the highest level among peers. Private schools separate the equality of public education and athletics.

It's not just Aquinas. Bishop Carroll and Kapaun, two more private schools, finished right behind Aquinas in golf and in the mix for tennis.
Last year these three combined for nine of the 22 titles in Class 5A.
If Liberal had that kind of success, like they did in football in the 1990s, the state would have changed the rules, like they did by allowing the second-place district teams into the playoffs.
Why did they do that? Because Liberal continually bumped private school Bishop Carroll out of the football playoffs.
The fact is public and private schools do not mix when private schools can pay more for teaching and coaching and be selective in their student population. There is no way one school can split its male and female athletes into seven different sports and dominate in all of them.
This deserves and requires an investigation by the KSHSAA.
Who in this state will have the courage to make a new classification for private schools to compete against each other with the ability to recruit and select their student bodies?
The state talks about putting the focus on the students, but until they fix this critical flaw, they have yet to prove the students come first.
If KSHSAA is not willing to correct this injustice, perhaps the public institutions should form their own activities association, one that allows expanded practice times and fairness on the playing field. That would truly benefit Kansas student athletes.