

[League Coordinators Names]-

I am writing to formally request that the recently announced change to the Fort Worth league advancement structure be referred to the Fort Worth League Rules Committee for reconsideration.

I understand the desire to ensure clarity around Sectional representation. However, introducing a single-elimination “final playoff match” midseason in divisions that were explicitly structured as round-robin leagues raises several significant concerns related to competitive integrity, participation, and long-term retention.

First, leagues with participation levels so low that playoffs are not equitable should not be adding additional barriers to participation. In two-team and three-team leagues, the primary governance objective should be fostering sustained local play, not engineering mechanisms to lock players into Sectional participation. Retaining engaged players in fragile divisions is more important to the health of the program than securing any particular roster for Sectionals. Policies that increase risk for players in low-participation leagues undermine that goal.

Second, the new mechanism is logically inconsistent with the stated rationale of sending the strongest team to Sectionals. A late-stage, single-match playoff creates a very real possibility that a team that did not win the regular season, and did not perform best across head-to-head competition, could advance instead. That outcome directly contradicts the competitive fairness that round-robin formats are designed to protect. From the outside, this approach risks making Fort Worth appear arbitrary rather than principled in its advancement decisions.

Third, this change was implemented after the season was already underway, and in at least one division after a clear leader had emerged. Midseason structural changes of this magnitude erode trust, alter player incentives, and place captains in untenable positions. Players begin to manage risk rather than participate freely, which is especially damaging in leagues that are already operating at the margins.

For these reasons, I believe the most appropriate alternative is to do nothing. Allow the round-robin results to stand, as originally designed, and preserve flexibility in Sectional participation for leagues that do not conduct playoffs. That approach aligns with fostering participation, improving retention, and maintaining competitive integrity. If that is not determined to be a viable option, I would encourage the rules committee to examine how HTA and NoHo handle

the situation. Their rules, while not perfect, are a lot better than what is communicated below.

I also ask that the League Committee address a related equity concern. This policy change appears to have been communicated only to certain women's leagues. The men's 55+ 6.0 division, which also consists of two teams, reportedly did not receive similar guidance or messaging. If low participation is the justification for this rule, it is unclear why it would apply selectively. Consistency across divisions is essential for both fairness and credibility.

I appreciate the work that goes into administering league play and understand that these decisions are not made lightly. My intent in raising these concerns is not to criticize individuals, but to urge careful reconsideration of a policy that may have unintended and lasting consequences for participation in Fort Worth leagues.

For clarity, I am an impacted player in this situation though I will most certainly also be blogging about this topic, regardless of the outcome.

Thank you for your time and for referring this matter to the League Rules Committee. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further if helpful.

Sincerely,  
Teresa