

Liberty North conference opponents could change

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A decision that is looming for the Hickman Mills School District will have a tremendous impact on the Liberty North athletic programs.

Hickman Mills is pondering whether to combine Hickman Mills and Ruskin together for budgetary reasons. If the district decides to bring the two schools together, it would radically alter the Greater Kansas City Suburban Conference alignment.

The alteration would be profound for Liberty North on the field and it could lead to substantial financial savings.

Under the current 2010-11 and 2011-12 alignment, Liberty North is in the Suburban Small Six with Grandview, Kearney, Hickman Mills, Platte County and Ruskin.

If Ruskin and Hickman Mills combine, a proposed realignment would have Ruskin-Hickman Mills moving up to the Suburban Big Seven with Lee's Summit West, North Kansas City, Park Hill, Park Hill South, St. Joseph Central and Truman.

The bottom two teams in enrollment in the Suburban Mid Six, Oak Park and Staley, would move down to the Small Six, creating a conference of Liberty North, Kearney, Grandview, Oak Park, Staley and Platte County.

The realignment would create some natural rivalries for Liberty North and greatly reduce travel costs. The Eagles would only have one conference road trip to south Kansas City instead of three and have two conference games a season against Kearney, Oak Park, Staley, schools that are less than 15 minutes away from Liberty North.

I have been told that the chances of Ruskin and Hickman Mills consolidating are good. But it is not a done deal. A decision has to be made within the next month because MSHSAA has to set football districts soon.