



The Flaget Museum

Xaverian Hall
St. Xavier High School Campus



Under the auspices of the Flaget Alumni Association

1942-1974

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"The Alabama System"

With the changes made by the KHSAA to the playoff rules for the coming football season I thought it might be interesting to review the 1960 Flaget football season. If you are a Flaget football fan, I am sure you are aware of "The Alabama System". You say you never heard of it? Well, that is what supposedly caused Flaget to miss out on winning another state football title in 1960. Lets start by saying Flaget had a great season in 1960. They were picked to finish no higher than fourth in the city race. The Braves finished the season losing only one game and tying one game. The loss, to an out-of-state team did not figure into the state championship, but the tie certainly did. The tie was with Male High. Because of this tie both Flaget and Male tied for the City Championship. Now on to the playoffs, which were in their second year. When two or more teams are tied going into the playoffs the Dickinson System is used to determine who will advance to what was then the City-County championship game. Both Flaget and Male posted wins over Trinity, Central, Manual, and St. X giving both teams a 23.125 rating in the Dickinson System. Only four regional games were counted in the Dickinson System and all regional losses and ties must be counted. Therefore Flaget's wins over DeSales and Shawnee as well as Male's win over Atherton were of no consequence in the calculations. When two teams are tied after the Dickinson System is applied, the "Alabama System" is used to determine the advancing team. This plan was adopted by the KHSAA board of commissioners for the newly adopted playoff system as reported in the August 1959 issue of "THE KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL

As in the Dickinson System, the "Alabama" system, so called because the Alabama high school athletic association uses it, only regional games are considered.

The tie-breaking system:

1. For winning a game, a team is awarded 10 points.
2. For tying a game, a team is awarded five points.
3. For each game won by a defeated opponent, one point.
4. For each game won by a tied opponent, one-half point.
5. For each game tied by a defeated opponent, one-half point.
6. For each game tied by a tied opponent, one-fourth point.

"4" gives Flaget two and one-half points while giving Male three points. Rule "6" is moot since the only ties by Male or Flaget were against each other. Flaget comes out on top no matter how you slice it. Nobody from Male, Flaget, or the KHSAA can shed any light on why Male advanced to the championship game over Flaget. This seems to be lost in time over the last fifty-nine years. I have had numerous people say, "well they must have done this or that" but no definitive answer. There was nothing in the newspaper to explain it. The only way Male could possibly be declared the advancing team is if the "Alabama System" rules were misapplied by ignoring rules "1 & 2" or by arbitrarily deciding only to use a limited number of regional games in the calculations. Now we all know that Paulie Miller was a very smart coach, and if he thought he was being messed over, he would have put up a fight. He did vigorously protest the situation but evidently to no avail. Prior to The Shawnee Atherton game, which somehow was to decide the city region advancing team, it was reported in the Courier-Journal that there was a good possibility of a rematch between Flaget and Male, which was supported by the KHSAA to determine the champion. Charlie Kuhn, the coach of Male stated, "that it was ridiculous to determine the champion by the winner of the Shawnee Atherton game." He stated that he was indeed in favor of a rematch with Flaget in order to determine the city representative in the State Championship game. Paulie Miller agreed totally with Kuhn on the rematch. However, after the Shawnee Atherton contest had been played to a draw, and Male was somehow declared the champion, Kuhn not only said he was not going to play a rematch but even denied having ever said he wanted one. Earl Cox, noted Courier-Journal sportswriter took issue and published quoted excerpts from Kuhn's conversations showing that indeed Kuhn had done a complete reversal on his stand of playing for the championship. Eastern the County Champion elected to forfeit the state championship game thereby handing Male an uncontested State Football Championship. In 1967 it looked again like Flaget and Male might tie in the Dickinson System and the "Alabama

That could happen if Manual loses to Trinity and DeSales Nov. 10, and Flaget loses to St. Xavier. Then, male and Flaget would wind up with identical Dickinson System ratings and Male, since it plays one more regional game than Flaget, would win on the tie-breaking method known as the Alabama System.

ATHLETE". On the left is a photo of the "Alabama System" rules as printed in the Courier-Journal on October 30, 1960. Only regional games count. Under rules "1 & 2" Flaget receives 65 points to 55 for Male. Under rules "3 & 5" both Flaget and Male beat four teams in common, so both would receive the same points. DeSales was winless so no points here for Flaget. Shawnee had two ties giving Flaget one point and Atherton had a win and a tie giving Male one and one-half points. Rule "4" gives Flaget two and one-half points while giving Male three points. Rule "6" is moot since the only ties by Male or Flaget were against each other. Flaget comes out on top no matter how you slice it. Nobody from Male, Flaget, or the KHSAA can shed any light on why Male advanced to the championship game over Flaget. This seems to be lost in time over the last fifty-nine years. I have had numerous people say, "well they must have done this or that" but no definitive answer. There was nothing in the newspaper to explain it. The only way Male could possibly be declared the advancing team is if the "Alabama System" rules were misapplied by ignoring rules "1 & 2" or by arbitrarily deciding only to use a limited number of regional games in the calculations. Now we all know that Paulie Miller was a very smart coach, and if he thought he was being messed over, he would have put up a fight. He did vigorously protest the situation but evidently to no avail. Prior to The Shawnee Atherton game, which somehow was to decide the city region advancing team, it was reported in the Courier-Journal that there was a good possibility of a rematch between Flaget and Male, which was supported by the KHSAA to determine the champion. Charlie Kuhn, the coach of Male stated, "that it was ridiculous to determine the champion by the winner of the Shawnee Atherton game." He stated that he was indeed in favor of a rematch with Flaget in order to determine the city representative in the State Championship game. Paulie Miller agreed totally with Kuhn on the rematch. However, after the Shawnee Atherton contest had been played to a draw, and Male was somehow declared the champion, Kuhn not only said he was not going to play a rematch but even denied having ever said he wanted one. Earl Cox, noted Courier-Journal sportswriter took issue and published quoted excerpts from Kuhn's conversations showing that indeed Kuhn had done a complete reversal on his stand of playing for the championship. Eastern the County Champion elected to forfeit the state championship game thereby handing Male an uncontested State Football Championship. In 1967 it looked again like Flaget and Male might tie in the Dickinson System and the "Alabama System" would again be used. The only difference was this time Male played the extra regional game. To The left is a photo of what appeared in the Courier-Journal on October 18, 1967 pertaining to this situation. As it turned out the "Alabama System" was not needed. Can you tell me why Flaget was not the city representative in the 1960 State Championship game? Nobody else seems to know, do you!

As always the Flaget Museum is accepting vintage Flaget memorabilia for display. Athletic programs, trophies, Landmarks and just about anything else from the years Flaget was open is sought. Just bring what you might have to any luncheon, drop it off at the museum, or call me if you need the items picked up.

