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## **Yampah Mountain explores fielding high school hockey team**

### OTHER NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS

The following are highlights from the Colorado High School Activities Association's Legislative Council meeting in Aurora on Thursday.

- The council approved the addition of another classification for girls tennis, girls swimming and girls golf, adding a 3A classification for the upcoming school year. Preliminary numbers would allow 40 teams in each swimming classification, 51 in each girls golf classification and 50 in each girls tennis class.
- The council emphatically struck down a measure that would have added an eighth classification — Class 6A — to Colorado high school football.
- The council voted against a proposal to return the Class 4A state basketball tournament to 48 teams from its current 32-team playoff bracket.
- Proposals to move the start of baseball season and the championship dates of the state baseball tournaments back one week both failed in a close vote. Both proposals, however, are expected to be revisited in future meetings, according to CHSAA.
- Among the new members of CHSAA's board of directors is Doug Pfau, the Weldon Valley athletic director. Pfau is the father of Cody Pfau, a Grand Valley High graduate who won national women's wrestling championship at Oklahoma City University earlier this year.
- Beginning with the 2015-16 season, wrestling will use a new weight management plan for athletes who are trying to drop weight. According to the wrestling report, the Optimal Performance Calculator "permits wrestlers to descend at a rate no higher than 1.5 percent of their body weight per week." Each wrestler will have their weight assessed before they compete.

Source: Colorado High School Activities Association

**GLENWOOD SPRINGS** — The addition of junior varsity play in Colorado high school hockey on Thursday may have opened the door for another Garfield County high school to begin fielding varsity teams as early as the 2016-17 school year.

Yampah Mountain High School in Glenwood Springs has a meeting with Colorado High School Activities Association commissioners next month to discuss the school fielding athletic teams, including high school hockey. A move during CHSAA's Legislative Council meeting in Aurora that approved junior varsity hockey programs in the state opens the door for the school to field a prep hockey program and, far down the road, others possibly.

"The reason that our school was created was to give opportunities to students who wouldn't have had them elsewhere," said school Principal Leigh McGowan of Yampah, which has served area students as an alternative high school. "This is a good fit for us, and it gives us a chance to offer something regionally."

First, however, Yampah must become a sanctioned CHSAA member. That opportunity will come on May 28 when CHSAA representatives will meet with McGowan and Glenwood Springs Youth Hockey Association director TK Kwiatkowski to tour the school campus and the hockey facilities at the Glenwood Springs Community Center Ice Rink.

"Our board of directors has been talking about bringing high school hockey here for more than a decade," Kwiatkowski said. "We feel really good about this."

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The addition of junior varsity teams among high school hockey teams in Colorado could also bring in Crested Butte, which is also considering adding a JV team, according to [www.CHSAAnow.com](http://www.CHSAAnow.com). Crested Butte was one of the hockey teams that played with the high-school aged Glenwood Springs Grizzlies in the Colorado Prep Hockey League, which provided an outlet for prep players who weren't affiliated with high school hockey in the state.

Additionally, if Yampah does attain CHSAA membership, the school mascot would be the Grizzlies. It would not only be a carry over from the GSYHA hockey mascot, but would, as McGowan said, fit into the school name.

“The name Yampah was meant to signify healing,” she said. “Really, that’s what the grizzly is. It’s the big medicine bear.”

The change would go into effect in time for the upcoming 2015-16 high school hockey season. McGowan added that she would be open to adding sanctioned ski teams at the school but emphasized that would take place own the road and not in the immediate future.

Glenwood Springs High School was originally approached by Kwiatkowski about fielding a prep hockey team. Glenwood Athletic Director Craig Denney, however, said that the Roaring Fork School District is still trying to bring sports that were cut at the depth of the Great Recession back to pre-recession funding levels before more sports can be added.

The move doesn’t require schools to have JV teams, but it gives them an option to do so. With this move, Kwiatkowski said Yampah would play for two years at the JV level under a probationary status before moving up to varsity status on a full-time basis. He also noted the recently completed renovations at the Community Center Ice Rink. They totaled \$1.1 million, adding new locker rooms while almost fully enclosing the covered ice rink.

“I would put our facilities up against any place in the state,” Kwiatkowski said. “CHSAA’s concern was that we’d have to cancel games due to weather. It’s happened because one team couldn’t make it through the weather to get here, but it’s never been because of our rink.”