

Panthers One Step Closer to Moving to CWC

On Thursday, June 23, 2016 the WIAA Board of Control voted unanimously to approve a conference realignment that will move Pittsville and Northland Lutheran from the Marawood Conference to the Central Wisconsin Conference for the 2017-18 school year. The vote also approved Wisconsin Valley Lutheran to move from being an independent school to finally having a home in the CWC. The next step in the process is a 40 day waiting period before the WIAA Board of Control can make the move final.

The conference change is difficult to think about as Pittsville has been a member of the Marawood since the 1950's. In reality, what started as a conference with schools centered in Marathon and Wood counties that were all fairly close in enrollment, has turned into a conference that spans 5 counties and ranges in enrollment from 69 students (Northland Lutheran) to 452 students (Tomahawk). Several schools have left, and several schools have been added, which is consistent with athletic conferences throughout the state. Recently, centrally located Edgar, which is also an original Marawood member, has been unsuccessfully requesting to leave the Marawood. While Pittsville's enrollment has dropped to 185 students, Stratford has grown to a school of over 300 students. This isn't the original Marawood anymore.

The Central Wisconsin Conference (CWC) is currently an 18 team conference that is split into 2 divisions for most sports. With the addition of Pittsville, Northland Lutheran and Wisconsin Valley Lutheran, the conference will have 21 schools and the initial proposal is for three 7 team divisions for Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball and Softball. These are proposed to be divided by enrollment and location with Pittsville most likely fitting in with the medium sized schools. Football and Track will be divided into 2 divisions with Pittsville probably playing in the small school division. The new CWC would have 11 Wrestling and Cross Country teams that would compete in one conference. All of this is tentative as the administrators of the new conference will have to finalize everything when it becomes official. The benefit of the new CWC conference will be that with 21 teams, there will be flexibility to group by enrollment and keep all schools competitive. It also will allow for easy transitions as school enrollments fluctuate.

Pittsville also looks forward to joining the CWC and introducing them to a conference wide art show, conference music festivals, and student leadership opportunities. These are tremendous academic traditions that Pittsville will proudly spread from the Marawood Conference to the schools of Central Wisconsin.

Change can be scary, but it is often the start of something great. If after the 40 day waiting period the WIAA approves this change, the Pittsville community will have some new opportunities and challenges. The most important thing to keep in mind is the students of Pittsville schools. The students are the reason the coaches, administration, and school board have pursued this change and they will need everyone's support and positive energy to become the best young men and women they can be. The past will always be there to look back on, but we only have one chance at making the future great. Together we can do just that.