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100 W. Broadway, Frankfort KY

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Who's Number One?

After beating Louisville High School in a regular season game on Feb. 18, 1911, Lexington High School declared itself the state champion. The Courier-Journal reported that the school based its claim on the fact that it had “defeated every team in the State which has any pretensions to the championship, except the Louisville Manual High School team, which, it is claimed here, refused to play the Lexington team.”

Well into the 1910s, teams declared themselves to be state champions based on their season records. There

was no state tournament until 1916, when Centre College organized an invitational and hosted eight teams: Henderson (Barret Manual Training High School), LaGrange, Monticello, Clark County, Somerset, Danville, Dayton and Winchester.

Henderson had an undefeated season going into post-season play that year and won the state title. In 1917, at another Centre-organized tournament, the title again went to a western Kentucky team. Owensboro beat Somerset in the championship game.



The Owensboro State Championship team of 1917. (Photo from the Courier-Journal.)