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To whom it may concern:

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Will Bixenman, the PE Teacher and Activity/Athletic Director at USD 292 Wheatland High School. I was born and raised in northwest Kansas. Open Spaces Sports has been covering our area athletes since I was playing high school sports myself. I have been working with them for years, so it only feels right to write this letter in support Rich and Cody Epp, along with all of the other phenomenal employees at Open Spaces Sports.

Let me first start off by saying I understand and truly appreciate what the Kansas State High School Activities Association has done with providing and covering high school sports in our state, especially during COVID-19. As you all know, the pandemic affected our country in many ways. One positive is that it forced school districts to begin live streaming all events, as best as they can allowing fans to be a part of sports still. At Wheatland, we did our best to use Facebook and Youtube to stream our events. Open Spaces isn't able to cover all of our events like some of the surrounding schools, but they still covered a large portion before, during, and after Covid.

Having friends and family all over the state that we enjoy watching and supporting through live streams, I have always appreciated the quality of service that Open Spaces provides. They are able to offer the high quality video feed, but their personal commentating is what sets them apart from many other streaming services. While watching other streams, I regularly find myself wishing for that missing piece.

Last year our football team earned the State Runner Up title. Over the course of that season, Open Spaces covered every single game (with video and commentary) except for the state game due to the agreement with NFHS. This year our volleyball team had a great season and qualified for the state tournament in Emporia. Throughout the season, Open Spaces covered a somewhere around 20-25 of the matches, but again were not able to cover the State Tournament.

As the athletic director, I received many messages from fans sharing their disappointment in the NFHS coverage. While NFHS streaming is great for schools who don't have other options, it falls short to what Open Spaces offers. Fans complained about NFHS not working at all on several occasions, poor stream quality, and usually lack of commentary. When commentary is available, it just isn't the same as Open Spaces who has invested so much time and knows the teams and athletes on a much more personal level. As the Athletic Director and basketball coach, I have signed up for an NFHS account and have used it on several occasions and while I appreciate it, I have had similar experiences to the other fans. One instance in particular was the State Basketball Championship last year when our area Greeley County Jackrabbits won the title. The coverages of NFHS and Open Spaces Sports (Dalton Snyder) was a huge disparity.

Again, I truly respect and appreciate all of the time and effort from KSHSAA and NFHS, but strongly believe that Open Spaces Sports, and other services like them, should be allowed to cover their teams in post season play. They know our teams, players, and coaches in a way that can't be matched.

With respect,

Will Bixenman