

Minutes of the 2014-15 IHSA Chess Advisory Committee Meeting March 9, 2015

The IHSA Chess Advisory meeting was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Monday, March 9, 2015, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Tournament Director Chris Merli, Garrett Scott of Bloomington (H.S.), Ken Lewandowski of Evanston (Twp.), George Dzuricsko of Chicago (De La Salle), Mark Grishaber, Principal of Chicago (Taft), and Jeff DiOrio of Naperville (North). Scott Johnson, IHSA Assistant Executive Director, chaired the meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommended the following changes to the Terms and Conditions:

1. Section III-F. Team Tournament Requirement

Recommendation: Change to say that in order to compete in the state tournament, a team is required to participate in at least two team-paired tournaments during the regular season.

Rationale: The team-tournament requirement was introduced several years ago to ensure that coaches and players acquire some experience playing in a team-paired tournament prior to participating in the state tournament. The change will increase the experience level of the players at the state tournament and require teams to show an added commitment to participating at state.

Died for Lack of Motion

2. Section V-B-1 and -4. Pairings

Recommendation: Rewrite section 1 (seeding procedures) in generic terms. The basic concept is that the field should be "broadly divided into two portions such that the top portion shall be a multiple of eight and that the top portion not be the larger of the two." At the same time, change Section 4 to state that "the acceleration break shall be set at the same number as the number of teams in the top portion of the tournament."

Rationale: The current language assumes a field of no more than 144 teams. This year's field was 146 teams and is likely to grow in the future.

Approved

3. Section V-B-2b. Pairings

Recommendation: Change to say that teams from the same conference will not be paired in Rounds 3 and 4.

Rationale: The current language conflicts with other language in the By-laws.

Approved

4. Section V-B-8. Pairings

Recommendation: Change to say that teams may be re-paired at the discretion of the Pairing Director.

Rationale: The current language say that teams will be re-paired at the discretion of the Pairing Director, which gives the impression that it is mandatory to do so.

Approved

5. Section E-1. Time Control

Recommendation: Change to say that "in the event a clock without a delay is used the time will be set to game 55."

Rationale: The correct setting for a clock without a delay is not explicitly stated elsewhere.

Approved

6. Section VIII-C-6. Team Roster

Recommendation: Change to say that a team may edit its "standard lineup" at any time starting with Round 1.

Rationale: In 2013-14 the lineup procedure was changed to allow for a "standard lineup" rather than a "starting lineup", and this item was not updated.

Approved

7. Section VIII-H. Communication Cards

Recommendation: Delete this section. (If passed, renumber subsequent sections.)

Rationale: Communication cards have become an increasing irritant. In their original implementation, the cards included language not only about the team score but also about emergencies and dinner. In its most recent refinement, the only information that is supposed to be imparted from the coach to the player is the team score and whether it would be appropriate for a player to offer or accept a draw. The number of cards being requested has risen throughout the years, and there was concern that coaches with a high level of chess knowledge could give an answer that was at least partially informed by the player's position on the board. Since there are other ways for a player to find out the team score, the committee thought it best to eliminate team cards completely.

Approved

8. Section VII-K-1. Apparel

Recommendation: In Section 1, change to say that the uniform item of apparel must be "the outermost layer of clothing and must remain clearly visible while team members are in the playing hall," and that failure to wear proper apparel may result in tie-break penalties (in addition to forfeiture of the board). In Section 3, regarding outlawed headwear, change the word "headbands" to "sweatbands".

Rationale: After its first year of full implementation, the apparel rule needed some tweaking. In particular, there were concerns about players who needed to add or subtract clothing in order to feel comfortable. The new rule makes clear that the apparel with the school name must remain visible at all times. Some schools were penalized with tie-break points; the change spells out this option explicitly. Finally, "head bands" that simply hold back the hair were judged to be acceptable, while sweatbands (like bandanas) that cover the forehead were seen as excessive adornment.

Approved

RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommended the following change to the Chess Rule Book:

1. Delete Rules 13-3 and 13-4

Recommendation: In line with the change to the Terms & Conditions, remove the language regarding communications cards and renumber the remaining sections.

Additional modifications to the IHSA Chess Rules, Rule Clarifications, and Coach's Guide will be undertaken by a special committee that is charged with completing the project by the first part of July for approval by the IHSA Board of Directors in August.

Approved

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed Chesscalate, the interactive scoring system introduced at this year's tournament. Chesscalate was well received and the majority of all individual match scores (about 75%) were input by coaches using the Chesscalate app on their mobile devices. There were no reports of problems with the wireless system in the Peoria Civic Center or slowness in submitting scores and substitutions, or with viewing the web pages of compiled results. Suggestions were received for minor tweaks and improvements, many of which will be implemented for next year.

The Committee reiterated its desire that qualifying tournaments should closely replicate conditions at the IHSA event. The Committee recommended that the Illinois Chess Coaches Association promulgate a list of standards that should be followed by tournament organizers, including: (a) employment of a tournament director with a knowledge of WinTD (or approved alternative); (b) employment of a requisite number of floor stewards; (c) having a copy of the IHSA Rule Book available. It may also be recommended that teams participate in their school uniforms.

The Committee discussed the implementation and enforcement of the new rule regarding team uniforms. As might be expected, some schools did not conform to the new rule and several stewards asked for more clarity on how to deal with noncompliant players and what the penalties were. The Committee established the following guidelines (some of which are reflected in proposed changes to the T&Cs):

- The team name must remain clearly visible while team members are in the playing hall. It is each player's responsibility to make sure the name remains visible.
- Failure to wear proper apparel may result in tie-break penalties (in addition to forfeiture of the board, which was already specified in the T&Cs).
- Individual stewards are empowered to enforce the apparel rule, without having to refer to the Head Steward.
- Stewards can direct a player to comply with the rule at any time without having to stop the clock to do so.
- Stewards are to record instances where a player is out of uniform or otherwise violating the rule.

The Committee felt that the apparel rule and its enforcement needed special emphasis in the rules video.

The Committee discussed enforcement of the rule regarding cell phone usage by coaches, now that coaches are encouraged to use their phones to submit scores and substitutions. Some

coaches were seen using their phones for purposes other than chess (such as email) and the feeling was that as long as coaches were not using their phones to gain an advantage in the tournament, it would be counterproductive for stewards to try to monitor such usage.

The Committee reaffirmed the policy that the only water allowed at the chess table is bottled water, which cannot be placed on the table top. Players who obtain water from a water station must drink the water and dispose of the cup at the station.

The Committee recommended that the scoresheet be altered to allow a running total of the score.

The Committee recommended that it be a point of emphasis in the rules video that substitutions must be notated on the scoresheet and that the scoresheet is the official record of the results.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Committee discussed the pairings that needed to be corrected prior to Rounds 5, 6, and 7. Discussion with Chris Merli and Mike Zacate, who served as Pairing Director this year, indicate the problem was due to a setting in WinTD that did not act as expected, and that this will not be an issue in future tournaments.

The Committee discussed at length the future of the tournament, which has grown in size from 118 teams in 2008, the first year in the Civic Center Ballroom, to 146 teams this past year. (This year's tournament was the last on the current five-year contract in Peoria.) There is little room for the tournament to grow comfortably in the Ballroom, and the Committee discussed a number of options for managing the size of the tournament over the next few years. The most discussed options were: (a) splitting the competition into six-board and eight-board events, which would allow the tournament to grow by 25-30 teams in the current space; (b) requiring teams to win a certain number of contests during the regular season for qualification to the tournament; (c) raising the number of team-paired tournaments a team must participate in during the regular season from one to two. There was also a discussion of how to house and conduct the tournament if no changes were made to the existing format, assuming growth continues. There was little discussion of moving to a sectional format and a much-reduced state tournament. In the end the Committee approved option (c), a Terms & Conditions change that requires an increased commitment by teams interested in competing at the state tournament, which should also result in more knowledgeable players and coaches. In the meantime, the IHSA will need to make a decision on whether to commit to a long-term contract with the Peoria Civic Center.

The Committee discussed changes to the tiebreak formula suggested by Tom Doan of Evanston but requested examples of the formula applied to past tournaments before making any recommendations.

The Committee thanked Ken Lewandowski and Garrett Scott for three years of service.

The meeting adjourned after setting a general meeting date in March 2016.