

MINUTES OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CLASSIFICATION MEETING

April 25, 2018

The IHSA Ad Hoc Committee on Classification met at the IHSA office in Bloomington, on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Nick Browder, Olympia Fields (Rich Central); Tim Chandler, Burbank (St. Laurence); Mike Cooper, Ottawa (Twp.); Alex Fox, Edwardsville (H.S.); Dorothy Gaters, Chicago (Marshall); Jennifer Haertling, Steeleville; Victor Iturralde, Chicago (Solorio Academy); Victoria McDonald, Robinson; Becky Moran, Summit (Argo); Eric Orne, Quincy (Notre Dame); Todd Rogers, Carterville; Chris Rozanski, Rockford (Boylan Catholic); Dan Tully, Niles (Notre Dame); Andy Turner, Park Ridge (Maine South); and Todd Vohland, Decatur (St. Teresa). Also in attendance were Kurt Gibson, IHSA Associate Executive Director; Scott Johnson, IHSA Assistant Executive Director; and Sam Knox, IHSA Assistant Executive Director. Not present was member: Doug Furlow, Williamsville.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

At their April 25th meeting, the committee advanced a series of five (5) proposals to the IHSA Board of Directors that would revise IHSA Policy 17. The Board will consider these at their June 11th meeting. The proposals are the outcome of the committee's work since January.

A summary of the five individual proposals along with accompanying rationale for each is listed below.

1. Enrollment/Classification

Recommendation: A two (2)-year 'Classification Cycle' for schools in all sports and activities will be created; schools would retain their classification for the entire 2-year period without changes; enrollment number would be an average of the two previous Fall Housing enrollments submitted to ISBE; schools will be notified earlier of its classifications on a seasonal basis the year prior to a Classification Cycle

Rationale:

- A. This approach allows for consistency in classification over time and avoids putting schools in the position of not knowing what class they'll be in on a yearly basis.
- B. Releasing season classifications earlier will allow schools proper time to adjust schedules as needed.

2. Waivers

Recommendation: Waivers will be calculated for non-boundary schools on a two-year basis; adjustments will be made to the current criteria to take a smaller snapshot of program achievement by looking at the two previous school terms, not the current four

3. Success

Recommendation: Individual programs at non-boundary schools will be adjusted up one class if the program wins two trophies at the state finals over the two years of a Classification Cycle; programs that do so will be adjusted up one class from the class in which they won the trophies during the next Classification Cycle

Rationale (for 2 & 3):

- A. Keeping classifications consistent for two years without any adjustment during a Classification Cycle provides stability for non-boundary school programs.

- B. Adjusting the criteria for both Waivers and Success Adjustment to a two-year snapshot more accurately reflects the ‘current’ status of a program at non-boundary schools and avoids affecting students who may have had no impact on a program’s prior accomplishments.
- C. Adjusting the criteria for Waiver and Success Adjustment in this manner will not unduly disadvantage a non-boundary school program that has one year of accomplishment in a given state series tournament.
- D. These adjustments reflect the evolution of the Waiver and Success Adjustment concepts to more accurately apply those to non-boundary school programs that have performed at a high-achieving (“winning”) level for a longer period of time. It is expected that this smaller snapshot of two years will increase the number of waivers granted and reduce the number of programs impacted by the Success Adjustment.

4. **Classification Cutoffs**

Recommendation: 2 separate proposals made in this category

- A. Wrestling will move to a category of three class individual sports (40% in 1A, 30% in 2A, 30% in 3A), and music will be eliminated from application of the waiver process and success adjustment.
- B. **Three and Four-class team sports (boys soccer, girls soccer, boys baseball, boys basketball, girls basketball, girls softball, girls volleyball):** Fixed enrollment numbers for all the above sports would be created after dividing the four-class team sport with the fewest participating schools by placing the smallest 27.5% of entries in Class 1A, the next smallest 27.5% of entries in Class 2A, the next smallest 22.5% of entries in Class 3A, and the remaining entries in Class 4A. The enrollment cutoffs that result will then be used across all seven sports. In soccer, which has only three classes, the lower cutoff is discarded and the other two cutoffs are used.

Rationale:

- A. Moving wrestling allows for greater competitive integrity for each of the three classes, particularly at the regional level where it is common to find brackets, especially in Class 1A, where competitors in numerous instances had to win one match to qualify for the sectional.
- B. Removing music from application of the Waiver Process and Success Adjustment recognizes the fact that there is no state finals tournament for the activity, making the application of each to that activity unnecessary.
- C. The modest adjustment in establishing fixed cut-offs from a percentage analysis of the least participated four-class sport returns the association to using a model that closely resembles its long-standing approach that placed somewhere between 55-60% of entries into the smallest classes (Class 1A and 2A in four-class tournaments and Class 1A in three-class tournaments) while maintaining a high level of competitive integrity for all classes in each tournament.
- D. This adjustment will allow schools to be in consistent classes in all bracketed-team sports, unless application of the Waiver or Success Adjustment moves a non-boundary school program up or down in a given sport. It is expected, however, that this type of situation would be a rare occurrence.

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The committee was thanked for their service to the association for their extensive work on the ad-hoc committee by IHSA staff, who noted the committee’s thoroughness and thoughtful discussion on these important, highly-impactful topics.
2. The committee discussed how making an adjustment of a school’s enrollment based on its socio-economic make-up may create a more accurate enrollment figure for classification. Reducing a school’s enrollment by a factor of a variable like the number of report low income students will

possibly provide a snapshot of students at a school who are most likely to participate in interscholastic athletic and activity programs. As a part of this discussion, the committee shared a series of observations:

- a. There would be a need for accurate reporting by schools should such a concept be utilized that would use any variable to reduce an enrollment figure.
 - b. To create this type of snapshot may recognize that not all schools have the same access to resources, like equipment, facilities, and coaching (to name a few), and ultimately the new enrollment figure created from this snapshot may put all schools on a more equitable footing for competition.
 - c. Some sports and activities may not be as ‘resource-dependent’ as others, and, as such, may not impact a school’s ability to compete against other similar-enrollment schools.
 - d. Additionally, sports that are in a single-class are not likely going to be impacted by this concept since no class fluctuation opportunity exists for participating schools.
3. During the committee’s discussion on the application of waivers for a two-year cycle, the committee wondered if coaches would intentionally sabotage one of their particular teams to prevent the program from not receiving the waiver in a future cycle. General consensus was this type of ‘coach think’ is not the norm and would not occur on any kind of regular basis.
 4. The committee discussed the impact that any change to the classification cut-offs for certain sports could have on two-class sports. These sports were not a focus of this committee, but the committee noted that two-class sports may be interested in suggesting changes to their cut-off numbers should the committee’s recommendations for three and four-class bracketed team sports be approved by the IHSA Board of Directors.
 5. In closing a committee member requested the IHSA Board of Directors consider making a by-law proposal next year that would raise the enrollment number for non-boundary schools to create co-operative teams.