

IHSA Team Chess Advisory Committee Meeting

March 21, 2025

9:00 a.m.

The IHSA Team Chess Advisory Committee met on Friday, March 21, 2025, in an online setting using Microsoft Teams, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Ted Linnenbringer, Chicago (Lincoln Park); Doug Roberts, Skokie (Niles West); Rodney Coatney, Joliet (Central); Robert Bernales, Brimfield; Jeremy Gibson, Mattoon; Melissa Nilles, Wheaton (North); and Mark Langer, Palatine (Fremd). Also in attendance were: Chris Merli, IHSA Team Chess State Finals Tournament Director; Erik Czerwin, IHSA Team Chess State Finals Head Steward; Scott Johnson, IHSA Team Chess State Series Statistician; and Dan Le, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Update time control language to more standard terms for qualifying team tournaments.

III. ONLINE ENTRIES, WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES, ELIGIBILITY, AND ONLINE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS, F. Team Tournament Requirement

- 1) Teams qualify for the Team Chess state series by participating in at least one team tournament during the regular season. For the purposes of this requirement a team tournament must involve at least six teams of at least five players each, playing at least three rounds with a minimum **time control** of 30 minutes **plus a 5-second delay** per player, and must be team-paired and not prescheduled (as would occur in a round robin).

Rationale: This update uses more standard time control language that is used by tournament organizers during the regular season and by the IHSA for the state series. A minimum of 30 minutes plus 5-second delay per player will better prepare teams for the 55-minute/5-second delay time controls used during the state series.

Recommendation #2: Update timing of when first-round pairings of the state finals can be made and add language regarding pairing procedures in the event a team withdraws after the seeding meeting.

V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING MEETINGS, E. Pairing Procedures – State Tournament

- 5) Teams shall be paired **immediately** before the start of the first round of competition. **If a team officially withdraws after the seeding meeting and before the start of the state finals, tournament pairings may be redone at the tournament director's discretion.**

Rationale: First-round pairings for the state finals are ready to be made after the seeding meeting is completed on the Sunday prior to the state finals. A team that withdraws from the state finals after the seeding meeting cannot be replaced per IHSA terms and conditions VII-A-3. If a team withdraws after the seeding meeting and within a timely manner before the state finals begin, the tournament director, at his or her discretion, may redo the pairings to maintain the most appropriate setup for the tournament. There may be circumstances when the pairings can be left as is.

Recommendation #3: Modify procedures to keep pairings as is and follow forfeiture rules, if necessary, when a team has not arrived for the start of Round 1 at the state finals.

VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND PLAYING SCHEDULES, D. Time Schedule – State Tournament

Note: If a team has not arrived for the start of Round 1, the clock for each player on a that team shall be started at 10:00 am. If a team has not arrived by 10:30 am, that team shall forfeit the match per Section VIII-C-3a of the IHSA Terms and Conditions. No later than 30 minutes before the start of Round 1, coaches must contact the tournament manager if their team will be arriving late but still intends to compete in the tournament. If a coach gives proper notification, the team will be paired in Round 1. If a coach fails to give proper notification to the tournament manager, the team will not be paired and will receive zero points for that round.

Rationale: Teams are able to determine their first-round opponent after seeing the list of seeds and typically set up at the appropriate table when the competition room opens for the opening ceremony of the state finals. To avoid a delay in the start of the tournament when a team has not arrived for the start of Round 1, tournament officials should proceed with the pairings as is and enact the forfeiture rules, if necessary, rather than redoing all the pairings for Round 1 as prescribed in the current terms and conditions language.

Recommendation #4: Modify the start time for the sectional tournaments by providing a range of times that sectional managers can choose from to begin competition at their respective sites. The remainder of the sectional tournament schedule will be based on the start time as determined by the sectional manager.

VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND PLAYING SCHEDULES, C. Time Schedule - Sectional

The time schedule for the 2025-26 IHSA Team Chess sectional tournaments is as follows:

Saturday, January 31, 2026

8:15 am - 8:45 am..... Check in
9:00 am..... Round 1
11:30 am..... Round 2
2:15 pm..... Round 3
4:45 pm..... Round 4
6:30 pm..... Awards

Local managers will be given the autonomy to schedule the sectional tournament at their site to begin between the following range of times. Round 1 shall begin no earlier than 8:30 am and no later than 10:00 am. Check-in shall begin 45 minutes before Round 1 is scheduled to begin.

2 hours and 30 minutes shall be allocated between the start of rounds. An additional 15 minutes for lunch may be provided after a round designated by the local manager. The awards presentation shall be held after the conclusion of Round 4 once results have been finalized.

Note: In Round 1, the clock for each player on a team shall be started at 9:00 am the start time designated by the local manager. No later than 30 minutes before the start of Round 1, coaches must contact the tournament manager if their team will be arriving late but still intends to compete in the

tournament. If a coach gives proper notification, the team will be paired for Round 1. If a coach fails to give proper notification to the tournament manager, the team will not be paired and will receive zero points for that round.

Rounds and awards may start ahead of the scheduled time at the manager's discretion, after consultation with the head coaches.

Rationale: A range of start times will provide sectional managers with flexibility when hosting to account for various uses of their facilities by other groups and/or travel times of the participating schools. Varying start times will also help the tournament statistician troubleshoot any technical issues at the start of each sectional tournament in an efficient manner.

Recommendation #5: Add language to clarify who can be inside the roped area at the state finals.

IX. TOURNAMENT POLICIES, A. Spectators

Spectators are permitted at the tournament; however, they are required to observe in silence during all tournament play. Failure to observe proper decorum during tournament play will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Other than as specifically allowed elsewhere in the Terms and Conditions or the IHSA Rules of Chess, the use of electronic devices in the competition area is prohibited. Spectators may not enter the roped area at the state finals. Other than tournament officials, only coaches and members of the teams assigned to the tables inside the ropes may enter the roped area.

Rationale: There is currently no reference to the roped area in the Terms and Conditions or the IHSA Rules of Chess. Language does exist in an informational section of the IHSA Chess Manual. Adding this language to the terms and conditions will clarify who is allowed inside the ropes, and tournament officials will be able to reference this language when an individual inquires.

Recommendation #6: Add language prohibiting sunglasses from being worn by competing players unless for medical reasons.

IX. TOURNAMENT POLICIES, H. Apparel

- 4) Apparel worn by players and coaches should be in good taste, show good sportsmanship, and be appropriate for state series competition. Hats, visors, hoodies, sunglasses, and other items of apparel that cover a player's head or face (except those of a religious or medical nature) are not permitted. The Tournament Director or Head Steward have the authority to require that inappropriate apparel be corrected.

Rationale: Officials have seen an increase in number of students wearing sunglasses during competitions for no valid reason related to gameplay. Prohibiting sunglasses would align with the expectations that apparel should show good sportsmanship and not intimidate other players.

Recommendation #7: Increase compensation for tournament officials and update payment procedures.

XI. OFFICIALS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, H. Sectional Officials and Fees

Sectional officials will be appointed and paid by the IHSA Office. ~~The host school shall issue payment to each official which will be reimbursed by the IHSA Office upon receipt of the Financial Report form.~~

Tournament Director: ~~\$100~~ \$140

Steward: ~~\$20~~ \$30 per round

XI. OFFICIALS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, I. State Final Officials and Fees

State Final Officials will be appointed and paid by the IHSA Office.

Tournament Director: ~~\$275~~ \$345

Chief Steward: ~~\$225~~ \$295

Steward: ~~\$25~~ \$35 per round

Scorer: ~~\$25~~ \$35 per round

Rationale: Since the addition of sectional tournaments in 2018, the compensation for tournament officials has gone unchanged. Prior to sectionals being implemented, it is believed that there was one modest increase for state final tournament officials. The sectional tournament is a 9 to 10-hour day. Day 1 of the state finals is an 11 to 12-hour day, and Day 2 of the state finals is about an 8-hour day. For their time and work to enforce the rules for players and spectators, an increase would compensate tournament officials more appropriately. Sectional hosts have not been paying tournament officials. All payments have been the responsibility of the IHSA office.

CHESS RULES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Add rule that recommends chessboards to have ranks and files labeled.

RULE 2: The Chessboard and Its Arrangement, Section 3

Article 4. The most acceptable chessboard has ranks and files labeled on the board.

Rationale: Labeled ranks and files on a chessboard clearly identifies the squares on the board and can help players with notation during gameplay.

Recommendation #2: Remove Article 1, which states that the scorer is responsible for providing notation sheets in the state series.

RULE 23: Responsibility of the Officials, Section 5

~~Article 1. The Scorer is responsible for providing notation sheets for each round upon which a game may be recorded.~~

Rationale: Notation sheets used to be included in the printed IHSA state final programs. Each player would receive a copy of the program and utilize the notation sheets. IHSA programs are now digital, and a previous update to the terms and conditions noted that teams were responsible for providing their own notation sheets in the state series. Removing this language would align with current practices according to the terms and conditions.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

NONE

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. The committee and tournament officials reflected on the 2025 IHSA Team Chess State Series. Items to note include the effectiveness of the Chesscalate program during the state series, and continued testing to improve the Chesscalate program will be done. The committee shared feedback on the operations at the Peoria Civic Center for the state final and suggested items to discuss with management for the future.
2. The committee discussed a suggestion to use player rankings from the season to assess stacking of lineups. There was a concern of the accuracy of rankings used, and it was discussed that there is no advantage to stacking, and any blatant stacking could be identified by officials. No action was taken by the committee.
3. The committee discussed difficulties with reading LED-display clocks. The consensus was that as long as the clocks are functional, that is of most importance. No action was taken by the committee.
4. The committee heard concerns with rule enforcement for games quickly drawn within ten moves. Committee members and officials will discuss these concerns with other coaches in their respective divisions and conferences to determine a solution that would discourage these types of quick draws from occurring.
5. The committee discussed ways to streamline the state final seeding meeting. Suggested ideas included having conference representatives rank the teams within their conference and prepare recommendations for which state final grouping each team should be considered, defining seeding criteria for the committee members, and enforcing a time limit for committee discussions. Tournament officials will work with the IHSA to develop criteria and a possible form for committee members to complete before the seeding meeting.
6. The committee heard a concern about teams playing matches between the sectional and state finals. Because chess does not have a season limitation, there was no concern with matches being played between the sectional and state finals.
7. The committee's next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for Friday, March 20, 2026.