

MINUTES OF THE IHSA GIRLS SOFTBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 1, 2010

The IHSA Girls Softball Advisory Committee met at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Wednesday, September 1, 2010, at 10 a.m. Committee members present were: Nate Emrick, Cobden; Colleen Kilduff, Mother McAuley; Greg Neisler, Raymond (Lincolnwood); Deb Nelson, LaSalle (L.-Peru); Dominic Nicosia, Chicago (Official); Randy Skaggs, Danville (Schlarman); and John Young, Lemont (H.S). Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) Assistant Executive Director Julie Cochran, IHSA Coordinator of Special Programs Tracie Brown and IHSA Assistant Executive Director Matt Troha were also in attendance.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IX – Tournament Policies – D. Facilities

Recommendation: Add a new sub-section to the IHSA Softball Terms & Conditions to read:

D. Facilities-In the Regional, Sectional, Super-Sectional and State Final tournament, the hosting schools shall not make the facilities available to the incoming teams for practice, other than customary scheduled batting practice and infield prior to the start of the game.

Rationale: This rule or a version of it exists in nearly all other IHSA State Series tournaments, including baseball.

Approved

2. XI – Officials – 5. Official's Fee for Suspended or Postponed Contest

Recommendation: Add a new sub-section to the IHSA Softball Terms & Conditions to read:

5. Official's Fee for Suspended or Postponed Contest: If an official arrives at the State Series site and the contest is postponed prior to the start of the contest, the official shall receive one half game fee and mileage reimbursement for any miles over 70 round trip.

Rationale: This payment policy is already in place, but is not currently reflected in the Terms & Conditions.

Died for lack of motion to approve

3. VIII – Tournament Rules – F. Guidelines for losing an official during a contest

Recommendation: Add two new sub-sections under section F. to the IHSA Softball Terms & Conditions to read:

1) Two-Umpire Crew-In a State Series contest prior to the State Finals with two umpires, if an umpire is forced to leave the contest due to injury, illness or for any other reason the game shall be considered suspended at that point and play shall resume the following day at the exact point where the game was terminated unless the following four parties all agree to continue the contest.

- Regional Tournament Manager
- Remaining Umpire
- Away team's coach
- Home team's coach

If any of the above do not agree to continue, the game will be suspended until the next day per the instructions above. If all agree, the remaining umpire will assume the umpire position behind the plate.

- 2) Three-Umpire Crew- In a State Series contest prior to the State Finals with three umpires, if an umpire is forced to leave the contest due to injury, illness or for any other reason the game shall be continued with two umpires. If the departing umpire is the home plate umpire, the umpire at the first-base position will assume the umpire position behind the plate and the umpire at third-base will assume normal field umpire duties using two-umpire mechanics. If two umpires were forced to depart from the contest, the guidelines from the above 1) *Two-Umpire Crew* would be used.

Died for lack of motion to approve

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. IHSA State Adoptions of NFHS Rules – 4-2-3 Use of game ending procedures

Recommendation: The committee recommends that, in accordance with provisions set forth by the NFHS concerning rules for state adoption, the following adoption to the IHSA's current State Adoption Policy for game ending procedures (4-2-3) be amended to read (*new language in italics*):

A contest is ended and the score final if the visiting team is ahead by 15 or more runs after the completion of three innings of play – or – if the home team is ahead by a similar number of runs after two and one-half innings. Or if the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs after the completion of five innings of play – or – if the home team is ahead by a similar number of runs after four and one-half innings.

Rationale: The move to 43 feet has brought more offense into the game, causing the scoring gaps to widen in contests between schools who have significant differentials in talent. Umpires report having worked contests with 40 and 50 runs being scored by the winning team. The IESA currently uses this game ending procedure as well.

Tabled

NFHS RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Rule 1 - Field & Equipment – Section 5 Bats, Article 3, Rule F (1-5-3-F)

Recommendation: Add the following Rule to 1-5-3 to read as follows: "A composite bat shall be illegal until meeting the standards of 1-5-1 and 1-5-2."

Rationale: Player safety has been at the forefront of game recently at the state and national level with the change to the 43-foot pitching distance and the consideration by the national committee to make facemasks mandatory for pitchers, first-basemen and third-basemen. The IHSA Softball Advisory Committee believes that instead of adding safety equipment to fielders, a more logical first step for player safety would be in limiting the use of "composite bats", which sometimes meet ASA standards out of the factory, but can become illegal after being broken in. In addition, the NFHS Baseball Committee instituted the same language into their Rule Book for the 2011 season.

Died for lack of motion to approve

2. Rule 4 - Starting and Ending the Game – Section 1 Starting A Game, Article 3, Rule F (4-1-3-F)

Recommendation: Add the following Rule to 4-1-3 to read as follows: No pitcher will be allowed to warm-up or practice pitching in the infield while either team is taking infield prior to the start of a game. If the facility does not have an area for the pitcher to warm-up outside the field of play, the pitcher may warm-up in foul territory in the outfield on the side of the field that their team dugout/bench is located on, as far from the infield as possible. In that instance, a player will be designated to guard against errant softballs and must wear a batting helmet.

The illegal pitching warm-up area includes foul territory as it pertains to the NFHS definition of “infield” (2-29: The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and covered by the pitcher and infielders). This would also include the areas in foul territory on each side of first and third base if an imaginary line were to continue to extend from the back of the skinned infield line until it reached the fence/boundary.

Rationale: Nearly all contests utilize infield practice prior to the start of the game and while there are rarely problems with teams providing each other the courtesy of vacating the field during their respective infield practice, many umpires have conveyed that they feel hamstrung when they attempt to move or remove pitchers who warm-up in foul territory in the infield during infield practice. This clarifies that once infield begins, the team not taking infield must clear the field with the exception of the pitcher, who is allowed to continue to warm-up in the appropriate area outside of the infield. It is an easy solution to an unnecessary player safety issue.

Approved

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The committee heard a report from IESA softball administrator Julie Cochran on recent rule changes to IESA softball and its upcoming state finals.
2. The committee heard a report from IHSA softball administrator Matt Troha on the 2010 IHSA Softball State Finals and the search for a new state final manager. The committee recognized East Peoria head coach Deb Neff, who has stepped down as the state final tournament manager after holding the position for the past 10 years.
3. The committee recognized Raymond (Lincolnwood) head coach Greg Neisler for his service to the IHSA. Neisler’s three-year term on the committee will end in June.
4. The committee discussed the move to the 43-foot pitching distance that took place last spring and provided feedback from their area/conference coaches. All NFHS member schools are required to move to 43-feet during the 2010-11 school year.
5. The committee discussed pitching counts.
6. The committee discussed the DP/Flex rules and need for further education for coaches and officials.
7. The committee discussed using three-umpire crews in Regionals. Currently, two umpires are assigned by the IHSA, but a third can be assigned at the expense of the Regional host.
8. The committee discussed increasing the IHSA game limit in softball from 35 games to 40 games.
9. The committee considered composing a recommendation to apply forfeit guidelines for teams that are late to contests or guidelines on warm-up times/taking infield when a team is late to a contest. The committee agreed that the guidelines for team arriving late to games should be handled by

school administrators, game officials and conference by-laws and that it has not been a significant enough problem at the State Series level to warrant a recommendation.

10. The committee discussed mandating chinstraps on helmets for batters and runners.
11. The committee discussed eliminating the use of the International Tie-Breaker from the IHSA State Adoptions.
12. The committee discussed mandating facemasks for all pitchers, first-basemen and third-basemen.
13. The committee discussed the Baden softball, which became the official ball of the IHSA in 2010.
14. The committee discussed the selection of State Series sites.
15. The committee discussed illegal pitching and ways to see more enforcement from umpires.