

2020 IHSA Bass Fishing Sectional Sites/Assignments update

The purpose of this correspondence is to share with schools entered in the IHSA Bass Fishing state series some developments within the IHSA's bass fishing program as we prepare to move into the 2020 state series. Over the 12 years the program has been in existence, the number of schools participating has grown 56% over that time, almost 5% each year, which is remarkable and shows how viable the program is to the membership.

However, with that growth has also come some challenges, particularly as it relates how to best manage this growth, which we expect to continue over time. One of the questions the IHSA Bass Fishing Advisory Committee has been discussing is how to restructure the state series, trying to decide if additional tournaments levels (like a regional tournament) should be added to the structure, or, for example, if sectional tournaments should be reconfigured to allow for larger bodies of water to hold bigger tournaments that would have more qualifiers for the state finals than the current model, which qualifies three boats from each sectional for the state finals.

While the advisory committee continues to work on managing the growth issue, our office wanted to let you know that, in order to help manage the growth of the bass fishing program in the short term, three new sectional tournaments will be added for the 2020 state series. Those lakes are Kinkaid Lake, Lake Jacksonville, and Lake McMaster (Snake Den Hollow). This means that there will be new sectional alignments this year for many, but not necessarily all, schools, with the intent that each of the 25 sectional tournaments will have approximately the same number of schools assigned to each. Like in previous years, three boats will qualify from each sectional to the state finals (assuming at least three boats catch fish in a given sectional tournament). Part of what remains to be seen is how many new schools will enter the bass fishing state series this year, and because of that uncertainty, our office is not able to release all the specific sectional assignments until after the February 1st entry deadline has passed. The addition of three sectional tournaments, though, as mentioned, will create some new alignments, and if schools have questions regarding this announcement, they can contact Kurt Gibson (kgibson@ihsa.org) at the IHSA Office.