

MINUTES OF THE IHSA BASS FISHING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
September 7, 2022

The IHSA Bass Fishing Advisory Committee met at the IHSA Office, Bloomington, Illinois, on September 7, 2022, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Chris Bradley, Newton; James Cherveney, LaSalle (L.-Peru); Mae Fitch, Cuba; Scott Plencner, Chicago (Taft); Don Selusnik, South Elgin. Also in attendance were Kurt Gibson, IHSA Associate Executive Director. Absent from the meeting was Allen Crombar, Elkhartville (Elverado); and John Young, Lemont (H.S.).

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1. VIII. Tournament Rules.** [New B (if approved, all other sub points in VIII will be adjusted)]

**Recommendation:** In all state series events, only largemouth, spotted, and smallmouth bass are accepted species.

**Rationale:** The committee recommends this new section to provide some additional clarity to the specific types of bass that can be caught during state series events. Currently, the Terms and Conditions don't provide any direction on this topic, and the listed species are the most common in Illinois.

**2. II. Dates and Sites, IV. Host Financial Arrangements, V. Tournament Assignments, VI. Tournament Structure, VIII. Tournament Rules, X. Awards**

**Recommendation:** The committee recommends that, no later than the 2024-25 school year, a regional tournament be added to the IHSA Bass Fishing State Series. The revised structure would consist of a regional, sectional, and state finals tournament, set up in the following manner:

6 Sectional Complexes, each consisting of 5 Regional Tournaments

30 regional tournaments

- Approximately 10 schools assigned to each Regional Tournament (reduction of 2-3 schools compared to number of schools currently assigned to Sectional Tournaments)
- Top 6 boats advance to Sectional Tournament
- Regional Tournaments to be held on Thursday of Week 45 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar (Rain Date: Monday of Week 46)

6 sectional tournaments

- Top 10 boats advance to State Finals Tournament
- Sectional Tournaments to be held on Thursday of Week 46 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar (Rain Date: Monday of Week 47)

60 boats at the state finals

- State Finals to be held on Friday-Saturday of Week 48 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar (Thursday of Week 48 to serve as State Finals pre-fishing day for qualifiers)

Regional Hosting Allowance of no more than \$200 to be provided to Regional hosts.

Awards

- School with the boat catching the most weight of fish at the Regional Tournament will be declared the winner of the Regional and receive a Regional plaque.
- Individual medallions will be given to the team participants in the boat catching the largest fish in the Regional Tournament.

**Rationale:** There are many points of consideration the committee took in making this recommendation:

- The number of entries in the IHSA Bass Fishing State Series has grown each year since the program was started in the 2008-09 school year.
- A consistent point of discussion in the bass fishing community has been a desire to see another competitive round added to the state series.
- The advancement structure will allow for approximately 30% of the field to advance from both the Regional Tournament to the Sectional Tournament and also the Sectional Tournament to the State Finals, and the committee believes that qualifying standard is an appropriate percentage at this time.
- While this model calls for a reduction in the number of boats that would qualify for the state finals, the committee believes 60 boats is still a significant number of qualifiers, and the modest reduction will create a better fishing experience for qualifiers, who will have less competition for space in certain parts of the state finals lake.
- If ultimately approved, the committee would like to see this model implemented as soon as the 2023-24 school year, but the committee recognizes that IHSA staff will need time to work with DNR to identify some new bodies of water for Regional Tournaments and with the current state finals location (city of Carlyle) to see if the lake is available on the new state finals date.

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

None.

**ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:**

1. The committee reviewed the minutes from the 2022 meeting.
2. The committee reviewed the 2022 state series. In particular, the committee expressed their thanks to sectional managers for all their work.
3. The committee asked IHSA staff to work with the local wardens or DNR staff at each sectional site to cover safety tips/requirements prior to the sectional tournament.
4. The committee reviewed the state series dates for the 2023 state series.
5. The committee discussed the types of acceptable life jackets that can be worn during state series events. The committee believes that so long as the jacket/inflatable is Coast Guard approved Type I, II, or III, the jacket/inflatable is acceptable and meets the standard outlined in section VIII. L in the Terms and Conditions.
6. The committee thanked out-going members Cherveney, Fitch, and Plencner for their service to the committee.