

## Minutes of the IHSA Boys & Girls Tennis Advisory Committee Meeting

October 25, 2023

9:00 a.m.

The IHSA Boys & Girls Tennis Advisory Committee met on October 25, 2023, in an online setting from various communities across Illinois, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Dawuad Talib, Chicago (University); Julia Barthel, Arlington Heights (Hersey); Brian Johnson, Palos Heights (Chicago Christian); Rick Mellinger, Moline (H.S.); Stefan Aydt, Paris; Zoe Murray, Pekin; and Steve Stuart, Edwardsville. Also in attendance were Jim Lange, Boys State Finals Tournament Manager; Kevin Schrammel, Girls State Finals Tournament Manager; Jon Betts, Illinois High School Tennis Coaches Association (IHSTCA) President; Greg Cohen, Illinois High School Tennis Coaches Association Board Member; and Dan Le, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation #1:** Add language that allows flexibility for sectional tournaments to begin on Thursday if inclement weather is forecasted for Friday and/or Saturday.

#### II. DATES AND SITES, A. Sectional Tournament

3. When inclement weather is forecasted for Friday and/or Saturday, the local manager may, at their discretion if the number of entries warrant, elect to begin tournament play on Thursday of [Week 15 for girls tennis, Week 46 for boys tennis]. Written consent of the principal from each participating school is required by using the IHSA Tennis Request for Earlier Start Time Form to obtain their approval.

**Rationale:** This additional language provides sectional managers with the flexibility to begin the tournament a day earlier if inclement weather is forecasted to ensure that the sectional is completed in a timely manner. Sectional seeds will have been determined and brackets will have been drawn by Wednesday evening at the seeding meeting. This additional language can also reduce the need to use indoor courts for the sectionals. Participating schools are responsible for indoor court fees, and providing more opportunities to play outdoors will potentially save schools money on indoor court fees.

**Recommendation #2:** Clarify language to classify entries from schools that have less than a full team.

#### III. ONLINE ENTRIES, WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES, ELIGIBILITY, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, AND ONLINE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS, E. Eligibility

All member schools in good standing may enter an individual(s) ~~(one (1) singles player or one (1) doubles team)~~ or a team under the provisions of IHSA by-law 3.053. When a school enters less than 6 players into the state series, those entries are considered individuals, and the school is not eligible for team points or team awards. Any school with 6 or more players must have participated in six (6) varsity contests prior to the state series. Note: Individual entries do not have a minimum number of contest requirements.

**Rationale:** The current language only addresses individual entries as either one singles player or one doubles team from a school. Some schools have more than one entry but less than a full team of six

players. Schools with less than six players tend to have difficulty finding contests to compete in during the regular season, which may prevent their participation in the state series per the six-contest requirement for teams. Classifying entries from schools with less than six players as individuals will not require these schools to participate in six contests prior to the state series.

**Recommendation #3:** Revise language regarding the state finals brackets to align with the computer system that makes the draws.

#### V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING, C. State Final Seeding Meeting

2. A draw of 64 will be used for both singles and doubles play. United States Tennis Association (USTA) rules shall be followed in assigning seeded entries in the proper positions in the brackets, except that ~~effort shall be made to place winners and runners up from the same sectional and~~ players from the same school will be placed in opposite halves of the bracket and the four singles qualifiers and four doubles qualifiers from each sectional will be placed in separate quarters of the brackets. ~~This may not always hold true for third and fourth place sectional qualifiers.~~

**Rationale:** The computer system that has been used to draw the state finals brackets was programmed to randomize the placement of players with the parameters that players from the same school would be placed in opposite halves and the four singles qualifiers and four doubles qualifiers from each sectional would be placed in separate quarters. This language will align with system's programming, allows for more flexibility in placement of players, and creates a more unbiased and random draw.

**Recommendation #4:** Change the state final packet pick-up time to 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and remove language about picking up programs.

#### VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME SCHEDULES, D. State Final School Packets

At the state final tournament, school packets, which include important state final information, updates, ~~and state final passes and programs~~ may be picked up [Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> for girls tennis, Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> for boys tennis], between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at [Buffalo Grove High School Gymnasium for girls tennis, Palatine High School Gymnasium for boys tennis] and after 7:00 a.m. on Thursday morning, [October 24<sup>th</sup> for girls tennis, May 29<sup>th</sup> for boys tennis], at tournament central located at the [Buffalo Grove High School Gymnasium for girls tennis, Palatine High School Gymnasium for boys tennis].

**Rationale:** In recent years, most packets (approximately 80%) are picked up by 7:00 p.m. Moving the packet pick-up time an hour earlier allows teams to practice, pick up their packets, have dinner, and return to their hotels earlier prior to the start of play the next morning. Both Buffalo Grove High School and Palatine High School have no issues with the earlier time. Because state finals programs are no longer printed, that reference should be removed.

**Recommendation #5:** Add language that permits coaching between the second set and a match tiebreak.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, G. Coaching, 1. Coaching Provisions

c. Coaching may occur for a maximum of 10 minutes between the second and third sets and for a maximum of 3 minutes between the second set and a match tiebreaker in lieu of a full third set.

**Rationale:** Section VII-E lists all time allotments permitted by players during a match, which includes no more than 3 minutes prior to a match tiebreaker. The coaching provisions of Section VII-G permit coaching for up to 10 minutes in between the second set and a full third set, but there is no language about coaching during the 3 minutes between the second set and a match tiebreaker. Adding this coaching provision will mirror all time allotments specified in Section VII-E.

**Recommendation #6:** Revise language of when a coach is permitted to sit courtside during the state finals.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, G. Coaching, 1. Coaching Provisions

e. Coaches may not enter the court enclosure except for the one (1) allowable coach during the ~~quarterfinals~~, semifinals, 5/6 place, 3/4 place and championship matches at the state final tournament.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, G. Coaching, 5. At the state final tournament, eligible high school girls'/boys' tennis coaches shall follow the following procedures.

e. During the ~~quarterfinals~~, semifinals, 5/6 place, 3/4 place and championship matches in the state finals, one coach per school wearing their official coaching pass will be allowed to be seated courtside for coaching purposes for both the singles and doubles competitions.

**Rationale:** When tennis was a one-class sport, one coach from each school was permitted to sit courtside to coach during the quarterfinals. Since tennis has been split into two classes, the number of quarterfinal matches has doubled from 8 to 16. There are not enough officials or officials' chairs to cover all 16 quarterfinal matches, and 1A and 2A quarterfinals are played at different sites. Having a chaired official during a match when coaches are seated courtside is necessary for management purposes, so it is recommended to remove language permitting a coach to be courtside during the quarterfinal round. The current language does not state that a coach can sit courtside during the 5/6 and 3/4 place matches. The participants in those matches earn a medal, and there are chaired officials for those matches. Thus, it is recommended to add language permitting a coach to be seated courtside for those matches.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

NONE

#### **ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:**

1. State finals tournament managers, Jim Lange and Kevin Schrammel, provided a summary of the 2023 tennis state finals.
2. IHSTCA board members, Jon Betts and Greg Cohen, shared their feedback of the 2023 tennis state finals.
3. The committee discussed a recommendation to move the list of participants deadline a day earlier to Monday to allow coaches more time to prepare for the seeding meeting. Because some schools still play matches on Monday and/or Tuesday as well as teams using those days to finalize their state series lineup, no action was taken by the committee.

4. The committee discussed a recommendation regarding the pairings of sectional seeds when an entry needs to be flipped to the opposite half due to being on the same half of a teammate when initially placed in the draw. The recommendation was to preserve the 3 vs 6 pairings in the quarterfinals and the 4 vs 5 pairings in the quarterfinals when possible. No action was taken by the committee.
5. The committee discussed a recommendation to change the match scoring format of matches before the quarterfinals of the sectionals to a match tiebreak in lieu of a third set. No action was taken by the committee.
6. The committee discussed a recommendation to pilot college-style on-court coaching during the 2024 boys tennis state series and 2024 girls tennis state series and discuss at next year's advisory committee meeting. This would permit coaching in between points and allow coaches to be within the tennis enclosure during the state series. Points noted in the discussion included possible faster play, consistency with coaching in other sports with allowing for more immediate coaching, possible discomfort of players, and management of potential issues with coaches when there are no officials on court. A motion was made, but the motion did not receive a majority vote of support from the committee.
7. The committee discussed a recommendation to expand the state finals tournament to 96 entries in the singles and doubles draws of both classes. Greg Cohen elaborated on the proposal that was submitted to each committee member for review and reiterated that the primary goal of the expansion is to increase opportunities for students to have the state finals experience. The proposal also included a comparison to other sports that increased the number of qualifiers after the addition of a class and included potential additional schools that could be used as sites for the state finals. Concerns discussed included the willingness of additional schools to serve as sites for an expanded tournament, quality of play, staffing and costs associated with the host sites, preservation of the consolation bracket when weather is an issue, and the number of matches players could play in a day and through the duration of the tournament. A motion was made, but the motion did not receive a majority vote of support from the committee.
8. It was shared with the committee that the officials of the Chicago Tennis Umpires Council would like the coaches association and advisory committee to discuss the rules regarding overturned calls at the IHSA state finals. USTA, ITA, and college matches with officials no longer use the appeal rule, which is used during the state series. Instead, officials prefer to overrule calls on-the-spot without appeal as that is the common practice outside of the IHSA state series.
9. The committee heard an explanation of IHSA Policy 18 with respect to postseason assignments and the timeline for posting sectional assignments online.
10. The IHSA recognized and thanked outgoing committee members: Coach Dawuad Talib of Chicago (University), Division 1, and Athletic Director Julia Barthel of Arlington Heights (Hersey), Division 2.