

Minutes of the IHSA Bass Fishing Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2024

The IHSA Bass Fishing Advisory Committee met at the IHSA Office, Bloomington, Illinois, on September 5, 2024, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Don Selusnik, Craig Lawrence, Brett Dunn, Doug Larson, Kim Webster, and Rowdy Fatheree. Also in attendance was Chris Schwarz, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

Terms and Conditions Recommendations:

1. Section VIII P. Coaching

Recommendation: The captain/coach of the boat may make suggestions but may not fish in any respect, including tying lures, netting fish, and handling fish or gear. However, if a team has only one participant on the boat, the captain/coach may net the fish if asked by the participant. **In the event an angler catches a non-target species, such as a muskie, northern pike, walleye, gar, bowfin, or catfish, the coach may assist the student in removing the lure from the fish to prevent injury.** The captain/coach or team participants can operate the electric motor. A boat captain must be an employee of the district or be a board approved bass fishing captain.

Rationale: The committee believes that coaches should be allowed to assist the student angler in removing a lure from a non-target species to prevent injury to the student. Specifically, species of fish that have sharp teeth or barbs that protrude from their bodies.

Approved by Consent

Administrative Recommendations:

-There were no administrative recommendations.

Discussion Items:

1. The committee reviewed the minutes from the 2023 meeting.
2. The committee reviewed the 2024 state series. Specifically, the committee discussed the implementation of the new substitution rules regarding teams being able to change rosters between rounds of the state series. The committee discussed several instances where this change allowed a positive outcome for teams across the state.

3. The committee reviewed a list of potential regional and sectional sites for the upcoming 2025 state series.
4. The committee heard a report regarding a recent site visit to Lake Shelbyville by Mr. Schwarz and Mr. Anderson. The report covered logistical information regarding boat ramps, boat trailer parking, spectator parking, the weigh-in area, hotel accommodations, and the overall status of the fishery.
5. The committee discussed the negative trend of unethical behavior throughout various bass fishing circuit tournaments. These unethical behaviors include cheating, unsportsmanlike behavior, and not following tournament rules. The committee believes that maintaining ethical behavior throughout the IHSA Bass Fishing State Series is imperative to the sport's growth and sanctity. Thus, the committee highlighted the importance of local tournament managers appointing a tournament rules committee should these situations arise.
6. The committee discussed the late withdrawal penalty fee being increased to \$500 for any team who withdraws after the list of participants due date. This would also be assessed for any teams who do not show up for a state tournament series round.
7. The committee discussed potential conflicts with Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation's High School State Tournament.
8. The committee discussed the rise of technology in bass fishing, specifically with forward facing sonar and its capabilities. The committee reviewed new limitations released from B.A.S.S. regarding forward facing sonar (FFS) and other technologies. The committee will continue to monitor the use of technology in high school bass fishing and revisit this topic during future meetings.
9. The committee discussed the possibility of implementing a digital fishing tournament for any interested schools during the spring of 2025. The committee discussed using the app, "Fish Donkey" to facilitate a big bass competition. The committee felt this could be a fun way to keep students engaged at the state level throughout the school year.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 4th, 2025