

Minutes of the 2016-17 IHSA Chess Advisory Committee Meeting March 19, 2017

The IHSA Chess Advisory meeting was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Friday, March 17, 2017, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Tournament Director Chris Merli; Jeff DiOrio, Naperville (North); Erik Czerwin, Rockford (Guilford); Vincent Springer, Lincolnshire (Stevenson); Eric Potter, Mahomet (M.-Seymour); and Hector Hernandez, Chicago (St. Ignatius). Mark Grishaber, Chicago (Taft), was absent. Scott Johnson, IHSA Assistant Executive Director, chaired the meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommended the following changes to the Terms and Conditions:

1. Introduction of Sectional Tournaments in 2018

Last year the committee approved the introduction of sectional qualifying tournaments starting in 2018, and laid the groundwork for the new system. To briefly recap, last year the Committee recommended and the Board of Directors approved:

- A State Final a field of about 100 up to a maximum of 128 teams, with competition taking place in seven rounds.
- Sectionals held on Saturday of Week 30 (Jan. 27, 2018), with four rounds of play at a time control of 55 minutes with 5-second delay, and all teams scoring 2.0 points (or more) qualifying for the state tournament.
- Sectional championship plaques awarded to all teams with perfect scores (there are likely to be two) or, if no team has a perfect score, to the highest scoring team as determined by the tie-break system; individual performance medals awarded to undefeated players on Boards 1 to 3 and players with perfect scores on Boards 4 to 8.

This year, the Committee tied up the loose ends. The following recommendations to accommodate sectional play are made as a package (with the affected area of Terms & Conditions noted):

- a. (VII-A-1) The state final field will be exactly 128 teams.
- b. (VII-A-2) The state tournament field will be determined by ranking all the teams based on their results in the sectional tournaments. They will be sorted first by the number of team points earned and second by the IHSA team tie-break formula. If there is a tie for the 128th spot, a random draw will determine the qualifier. (NOTE: This removes the "automatic bid" for a team with 2.0 points, approved last year. The modified language anticipates the day when more than 128 teams score 2.0 points or better at the sectional level. This will not occur until there are approximately 180 entries in the state

series.)

- c. (V-C-3) If a team withdraws from the sectional after the entry deadline and after the sectional assignments have been posted, the team will be kept in the first round sectional pairings as a forfeit and dropped from the pairings in all subsequent rounds.
- d. (VII-A-4) If a team withdraws from the state tournament after qualifying at a sectional tournament, the team may be replaced by the IHSA Office before the close of business on the Friday prior to the state tournament by selecting the next available alternate using the qualifying criteria.
- e. (V-B) Sectionals will be seeded by the coaches of the assigned teams, using the seeding method used in team sports (ranking the teams numerically from best to worst, throwing out the high and low marks for each team, and ranking the averages). A tie for a particular seed will be broken by a random draw.
- f. (V-C) The pairing system used in the sectional tournament will be the same as that used in the state tournament (non-accelerated Swiss pairings).
- g. (V-C-2 & V-C-3) When an when an odd number of teams is assigned to the sectional tournament, a bye will be awarded within the lowest seed group to the lowest seed not already having a bye.
- h. (VI-A-1 & VIII-C-1) A coach may designate up to four alternates who may compete at the sectional tournament (the same as the state tournament).
- i. (VI-C) The sectional time schedule will be as follows:
 - Round 1: 9:00 am
 - Round 2: not before 11:30 am
 - Round 3: not before 2:15 pm
 - Round 4: not before 4:45 pm
 - Awards: not before 6:30 pm
- j. (VIII-D-5) The deadline for making a claim of stacking in the sectional tournament will be 30 minutes after the end of Round 2.
- k. The following calendar dates, which appear throughout the Terms & Conditions, were also approved:
 - Wed., Jan. 17, midnight — Deadline for watching video and submitting roster
 - Thu., Jan. 18, by 4 pm — Sectional assignments posted
 - Mon., Jan. 22, 10 am — Season summaries due
 - Tue., Jan. 23, noon — Sectional seeds due
 - Wed., Jan. 24, midnight — Deadline for submitting lineup and alternates for sectional
 - Mon, Jan. 29, by 4 pm — List of state final qualifiers posted
- l. In several places, language referring to the "IHSA Administrator" has been changed to the "Tournament Director," since these directors will be empowered to make decisions at the sectional tournaments.

Rationale: The state final venue has become increasingly crowded over the past few years. Since 2008, when the tournament moved to ballroom of the Peoria Civic Center, the number of participating teams has risen from 118 to 149, and further growth is anticipated in the years to come. The IHSA team chess tournament has been an all-comers event for a very long time, but as the ballroom neared capacity it became clear that a long-term plan was needed. The addition of sectionals envisions a day when 300 or more IHSA member schools field teams.

Approved

2. Section III-E. Six-Contest Requirement

Recommendation: Count every dual team contest separately for the purposes of the six-contest requirement. Previously a maximum of two per calendar date could be counted, even though as many as four were possible.

Rationale: This will reduce the number of actual contests needed to satisfy the requirement, while at the same time encouraging schools to schedule team contests instead of simply entering their players in individual meets. Since the IHSA state series is a team competition only, these are desirable outcomes.

Approved

3. Section V-E-7. Pairing Procedures

Recommendation: Delete the requirement to use the "Harkness variation" when pairing the teams.

Rationale: Although the Harkness variation is the desired method, the program used to pair the teams does not implement it correctly and has caused problems at the last three state tournaments.

Approved

4. Section XI. Officials

Recommendation: Language delineating the responsibilities of the various officials has been reworked. The parts that apply to all competitions, including those held outside the IHSA state series, remain in the Rule Book. The parts that pertain specifically to the state series have been moved to Section XI of the Terms & Conditions.

Rationale: With the implementation of sectional tournaments, it is important to be able to describe exactly what is expected of officials at the various sites.

Approved

RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommended the following changes to the Chess Rule Book:

1. Modify Rule 1-4-2

Recommendation: Prohibit clocks that make a noise during play.

Rationale: Some clocks can be programmed to beep or chime at certain intervals or when the flag drops. Especially with regard to the flag dropping, it is the player's responsibility to notice this on his or her own.

Approved

2. Modify Rule 12-11

Recommendation: Clarify the rule regarding when a steward can intervene in a very long game.

Rationale: The rule is the same but the rewording brings it in line with USCF rule and reads more clearly.

Approved

3. Modify Rule 13-2

Recommendation: Prohibits a player (typically one in time trouble) from passing off his or her scorebook so that a "deputy" can take notation.

Rationale: Such notation has never been regarded as official and is often incorrect. The passing of the scorebook has been a concern to stewards. This recommendation prohibits this informal and unsanctioned practice.

Approved

4. Add new Rule 22-2, and renumber following rules

Recommendation: States that the IHSA Chess Rules cannot regulate all possible situations and empowers the Head Steward to reach a fair decision in cases where no rule applies.

Rationale: This language is patterned after the USCF rule book, and affirms that the Head Steward has the ability to make decisions in such cases.

Approved

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Sectionals

The Committee discussed how to staff the sectionals. A typical sectional will consist of the following personnel:

- A Tournament Manager who is charge of facilities, logistics, and other details not specific to the rules of chess.
- A Tournament Director who in charge of the chess competition and also serves as Section Chief in charge of the Stewards. At most if not all sites the Tournament Director will also be in charge of making the pairings for Rounds 2, 3, and 4.
- One or two Stewards.

If a coach wishes to appeal a ruling made by the Tournament Director, it will be heard by a remote Chief Steward (probably Chris Merli), who will be available by telephone. It is anticipated that only one or two appeals will occur over the course of the day.

The Committee discussed having a remote Pairings Chief (probably Chris Merli) make the pairings for Rounds 2, 3, and 4 of every sectional, but opted for having the Tournament Director at each location make the pairings. If a knotty problem comes up, it can be discussed on the telephone with the Pairings Chief.

The Committee discussed the need to educate potential Tournament Directors and Stewards in order to achieve consistent rulings throughout the state series. This will probably involve both a written and video component.

The Chairman discussed the need for a Manager's Manual that will include all the necessary instructions and forms required to host a sectional meet. This manual will be completed during the summer months.

The Committee discussed how sectional pairings and team results will be posted. The Chairman indicated that the online Winner Report would be modified to suit the chess sectionals and managers will be encouraged to report the scores after each round.

Other Topics

The Chairman inquired why there are so many late additions to the team rosters. He reported that at least 10 names were added at the state tournament. It was decided that an extra effort will be made to ensure that the names of all potential players be listed on the List of Participants prior to the sectional tournaments.

The Committee discussed an incident at the state tournament where a team was penalized when their coach was not present at the start of the round. The penalty, as specifically stated in the Terms & Conditions, is that their clocks must run until the coach is present. It was generally agreed that having the coach present at the start of the round is important and that the rule needs to be emphasized in the Manual and the required video.

The Committee discussed the size of some of the table-top mascots. A few of them were quite large and posed a potential hazard. This will also be a point of emphasis next year.

The Committee discussed the production of an instructional video, intended especially for players, that would cover some of the most commonly misunderstood play situations and the protocol for asking for help or intervention from a steward. The IHSA will work on a script and seek to record the video using local student chess players. The video would be most useful if it were ready by the start of the school year. This recommendation is held over from last year.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Committee discussed the locations of the sectionals in 2018. A total of 24 coaches have volunteered their buildings as potential sites, which bodes well for the future. There are sufficient sites in every area of the state.

With sectional tournaments now a reality, one suggestion was that the "team-tournament" requirement be removed. This was discussed last year and again this year. The Committee determined that it is just as important that new players and coaches are ready for competition in the sectionals as it is for the state finals, and recommended that the requirement remain in force.

The Committee discussed the idea of altering the restriction on pairing conference teams at the state tournament. A proposal was made to remove the restriction starting with Round 4 (currently Round 5), but the motion failed.

The Committee discussed the possibility of bringing back communications cards to allow a player to ask what the current score is. In general it was thought that the player has the opportunity to walk to the scoresheet and determine the score, although this is not always possible when under time pressure. The Committee members will look at possibilities for displaying the score that would be visible to all players at the table.

NOTE

Provisions for pairing the State Tournament with more than 128 teams remain in the Terms & Conditions. Although it is not anticipated that the field will now exceed 128 teams, the language has intentionally been left in place in case a situation arises where a protest is made and it is deemed prudent to add an extra team.

FINAL BUSINESS

The Committee thanked Jeff DiOrio and Erik Czerwin for three years of service.

The next meeting of the IHSA Chess Advisory Committee will be held on Friday, March 16, 2018.