

IHSA Chess State Series Update

On Monday, December 14th, the IHSA Board of Directors approved a virtual Chess State Series for the 2020-2021 school year.

For this year only, **there will not be a Sectional tournament**. Teams that meet regular season requirements will automatically qualify for the virtual Chess State Finals on February 12th and 13th.

Below are some things to consider before you enter your team in the Chess State Series. While the Advisory Committee continues to work through the details of this virtual tournament, we wanted to give you some basic information to allow you to start planning.

Entry Requirements

- This year, teams entering in the Chess State Series will be required to pay a \$100 entry fee. Even if you have already entered for this year, those entries have been cleared out and your Official Rep will need to re-enter your team in the Schools Center and agree to pay the \$100 fee. The deadline to re-enter is January 6th, 2021.
- Teams will still be required to have played in at least six regular season matches and one tournament. These matches and tournaments can be in person (following IDPH guidelines) or virtual.
- Teams will still be required to have a minimum of six players competing in every round of the state tournament. If you will not have enough players available, you will not be permitted to compete.

State Final Format

- The 2021 Chess State Final will be played virtually using LiChess.org. This is a free online platform. All students participating in the State Final will need an LiChess.org username. We suggest getting players signed up now and making sure they are familiar with this platform.
- Even with this tournament being played virtually, **we are requiring all teams to play with their teammates IN PERSON**. While teams will not be facing their opponents in person, we are requiring each team itself to compete in the same room socially distanced. This can be a library, cafeteria, computer lab, etc. In order to preserve the integrity of the tournament, teams will need to play together under the supervision of a coach for the duration of the tournament. No exceptions.

Expectation of Coaches During State Series

- Coaches will need to actively monitor their players for the entirety of the tournament to prevent cheating. The coach will need to walk the room while closely monitoring players and screens. This is not the time to catch up on work, grade papers, etc. Coaches should always be in the

room while matches are being played. We must do the best we can to maintain the integrity of our State Series in these circumstances.

- Coaches should account for all players' phones before each round. This can mean watching each student place the phone in a book bag or collecting all phones in a common area.
- Coaches should make sure only one application on the computer is open. LiChess.org will flag for this but the extra set of eyes will be helpful.
- When coaches submit the official score each round, they will have to check a box saying that they monitored their team the entire time and, to their knowledge, no player cheated. Coaches will not be able to submit scores without verifying that they did not witness cheating.
- Players will be allowed to use a tangible board, but coaches must watch to make sure players are not planning out moves. LiChess.org will be the official board used; therefore, it is at the coach's discretion if they will allow their team to utilize physical boards.

Revised Timeline for Virtual State Series

- **Wednesday 1/6** - Deadline to re-enter for the 2021 Chess State Series
 - All entries are being cleared out so even if you previously entered, you will need to re-enter and agree to pay the \$100 entry fee
- **Tuesday 1/12** - Chess Rules Video posted
- **Friday 1/29** - Rules Video deadline at midnight (same date for all winter sports/activities)
- **Friday 1/29** – Deadline to withdraw from Chess State Series without penalty
- **Monday 2/1** - Qualifiers for State Tournament posted
- **Monday 2/1** – Chesscalate passwords emailed to coaches (4pm)
- **Thursday 2/4** - List of Participants (final roster of all available players), **LiChess usernames for all players**, and Season Summaries due in **Schools Center** at 10am.
- **Thursday 2/4** - Deadline to submit final List of Participants (12 players available for State), and Strength Order for State **in Chesscalate** (midnight)
- **Sunday 2/7** - Seeding Meeting (virtual) - 10am
- **Friday 2/12** - Virtual State Tournament (timing TBA)
- **Saturday 2/13** - Virtual State Tournament (timing TBA)
 - Depending on number of teams, only six rounds may be needed
 - Start time of rounds will depend on number of teams and will be determined in January
- **Tuesday 2/23** - Virtual Advisory Committee Meeting

Things to Consider as You Plan for the 2021 Chess State Final

- Familiarize yourself with LiChess.org and using 45+5 time control
- Go ahead and reserve playing spaces within your school for all day Friday 2/12 and Saturday 2/13 to ensure you have adequate space for tournament play
- Consider how you will feed your team on both days (ordering food vs kids bringing their own food, spaces to eat, etc.)
- Make sure to include socially distanced space for players who are not playing in a particular round

We know that this setup isn't ideal, and that the requirement to play virtually while in person will not allow for some teams to participate. But we felt it was necessary to give competing students structure and accountability.

More detailed information will be sent out once our committee meets again in January. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to Raye McDonald (rmcdonald@ihsa.org) with any questions.