

Minutes of the 2015-16 IHSA Chess Advisory Committee Meeting March 15, 2016

The IHSA Chess Advisory meeting was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Tuesday, March 15, 2016, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Tournament Director Chris Merli; George Dzuricsko, Chicago (De La Salle); Mark Grishaber, Chicago (Taft); Jeff DiOrion, Naperville (North); Erik Czerwin, Rockford (Guilford); Vincent Springer, Lincolnshire (Stevenson); and Eric Potter, Mahomet (M.-Seymour). 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. Section V-B. Pairing Procedures

Recommendation: Add an article describing how the halves of the field are divided into groups during the seeding process.

Rationale: The entire section was rewritten last year and this fundamental procedure was overlooked.

Approved

2. Section VI-D. Equipment

Recommendation: Require all games to be played with a digital clock. Suggest that digital clocks with time delay are "preferred".

Rationale: Analog clocks are outmoded. Digital clocks with time delay are affordable and widely available.

Approved

3. Introduction of Sectional Tournaments in 2018

Recommendation: The committee approved the introduction of sectional qualifying tournaments starting in 2018. Many details remain to be determined and many sections of the Terms and Conditions need to be developed over the course of the next year. In the meantime, the committee recommends that the Board approve the following general framework for the new state series:

The State Final will have a field of about 100 up to a maximum of 128 teams.
The state final tournament schedule will remain the same.

Sectionals will be held on Saturday of Week 30 (Jan. 27, 2018), two weeks prior to the state finals in Peoria. With the current number of entries it is anticipated that the IHSA will organize seven or eight sectionals of 20 to 24 teams apiece. A smaller sectional may be organized to accommodate the southernmost teams, where excessive travel might otherwise be a concern. The playing schedule at each sectional will be similar to first day of the state finals, with four rounds of play at a time control 55 minutes with 5-second delay. Teams scoring 2.0 points (or more) in the four rounds of the sectional will advance to the state tournament.

Sectional championship plaques will be 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 will be awarded to undefeated players on Boards 1 to 3 and players with perfect scores on Boards 4 to 8.

It was recommended to implement this change in 2018 rather than 2017, because many of the existing conference tournaments are held on the weekend proposed for sectional play. It is anticipated that some of those tournaments may dissolve and the host school will host a sectional instead. In any case, long-term planning is necessary. If the Board approves the change, work will begin immediately on securing hosts for 2018.

The vote to implement sectionals was 5 in favor, 1 opposed, with 1 abstention.

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 146, 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. In the IHSA system, qualifying tournaments ("sectionals") are the traditional method of narrowing the field for the state finals. Non-traditional methods were investigated and discussed, but none adequately addressed the issue of long-term growth. The addition of sectionals envisions a day when 300 or more IHSA member schools field teams.

Approved

RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Add Rule 12-5-6

Recommendation: Allow a player to request that a steward observe the game for the purposes of a later claim.

Rationale: Clarify that this is a permissible request.

2. Modify Rule 18-3-6

Recommendation: State that an incident must be recorded, without specifically mentioning "Incident Cards."

Rationale: Although cards are the usual method of recording incidents, an electronic system such as Chesscalate may also be used, in which case Incident Cards are unnecessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommended that the IHSA Administrator strictly enforce the rule that each conference send just one representative to the State Final Seeding Meeting.

The Committee recommended increasing the pay of stewards at the state final tournament by \$5 per round. The IHSA Administrator will develop a cost analysis and recommend a comparison with the compensation received by officials at other non-athletic activities.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

If sectional tournaments are implemented, one suggestion was that the "team-tournament" requirement would be removed. However, 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 when the change is made in 2018.

There was much discussion of the uniform rule and its enforcement at the 2016 tournament. This was the first year that complete compliance with the rule was expected and enforced. Most infractions resulted in warnings, although three resulted in the loss of a tie-break point. Although many varying viewpoints were heard, in the end it was agreed that as the rule becomes more familiar it will cease to be an issue. Accordingly, no changes were recommended.

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.

Several members of the Committee observed that adult spectators seemed to be more visible at this year's tournament, and added to the crowding around some of the tables. One suggestion was to confine adult spectators behind a taped line, as occurs at some tournaments. Since there is no good way to implement the line in the current crowded facility, it was agreed to make no change for 2017 but consider the change for 2018, when the room will have fewer teams and tables.

Jeff D'Orio indicated that the Illinois Chess Association is very interested in getting the IHSA tournament USCF-rated. Though this has been suggested in the past, IHSA has always declined because it would have required players to pay for a USCF membership (if they were not already members). Jeff indicated that the organization is willing to work on a solution that would be mutually satisfactory.

The Committee discussed the pairings that needed to be corrected prior to Rounds 5, 6, and 7. Discussion with Chris Merli, who served as Pairing Director this year, indicate the problem was due to a setting in WinTD that did not act as expected, and that this will not be an issue in future tournaments.

The Committee thanked George Dzuricko for three years of service.

The meeting adjourned after setting a general meeting date in March 2017.