

MINUTES OF THE IHSA OFFICIALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 27, 2023

The IHSA Officials Advisory Committee met at the IHSA Office, Bloomington, Illinois, on Thursday, April 27, 2023, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Doug Elledge, New Canton; Lance Emery, Mokena; Michael Hurckes, Ringwood; Rick Karhliker, NFOA, Sherman; Kelly Lucas, Mt. Zion; Scott Maupin, Wilmington; Jerry (Jay) Miller, Centralia; Patrick Nolan, Elmwood Park; Benny Phillips, Decatur; Summer Riordan, Palatine; Noreen P. Rodriguez, Arlington Heights; Chris Frasco, (IESA); and Kurt Gibson, Associate Executive Director, IHSA. Committee members Mark DiMarzio, Springfield; Patricia Flesher, Waukegan; Scott Hagel, Wauconda; Michael Mitchell, Palatine; Donna Mobley, Maywood; Doug Neufeldt, Roselle; and Connie Scott, Winnebago, were unable to attend.

Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends the creation of a sub-committee to be made up of a diverse group of individuals to examine the ratings system and the post-season assigning process.

RATIONALE: The committee believes that the current system contains a number of biases and is not uniformly applied. The committee believes the current system needs a review to see what other approaches could be used to identify officials worthy of post-season assignments. The current system uses a ratings component as one of its building blocks, and the committee believes coaches, for a variety of reasons, are not fulfilling their obligation to rate officials, and this failure is discouraging officials across all sports, and, as a result, warrants a review.

2. The committee recommends a change to the officials uniform in competitive cheer as follows:
 - a. Black pants or black skirt
 - b. Required IHSA patches must be properly worn
 - c. Solid black jacket or sweater with IHSA Officials patch worn over the left breast pocket with a solid black or white shirts underneath or solid black or white shirt with IHSA Officials patch worn on the sleeve.
 - d. Black shoes

RATIONALE: The recommendation will allow officials more clothing options when officiating. This change will allow officials to maintain a professional look and not stand out when on a judging panel or while technical judging on the floor.

3. The committee recommends that the street addresses of officials no longer be published in any IHSA publication or directory or in the IHSA Schools or Officials Centers.

RATIONALE: The committee believes it is no longer necessary to publish an official's street address in this day and age of electronic communication. Currently, anyone with access to the Officials' Directory has access to an official's street address, which could lead to inappropriate targeting of officials in a variety of ways.

Items of Discussion

1. The committee reviewed minutes from earlier meetings this year.
2. The committee reviewed officials' licensing data for the current year. The number of officiating licenses in 2022-23 is up approximately 6% compared to 2021-22, and the majority of sports licensed more individuals this year than chose not to renew their licenses.

3. The committee heard an update from IHSA staff on new initiatives related to officiating adopted by the IHSA Board of Directors. All these initiatives are aimed at further increasing the number of licensed officials in Illinois and will be reviewed annually. These new initiatives include:
 - a. Provisional License for 15- and 16-year-old students
 - b. Adjusted registration fees for 2023-24
 - c. Adjustments for licensed officials in border states
4. The committee reviewed the results of the 2023 Officials Survey, an exercise formed by the committee directly. Among the take-a-ways for the committee from their review include:
 - a. Consider asking for more demographic information from respondents in the next survey. The committee will discuss timelines for future surveys at their next meeting in September.
 - b. Sportsmanship issues/participant and fan behavior need to be more aggressively addressed.
 - c. Are there other, more efficient ways to distribute pertinent information and training materials than the Officials Center, particularly in light of survey results that seem to indicate the portal is not frequented as much as it once was?
 - d. IHSA staff could do more to better explain the post-season assigning process.
5. The committee heard a report from IHSA staff regarding the Summer Officials Conference, which is scheduled for July 7-8 and will be held in Normal, IL. Larry Young, MLB Umpire Supervisor, will speak to attendees on July 7th, and Brenda Hilton of Officially Human and the Big 10 Conference will speak on July 8th. The conference theme is “Learning, Growing, Giving”, and the conference is partnering with the local Habitat for Humanity and holding a tool/building equipment drive in conjunction with the conference.
6. The committee heard a report from IHSA Staff regarding the recent Head Clinicians meeting. In keeping with established protocols that had fallen by the wayside, each Head Clinician will be meeting with all clinicians in each sport in an in-person setting over the next two to three-year period to ensure that all clinic instruction is consistent across all clinics and with all clinicians. Head Clinicians also requested that a ‘rotation’ be established by the IHSA to allow each sport to conduct in-person rules meeting every few years. IHSA staff indicated they would look into this.
7. The committee heard a brief report from IESA staff that focused on new penalties, and the success of those penalties, imposed by that association on players, coaches, and fans for being ejected from junior high/middle school contests.
8. The committee reviewed a series of proposals. Those that were recommended for review and adoption by the IHSA Board of Directors can be seen above. Those proposals on which no action was taken by the committee include:
 - a. The lack of officials’ ratings submitted by coaches. This is a major concern within the community and the officials’ community as a whole. The committee believes that without any consequence for coaches who don’t rate, the situation will not improve.
 - b. The adoption of a new shirt for baseball umpires to wear in the post-season.
 - c. Changing the ratings system from a 1 (best) – 5 (worst) to a 10 (best) to 1 (worst) system.
 - d. Changing the equation used to calculate the officials’ ratings percentile.
 - e. Changing the allocation of points for the ratings percentile and Top 15 List percentile in determining an officials’ power rating.
 - f. In general, the committee is concerned that there is a lack of consistency in how post-season assignments are made by IHSA staff and that the process is not communicated very well.
9. The committee recognized and thanked out-going members Elledge, Hurckes, and Neufeldt for their service to the committee.
10. The next meeting of the committee is schedule for Thursday, September 7, 2023.