

Minutes of the IHSA Wrestling Advisory Committee Meeting

March 8, 2023

The IHSA Wrestling Advisory Committee met Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Committee members present: Matthew Yan, Chicago (Lane Tech); Chris Testone, Burlington (Central); Mark Masters, Coal City; Rich Montgomery, Rock Falls; Andy Moore, Monticello; Nick Miller, Washington; Eric Roberson, Alton (Sr.); Nate Kessen, Official; and Sam Knox, IHSA.

Guests Tony Clarke and Mike Manahan were also present.

The committee discussed and approved the minutes from the March 9, 2022 meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. VIII. Tournament Rules: B. Weight Classifications

Recommendation: Adopt 14 weight classes for boys and girls (effective July 1, 2023).

Boys: 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 144, 150, 157, 165, 175, 190, 215, 285

Girls: 100, 105, 110, 115, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140, 145, 155, 170, 190, 235

Rationale: The NFHS rule book requires each state to adopt 12, 13, or 14 weight classes starting July 1, 2023. Continuing to wrestle in 14 weight classes, as we have for many years, gives more participation opportunities for wrestlers as opposed to 12 or 13 weight classes.

2. II. Dates and Sites: C. Girls Individual Tournament Series Dates

Recommendation: Implement two Girls Regional tournaments within each Sectional.

The Girls Regional will be the weekend prior to the Boys Regional.

Girls Regional: Friday & Saturday of IHSA Week 30

The top 6 girls from each Regional weight class will advance to the Sectional, which will continue to be on the same weekend as the Boys Sectional (IHSA Week 32).

Each Girls Sectional bracket will have 12 wrestlers, just like the Boys Sectional.

Rationale: Girls wrestling participation continues to increase rapidly.

2021-22: 1,249 girls had their body fat assessed

517 girls participated in the Sectional

2022-23: 2,215 girls had their body fat assessed

908 girls participated in the Sectional

If the Sectional continues to be the first round of the state series, we face the very realistic possibility that some Sectionals could become unmanageable over two days due to the increasing number of participants. Adding Girls Regional tournaments will reduce the potential overload of wrestlers at the Sectional and will allow the state series to operate more efficiently.

X. Awards: B.

Recommendation: Award team trophies to the top three teams in the Girls Individual State Finals based on tournament scoring from the NFHS rule book.

Rationale: Girls wrestling does not have a dual team competition. This recommendation allows schools to earn State Finals team awards based on their individual wrestlers' performances, similar to other sports where individuals participate with a team component (tennis, swimming & diving, gymnastics, track & field).

Administrative Recommendations

Recommendation: Require all wrestling schools to use Track Wrestling's OPC (Optimal Performance Calculator) to determine each wrestler's descent plan and ideal competition weight. Each school is responsible for paying a \$30 fee to use the OPC, regardless of how many wrestlers are on the roster.

Rationale: The OPC is regarded as the national standard for weight management as 44 state associations currently use the program. The OPC simplifies the weight management process. It ensures safety and compliance since each weigh-in is recorded in TrackWrestling throughout the season. It also gives coaches the peace of mind to know each wrestler is eligible to participate in a certain weight class at a dual or tournament. TrackWrestling's program shows the coaches which wrestlers are available at each weight as they enter their wrestlers in a dual or tournament. This prevents wrestlers from participating at weights where they are not eligible to wrestle.

In theory, Regional seed meetings will be simpler since all weigh-ins and results will be in the same format. The \$30 annual fee has remained the same since 1999. The fee includes a National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) membership for each school.

The IHSA's weight appeal process would continue to exist as it has for many years.

Recommendation: Interpret IHSA by-laws 5.173 and 5.373 (45-match limit for boys and girls) to define a match as a competition when a wrestler physically participates in wrestling on the mat.

Rationale: The committee completely supports the concept of a 45-match limit, but members feel a match should be defined as a competition when a wrestler physically participates in wrestling on the mat. This would exclude forfeits. It would also exclude injury defaults that happen after the first match of a dual or tournament.

Recommendation: Encourage the IHSA Board of Directors to consider a hybrid seeding model for a unique sport like wrestling that has an individual component and a team component.

Rationale: The committee learned that IHSA Policy 18 doesn't allow schools to seed teams at the Regional or Sectional level in sports that are considered individual sports. Since wrestling is a hybrid sport, the committee feels there should be language in Policy 18 that allows the IHSA wrestling administrator to group schools geographically into Sectionals and the coaches then seed the teams to separate the top four or top eight teams into different Regionals within each Sectional.

Recommendation: The committee, in a joint recommendation with the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, recommends that all body fat assessors are required to attend an in-person body fat assessment course when they initially become a body fat assessor. After that, they are required to annually renew their certification through the IHSA Officials Center. If there are significant changes to the body fat assessment process at some point in the future, all assessors would be required to attend another in-person course. If a body fat assessor's license lapses, he/she will be required to attend a live course prior to assessing wrestlers again.

Rationale: Once assessors learn the required skills, they apply them annually. Attending an in-person course every four years adds travel and time commitments that not all body fat assessors have. If assessment details change significantly, then the need for an in-person course also changes.

Recommendation: The committee, in a joint recommendation with the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, recommends that a female wrestler's descent plan shows both male and female weight classes so girls can see the weight class they are able to wrestle vs. a boy on a certain date.

Rationale: This would provide clarity of the weight classes where a girl can wrestle vs. a boy.

Recommendation: The committee, in a joint recommendation with the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, recommends that a wrestler, unless directed by a physician based on the [USA Wrestling Guidelines](#), will be body fat tested at the birth certificate sex in order to determine a safe weight descent plan.

Rationale: Current medical research indicates the minimum body fat is based on your birth sex. This will ensure a wrestler is at a safe weight by not going below the recommended body fat allowance (12% for females; 7% for males).

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The committee discussed the Regional seeding process regarding whether a returning state champion should automatically receive the #1 seed.
2. The committee discussed the options of changing lineups and weight classes at the Regional for a variety of reasons (injury, illness, missing weight, etc.).
3. The committee discussed a potential change to the 3A Boys Individual State Finals tournament schedule on Friday morning during winner's bracket quarterfinals and first round wrestlebacks.
4. The committee discussed NFHS rule change proposals.
5. The committee discussed the possibility of implementing a Girls Dual Team State Series.
6. The committee discussed creating a separate Girls Wrestling Advisory Committee. All other two-gender sports have one advisory committee with representatives from boys and girls teams.
7. The committee discussed by-law 5.372 (18 dates) and the intent of having the girls season limitation match the boys season limitation in by-law 5.172 (25 dates). This item will need to go through the IHSA by-law amendment process in the fall.
8. The committee discussed concerns about the boys and girls postseason timelines overlapping.
9. The committee discussed the timeline for requiring girls to participate in the girls state series.
10. The committee recommended editing the weight control manual to make it simpler to understand and potentially creating videos to educate coaches, wrestlers, and parents about the IHSA weight management program.
11. The committee discussed the percentages of teams in each class (1A, 2A, 3A).

12. The committee discussed options to seed the individual Sectionals.
13. The committee discussed Dual Team Sectionals and State Finals, especially options to include more teams in the Sectional and an option to wrestle to a true 3rd place at the State Finals.
14. The committee discussed concerns about mat sizes at the State Finals.
15. The committee discussed the IWCOA Frosh/Soph State Series and the fact that these events are non-school events. The committee feels better education to our schools will help clarify what coaches are allowed to do with their wrestlers during IWCOA events.
16. The committee recognized outgoing members Chris Testone, Burlington (Central) and Nick Miller, Washington.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.