

Minutes of the 2013-14 IHSA Chess Advisory Committee Meeting

March 10, 2014

The IHSA Chess Advisory meeting was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Monday, March 10, 2014, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Chairman Chris Merli of Urbana (University), Dylan Canavan of Hinsdale (Central), Kent Hieronymus of Stanford (Olympia), Garrett Scott of Bloomington (H.S.), Ken Lewandowski of Evanston (Twp.), and George Dzuricsko of Chicago (De La Salle). John Venerable of the Illinois Elementary Association was also in attendance. Betsy Dynako, head steward, was unable to attend. Scott Johnson, IHSA Assistant Executive Director, ran the meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Section V-B-9. Pairings

Recommendation: Add a section allowing the coach of a team that has already been paired into a higher score group twice in the tournament (other than that which occurs as a result of acceleration in round 2) to request that the team's pairing be restricted to its own score group for the remainder of the event, unless an out-of-group pairing is unavoidable. Such a request must be made before pairings for the seventh round are completed. The restriction will be removed from any team within one point of first place before pairing the final round.

Rationale: There are advantages and disadvantages to being paired up, but the Committee felt that being paired up more than twice may be considered unacceptable by some coaches. Although such instances are unusual, it is possible to be paired up three or even four times, as was the case for one team in the 2014 tournament.

Approved

2. Section I-1. Equipment

Recommendation: Add a section reinforcing the Rule Book regulations regarding the allowable colors of chess pieces and squares, and stating that the penalty for not supplying a suitable chess set is forfeiture of the game.

Rationale: Two years ago the committee added language to the Rule Book regulating the colors of chess pieces and squares on the board, but compliance has been a problem. Adding it to the Terms & Conditions in the Equipment section will give the rule more prominence.

Approved

3. Section J-1-c. Electronic Devices

Recommendation: Add wording that will allow the use of cell phones in the playing area, by coaches only, "for official tournament business."

Rationale: In 2014-15 we hope to debut a system that will allow coaches to submit substitutions and results using a smartphone or table device. Current rules do not allow the use of such devices in the playing area. The rule will still prohibit their use for any purpose other than tournament business, and by anyone other than a coach.

Approved

4. Section K-1. Apparel

Recommendation: Clarify that the uniforms that will be required in 2014-15 must be worn by all team members, and that they must be "matching", incorporating wording taken from the Scholastic Bowl T&C's to describe what is meant by "matching tops." In addition, add a sentence indicating that the penalty for a player not wearing a matching uniform is forfeiture of the game.

Rationale: The committee hopes to head off confusion about the new rule by providing some guidelines for what constitutes a uniform, and what the penalty is.

Approved

5. Section K-2. Apparel

Recommendation: Add a provision that a coach must wear his or her IHSA-issued pass while in the playing area.

Rationale: Since a coach may now use an electronic device in the playing area, it's important that he or she be specifically identified as a coach.

Approved

6. Section K-3. Apparel

Recommendation: Add a provision that players are not allowed to wear head coverings (except for religious headwear) during a match.

Rationale: Hats, visors, headbands, and hoodies have been a source of distraction throughout the years and the committee feels that the tournament will run more smoothly if they are prohibited.

Approved

RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Delete Rules 2-1-5 and Rule 3-1-5

Recommendation: Remove a rule, implemented last year, that allows an "unsuitable" chess board or chess pieces to be used if no alternative is available.

Rationale: The committee feels that there is no reason that a school cannot supply four standard chess sets.

Approved

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee approved the implementation of an interactive scoring and stewarding system for 2014-15. Under the proposed system coaches and stewards, using their smartphones or tablets, will be access the internet to submit substitutions, game results and incident cards during the course of the tournament, instead of handwriting them and submitting them to the clerk for entry. The Committee believes the system will provide a more accurate record of substitutions, more timely results, and a much better way of communicating incidents from stewards to coaches. As a double-check, match results will still be recorded on scoresheets placed on individual tables, and for the first year at least, paper forms will be available for substitutions and incidents.

The Committee discussed how to communicate infractions to the coach in a timely manner. Among the methods discussed were posting a list of infractions in the coaches' lounge, to marking a box on the scoresheet to indicate that an infraction had occurred, to notifying coaches of an infraction by text message, to printing a team's recent infractions on the match

scoresheet. The Committee decided to recommend the last two options, in conjunction with the new scoring system. It is also likely that this information will be available online to coaches.

The Committee recommended the development of a training video for players to cover basic rules and procedures. Topics suggested for the video include illegal moves, how to operate a chess clock, the 5-minute notation rule, what happens when a player becomes a spectator, the proper color of pieces and chess boards, how to summon a steward, how to claim a draw, and how to use a communication card. It was suggested that the video would carry more weight with new chess players if it was put together by students, based on a script written by Committee members. Dylan Canavan of Hinsdale Central volunteered to take this project to his school for implementation.

The Committee discussed the concern that qualifying tournaments often do not have stewards and that the purpose of a qualifying tournament is to closely replicate conditions at the IHSA event. The Committee recommended that the IHSA and ICCA talk to tournament organizers and strongly encourage them to employ a steward.

The Committee briefly discussed and approved some procedural changes:

- Using the List of Participants to gather information about players who need assistance under Rule 21 as well as others who may have medical conditions that would be useful to know about ahead of time.
- Placing the chairs for each match such that only two chairs (Boards 1 and 2) are at the first table, along with the match scoresheet, with three chairs at the other two.
- Removing the chessboard diagram from the scoresheet provided in the souvenir program.

The Committee approved minor changes to the Incident Card and the Communication Card.

The Committee recommended that the chess vendor be instructed not to sell chess sets with unsuitable colors during the conduct of the tournament.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Committee discussed the conduct of coaches and players at the state tournament.

The Committee discussed the possibility of reviving the mandatory coaches' meeting at the state tournament but made no recommendation. The general feeling was that the required video was intended to replace the items of discussion at the meeting.

The Committee discussed the possibility of conducting clinics for coaches outside of the state tournament but made no recommendation.

The Committee discussed the abundance of oversized mascots and nameplates and directed that the problem be addressed in the rules video. The Committee also agreed that the steward

could require an oversized item to be moved to the floor if it was deemed to be distracting to players.

The Committee briefly discussed limiting the number alternates a team may bring to the state tournament (currently four) and did not recommend a change.

The Committee discussed scenarios for the future of the tournament, which has grown in size from 118 teams in 2008, the first year in the Civic Center Ballroom, to 138 teams this past year. (Next year's tournament, 2015, will be the last on the current five-year contract in Peoria.) The Committee felt that while the playing area is filling up, there is still plenty of elbow room compared to other large chess events, and that additional tables can still be moved into the layout to take care of any short-term growth. The Committee discussed more stringent requirements, such as winning a match or competing in two qualifying tournaments instead of one, but came to no conclusion. The Committee also felt that as long as space was available, coaches preferred a "big tournament" to sectionals. Finally, the Committee discussed the plausibility of a two-class tournament, but took no action.

The Committee thanked Kent Hieronymus and Dylan Canavan for three years of service.

The meeting adjourned after setting a general meeting date in March 2015.