

# Minutes of the 2017-18 IHSA Chess Advisory Committee Meeting March 16, 2018

The IHSA Chess Advisory meeting was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington, Illinois, on Friday, March 16, 2018, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Tournament Director Chris Merli; Vincent Springer, Lincolnshire (Stevenson); Eric Potter, Mahomet (M.-Seymour); Hector Hernandez, Chicago (St. Ignatius); Joel Penne, Sterling (H.S.), and Jim Fox, Naperville (Neuqua Valley). 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. Individual awards and playing order (multiple rules)

#### **Changes to:**

VIII-C-1 ("strength order")

VIII-C-4 (abnormal substitutions removed)

VIII-C-6 (indication of lineup; reference to substitution cards removed)

VIII-C-7 ("strength order")

VIII-D-1,2 ("strength order")

VIII-D-4 (special circumstances for stacking)

**Recommendation:** Eliminate individual awards at both the sectional and state final level, which will allow more flexibility in a team's lineup over the course of a tournament.

**Rationale:** The appropriateness of giving individual awards after a team-paired tournament has been discussed for many years, even as the number of awards has increased incrementally several times.

There is an inherent problem with the awards because they can easily be interpreted as something they are not. A player who wins a board medal (about 10 out of 128 on each board at the state finals) is very likely not one of the best players in the tournament at that board. He or she simply did very well playing a variety of opponents who were determined by the team's success, not his or her own success. In the past a top placement on Board 8 was publicized as a "state championship" for the player, which it most definitely was not.

A second problem is that giving individual awards sometimes pits the player's interest at odds with the team's interest. Cases have been reported where a player accepted a draw (clinching an individual medal) despite the fact that trying for a win, in order to aid the team, would have been a better course.

Eliminating individual awards has a desirable side-effect: It allows teams to substitute players much more easily from round to round. In the current system, a player can play on only one board. If a substitute appears on Board 8, he or she cannot subsequently be subbed in on Board 7 if needed. In

the proposed system, players would always play in order of strength, but not necessarily on the same board.

Imagine a team of 12 players, designated in order of strength from 1 (highest) to 12 (lowest). In any round the coach can select any 8 players from the group. The only restriction is that they must be seated in order of their strength. Here is an example of how the board positions might shift over the course of four rounds, while the order of the players remains the same.

	Bd. 1	Bd. 2	Bd. 3	Bd. 4	Bd. 5	Bd. 6	Bd. 7	Bd. 8
Rd. 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rd. 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	10
Rd. 3	1	2	3	4	7	8	11	12
Rd. 4	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In this example, the first round is played with the top 8 players (number 1 to 8) playing on Boards 1 to 8, in order. In the second round, substitutions are made on Boards 7 and 8, with players 9 and 10, again in order. So far nothing has deviated from past practice. But in the third round, the coach removes players 5 and 6. Players 7 and 8 move up to Boards 5 and 6. In the past this was not possible, because the substitutes would have been "locked in" by their previous participation on Boards 7 and 8. In the fourth round, the coach has rested Players 1 and 2. Again, the remaining players are placed on the boards *in order of strength*.

The bottom line is that removing individual awards stresses that the IHSA chess tournament is a team tournament and allows team strategies that previously came into conflict with individual awards.

The proposed penalty for playing out of order is forfeiture of the game for any player who played below a teammate who was lower in the order of strength submitted by the coach.

For example: The eight boards (numbered 1 to 8) are occupied by players whose Strength Order is 1, 2, 4, 5, 3, 6, 8, 7. Player #3 (on Board 5) is playing below two players with a lower rank (3 & 4) and must forfeit. Likewise Player #7 (on Board 8) is playing below a player with a lower rank (8) and must forfeit.

Approved

## 2. Sectional seeding (V-B-4)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that if two teams are tied in average rank, a head-to-head result (if any) will be used to break the tie.

**Rationale:** This is the same method used in seeding IHSA sports.

Approved

### 3. Sectional and state final pairings (V-C-3 and V-E-6)

**Recommendation:** Clarify the procedure when a team or teams withdraws prior to Round 1. For the sectionals: wait until teams have reported at the site before pairing Round 1. For state finals: re-pair Round 1 if there are any withdrawals.

**Rationale:** Withdrawal of any team except the bottom seed can wreak havoc on the pairings and affect tie-breakers. It is possible to re-pair the first round easily and quickly with minimal delay.

Approved

### 4. State final pairings (V-E-3)

**Recommendation:** Remove all restrictions on pairing teams from the same conference in the state finals.

**Rationale:** This restriction has repeatedly caused problems in the pairings, and does not exist in any other IHSA sport or activity.

Approved

### 5. State seeding (V-E-1, 2, 5)

**Recommendation:** Change the process for seeding state final qualifiers to require 16 groups of 8.

**Rationale:** Adding an extra round of refinement to the seeds can only help, and will not delay the seeding meeting significantly.

Approved

### 6. Sectional schedule (VI-C)

**Recommendation:** Allow rounds in the sectional tournament to start early at the manager's discretion.

**Rationale:** Several of the sectionals were ready to play well ahead of the printed schedule. There is no harm in allowing them to proceed if ready.

Approved

### 7. Sectional cancellation (new section)

**Recommendation:** Provide for teams to advance if a sectional cannot be played before the state seeding meeting.

**Rationale:** This scenario is unlikely, but needs to be addressed before it ever happens.

Died for Lack of Motion

## 8. State final qualification (VII-A-2)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that in the case of a tie for the 128th qualifying spot, a head-to-head result from the sectional (if any) will be used to break the tie.

**Rationale:** This scenario is unlikely, but needs to be put in writing just in case.

Approved

## 9. Forfeits (VIII-E-4)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that the score of a forfeit is the sum of the individual matches won (up to 68-0), not the current 48-20. Remove the reference to scoring in VII-A-3, since it duplicates language in VIII-E-4.

**Rationale:** It is believed this change was made, perhaps erroneously, many years ago.

Approved

## 10. Scoring system (new Rule VIII-E-6)

**Recommendation:** Add language that describes how a team wins a match.

**Rationale:** This is added for the sake of completeness.

Approved

## 11. Team placard (IX-F-2)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that the school's name must be on the placard or mascot.

**Rationale:** The purpose of the placard or mascot is to help stewards and administrators quickly locate a team.

Approved

## 12. Smartwatches (new rule IX-G-4)

**Recommendation:** Make use of smartwatches illegal, just like cell phones.

**Rationale:** Smartphones present the same potential for abuse as a cell phone. Messages can be viewed on the screen.

Approved

## 13. Uniforms (IX-H-1)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that player and coach uniforms should "clearly identify the school."

**Rationale:** Makes accommodations for uniforms that contain a school logo but do not include the school name.

Approved

#### 14. Apparel (IX-H-3)

**Recommendation:** Clarify that players can wear headwear that is required for medical reasons.

**Rationale:** It would not be good policy to restrict such items.

Approved

#### RULE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

##### 1. Medical emergency (new section, Rule 14-10)

**Recommendation:** Specify that in case of a medical emergency, the clock may be stopped and a steward must be informed. The clock may not be stopped for more than 5 minutes per match per player.

**Rationale:** A player may need to step away from the board momentarily to deal with a medical issue (a nosebleed is a common example).

Approved

##### 2. Kibitzing (new article, Rule 17-2-3)

**Recommendation:** Move language regarding the penalty for kibitzing out of the Situation after Rule 17-2 and into the body of the rule, and add the ability to impose a minor penalty (instead of a major penalty) at the head steward's discretion.

**Rationale:** The penalty for kibitzing needs to be clearly stated in the rules. Not all kibitzing incidents rise to the level of a major penalty.

Approved

#### ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed the policy for restricting team members inside the roped area at the state final policy, and made the following recommendation: If enough rope and enough stanchions are available to allow roping around a particular table, non-playing team members of the teams at that table must stand outside the barrier. However, players from teams involved in matches inside the larger roped area will always be permitted inside the ropes.

The Committee recommended that, if individual awards are eliminated, the names of players and coaches of all teams finished with six points be announced during the awards ceremony.

If individual awards are eliminated, procedures (including Chesscalate) will need to be altered to require coaches to order their players by strength prior to the start of both the sectional and the state finals.

The Committee heard a report that the United States Chess Federation had offered to rate the results of the individual matches during the sectional and state tournaments. To do so, it would provide any players who were not members of the USCF with a trial membership and ID number. The Committee

was in favor of pursuing the service. If an agreement is reached, it would require coaches to submit the ID numbers of players who have memberships during the List of Participants process.

The committee asked State Final Manager Chris Merli to work with the proprietor of the WinTD system to see if the bug with the Harkness variation can be fixed. There is interest in using the variation again if it can be made to work correctly.

The committee asked the IHSA to take a survey of coaches to see what their thoughts are on reducing the length of the first day of the state finals. Options include reducing the time allotted to each player, reducing the length of the lunch period, and starting earlier. The last option would likely require some teams who have not previously stayed in Peoria on Thursday night to do so.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

The Committee reviewed a variety of incidents during the sectionals and state finals. In connection with one incident the Committee heard an explanation of why there is no additional level of appeal beyond the head steward's ruling (it was removed several years ago).

The Committee endorsed an effort to work with the Illinois Chess Coaches Association to create some sort of steward training curriculum for next year.

The Committee engaged in a discussion of the new sectional level of qualifying tournaments. There was some disappointment that the sectionals only ended up eliminating 23 teams (from 151 to 128). Some committee members would like to see a much smaller state final. Others would like to use 2.0 points in the sectional as the qualifying mark and eliminate at-large entries. There was concern that the Swiss pairing system gives an advantage to lower-seeded teams that are vying for a second win in the final round. And there were concerns that some teams made it to state as an at-large team while gaining their only point through a bye. In general, it was agreed that at least another year of sectionals needs to play out before any strong conclusions can be drawn. The chairman advised the committee that proposals to change the size of the state finals or the nature of competition (adding classes or divisions, for example) need to be fully formed and would be well served if they have gone through a survey process or vote of the coaches prior to presentation to the Advisory Committee and the IHSA.

The Committee reviewed several proposals for seeding and pairing the tournament, including using the sectional result more directly in state final seeding (for instance, by seeding all the 4-point teams at the top of the state seeds), and pairing the final four teams in classic bracket style.

The Committee responded negatively to an idea to move the tournament to March or April at some date far in the future.

### **FINAL BUSINESS**

The Committee thanked Vincent Springer and Eric Potter for three years of service.

The next meeting of the IHSA Chess Advisory Committee will be held on Friday, March 15, 2019.