

IHSA Esports Advisory Committee Meeting

September 11, 2024

10:00 a.m.

The IHSA Esports Advisory Committee met on September 11, 2024, at the IHSA office in Bloomington, Illinois, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: James Keathley, Elgin (H.S.); Ellie Bell, Minooka; and Brian Clausen, Bartonville (Limestone). Patrick Davey, Chicago (Lane); and Brock Frazier, Metropolis (Massac Co.) attended the meeting virtually. Also in attendance were Dan Le, IHSA Assistant Executive Director; Chris Schwarz, IHSA Assistant Executive Director; and Dan Truffa, 2024 Esports State Finals Tournament Manager, who attended for a portion of the meeting. Absent from the meeting were: Colin Flaherty, Milford; and Dalton McGhiey, Springfield (Lanphier).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Move the date when the first-level tournament (currently the sectional) brackets are drawn to the Tuesday prior to the first-level tournament, and designate the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday prior to the first-level tournament as the dates when preliminary rounds may be played online if necessary.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, K. Tournament Assignments and Seeding

1. Bracket assignments for the first-level tournament in each game of the state series will be a random draw. For individual games, participants from the same school will be assigned to opposite halves of the bracket. First-level tournament brackets will be drawn and posted publicly on the ~~Wednesday~~ Tuesday before the first-level tournament of the state series.

II. DATES AND SITES, A. Individual Tournament Series Dates and Sites

1. The sectional tournament shall be on Saturday of Week 42 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar. In the event that the number of entries in a given game requires preliminary rounds to be played, those shall be played ~~during Weeks 41 and~~ on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday of Week 42 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar ~~based on a schedule determined by the IHSA Office.~~ Participating schools will schedule a date and time to play the online match. If the schools involved cannot agree on a date and time to play, the IHSA office will determine when the match will be played. Tournament sites and school assignments will be posted online.

Rationale: Depending on the number of participants in a sectional and the number of available gaming devices at the sectional site, it may be necessary to play preliminary round matches online before the sectional date to ensure that the tournament can be completed on Saturday of Week 42. Moving the date when brackets are drawn one day earlier provides additional flexibility for schools to schedule online matches when necessary.

Recommendation #2: Modify the state finals schedule to allow for continuous play in all games, which includes removal of the scheduled one-hour lunch break in the current schedule.

VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME SCHEDULES, C. Time Schedules

2. **State Final:** The state final shall be a one-day event using the following schedule:
7:45-8:30 a.m. Registration/Check-in
8:30-8:45 a.m. Coaches Meeting

8:45-9:00 a.m. Final instructions to teams by coaches

9:00 a.m. Preliminary round competition in Individual and Small Group all games begins

Noon-1:00 p.m. LUNCH BREAK

Play will be continuous through Competition Finals ~~begins after Lunch Break~~

~~Individual Game (championship match)~~

~~Small Group Game #1 (championship match)~~

~~Small Group Game #2 (championship match)~~

~~Team Game (championship match)~~

Awards after conclusion of final championship match

Rationale: As more games have been added to the state series and with more schools participating, the length of the state final tournament has extended into the evening hours in the past couple of years. Natural breaks for participants occur in between rounds of the tournament as there are not enough devices to have all participants playing simultaneously. Participants can eat lunch during their breaks between rounds, which would allow for continuous play to keep the tournament progressing.

Recommendation #3: Add language that prescribes who can provide coaching and when coaching is permitted during matches.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, L. Coaching

During matches, only individuals wearing an official coach's pass are permitted to provide coaching and instruction to participants according to the times outlined in the rules of each event.

Rationale: Each event has its own specified times when coaching is permitted. Adding this language to the terms and conditions specifies who can provide coaching and references that the allotted periods for coaching in each event are prescribed in their respective sets of rules.

RULES RECOMMENDATIONS

Rocket League

Recommendation #1: Breaks no longer than ~~10~~ 5 minutes will occur after every two (2) matches in any match played in a Best of 5 or greater format. During breaks, coaches can meet with players to analyze film, discuss, and substitute/coach players.

Rationale: Each individual Rocket League game is set for 5 minutes. A 10-minute break is nearly equivalent to the amount of time it takes to play 2 games. Reducing the break length to 5 minutes will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate.

Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Singles

Recommendation #1: Player 1 (P1) and 2 (P2) will be determined by ~~Rock, Paper, Scissors~~ a coin toss. ~~Both players stand back to back and throw on three.~~ The winning player can choose to be P1 or P2.

Rationale: Conducting a coin toss is more consistent with procedures in other events like Rocket League and EA Sports FC.

Recommendation #2: Players have up to ~~2 minutes~~ 1 minute between games to strategize with coach(es) ~~and/or teammate(s)~~ before play resumes.

Rationale: Reducing the coaching and strategizing period to 1 minute will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate. There are no teammates in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Singles.

Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Crew Battle

Recommendation #1: Game Settings – Stock and time are set to 3 stock and ~~6~~ 5 minutes

Rationale: Reducing the time settings will be consistent with rules of the Illinois High School Esports Association, and it will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate.

Recommendation #2: Team 1 (T1) and 2 (T2) will be determined by ~~Rock, Paper, Scissors~~ a coin toss. ~~Both teams will elect a captain that will stand back to back and throw on three. The captains' coaches will determine the winner.~~ The winning team can choose to be T1 or T2.

Rationale: Conducting a coin toss is more consistent with procedures of other events like Rocket League and EA Sports FC.

Recommendation #3: Coaches and crew have up to ~~2 minutes~~ 1 minute between games to strategize before play resumes.

Rationale: Reducing the coaching and strategizing period to 1 minute will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate.

EA Sports FC

Recommendation #1: Game Settings – Injuries: ~~On~~ Off

Rationale: Injuries during gameplay is outside of the control of the participants.

Recommendation #2: Coach Interactions – Coaches are not allowed to contact players unless during the following specified times:

- Before a game begins
- Halftime for up to 1 minute
- After the 2nd half if extra time is needed for up to 1 minute
- After the match is completed

Rationale: Adding this language will define a set amount of time for coaching to occur in the middle of a match. Defining an amount of time for coaching will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate.

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe

Recommendation #1: Coaching – Coaches are not allowed to contact players unless during the specified times:

- Before a race
- Between races for up to 1 minute
- After a race

Rationale: Adding this language will define a set amount of time for coaching to occur in the middle of a match. Defining an amount of time for coaching will help keep the tournament progressing at an appropriate rate.

EA Sports Madden NFL

Recommendation: See separate document for proposed Madden NFL game rules.

Rationale: The rules were developed using rules adopted by the National Junior College Athletics Association Esports organization and current IHSA rules for EA Sports FC as references. Note that gameplay under these proposed rules will be observed this fall and winter, and modifications may be suggested prior to the 2025 state series.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

None

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. The committee discussed the current number of players required for each team game as there have been schools that have asked if it would be possible to play with less players than required.
2. The committee discussed the interpretation of a rule in Mario Kart 8 Deluxe regarding disabled parts or characters. Currently, there are no parts or characters that are officially disabled from competition.
3. The committee discussed the logistics of adding more gaming stations at the state finals to improve the timeliness of the tournament. Some coaches have given feedback regarding the amount of time it has taken to complete the tournament.
4. The committee discussed the role of the bracket/room managers during competition and agreed that a guide should be created for all bracket/room managers during the state series to outline consistent expectations and responsibilities.
5. The committee discussed the number of withdrawals that occur between the List of Participants deadline and the sectional tournament. Dan Le clarified the procedures for replacing a student who withdraws. These procedures will be communicated to all coaches through a rules presentation.
6. The committee reviewed the appeals process during state series competition.
7. The committee reviewed previous discussions on the appropriate number of events for overall team trophies to be awarded.
8. The committee further discussed a survey for coaches to obtain information on preferences for game titles, gaming platforms, and rule considerations in the IHSA state series. The IHSA will create a survey this school year to obtain feedback prior to the next advisory committee meeting.
9. James Keathley proposed the thought of streaming state series competitions publicly in the future.
10. Dan Le provided an update on communications between IHSA and IHSEA and potential collaborations in the future.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 7, 2024