

Minutes of the IHSA Boys & Girls Tennis Advisory Committee Meeting

November 21, 2024

9:00 a.m.

The IHSA Boys & Girls Tennis Advisory Committee met on November 21, 2024, in an online setting from various communities across Illinois, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Kathryn Cattafesta, Chicago (F.W. Parker); Nate Brill, Mundelein (Carmel); Brian Johnson, Flossmoor (Homewood-F.); Aaron Guenther, LaSalle (L.-Peru); Stefan Ayd, Paris; Zoe Murray, Pekin; and Alex Fox, Edwardsville (H.S.). Also in attendance were Jim Lange, Boys State Finals Tournament Manager; Kevin Schrammel, Girls State Finals Tournament Manager; Josh Leighton, Illinois High School Tennis Coaches Association (IHSTCA) Board Member; and Dan Le, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Increase the number of state qualifiers from 64 to 96 in Class 1A and 2A singles and doubles. Add consolation bracket for entries who lose in the quarterfinal round of the sectional tournaments and play matches through 5th and 6th place. 1st through 6th place finishers at the sectional qualify for the state finals.

V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING, B. Sectional Seeding Meeting

2. The sectional manager shall conduct the seed meeting in accordance to IHSA seeding policies and with the directions as stated on the sample draw sheet which can be found in this manual and on the IHSA girls'/boys' tennis page at IHSA.org. At the Sectional, the #4, #5, **and #8** seeds will be placed in the top of the draw while the #3, #6, **and #7** seeds are placed in the bottom of a draw. For a 17 or more entry, the lines of the seeds will be as follows: #1 (line 1), #2 (line 32), #3 (line 24), #4 (line 9), #5 (line 13), #6 (line 20), **#7 (line 28), and #8 (line 5)**. For a 16 or less entry draw, the lines of the seeds will be as follows: #1 (line 1), #2 (line 16), #3 (line 12), #4 (line 5), #5 (line 7), #6 (line 10), **#7 (line 14), and #8 (line 3)**.

3. Four, five, six, **seven, or eight** singles players and four, five, six, **seven, or eight** doubles teams shall be seeded at each sectional tournament. There shall be no additional placement of players. A school is eligible to receive more than one seed in each event. If a seeded singles player withdraws or a seeded doubles team substitutes with a student on the original list of participants roster between the time of the seeding meeting and when sectional play begins, the draw shall be redone. If the seeding is not done in accordance to IHSA seeding policy, the draw shall be redone.

V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING, C. State Final Seeding Meeting

1. The committee shall prepare a list of no more than ~~16~~ **32** seeded singles players and doubles teams in both 1A & 2A based on information submitted online by coaches prior to the sectional seeding meetings and received by the IHSA office.

2. A draw of ~~64~~ **128** will be used for both singles and doubles play **with 96 total entries, which includes 32 first round byes for seeded singles players and doubles teams**. United States Tennis Association (USTA) rules shall be followed in assigning seeded entries in the proper position in the brackets, except

that players from the same school will be placed in opposite halves of the bracket and ~~the four singles qualifiers and four doubles qualifiers from each sectional will be placed in separate quarters~~ **no more than two qualifiers from the same sectional will be placed in the same quarter** of the brackets.

VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME SCHEDULES, C. State Final

1. On Thursday, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd rounds of the main draw and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd rounds of the back draw will be played **(Note there are no matches for the 1st round of the back draw due to the byes in the main draw)**. On Friday, the **round of 16 and quarterfinal round** and semifinal rounds of the main draw and 4th, 5th, and 6th, **and 7th** rounds of the back draw will be played. On Saturday, the **semifinal and final round rounds** of the main draw and the **quarter**, semi, and final rounds of the back draw will be played.

VII. SECTIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF WINNERS

A. Sectionals: The first ~~four (4)~~ **six (6)** places in both singles and doubles shall advance from each sectional tournament to the state final tournament.

B. Sectional Match Disruption or Postponement: If circumstances do not permit a sectional tournament to be completed **through the qualifying rounds** by Monday evening, the top **4 6** seeded singles players and doubles teams shall advance to the state tournament unless ~~they already have been defeated~~. ~~If one of these players or doubles teams has been defeated, the winning singles player or doubles team would advance to the state tournament in place of the seed.~~ **play has reached the quarterfinals. If a top 6 seeded entry has reached the quarterfinals, they shall advance. If a top 6 seeded entry does not reach the quarterfinals, the next highest seeded singles player or doubles team that has reached the quarterfinals shall advance. If not enough seeded teams reach the quarterfinals, then the singles player or doubles team that defeats the highest seeded participant shall advance first followed by the singles player or doubles team that defeats the next highest seeded participant and so on until all 6 state qualifying spots are filled.**

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, A. Sectional Scoring

1. Regular scoring shall be used in all rounds of sectional play (two out of three tie break sets). If the tournament is taken indoors, "no-ad" scoring shall be used except for quarterfinal, semifinal, ~~and final round~~, **and all consolation round** matches in which regular scoring shall be used.

1a. Round 1 through Round 5: Two points shall be awarded for each round in both singles and doubles, except that the winners of the third place matches shall be awarded one team point. **No points shall be awarded for wins in the consolation bracket.**

1b. Losers of semifinal matches in both singles and doubles at all sectional tournaments shall play a match to determine third and fourth place. **Losers of quarterfinal matches in both singles and doubles at all sectional tournaments shall go into a consolation bracket and play semifinal back draw matches with the winners playing a match to determine fifth and sixth place.**

1e. The **fifth place**, third place, **and** championship, matches in both singles and doubles shall be played at the tournament even if the competitors are from the same school. Failure to play this match may result in a breach of contract (IHSA by-law 6.041). Any match not played should be reported to the IHSA.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, B. State Final Scoring

1. All matches in the **main draw of the** state tournament will use regular ad scoring. In rounds 1, ~~and 2,~~ **and 3** of the main (championship) draw ~~and all consolation/back draw matches,~~ a 3rd set super tie break will be played in lieu of a full third set, including the 5/6 place match. **All back draw matches, except the 5/6 place match, will use “no-ad” scoring with a 3rd set super tie break in lieu of a full third set.** The Championship match and 3/4 place match will play out a full 3rd set. If the tournament is taken indoors, “no-ad” scoring shall be used except for quarter final, semifinal and final round matches in which regular scoring shall be used.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, F. Substitutions

2a. Advancement of the next qualifier **from a sectional** will be allowed for singles players who qualify for the state tournament and cannot participate. The player, who lost ~~to the injured/ineligible player~~ in the quarterfinals **consolation semifinals** at the sectional **and was in the same half of the bracket as the player who withdrew,** will be the player who advances. **The player, who lost in the consolation semifinals in the other half of the bracket, will be the second alternate from that sectional if needed.**

X. AWARDS, A. Sectional Awards

2. ~~Four~~ **Six** individual medals will be awarded for the top ~~four~~ **six** singles players and the top ~~four~~ **six** doubles players.

Rationale: When tennis increased from one class to two classes, the total number of state qualifiers did not change. The 128 singles players and 128 doubles teams that qualified for state in the one-class system were split to advance 64 singles players and 64 doubles teams in each class. In the one-class system, approximately 80 of the 128 qualifiers in each bracket were from larger schools, and approximately 48 qualifiers were from smaller schools. By adding a class and not changing the number of qualifiers, approximately 16 singles players and 16 doubles teams who typically had qualified for the state tournament in the one-class system were no longer qualifying in the two-class system.

Increasing the number of qualifiers from 4 to 6 at each sectional will provide a greater opportunity for participants in tougher sectionals to qualify for the state tournament.

Team trophies will be awarded more appropriately to teams with 3 or 4 state tournament qualifiers rather than team trophies being awarded to schools with just 1 or 2 qualifiers who advance far in the state tournament.

In comparison to other IHSA sports that added classes, tennis did not increase the number of qualifiers after adding a class while other sports did.

Recommendation #2: Change the early start time consent form to be required for sectionals planning to start before 12:00 p.m. on Friday of the sectional tournament.

II. DATES AND SITES, A. Sectional Tournament

To complete the tournament on Saturday, the local manager may, at their discretion if the number of entries warrant, elect to begin tournament play on Friday afternoon (after school hours). If the local

manager wishes to begin the competition on Friday before 4:00 ~~12:00~~ p.m., written consent of the principal from each participating school is required. Sectional managers will send to the principals from participating schools the IHSA Tennis Request for Earlier Start Time Form for their approval. This document can be located online and in the tennis manual.

Rationale: The current timeline of 4:00 p.m. was added to the tennis terms and conditions in 1981 when there were less teams participating in tennis. The growth in participation has required sectionals to start earlier to complete the tournaments while navigating weather, daylight, and number of available tennis courts. Each sectional currently hosts 9 to 11 schools, which requires five rounds to complete. To ensure that sectional tournaments are completed through the quarterfinals on Friday and leaves the final two rounds for Saturday, the vast majority of schools are already consenting to start sectionals before 4:00 p.m. on Friday with most starting between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. In the fall, starting at 4:00 p.m. would likely only permit one round of matches to be conducted at sites without lights due to darkness.

Recommendation #3: Whenever possible, the 3 and 6 seeds should be on the same half of the sectional bracket, and the 4 and 5 seeds should be on the same half of the sectional bracket to preserve the 3 vs. 6 and 4 vs. 5 quarterfinal matchups. *Note: This recommendation is proposed for the current state series format of 6 seeded players and 4 state qualifiers per sectional. If Recommendation #1 is approved, then this recommendation would be withdrawn because of the increased number of seeded players.*

V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING, B. Sectional Seeding Meeting

4. At the sectional tournaments, the draw for both singles and doubles shall be made so those competitors from the same school are placed in opposite halves of the bracket. **If the 3, 4, 5, or 6 seed must be moved to the opposite half of the bracket to prevent teammates on the same half, the 3, 4, 5, and 6 seeds shall all be moved to the opposite halves of the bracket provided no teammates are on the same half as a result.**

Rationale: The quarterfinal round of the sectional is the state-qualifying round. To ensure that the higher seeds have the fairest and most appropriate path to qualify for the state finals, the 3 versus 6 and 4 versus 5 quarterfinal matchups should be preserved whenever possible. Note that there are arrangements of seeds that will not allow the 3/6 and 4/5 quarterfinal matchups to be preserved.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Adopt current USTA officiating procedures for overruling out calls when a licensed tennis umpire is present.

Rationale: USTA officiating procedures have changed so that umpires immediately overrule 'out' calls from a player when the ball is in rather than waiting on an appeal from the opposing player. Adopting this practice at the state finals would be consistent with USTA procedures that many of the players are familiar with, and it would reduce any confusion between players and umpires when a player may or may not be appealing an 'out' call.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. State finals tournament managers, Jim Lange and Kevin Schrammel, provided a summary of the 2024 tennis state finals.
2. IHSTCA board member, Josh Leighton, shared the IHSTCA's feedback on the 2024 tennis state finals.
3. The committee discussed the possibility of having two line judges for a match at the state finals when a line judge is requested. The committee heard feedback on the challenges of finding individuals to serve as line judges at some state final sites. Neutral coaches are present to coach their own players, and site directors have several responsibilities for administering the site and reporting results. The committee heard a suggestion to pay an individual at each site to serve as a line judge when needed. The committee also heard a suggestion for sites to consider where the match is at when assessing the need for a line judge (Ex. early in the first set versus late in the third set or in a match tiebreak). No action was taken.
4. The committee discussed the amount of time permitted after the first set per USTA rules in comparison to the amount of coaching time permitted after the first set according to the IHSA terms and conditions. It was noted that the IHSA terms and conditions allot more opportunities for coaches to coach during matches (Ex. before a set tiebreak and during change of courts in a tiebreak). No action was taken.
5. The committee discussed 3rd place and championship matches between teammates at the sectional that are defaulted by one of the participants. The committee heard a suggestion to withhold the sectional medal for individuals that default. The committee tabled this discussion to obtain more feedback from coaches on how to best address this topic.
6. The IHSA recognized and thanked outgoing committee members: Coach Brian Johnson of Flossmoor (Homewood-F.), Division 3; Coach Zoe Murray of Pekin, Division 6; and Principal Alex Fox of Edwardsville (H.S.), Division 7.