**MINUTES OF THE IHSA OFFICIALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**April 30, 2025**

The IHSA Officials Advisory Committee met at the IHSA Office, Bloomington, Illinois, on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Christina Butterbrodt, Dwight; Nicholas Cargola, Elk Grove Village; Rick Karhliker, Springfield; Linnea Mason, Chicago; Scott Maupin, Wilmington; Jerry (Jay) Miller, Centralia; Donna Mobley, Maywood; Leah Morgan, Oswego; Benny Phillips, Decatur; Noreen Rodrguez, Arlington Heights; Hanah Shehaiber, Chicago Ridge; Connie Scott, Winnebago; Kenneth Watkins, Maywood; Chris Frasco, (IESA); and Kurt Gibson, Director of Officiating Services, (IHSA).

Committee Members Hollice Clark III, Kankakee, Patricia Flesher, Waukegan, Alan McCormick, Belvidere, Nitin Rao, Northbrook; Cindy Rueter, Columbia; were unable to attend.

Administrative Recommendations

**1-3:** Earlier this school year, IHSA member schools modified By-law 2.080. Subsequently, adjustments to the IHSA Officials Handbook need to be made to reflect the change in the by-law. The three ‘proposals’ below address the change. (all recommended changes highlighted in yellow below)

1. Officials Handbook I.H. (new #6)

6) Assign an unlicensed or non-compliant official to an interscholastic contest or officiate a contest when non-compliant.

2. Officials Handbook I.H. (new edit after #6)

If an official is placed on disciplinary probation, he/she/they is ineligible for promotion in the current licensing year and may be ineligible for an IHSA post-season assignment. The individual must meet all requirements for an active license the subsequent year to avoid suspension.

Recognized assignors who assign unlicensed or non-compliant officials to interscholastic contests will be ineligible for post season assignments in the current year and unable to submit a Top 15 List for the sport(s) where the violation(s) occurred. Additional violations could result in more penalties, as determined by the IHSA Executive Director.

3. Officials Handbook IV.G (new last sentence; will replace current one)

Violations of IHSA By-law 2.080 will result in penalties as outlined in the IHSA Member School Handbook and the IHSA Officials Manual.

**RATIONALE:** Earlier this school year, the IHSA membership modified the language to By-law 2.080. As a result, language should be added to the IHSA Officials Handbook to provide guidance on how the new modified language should be applied. These proposals address this change.

4. Create a process to allow licensed IHSA Officials a second promotion window during a school year; **NOTE:** *this additional window does NOT eliminate the seasonal promotion opportunity that many officials will still utilize*

**When**: Week 15 IHSA Standardized Calendar (one week only: Sunday – Saturday) for ***spring sports***

* Spring sports: baseball, boys’ lacrosse, girls’ lacrosse, softball, track & field, and water polo

Week 39 IHSA Standardized Calendar (one week only: Sunday – Saturday) for ***fall/winter sports***

* Fall/Winter sports: football, flag football, soccer, swimming and diving, volleyball, basketball, competitive cheerleading, competitive dance, girls’ gymnastics, and wrestling

**Who:** Officials who have met qualifications to apply for promotion; officials can only apply for promotion ONCE in a given school year (school year defined as July 1 – following June 30);

**Additional Considerations**

1. In order to be eligible for the second promotion window, officials MUST have completed all application requirements by October 1st (for the Week 15 window) and March 15 (for the Week 39 window) and be eligible for promotion. No one will be allowed to apply for promotion earlier than outlined in the IHSA Officials’ Handbook. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.
2. If an official tests for promotion in consecutive years and fails to promote, he/she/they will be required to wait one full calendar year from the last promotion attempt before becoming eligible for promotion.

**RATIONALE:** For some officials, the current promotion calendar is challenging. Allowing a second promotion window should enable more officials to undergo the promotion process. The current proposal maintains the integrity of the process by allowing an official to only go for promotion once in a school year.

**Items of Discussion**

1. The committee reviewed the minutes from its September 2024 meeting and received the following reports/update from IHSA Director of Officiating Services Kurt Gibson:
   1. For the 3rd consecutive year, the number of officiating licenses distributed increased; 20,209 licenses have been distributed for the 2024-25 school year.
   2. There has been a 5% increase in the number of officials who have at least 2 licenses compared to 2023-24.
   3. Approximately 85% of licensed officials are male.
   4. The approximate average age of an official in Illinois is 50.7 years (stable number YOY)
   5. The turnover rate (comparing unrenewed licenses against new licenses) was up slightly compared to 2023-24.
   6. Over 80% of all officials met the new compliance requirements this year.
   7. Officials’ ratings from coaches are up 47% over last year; it is expected that number could reach 50% by the end of the current school year.
   8. Over 20,000 mobile ratings have been received this year.
   9. A new official’s on-boarding presentation has been developed and is expected to be used beginning next year.
2. The committee was reminded that the licensing period for the 2025-26 school year, along with registration for the annual Officials Conference (slated for July 11-12 in Normal, IL) will open on May 1st. No changes to the licensing process or fees will be implemented for the coming year.
3. The committee discussed the new process established by IHSA staff to review official’s uniform changes.
4. The committee heard a report from IHSA staff concerning the windows for officials to complete their eligibility requirements for the coming year. In all but one sport, officials will have at least one month to complete the requirements before the rules presentations and exams are closed.
5. The committee heard a report from IHSA staff concerning the expected increase in the use of the Arbiter platform for initial eligibility. It is expected that Arbiter will become the on-boarding platform for eligibility beginning with the 2026-27 school year. More information will be shared with officials about this initiative over the coming year.
6. The recertification process for clinicians in all sports was discussed. The recertification process has begun and will be completed by all sports no later than June 30, 2026.
7. The committee was updated on the increase in official’s pay that went into effect for the current year. It is expected that the changes will result in the association paying out more than $200,000 in official’s fees this year compared to last year. No changes in the pay structure for state series contests is expected for the 2025-26 year.
8. The committee heard a report regarding House Bill 2521, which would require all officials to be fingerprinted as a part of the registration process. The bill has passed committee in Springfield and could possibly be acted on as a part of the spring Legislative session. If the bill becomes law, more information will be provided to officials.
9. The committee discussed and recommended two proposals that are reflected above in these minutes.
10. The committee heard a report from IESA Associate Executive Director Chris Frasco on the following IESA initiatives:
    1. Official’s Spotlight: new initiative of the IESA designed to offer weekly recognition for junior high/middle school officials; weekly posts online have been well-received.
    2. 2nd Annual Celebration of Excellence: 15 students were recently recognized for their sportsmanship and another 10 individuals were recognized for their service as officials to middle schools/junior high schools in Illinois.
11. The committee discussed the need for feedback from coaches who assign a poor (i.e., ‘5’ rating) to an official. Currently, submission of such a rating requires a coach to offer a narrative for the poor rating. The committee discussed developing a checklist for coaches to complete, possibly in lieu of the narrative, when giving the poor rating. This would provide officials with feedback that could be processed and used for improvement. The committee discussed if, when, and how that feedback could be given to officials. IHSA staff indicated they would create a framework for this reporting and would make this an agenda item for the committee’s fall meeting.
12. The committee thanked out-going members Flesher, Maupin, Miller, Mobley, Phillips, Rodriguez, and Scott for their service to the committee.