SCHOLASTIC BOWL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The IHSA Scholastic Bowl Advisory Committee met virtually on Thursday, May 8, 2025, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee Members present were: Brandon Morgan, Coach, Chicago (Leo); Brad Frey, Coach, Johnsburg; Brian Dunne, AD, Westmont; Nevagay Abel, Coach, Rockford (Auburn); Brant Trimpe, Coach, Williamsville; Jay Krause, Principal, Edwardsville (Metro-East Lutheran); Rob Grierson, Coordinator of Officials, Skokie; Mike Laudermith, Coordinator of Officials, Addison. Others in attendance: Brad Fischer, IHSSBCA President; Kraig Garber, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Item VIII.H – State Final Team Seating

Recommendation: Adjust the language as follows:
~~State Final Team Seating: The team on the left side of the bracket (pairings) will be designated as the "Home" team and will be seated facing the left-hand side of the Moderator. The team on the Right-side of the bracket (pairings) will be designated as the Visiting team and will seated facing the right-hand side of the Moderator.~~ The competitors within each team will be seated side-by-side and facing in the same direction. The moderator will be positioned to see the faces, name plates, and responder lights of all competitors, and as close as possible to halfway between the two teams. Coaches and reserve players should be physically separated from the competitors and may be behind or in front of the teams depending on room constraints. Only coaches, school officials, and substitute players may sit at the coaches' table. If there is many spectators watching a match, the preferred setup is to have the teams positioned in a chevron (V-shape), moderator at the point of the V, all facing the coaches, reserve players, and spectators.

Rationale: This T&C change would apply if the proposed changes to Rule 3-C-1 are adopted. First-come-first-served competition seating has been a long-time practice in scholastic bowl. This would align the state final seating procedures with what teams are accustomed to during the regular season.

Approved by Consent

2. Item VIII.O – Categories and Subcategories for Toss-Up and Bonus Questions

Recommendation: Adjust the following categories as follows:
MATH ~~4/4~~ 3/3
Drawn from a mix of Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus, Probability, Statistics, History of Mathematics, ~~Computer Science~~, and Miscellaneous Math Topics. Subcategories are not required to be represented equally or at all.

MISCELLANEOUS ~~1/1~~ 2/2
Drawn from the different categories: Interdisciplinary, Journalism, Sports, Technology, <u>Computer Science,</u> Agriculture, Family Consumer Science, Drivers Education, Industrial Arts, Pop Culture, Consumer Education and not requiring all subcategories to be represented equally or at all.
<u>Note: Within the 2/2, no more than 1/1 will be from the Pop Culture & Sports subcategory.</u>

Rationale: The committee feels that computer science is more appropriately placed in the Miscellaneous category as opposed to the Math category. Additionally, the committee would like the note added to the Miscellaneous section to help narrow the broad scope of these questions.

Approved by Consent

RULE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

3. Rule 3-C – Pre-match Procedures

Recommendation: Add new rule, re-number the section, and adjust the index as needed.

3-C -1. The team arriving first typically has first choice of sides. A coach may request, and the moderator will grant, a change of sides before the match begins, to accommodate a player's special need.

Rationale: First-come-first-served has been a long-time practice, but it makes sense to allow a coach to request a specific side to accommodate a player with a hearing or visual impairment.

Approved by Consent

4. Rule 3-D – Start of Match

Recommendation: Change name of Section 3-D and add new rules to the end of Section 3-D

3-D. Start of Match and Start of Each Question

3-D-6. If the questions are preceded by categories, the moderator will read the category and pause briefly before reading the question.

3-D-7. If the questions are not preceded by categories, Rules that reference the category will automatically be adjusted as follows:

3-D-7a. Rules 3-E-3 and 4-A-6d will refer to the first word of the question.

3-D-7b. Rules 3-G-2b, 4-J-1, and 4-J-2 will defer to moderator's discretion.

Rationale: Members of the committee expressed that category tracking is a team strategy. This proposed change also allows for use of sets without categories as that does occur during regular season scholastic bowl matches. Therefore, 3-D-7, 3-D-7a, and 3-D-7b were proposed to provide guidance when categories are not provided within question sets.

Approved by Consent

5. Rule 3-D – Start of Match

Recommendation: Adjust Rule 3-D-2 as follows:

3-D-2. Players may not bring accessible written material to the table with them. Notebooks with previously written material may be brought to the table, but must be turned to a new, blank page; previous pages may not be reviewed at any time during the game. Players may bring a scoresheet. The moderator should verify that papers at the table are blank or pristine. ~~contain only bonus grids.~~ Written material found before the game starts should be put away (notebooks turned to a new page, etc.) without penalty. Turning back in a notebook or otherwise consulting previously written material during a game is considered illegal communication in accordance with rule 4-A-4b.

Rationale: Teams often adjust strategy based on the score. The committee feels that there is no advantage gained by allowing players to personally track the score of a match on their own scoresheet.

Approved by Consent

6. Rule 3-F - Halftime

Recommendation: Modify Rule 3-F-2 to clarify that changing sides must be justified.

3-F-2. Teams will change sides at half-time if either coach ~~requests it~~ makes a compelling argument to the moderator that environmental factors are creating an unfair advantage.

Rationale: The committee feels that changing sides is a challenge for scorekeeping and can lead to scoring errors. However, this proposal would still allow for the moderator to grant a request to change sides at half if a team presents a compelling reason as to why it is necessary.

Approved by Consent

7. Rule 4-A – Communication

Recommendation: Adjust Rule 4-A-3a to state the following:

4-A-3a. The "wait" gesture, <u>"I got it" gesture, or</u> anything that silently communicates the message "do not trigger the lockout system" during second reading of a toss-up.

Rationale: The committee feels that adding this phrasing adds clarity to this rule as "I got it" is the most common gesture.

Approved by Consent

8. Rule 4-B - Answering

Recommendation: Add new rule 4-B-1e.

<u>4-B-1e. The moderator has the authority to decide whether a player has begun their answer before time has expired and/or before time is called. Moderators should accept a player's answer if the player was beginning an answer as time expired or as time was being called.</u>

Rationale: The committee feels that this better clarifies that this type of decision is within the moderator's authority. This establishes that this is a judgement call by the moderator which would remove any potential for an appeal.

Approved by Consent

9. Rule 4-C - Completeness

Recommendation: Modify existing prompting rules to allow for directed prompts. Adjust the following rules as follows:

4-C-1. Moderators must ask for additional information to be given ("prompt") if the answer given is correct but is ambiguous. <u>If the question set includes specific instructions for which answers to prompt, those instructions should be followed; but even without printed instructions, a moderator is permitted to prompt. In most cases,</u> the moderator will prompt <u>only</u> with the word, "prompt," <u>or an equivalent generic phrase such as, "be more specific" or "need more information." However, if the answer lines include follow-up phrases or questions to use when a certain answer is given, that guidance should be followed.</u> Situations <u>that warrant prompting</u> include, but are not limited to, the following:

4-C-4. In rare cases a printed answer may include a moderator instruction to "anti-prompt". This occurs when a question is seeking a general answer, but a clue in the question points to something more specific. <u>If the question set includes specific instructions for which answers to anti-prompt, those instructions should be followed; but even without printed instructions, a moderator is permitted to anti-prompt. In most cases, the moderator will anti-prompt only with the word, "anti-prompt," or an equivalent generic phrase such as, "be less specific." However, if the answer lines include follow-up phrases or questions to use when a certain answer is given, that guidance should be followed.</u>

~~4-C-5. Even without printed moderator instructions, a moderator is permitted to "anti-prompt".~~

Rationale: Question writers have begun anticipating these situations and providing specific guidance, which should be followed exactly, or as adjusted during the moderators' meeting. In a tournament where the same question sets are used in multiple rooms, moderators must be consistent with prompting and not provide extra clues that give unfair advantage. The intent of Rule 4-C-5 is to be incorporated into Rule 4-C-4, so Rule 4-C-5 is redundant.

Approved by Consent

CASE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

10. 4-C – Completeness

Recommendation: Add the following Case as 4-C-1 – Case #1:

The moderator asks a tossup that ends "Name the process of feeding data to a model to help it learn."

The printed answer & instructions are: **train**ing a model
Prompt on "machine learning" by asking the player "Prompt - Which step of machine learning?"

Player #1 on Team X rings in and answers "machine learning."
The moderator should respond "Prompt - Which step of machine learning?"

Usually when prompting, the moderator should only say the word "prompt," so as to be clear to the player and to be consistent across all rooms on how the question is being judged. Some prompts, such as those in the examples for names with rule 4-C-1a below, are very clearly understood. In more complicated scenarios, the question writer may anticipate that a certain answer needs to be prompted, but wants to be sure that the player knows how they are being prompted. In this case, the question gives the moderator instructions on how to direct the prompt, and the moderator should follow these instructions as printed.

The general notion that moderators should not direct or "help" players with prompt instructions remains true; this should only be done when the question instructs a moderator to do so, and should only be done as directed.

Rationale: The committee feels that this added case supports and provides necessary clarity to the proposed change to Rule 4-C-1.

Approved by Consent

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation: Name Adam Silverman as the IHSA Head Writer/Editor of the IHSA Scholastic Bowl State Series questions for the 2026 State Series.

Rationale: Adam has served as part of the writing team for a number of years, and his share of the questions that he has been responsible for writing has grown significantly over those years. He acted as Head Editor for the 2025 State Series, and the Advisory Committee wishes to see him remain in that role.

Approved by Consent

Other items of discussion that did not receive action:

1. The committee discussed the sectional rotation, its purpose, and how schools can be added or withdrawn from it.
2. The committee discussed the minimum number of participants required to start a match.
3. The committee discussed Rule Book and T&C language regarding computational toss-ups.