MINUTES OF THE IHSA GIRLS SOFTBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 5, 2024

The IHSA Girls Softball Advisory Committee met on Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Committee members participating were: Nicole Capalbo, Palatine; Emily Richardson, Chicago (Amundsen); Janet Crownhart, Amboy; Nicole Hayner, Pontiac; Joy Neal, Marion; Chris Traina, Lemont; Ryan Knox, Athens; and Chris Terpstra, Lisle. Conducting the meeting was Tracie Henry, IHSA Assistant Executive Director; and also participating was Jackie Litwiller, Illinois Elementary School Association Executive Director & Roger Nichols, IHSA Head Softball Clinician.

TERMS & CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **II. DATES AND SITES- Align all classsifications 1A/2A/3A/4A on the IHSA standardized calendar weeks 46-48 beginning in 2026 and play all four classifications on week 48 at the State Final.**

   Recommendation:
   A. Class 1A/ 2A/3A/4A: Regional play shall begin on Monday, May 18, 2026. All play will follow the schedule below, as determined by the number of teams in a respective bracket. *Regional Quarterfinals: Monday, May 18, 2026 *These games will be played at the site of the highest seed. Regional Semifinals: Tuesday, May 19, and Wednesday, May 20, 2026 *Regional Semifinal and Final will be played at the Regional host site. *Regional Finals: Friday, May 22 or Saturday, May 23, 2026. **Class 1A/2A/3A/4A Regionals will be played Week 46.** Regional and Sectional games cannot be played before 3:00 p.m. on weekdays.
   The Sectional semifinal games may be played on Tuesday, May 26, and Wednesday, May 27. The Sectional Final (Championship) shall be played on Friday, May 29 or Saturday, May 30. The Super-Sectional games shall be played on Monday, June 1. **Class 1A/2A/3A/4A Sectionals will be played Week 47**. Regional and Sectional games cannot be played before 3:00 p.m. on weekdays.

   Rationale: The committee believes moving to one weekend and encompassing all four classes will enhance the experience for athletes, coaches, fans and officials. Other sports have found success playing all four classes in the same weekend and the committee believes the structure will fit well with the softball format.

   Tabled

2. **VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME SCHEDULES**

Thursday

10:00	a.m.	1A Semi-finals
12:15	p.m.	1A Semi-finals
2:30	p.m.	2A Semi-finals
4:45	p.m.	2A Semi-finals

Friday

10:00 a.m.	3A Semi-finals
10:15 a.m.	1A Third Place- Stadium #2
12:15 p.m.	3A Semi-finals
12:30 p.m.	2A Third Place- Stadium #2

2:30 p.m.	4A- Semi-finals
4:45 p.m.	4A Semi-finals

Saturday

10:00 a.m	1A Championship
10:15 a.m	3A Third Place-Stadium 2
12:15 p.m.	2A Championship
12:30 p.m.	4A Third Place- Stadium 2
2:30 p.m.	3A Championship
4:45 p.m.	4A Championship

Rationale: The committee believes moving to one weekend and encompassing all four classes will enhance the experience for athletes, coaches, fans and officials. Other sports have found success playing all four classes in the same weekend and the committee believes the structure will fit well with the softball format.

Tabled

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation: Remove the option for regional host schools to request a third official.

Rationale: Having the third official as an option passed down to host schools causes inconsistency in crews across the state at the regional level. All sites need to be assigned the same number of umpires. The committee discussed adding a third umpire to all regional games but the majority of games in the regular season are played with two umpires which mirrors the recommended 2-person crew assignment at the regional level.

Approved by Consent

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The committee heard a report from IESA softball administrator Jackie Litwiller. IESA Softball will be conducting their State Series September 27 & 28 at Champion Fields in Normal. 2024 will be the fourth year IESA will crown champions in three classifications (1A, 2A & 3A). Jackie reported that IESA implemented a time limit for softball games and a game ending procedure of 15 after 3, both rules variances from IHSA Softball.

2. The committee reviewed the minutes of the 2023 IHSA Softball Advisory Committee meeting.

3. The committee discussed the changes implemented to state series play. Expanding playable regional and sectional dates to include Thursday as an option for Regional and Sectional Championships was favorable amongst the committee and host schools. The committee also thought the modified time adjustments to the Session 4 State Final time schedule created an accurate timeline.

4. The committee reviewed several IHSA initiatives for the 2024-25 school year. The IHSA Board of Directors increased the withdraw penalty to $500 for schools that withdraw from a State Series after the withdraw date. Tracie Henry showed the committee how to check an officials compliance and communicated the importance of making sure officials are in compliance prior to umpiring games. Tracie also communicated IHSA Policy 41, which

establishes ratings requirements for varsity-level coaches in those IHSA sports that use licensed officials. Softball coaches are required to submit 30 ratings on officials in the spring of 2025. Officials have the ability to upload their scheduled into the IHSA Officials Center and coaches will get a direct email the following morning to rate the officials.

5.   The committee discussed utilizing a RPI format from MaxPreps for seeding versus the current process in the IHSA Schools Center allowing coaches to seed from the information submitted by the coaches in the season summary.

6.   The committee reviewed and discussed the current language in the state series terms and conditions that prohibit games from being played earlier than 3:00 p.m. on a weekday. The committee thought that 3:00 p.m. was reasonable and did not make a formal recommendation for change.

7.   The committee discussed the NFHS Rules Softball Rule Changes- 2025.

8.   The committee recognized Nicole Hayner, Joy Neal, Nicole Capalbo and Janet Crowhart for their service to the IHSA Softball Advisory Committee after the final meeting of their terms.