

## IHSA Team Chess Advisory Committee Meeting

March 31, 2023

1:00 p.m.

The IHSA Team Chess Advisory Committee met on Friday, March 31, 2023, in an online setting using Microsoft Teams, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Committee members present were: Salvador Velasco, Jr., Chicago (Acero/Garcia); Pablo Alvarez, Highland Park; Scott Liechty, Glen Ellyn (Glenbard West); and Joseph Guth, Rockford (Auburn). Also in attendance were: Chris Merli, IHSA Chess State Finals Tournament Director; Erik Czerwin, ICCA representative; Scott Johnson, IHSA Chess State Finals Statistician; and Dan Le, IHSA Assistant Executive Director. Advisory committee members not in attendance were: Brad Schmidt, Belleville (East); Ted Goergen, Lincolnshire (Stevenson); and Denise Dubravec, Winnetka (New Trier).

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING MEETINGS, C. Pairings Procedures – Sectional

**Recommendation #1:** The pairings for sectional tournaments will be formulated in Chesscalate and by following the procedures outlined in the IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document.

**Rationale:** Chesscalate, the program developed by Scott Johnson, is now capable of producing pairings for sectionals and the state tournament according to the procedures already established in the terms and conditions. This statement will refer coaches to an IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document that fully details the pairings process and how the pairings will look in Chesscalate. See the administrative recommendation to add the IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document to the IHSA Team Chess Manual.

**Recommendation #2:** 4. The Harkness variation will be used for pairings when there is an odd number of teams in a score group.

**Rationale:** When there are an odd number of teams in a pairing group, the Harkness variation pulls the highest-ranked team in the next score group up to obtain an even number of teams and to create better pairings. Language regarding the Harkness variation previously existed in the terms and conditions but was removed because the pairings program, used at the time, could not apply the Harkness variation correctly. Chesscalate can apply the Harkness variation, so it is recommended to restore the language.

#### V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING MEETINGS, E. Pairings Procedures – State Tournament

**Recommendation #3:** The pairings for the state tournament will be formulated in Chesscalate and by following the procedures outlined in the IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document.

**Rationale:** See Rationale for Recommendation #1.

**Recommendation #4:** 1a. ~~Divide the teams into 16 groups of 8.~~ top half of teams into 8 groups of 8.  
Divide the bottom half of teams into 4 groups of 16.

1b. Order the teams in groups 1 and 2, and randomly assign a pairing number within groups 3 through ~~16~~ 12.

**Rationale:** Dividing the bottom half of teams into 4 groups of 16 instead of 8 groups of 8 will expedite the seeding and pairings process. Teams generally finish the state tournament close to their original seed group, and this modification would not have a significant impact on where these teams will finish.

**Recommendation #5:** ~~2b. If there are more than 128 teams, pair the highest-ranked 8 groups as the top half of an accelerated Swiss System and pair the remaining teams so the teams in groups 9, 10, 11, and 12 play the teams in groups 13, 14, 15, and 16 in Round 1.~~

**Rationale:** The accelerated Swiss pairings process is not the preferred method for tournament fields of 128 teams or less. It is also unnecessary for the tournament fields slightly above 128. Since the state finals includes 128 qualifying teams and is very unlikely to have significantly more teams, it is recommended to produce pairings using only the non-accelerated Swiss system. If the field is ever increased significantly beyond 128, acceleration can be revisited.

**Recommendation #6:** 3. The number of competing teams determines the pairing system ~~and whether acceleration is necessary:~~

- a. If there are up to 128 teams, a standard non-accelerated Swiss system pairing shall be used.
- ~~b. If there are more than 128 teams, modified accelerated Swiss pairings shall be used for Rounds 1 and 2. The acceleration break shall be set at the number of teams in the higher-ranked part formed in 2a.~~

**Rationale:** See Rationale for Recommendation #5.

**Recommendation #7:** 6. The Harkness variation will be used for pairings when there is an odd number of teams in a score group. If only one team remains in the highest score group entering the final round, it shall be paired with the highest-seeded team in the next pair group that it has not already played.

**Rationale:** See Rationale for Recommendation #2.

**Recommendation #8:** 7. If a team has already been paired into a higher score group twice in the tournament, ~~the coach may request that~~ the team's pairing will be restricted to its own score group for the remainder of the event, unless an out-of-group pairing is unavoidable. ~~Such a request must be made before pairings for the round are completed.~~ The restriction shall be removed from any team within one point of first place before pairing the final round.

**Rationale:** Automatically exempting a team from being paired up a third time during the state tournament will eliminate the time required for a coach's request and prevent any delays with pairings and schedule of play. Chesscalate is programmed to prevent a team from being paired up for a third time.

## V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS AND SEEDING MEETINGS, F. Pairing Appeals

**Recommendation #9:** 1. A coach may appeal a pairing to the Pairings Chief according to the criteria outlined in Rule 19 Section 4 of the IHSA Chess Rule Book.

2. Appeals to pairings for any round of the sectional or state final must be made within 15 minutes of the pairings being posted except for Round 5 of the state final, which must be appealed by 8:15 am on Saturday of Week 32.

**Rationale:** With Chesscalate, coaches have instant access to the pairings once they are posted prior to the start of each round. 15 minutes is enough time for coaches to review the pairings and make an appeal without having to delay the tournament.

## VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND PLAYING SCHEDULES, C. Time Schedule – Sectional

**Recommendation #10:** Note: In Round 1, the clock for each player on a team shall be started at 9:00 am. No later than 30 minutes before the start of Round 1, coaches must contact the tournament manager if their team will be arriving late but still intends to compete in the tournament. If a coach gives proper notification, the team will be paired for Round 1. If a coach fails to give proper notification to the tournament manager, the team will not be paired and will receive zero points for that round.

**Rationale:** This protocol will allow tournament managers to pair teams in a timely manner prior to the start of Round 1 and ensure that all teams competing are paired unless a team has a bye due to an odd number. With proper notification, a team would still be allowed to play despite being late due to weather or other circumstances.

## VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND PLAYING SCHEDULES, D. Time Schedule – State Tournament

**Recommendation #11:** Note: In Round 1, the clock for each player on a team shall be started at 10:00 am. ~~Any team failing to appear by 9:50 am for its Round 1 match will receive a forfeit~~ No later than 30 minutes before the start of Round 1, coaches must contact the tournament manager if their team will be arriving late but still intends to compete in the tournament. If a coach gives proper notification, the team will be paired in Round 1. If a coach fails to give proper notification to the tournament manager, the team will not be paired and will receive zero points for that round.

**Rationale:** See Rationale for Recommendation #10.

## VII. ADVANCEMENT OF QUALIFIERS, A. Advancement and Determination of Qualifiers

**Recommendation #12:** 5a. Combined sectional results will be posted on the IHSA website as soon as all sectional results have been reported by the host schools.

5b. Coaches must contact the IHSA Chess Administrator by 1:00 pm on Sunday of Week 31 to appeal a sectional score that was reported.

**Rationale:** Not all teams are aware that they have qualified for the state finals until all sectional results have been reported. Setting this deadline will give coaches the opportunity to review the combined sectional results and appeal any reported results that may impact the state qualifier list. This deadline will also allow the qualifying teams to be notified in a timely manner after the sectionals, so they may begin their preparations for the state finals.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, C. Tournament Roster, Strength Order, Participation, and Substitution

**Recommendation #13:** 3b. If a team arrives more than one hour after the beginning of the round (excluding Round 1), the team shall be disqualified from further participation in the tournament unless the coach has notified the tournament manager that the team will be late.

**Rationale:** This additional language accounts for the possibility that a team could be late to Round 5 on day 2 of the state finals and would prevent the team from being disqualified for the remainder of the tournament if proper notification is given to the tournament manager.

**Recommendation #14:** 4b. If a player arrives more than one hour after the beginning of a round, the player shall be disqualified from further participation in the tournament unless the coach has notified the tournament manager that the player will be late.

**Rationale:** This additional language accounts for the possibility that a player or players could be late to Round 5 on day 2 of the state finals and would prevent them from being disqualified for the remainder of the tournament if proper notification is given to the tournament manager.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, F. Team Tie-Break System

**Recommendation #15:** 2. For each match played, ~~adjust the results as per E-5 if needed,~~ add 10 to the team's match points, multiply by 1 plus the square of the opponent's tournament points, and divide by 100. Add the values for all seven matches to determine the tie-breaker.

**Rationale:** E-5 does not exist in the current terms and conditions.

#### IX: TOURNAMENT POLICIES, F. Equipment

**Recommendation #16:** 1. Each school must provide four chess boards, four Staunton chess sets, notation sheets for the team, and four digital time-delay capable chess clocks that comply with the rules published by the IHSA...

**Rationale:** The state finals programs used to include notation sheets when each player received a program. Since programs are now digital, it is recommended that each school be responsible for bringing their own notation sheets to be used. This recommendation would also apply to the sectionals.

## IX. TOURNAMENT POLICIES, G. Electronic Devices

**Recommendation #17:** 1. The use of electronic devices in the competition area is prohibited, except as specified in the IHSA Chess Rule Book. Coaches are allowed to use electronic devices as a part of their official coaching responsibilities.

**Rationale:** With the advancements of the Chesscalate program, coaches are encouraged to use Chesscalate more in order to view pairings and report results from matches on their phones or tablets. Adding this additional language clarifies who may be using an electronic device in the competition area for tournament business. Penalties for inappropriate use or noise related to electronic devices would still be applied.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation #1:** Add IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document to the IHSA Team Chess Manual.

**Rationale:** The IHSA Team Chess Pairings Procedures document will provide full transparency of the pairings process and illustrate how the pairings will look in Chesscalate.

**Recommendation #2:** Steward vests will no longer be mailed to sectional sites for use. Vests will only be brought and used at the state finals.

**Rationale:** Over the years, the quantity of steward vests have decreased as vests aren't returned after being mailed out for use at sectionals. Limiting their use to the state finals only will make the vests easier to distribute and to collect.

### **ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:**

1. The committee reflected on the 2023 IHSA Team Chess State Series, which included pairings being created in Chesscalate instead of WinTD.
2. The committee discussed the use of Chesscalate at the sectionals. If approved, the program would be tested at some regular season tournaments, which would allow tournament directors to become more familiar with the program.
3. The committee discussed the size differences between sectionals and skewed results at larger sectionals. The discussion involved a reminder that the purpose of sectionals isn't to crown sectional champions, but to determine the 128 state qualifiers.
4. The committee discussed the number of teams that qualify for state. The consensus that the state tournament field is appropriate as is.
5. The committee heard and discussed ideas for increasing the number of schools participating in chess. The 2023 State Series had the second-highest number of participating schools in IHSA Chess history.

6. The committee discussed the current 1-point credit for teams with a bye. In the discussion, it was noted that the current 1-point credit does not have a significant impact on the state tournament qualifiers.
7. The committee discussed the team placard rule as there has been a misunderstanding by some coaches and stewards as to whether placards are required or optional. Placards are optional according to the language in the terms and conditions. No action was taken to change the rule. It was recommended to clarify the rule in an email to coaches next year.
8. The committee discussed the uniform rules. No action was taken to modify the rules. It was recommended to communicate the expectations to stewards for consistency of enforcement.
9. The committee discussed rules regarding correction of board arrangement and clocks, drawn games, and recording of moves by players. No action was taken to modify these rules.
10. Dan Le recognized and thanked the committee members whose terms expire at the end of this fiscal year.