

**Advisory Committee Recommendations**  
**February 10, 2026, Board Meeting**  
**Consent Items**

***Boys/Girls Cross Country***

**No Terms and Conditions Recommendations Forwarded**

***Boys/Girls Golf***

**Recommendation #1:** Sections III.F., VI.C.1.e

Coaches with teams will enter their List of Participants in iWanamaker instead of the IHSA Schools Center and seed their players in iWanamaker prior to each round of the state series. Coaches must still complete the IHSA Schools Center List of Participants form to enter coaches' names and individual entries without an iWR. The List of Participants is still due on by Wednesday of Week 12, and coaches will still have 24 hours from the posting of pairings/tee times to adjust their lineups. Schools that do not enter their golfers will be seeded last and their golfers will be placed in alphabetical order. Coaches will still need to certify in the Schools Center that their team has played 6 matches.

**III. ON-LINE ENTRIES, WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES, ELIGIBILITY, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, AND ON-LINE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS. F. List of Participants/Substitutions**

Each school must enter the names of their 6 eligible starting players ~~on the List of Participants form found in the Schools Center on the IHSA web site prior to each round of the state series in iWanamaker~~. No more than six (6) participants from a school may play in the regional, sectional, or state final. ~~No alternate names are required.~~ Team substitutions are allowed with any eligible golfer up to the start of each regional, sectional, or state final tournament. In addition, team substitutions may be made on Saturday's final round of the state tournament. Substitutions are not allowed for individuals who are not a part of a team and who advance in the state series. Coaches with teams or individuals must complete the List of Participants prior to September **23, 2026**. The regional manager will be able to view the rosters of the teams competing in their tournament on-line after September **23<sup>rd</sup>** to set up tee times for the regional tournament. Sectional managers will be able to view their respective qualifiers through the online winner reports and in **iWanamaker**.

**VI. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME SCHEDULES. C. Pairing Procedures**

1e. At all levels of the state series, team members will be seeded ~~by the team's coach~~ ~~based on their iWanamaker (iWR)~~. Coaches will have until the aforementioned times to make any adjustments to their 1-6 orders.

**Rationale:** Coaches already have their players entered in iWanamaker and are able to seed their players in lineup order. By having coaches complete this task in iWanamaker, regional and sectional hosts will not have to wait for the IHSA to send the complete List of Participants from the Schools Center, and hosts will not have to enter team lineups into iWanamaker for the teams in their regional or sectional. Hosts will only have to make the pairings once all coaches have entered and seeded their players. Coaches with teams will only have to enter their lineups in iWanamaker and not have to enter lineups a second time in the Schools Center.

**Recommendation #2 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Recommendation #3** - Section VI.C.1.

Adjust all groups into foursomes.

**V. TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENTS. C. Pairings Procedures**

1. During the entire state series, 'wave' groupings that pair competitors from teams into team groups and individual qualifiers into individual groups will be used. ~~Threesomes will be used whenever possible, although foursomes can be used as necessary.~~ **Teams and individuals will be paired as foursomes whenever possible. Threesomes may be used when necessary.** No group shall have two or more players from the same school.

**Rationale:** Individual groups in threesomes are often held up by team groups in foursomes. The team foursomes tend to make the turn close to the last group of individuals or possibly overlap the threesomes who have not teed off. Pairing individuals into foursomes will cut down the number of groups teeing off and prevent this overlap. It will also help with the integrity of the game to have another set of eyes in the group.

#### **Recommendation #4** - Section VIII.N.

During the IHSA state series, the use of cell phones or any communication device (i.e. smart watch) shall be prohibited. Golfers may access their cell phone for scoring purposes and only from green to tee unless the golfer is requesting a ruling or calling their coach for an emergency. Players shall announce to their playing group that they are using their phone for a ruling or emergency/medical condition prior to use.

The use of distance measuring devices (i.e. Bushnell “watches” or strictly GPS devices) are legal as they do not receive advice. No devices that allow for communication are allowed.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES. N. Measuring Devices

Players or coaches may use USGA-approved measuring devices during state series competitions to obtain distance information. If, during a state series competition, a player or coach uses a distance-measuring device to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his/her play (e.g., elevation changes, wind speed, etc.) the player or coach is in violation of Rule USGA 4.3 and subject to the appropriate penalties. Distance-measuring devices include range finders (such as Bushnell units), laser devices (such as Laser Link), and GPS-based systems (such as SkyCaddie, Callaway, or Garmin). Any standalone device (like a smartwatch) of any of these types is permitted under this Local Rule adopted by the IHSA, as long as the device meets the other, previously mentioned criteria. During IHSA state series competitions, the use of cell phones **or any communication devices (e.g. smartwatch)** is prohibited, ~~unless except when~~ used for scoring **between the green and next tee, requesting a ruling, calling a coach for an emergency**, or the local committee (rules or games) determines that the player’s use of the cell phone was an emergency. Players found using cell phones **or communication devices** for any other reason will be considered to have violated USGA Rule 10.2a (Advice) and be penalized according to the rule.

**Rationale:** The less students are on their phones, the better for the integrity of the tournament. There were multiple accusations of cheating, inappropriate communication, or use of illegal measuring devices throughout the state series during the 2025 state series. By limiting cell phones use to only “green to tee,” the committee anticipates this will reduce the accusations of cheating.

#### **Recommendation #5** - Section VIII.Q.

Add scoring and attesting procedures to the terms and conditions.

#### VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES. Q. Scoring and Attesting Procedures

- 1. After completing the round, players will report directly to the score verification area. Only players of the playing group are allowed in the score verification area.**
- 2. Players will go through hole-by-hole scores with the score keeper. All questions and rulings shall take place prior to players attesting to their score cards. The rules committee/rules officials shall be called in if needed.**
- 3. Once all players agree, players will attest to their scores. The official score keeper shall make sure all golfers attest and lock the score card.**
- 4. Scores are attested and final once those players in the group leave the scorer's table.**

**Rationale:** Adding scoring and attesting procedures to the term and conditions will provide clear procedures for reporting, attesting, and finalizing scores. It is the responsibility of the players in the group to ensure that the scores are correct in the iWanamaker app. By only having the players meet with the official score keeper of the tournament, there are no outside influences. Having scores declared final through this procedure will eliminate “gotcha” attempts by others in an effort to get a player disqualified. Removing hole-by-hole attesting procedures will also eliminate errors in scoring.

#### **Recommendation #6 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

#### **Administrative Recommendation**

**Recommendation #2:** - Remove language in the IHSA Coaching Guide that permits spectators to report scoring issues.

~~The Committee may receive information from a spectator if it is believed a lower score has been recorded for a hole. If any doubt arises as to the correctness of a card, the Committee should consult with the competitor and also take into account the testimony of other witnesses, including the other players in the group. If the evidence indicates that the recorded score for the hole was lower than actually taken, and the player has signed and submitted the score card to the scorer's area, the Committee should disqualify the player. Otherwise, no penalty should be applied.~~

**Rationale:** Spectators should not be involved with scoring. Players are responsible for the scores in their group. Coaches, members of the games committee, and tournament officials may address issues as they arise.

**Recommendation #1:** Add principal's designee as an eligible school staff member to sign the Request for Earlier Start Time form and permit the school's tennis player(s) to compete earlier than 12:00 p.m. on the Friday of the sectional tournament.

II. DATES AND SITES, A. Sectional Tournament

Class 1A and 2A sectional tournaments will be held on Friday-Saturday [sectional dates] at assigned locations across the state.

2. 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. If the local manager wishes to begin the competition on Friday before 12:00 p.m., written consent of the principal **or principal's designee** from each participating school is required. Sectional managers will send to the principals **or principal's designees** 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.
3. When inclement weather is forecasted for Friday and/or Saturday, the local manager may, at their discretion if the number of entries warrant, elect to begin tournament play outdoors on Thursday of Week [corresponding week of IHSA standardized calendar]. Written consent of the principal **or principal's designee** from each participating school is required by using the IHSA Tennis Request for Earlier Start Time Form to obtain approval.

**Rationale:** Adding principal's designee allows schools to have another appropriate staff member, such as the school's athletic director or assistant principal, give administrative approval for their player(s) to compete in the sectional competition when the host school would like to begin the tournament before 12:00 p.m. on Friday. This would give schools flexibility with personnel according to their administrative structure, and in the event that the school's principal is not available, a designated staff member could sign the form for approval.

**Recommendation #2 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Recommendation #3:** Add language that permits coaches to coach their players when the ball is not in play (ex. in between points of a game) under the conditions that the coaching does not impact pace of play or interfere with opposing players or players on other courts.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, G. Coaching

The following provisions for coaching will be employed.

1. Coaching Provisions:

- a. **Coaching may occur when the ball is not in play, including between points, as long as it does not delay the pace of play, nor interfere with or distract other competitors. Coaching may only occur at the court where the coach's players are competing.**

**\*\*If approved, all current articles of this section would be adjusted (a becomes b, b becomes c, and so on).**

**Rationale:** Current provisions limit coaching to during changeovers, between sets, before a tiebreaker, and during changeovers of a tiebreaker. By allowing coaches to talk to players between points, coaches can give immediate feedback like coaches in other sports and address social/emotional issues immediately that may arise during a match. Coaching between points could improve pace of play with less time needed to coach during changeovers. This practice also aligns with college coaching rules. Parameters are included in the proposed language to prevent coaching that would hinder the pace of play or interfere with players on any of the courts at the site.

**Recommendation #4:** Add language that permits coaches to coach on the court for the main draw quarterfinal and consolation semifinal matches.

VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES, G. Coaching

The following provisions for coaching will be employed.

1. Coaching Provisions:

- e. Coaches may not enter the court enclosure except for the one (1) allowable coach during the **consolation semifinals, main draw quarterfinals, main draw** semifinals, 5/6 place, 3/4 place and championship matches at the state final tournament.
5. At the state final tournament, eligible high school tennis coaches shall follow the following procedures.
  - e. During the **consolation semifinals, main draw quarterfinals, main draw** semifinals, 5/6 place, 3/4 place and championship matches in the state finals, one coach per school wearing their official coaching pass will be allowed to be seated courtside for coaching purposes for both the singles and doubles competitions.

**\*\*Should Recommendation #3 be approved, Article VIII.G.1.e would become Article VIII.G.1.f.**

**Rationale:** When tennis was a one-class sport, coaches were permitted to be seated courtside to coach during the main draw quarterfinal round of the state finals. For these matches, one chair umpire was assigned to each court (8 umpires for 8 matches). In 2023, a change was made to no longer permit coaches to be seated courtside during quarterfinal matches due to not having enough umpires to be assigned to each court in the two-class tennis system (8 umpires for 16 matches). The quarterfinal round matches are worth the most points in the tournament, and players, who reach the consolation semifinals, have achieved a top 8 finish in state. The committee feels that reaching the main draw quarterfinal and consolation semifinal rounds are major accomplishments and warrant the allowance for coaches to be seated courtside to coach in these matches. While the consolation semifinal and main draw quarterfinal matches would not have one umpire assigned per match, 8 roving umpires are present during these rounds, and each roving umpire has officiating oversight of 2 matches being played on adjacent courts.

**Recommendation #5 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Boys/Girls Volleyball**

**Recommendation #1:** G- Tournament Rules F) Warm up/ B- VIII. Tournament Rules D) Warm-up Time:

Warm-up Time: If a team arrives early, ball handling is permitted on the court prior to the timed warmups. Teams can take the court no sooner than 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the match. If both teams are present, each team shall be restricted to their side of the playing court. The warm-up time for each match will be 2-6-6 with both teams sharing the first 2 minutes, the first 6 minutes will be the home team on the entire court, and the second 6 minutes will be the visiting team on the entire court. When teams are off the court, ball handling is only allowed if an auxiliary space is available. Endline or sideline ball handling is not permitted.

**Rationale:** The committee felt this would help with safety of players. So many times, you see the team on the court hitting into the team ball handling at the end line or the team ball handling is interfering with the team on the court by being too close to girls trying to serve or with a shanked pass.

**Recommendation #2:** G- Tournament Structure and Time Schedule B) Time Schedule

Time Schedules:

- 1) Regional Time: In a regional tournament that is held on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, the matches shall start at 5:30 pm. The Thursday Regional Championship will be played no sooner than 6:00 pm.
- 2) Sectional Time: In a sectional with 2 matches shall start at 5:30 pm. A sectional with 1 match shall be played at 6:00 pm. Hosts seeking flexibility on regional or sectional match start times shall reach out to the IHSA office and have agreement from all schools and officials.
- 3) Super-Sectional Time: Super-sectional matches shall be played at 6:00 pm

**Rationale:** The Committee feels that nights are getting late during the girls post season. A modest adjustment to a 5:30 start on nights of multiple matches will help teams and hosts.

**Recommendation #3:** Tournament Rules (Boys and Girls) B) Rally Scoring:

By state association adoption, a match will consist of the best 2 (two) out of 3 (three) games. Each game including the deciding game will be played to 25 points (no cap).

- i) If any 3<sup>rd</sup> place match on Saturday of the state tournament goes to a 3<sup>rd</sup> set, the 3<sup>rd</sup> set will only be played to 15 points (no cap).

**Rationale:** This adjustment will allow the athletes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place match to participate and compete while also placing emphasis on the Championship match by making sure the Championship starts at a reasonable time.

**Recommendation #4:** Boys- II. Dates and Sites A)

A) Regional Matches shall begin with quarterfinal matches being played on either Friday or Saturday of Week 46 as determined by the competing schools. All quarterfinal matches will be hosted by the higher seed. If the higher seed cannot host, the opponent will host. It is the responsibility of competing schools to find a host site. The host school will hire the officials and line judges for the match.

Regional Semifinal Matches will take place at the predetermined host site on Tuesday of week 47. With regional championship matches taking place on Thursday of week 47 also at the predetermined host site. The IHSA will hire officials for all predetermined host sites, the host will be responsible for line judges.

**Rationale:** The Boys Volleyball schedule has presented significant challenges in the past few years due to Memorial Day and graduations. This adjustment will allow school the opportunity to work together to play the quarterfinal matches as well as avoid all matches on Memorial Day.

**If passed this will start in May of 2026**

**Recommendation #5 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Recommendation #6 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**State Association Adoption:**

**Recommendation #1 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

### *Boys Football*

**Recommendation #1 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Administrative Recommendations:**

**Recommendation #1 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

**Recommendation #2 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

### *Girls Flag Football*

**Recommendation #1- II. DATES AND SITES**

A) Regional Quarterfinals (Mon. Tue. Week 14)

B) Regionals: (Mon. Thurs. Week 14)

C) Sectionals: (Mon. Tues. 15)

A) Regional Quarterfinals and Semifinals: The regional quarterfinals will be played Tuesday-Thursday during Week 13 of the IHSA Calendar: Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. The regional semifinals will be played on Monday of Week 14 in the IHSA Calendar: Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>.

B) Regional Finals: The regional finals will be played on Wednesday of Week 14 in the IHSA Calendar: Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

C) Sectional Semifinals: The sectional semifinals will be played on Saturday of Week 14 in the IHSA Calendar: Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

D) Sectional Finals: The sectionals finals will be played on Monday or Tuesday of Week 15 in the IHSA Calendar: Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Rationale:** The regional quarterfinals were moved from Week 14 to Week 13 to allow more time between rounds of the state series. This will increase the amount of time for rest and recovery for the student-athletes. The dates and location of the state tournament will remain the same.

**Recommendation #2 - VIII. TOURNAMENT RULES**

E. Game Ball: ~~Wilson TDY football. All IHSA State Series games will be played with the Wilson GST SPEEDSKIN HEIR.~~

E. Game Ball: The host school shall supply a top-quality Wilson leather or composition covered ball, SIZED TDY. If the visiting team desires to use a different type (leather or composition) it may do so provided the ball is a Wilson, SIZED TDY, and the team furnishes the ball. This provision shall also apply to championship games.

**Rationale:** The proposed game ball language would be consistent with boys tackle football. It also gives teams the opportunity to use a composite style ball or a leather style ball, whichever they prefer.

**Recommendation #3 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

## **State Association Adoption**

### **Recommendation #4 – Mercy Rule**

- 35+ 30+ points or more in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter will activate the running clock.
- Once the 35 30-point spread is reached the clock will run and will not return to the timing in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.
- Clock only stops on ~~scores~~, timeouts, quarter changes, and injuries during the mercy rule.

### ***Do What's Right - Sportsmanship***

## **No Recommendations Forwarded**

### ***Sports Medicine***

### **Recommendation #1 Non-Consent – See Board Agenda**

### ***Student Advisory Committee***

**Recommendation #1:** The committee recommends that the 2026 Student Advisory Committee summer retreat be held at the IHSA office on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, and Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, which includes an overnight stay at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bloomington, IL.

**Rationale:** This retreat serves as an opportunity for the new members and returning members to participate in team-bonding activities. During the retreat, the committee will establish goals for the 2026-2027 school year, create content for outreach to schools and high school students, and participate in leadership training activities with the assistance of Dr. Scott Pierce, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Recreation at Illinois State University.

### ***Athletic Administrators***

## **No Recommendations Forwarded.**