

Illinois Track and Cross Country Coaches Association

Understanding IHSA Governance and the ITCCCA Advocacy Task Force

The Illinois High School Association has several structures that control the operations of the sports of cross country and track & field. Each of the structures has a process to accept and decide on proposals. The four structures are:

- Terms and Conditions
- Constitution and By-Laws
- Policies and Procedures
- Administrative Recommendations (Meet Management)



Terms and Conditions

1. Recommendation (Proposal) Origination

- a. Recommendations are normally submitted through the representative from member schools. Coaches can make proposals through their Athletic Director (or official representative). Recommendations may also be generated from other sources such as IHSA staff, Advisory Committee members, etc.

2. Sport Specific Advisory Committee: [Cross Country](#) [Track & Field](#)

Recommendations are vetted at the Advisory Committee. Recommendations can be

- a. Approved
- b. Rejected
- c. Not moved

3. Athletic Administrator Advisory Committee: [Members](#)

Recommendations are vetted at the Athletic Administrator Advisory Committee and can be

- a. Approved
- b. Rejected

4. IHSA Staff: [Members](#)

Recommendations are vetted by the IHSA Staff

- a. Approved
- b. Rejected

5. Board of Directors

- a. Approved (consent agenda or individually)
- b. Rejected

Any item that receives approval from the specific sport advisory committee, the Athletic Administrators Advisory Committee, and the IHSA staff are put on to a consent agenda that is presented to the Board of Directors to be voted on.

Recommendations that are approved by the specific sport advisory committee but do not get a majority vote by Athletic Administrators Advisory Committee or the IHSA staff go on a non-consent agenda. These items can be brought to a vote by the Board of Directors individually.

Constitution and By-Laws

Recommendation (Proposal) Origination

Member schools can propose new by-laws or changes to existing by-laws.

The [Legislative Commission](#) reviews these proposals for all IHSA member schools at mandatory Town Hall meetings. Using feedback from the Town Hall meetings, the Legislative Commissioners vote on whether each proposal should appear on an all-school ballot.

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are enacted by the Board of Directors as a means of how to execute certain By-Laws or other functions of the association.

Policies and recommendations can be brought by official school representatives to Craig Anderson, or be brought to the individual board member that represents the recommender.

The board of directors can do any of the following if a policy or procedure makes it to the Board for consideration:

- Take action at the meeting
- Kill it due to lack of action
- Table it to get more feedback
- Create an ad hoc committee

Administrative Recommendations (Meet Management)

There is no formal mechanism for recommendations regarding decisions relating to meet management.

That being said, recommendations regarding how the meets function can and are presented at the advisory committee meeting for discussion. If support is generated at that meeting, Craig Garber can bring those suggestions to the meet managers.

What helps... and what doesn't

1. Understand what it is you are recommending and what is needed to make your recommendation happen. Is it a term and condition, a policy, or something with meet management. There are different ways to address each.
2. Be aware of the groups that will consider the recommendations.
 - a. **Advisory Committee:** This group has representatives from both genders and all of the classes from around the state. Recommendations that focus on one gender, one class, or one geographic region don't always gather support.
 - b. **Athletic Administrator Advisory Committee:** This group will look at recommendations through a school administration lens. If recommendations cost schools more money or create hardships through schedules or management, they may not garner support.
 - c. **IHSA Staff:** This group may focus on the equity of a recommendation in relation to other sports. Recommendations that create notably different situations from similarly situated sports are met with extra scrutiny. Furthermore, recommendations that create budgetary changes are also looked at closely.
3. Big changes usually need big support.
 - a. Changing a policy or procedure involves getting a recommendation to the Board of Directors and then getting support for such a change.
 - b. Getting buy-in from your school representative is essential. Generating coalitions is even better.
4. Be careful what you wish for- unintended consequences are lurking

Case Studies

Track & Field Metric System

- a. Recommendation
- b. Advisory Committee
- c. Athletic Administrator Advisory Committee
- d. IHSA Staff
- e. Board of Directors

Cross Country Regional/Sectional Assignments

Any recommendation to change regional assignments to consider team strength or performance is dead on arrival due to Policy 18 (see below). Coaches who wish for this to change need to propose a new policy, NOT a new manner of assigning schools.

The Geographic Principle of IHSA State Tournament Series

1. The State Series is designed to determine a State Champion. The State Series is not intended to necessarily advance the best teams in the state to the State Final.
2. Representation in an IHSA State Final Tournament is determined on a geographic basis — that is, schools advancing to the State Final Tournament (or in Boys Football, the State Final Game) qualify from given geographical areas of the state. Pairings for the State Final Tournament are determined every year in a drawing that is open to the media/public.
3. The number of schools in a State Final Tournament, and levels of competition in the State Series, are determined by the number of schools entered in the series.
4. Schools are assigned to first level tournaments/meets on a geographical basis so that there is a reasonable balance in the number of schools assigned at each first level site.
 - A. Factors considered in assigning schools to first level tournaments include:
 1. Schools willing/eligible/selected to host and their location;
 2. Number of schools entered in state series and their locations; and,
 3. Classification of schools in the state series.
 4. In individual state series tournaments/meets, the number of schools with full teams assigned to the beginning competition is balanced as much as possible. Travel distance to the tournament/meet site could justify an imbalance in the number of schools assigned to a site.
 - B. Factors considered in assigning schools to first level tournaments do not include:
 1. Won-lost records of the schools;
 2. Strengths or weaknesses of the schools in a geographic area;
 3. Anticipated or potential revenue; and
 4. Individual, private requests of schools and/or coaches.

ITCCCA Advocacy Task Force- What now?

History

- Inspired by history and spurred on by Covid
- Full-state committee
 - Researched other state sport associations
 - Generated possibilities for ITCCCA to take the lead on advocacy
- Reality kicked in
 - ITCCCA officers and directors have regular responsibilities
 - Advocacy is best from the source
 - Reactive social media blasts and “what are you doing about this” are not effective

ITCCCA's future role in Advocacy

While ITCCCA may generate and pursue recommendations for change, we can provide a broader role in encouraging, helping to develop, and supporting recommendations that come from the membership.

- IHSA has repeatedly stated that recommendations with broad support carry more weight. Members can develop recommendations in consultation with ITCCCA
- ITCCCA can join as a co-sponsor to recommendations
- ITCCCA can communicate with and potentially mobilize the membership in support of recommendations
- ITCCCA can educate recommendation sponsors on the appropriate groups to consult and generate ancillary support