

Expect IHSAA to pass football mercy rule, suspend fans who get ejected

[Kyle Neddenriep](#) | Indianapolis Star 4:06 p.m. EDT Apr. 25, 2019



Preps Podcast: Breaking down Mr. Basketball finalists, in-state recruiting

Insider Kyle Neddenriep is joined by Matthew Glenesk to analyze Mr. Basketball race, and provide updates on some in-state recruiting news.

Kyle Neddenriep



The Indiana High School Athletic Association will have its annual board of directors meeting on Monday with 23 proposals on the agenda.

“That is one of the lowest numbers we have had,” IHSAA commissioner Bobby Cox said this week. “I like it as a sign that our rules are in good shape. If not, we’d have a variety of proposals — ‘change this, change that.’ You aren’t going to please everybody, but I feel like we are trending in the correct direction.”

Some of the more transformative proposals on the agenda have little chance of passing according to the straw polls conducted at the principals meetings this spring. One of the more anticipated pieces of news coming out of the meeting is the new two-year sectional alignments for football and basketball, but let’s take a look here at some of the proposals on the agenda:

>> A proposal submitted by Roncalli principal Chuck Weisenbach to

redefine the territory for a private school to include the counties contiguous to the school instead of the city limits or county lines of the school. This change would make it possible for an individual to transfer from another county without a change of address and receive immediate eligibility.

That proposal was supported by just 18% of those voting at the spring principal meetings (athletic directors also vote). In order for the board of directors to consider any proposal, a starting point is usually around 70 to 75%.

"That proposal is not getting any support," Cox said. "Public schools won't support it."

>> A proposal submitted by Cathedral principal Dave Worland and Lafayette Jeff principal Mark Preston that a tournament series will be provided at such time as 30% of the IHSAA member schools are participating in a sport. That would be a change from the current 50%.

"The genesis of that is boys volleyball," Cox said. "They are realistic enough to know they are not getting to 205 schools playing boys volleyball. But 123 might be possible. I'm all for participation, but that doesn't come for free. Schools have to make the determination that they can support that."

That proposal has just 13% support.

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>> A proposal on behalf of the Porter County Conference for a 1.65 multiplier for any private or charter school added to the official enrollment from the Indiana State Department of Education. This would be on top of [the tournament success factor rule](#) added by the IHSAA six years ago.

"I've said publicly that this is a bad idea," Cox said of the multiplier.

"The membership made a decision to accept private schools way back. When you start treating them differently, you are going to run into problems — legal problems and probably legal interference. This proposal is all about who is winning. We address that with the success factor. We have 47 private schools and 23 charter schools. That is 17% of our membership."

That proposal has 34% support at the spring meetings.

>> A proposal from the Pocket Athletic Conference nixes the mileage limitations on out-of-state travel. The rule currently allows for teams to play a school within a 600-mile round trip distance from the state line.

"The concern is that it would create a further chasm between the haves and have-nots," Cox said. "Maybe you can compete. But who is going to pay for that? I've had parents call me directly and say, 'Don't ever change that rule.' Our rule already gets us into Alabama, halfway into Missouri, the upper peninsula of Michigan, to Wheeling, West Virginia. I think we can find somebody to play in that circle."

There will be some changes, however.

>> A mercy rule for football will go in front the executive committee. The rule, submitted by the Indiana Football Coaches Association, calls for a mandatory running clock in the second half once a team reaches a 35-point lead.

"We will probably call it a 'mercy rule,'" Cox said. "Once the point differential reaches 35 points in the second half, the only stoppage will be for scoring plays, timeouts and injuries. The 40-second play clock will still be in effect."

The other change in conjunction with the mercy rule is to allow six quarters of participation per week (four on junior varsity and two on varsity) instead of five.

"I'm really pleased that is going to pass," Cox said. "It is a great move by the football coaches. The notion is, when the score is 77-0, 'Put the JV kids in the game. Nothing good happens in those games. Get it over with and run the clock. You can play the JV kids in the second half and they can still play a full JV game.'"

The proposal has 99% support.

>> A proposal that could happen — it has 64% support — is to lower the threshold of the tournament success factor to two points for a program that has already moved up. The current threshold is at least three points. That means a program that has moved up currently has to win a regional (two points) and sectional (one point) in a two-year period to stay up a class. Going to two points would change it to winning a regional in one year or back-to-back sectional titles.

"I don't know how the committee will react," Cox said. "Some people have said, if you win two sectional titles in a two-year period that shows a pretty high level of success and you should stay up. Others have said you might just have a good class coming through. We'll see how that one is voted."

Insider: [The tournament success factor is working](#)

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>> A proposal for a fan who is ejected from a contest to be barred from the next home contest will likely pass with 97% support.

"The idea is to treat the fan like the kids and coaches," Cox said. "They asked about away games, but those schools don't know who your knucklehead fan is. But you do. You can bring that fan in and tell them not to attend the next road game, too. But the home game will be the rule."

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