

1-time transfer plan could happen soon

Kyle Neddenriep Indianapolis Star USA TODAY NETWORK 26 Dec 2024



High School Insider

Happy holidays, high school basketball fans.

Before we get into what we learned this week in hoops, I wanted to write a little bit about significant changes that could be coming to the Indiana High School Athletic Association bylaws on transfer rules.

If you have been following the discussion in recent months, this might come as no surprise. The IHSAA polled school administrators in the spring on the idea of a one-time transfer in high school and/ or a one-time transfer after an athlete's freshman year. Under both circumstances, the potential proposal would allow for essentially a "free" transfer no questions asked, unless there was found to be recruiting or undue influence in the transfer process.

There was lukewarm support for either idea from athletic directors. IHSAA commissioner Paul Neidig said Friday that 30% were in favor of a one-time transfer after freshman year and only 13% in favor of a one-time transfer at any point in high school. I attended a meeting at Plainfield in the spring where just eight of the 67 athletic directors who voted were in favor of the idea (27 were in favor of the transfer after freshman year and 39 opposed).

But there is pressure coming from state legislators to create a bill that would allow a "free" transfer (essentially no chance of losing eligibility). Neidig said he has been in discussions with "people in the state office" for more than a year about making a change to the transfer rule. Under the current rules, a transferring athlete without a change of address can receive immediate eligibility in most circumstances if the sending school and receiving school agree on the transfer (according to IHSAA numbers, 2,423 transfers from June 1 to Dec. 3 have received full eligibility, another 157 have received limited eligibility and 25 have been ruled ineligible).

After the IHSAA's initial ruling on eligibility, there is an appeals process that starts with the IHSAA's review board, followed by the Case Review Panel administered by the Indiana Department of Education. If unsuccessful at those levels, a family can seek an injunction in court.

There is a push from the House of Representatives to create a bill to allow a one-time transfer. In West Virginia, a law was passed in 2023 to allow a one-time transfer for student athletes without a change of address.

"I've had numerous conversations with people in the state office going back over a year or so about the transfer system and what is going on

out there," Neidig said. "Because of this bill, we are looking at some possibilities as it relates to our transfer rules — trying to keep it from becoming NCAA style but providing more flexibility. In some people's perspective, we need to let (transfers) go wherever they want to go, and some people believe we're not stringent enough."

Neidig points to the IHSAA making 28 changes to its bylaws regarding transfers in the past decade as evidence the organization has been willing to make changes in accordance with changes in the educational system. However, Rep. Bob Morris, a Republican from Fort Wayne, told IndyStar's Gregg Doyel in October of 2023 he had been in discussions with Neidig and proposed a onetime transfer, though he had not filed it. The House will reconvene Jan. 8, though there is not a House bill currently listed regarding transfers.

"I think forced is probably a strong word to use right now but we certainly have some friends in the House that believe we need to adjust the transfer rule," Neidig said. "Some would rather see us do it than it become a state law and that I do agree with. But there are a lot of things to consider with what a more liberal transfer rule looks like."

Neidig discussed the potential significant bylaw changes at the IHSAA's executive committee meeting on Dec. 11 and has been in communication with principals and athletic directors. What could it look like?

"I think it tries to look at and protect the tenants of undue influence and past link rules," Neidig said. "We want to be focused on those things. It could be something along the lines of a one-time transfer with parameters. One of those questions would be, 'What happens if you transfer a second time without a change of address?'"

Neidig said this possibility should not come as a surprise, though he understands it will "create a lot of opinions." It could also come to a vote sooner than later. The next IHSAA executive committee meeting is Jan. 16.

"That's something to be determined," Neidig said of the timeline.

"We have a board meeting every month. We're going to move pretty quickly in our study."

Now on to basketball ...

Anderson impressive in win vs. Pike

It was a rough weekend for Pike, which I seemed to jinx by saying the Red Devils could go into a game against Noblesville on Jan. 7 with an 8-0 record. Yeah, that's not going to happen.

Pike lost 78-74 on Friday night at Lawrence

Central, then returned home on Saturday and were blitzed by Anderson, 79-63. Pike was without coach Jeff Teague, who was ejected from the Lawrence Central game after picking up two technical fouls, and leading scorer Damon Howard. The Red Devils dropped to 4-2.

But take nothing away from Anderson, which shot 70% from the field in the first three quarters to cruise to a 16-point win. Star senior Damien King scored 14 points to reach in the 1,000-point barrier for his career. The Indians got a major boost from senior Javon Warfield, whose offensive production and efficiency had been down from last year through five games.

Warfield finished with a team-high 21 points, six rebounds and three steals on 8-for-13 shooting from the field.

"He really hasn't had the greatest year," Anderson coach Donnie Bowling said of Warfield. "This is the first game he's really showed up and he made us a different team. If he's scoring eight points, we're just not very good. If he scores 16 to 18, we're a pretty good team. And he hit a couple jump shots."

Anderson is 5-1 going into the East Noble holiday tournament on Saturday. The only loss for the Indians came earlier in the week, 56-52, to sectional rival Mt. Vernon. Anderson led almost the entire way in that game until the final two minutes.

"I told (the team) I lost the game for them," Bowling said. "We went man-to-man because I wanted to be conventional. But at the end of the day, we're just not a conventional team. We had some momentum."

Anderson has found some success with a trapping 1-3-1 zone defense, playing it primarily against Pike. The Red Devils committed 26 turnovers and shot just 5-for-21 from the 3-point line.

"After the Mt. Vernon game I said, 'I'm going to keep trapping, keep trapping, keep trapping,'" Bowling said. "And it worked. I didn't know it was going to be like this (against Pike). I helped that Damon Howard didn't play. But I think our defense is pretty good. We're long so it makes the 1-3-1 work. We try to keep you off balance."

Bowling's son, freshman Don Bowling, had 16 points on 7-for-10 shooting and junior Collin Lewis added 13 points and six steals.

Good week for ...

Lawrence Central. The Bears (4-4) have rebounded nicely following a rough week that included the departure of sophomore Kenneth Lampley and freshman Landon Lampley. Lawrence Central knocked off Crispus Attucks (60-57) and Pike (78-74) and then completed the three-win week with a 51-41 victory over Princeton in the Evansville Bosse Winter Classic. Doron Harris and Nizyi Davis each had 17 points in the win over Pike.

The Fishers Event Center. A great idea to have the Mudsock double-header as one of the first events at the sparkling new arena. I sort of side with Fishers girls coach Lauren Votaw that I prefer high school games in high school gyms but maybe this game is an exception. If it works with the calendar and financially, a pre-Christmas game seems like a great idea. I don't know how to feel about having a sectional there. If you could rotate it with Carmel and Noblesville and still make as much money (hopefully more with increased capacity), then it might make sense.

Carmel. The Greyhounds held on for a 48-47 win at North Central on Friday night, then blitzed Kokomo 74-36 on the road on Saturday night. A night after Kokomo guard Zion Bellamy scored 43 points in a 109-104 overtime loss to Marion, Carmel held him to six points on 2for-11 shooting and 0-for-6 from the 3point line.

Silver Creek. The Dragons improved to 8-0 with wins over Jeffersonville (71-63) and Bedford North Lawrence (59-51). Junior Dane Caldwell had 19 points and nine rebounds and Kasen Daeger 19 points in the win over Jeffersonville, which again played without Tre Singleton (foot) this week.

Westfield. The Shamrocks knocked off 4A fourth-ranked Noblesville

57-50 and Bethesda Christian 67-23. Westfield (5-1) was 7-for-10 from the 3-point line against the Millers, including 3-for-3 from junior Drew Haffner (15 points) and 3-for-4 from senior Will Harvey (14 points).

Call Star reporter Kyle Neddenriep at (317) 270-4904.