

Illinois High School Scholastic Bowl Coaches Association Ethical Standards for Coaches

The role of coach is an extension of that of being a professional educator, even if a particular coach is not on the staff of a particular school. It is expected that all of the norms of acting in a professional capacity in the classroom extend to the coaching arena. The competition we participate in is an extension of the classroom – it is first and foremost a learning experience for the players, who are learning to compete in a healthy and ethical manner.

- A. Being “caught up in the moment” is no excuse for unsportsmanlike or inappropriate conduct.
- B. Coaches are expected to speak up when they know that a player on the opposing team has given a correct answer and is not receiving credit for it from the moderator.
- C. Coaches who register for tournaments are expected to be there with a team. Coaches who fail to call and cancel at the earliest possible moment are creating an inconvenience to the host. The key is communication; when a team realizes that it is not going to be able to attend a tournament or that its status is in serious doubt, the coach should contact the host immediately.
- D. When seeding teams at the annual seeding meeting, coaches should make a concerted effort to rank teams according to their actual accomplishments. Each voter is expected to pay attention to the information presented at the meeting and use that information to decide who the top teams are. It is not acceptable to rate a team high or low because of one’s relationship to the other team. Coaches should also do their utmost to fairly and objectively rank individual players nominated for All-Sectional/All-State honors.
- E. It is unethical to falsify a team record or individual statistics for purposes of seeding or to accrue individual honors. Coaches should be careful to avoid making errors when entering team records. Coaches are required to submit the results of all five-on-five matches played during the year by their best team available on any given day.
- F. If a team is far ahead during a match, the coach needs to consider the feelings of the opponent. While their actions may depend on the exact situation, coaches should consider substituting players and reminding their own team to treat the other team with respect.
- G. While coaches are not ultimately responsible for the actions of non-player spectators, they are obliged to help tournament officials deal with any inappropriate behavior by non-players who are there watching their team.
- H. Coaches who are not moderating should not address members of the other team during a match. If a coach has a problem with the actions of his/her opponent, the coach should ask the moderator to intervene. Coaches who are moderating should be sure when they do address members of another team that they do so respectfully.
- I. There are special ethical considerations that must be addressed in regard to using a “B” team in a tournament. The following are the guidelines adopted by the IHSSBCA in regard to ethically using a “B” team in a tournament.
 - 1. The normal expectation at a tournament, unless communicated otherwise by the tournament director, is that a school’s “A” team is composed of the best team of five that can be assembled from the team members present at the tournament that day. This does not necessarily mean that the five highest scoring players must play on the “A” team, but a coach should be prepared to defend his/her choice if questioned. Coaches should not violate this ethic in an effort to get both teams into the playoffs. This type of violation is often called ‘stacking’.

2. Before accusing a coach of stacking, one should consider the many factors which could lead to a "B" team's success. Just because a school's "B" team advances and its "A" team doesn't, does not mean a breach of ethics has occurred.
 3. Whether "B" team players may join the "A" team later in a tournament is at the discretion of the tournament director. Generally, players on the "A" team may NOT be moved down to the "B" team in the afternoon. Coaches should check with the tournament director before moving a player up in the afternoon.
 4. A player who clearly belongs on the "A" team should not be played on the "B" team as punishment or for disciplinary reasons.
 5. The record of the "A" team that day, even if normal starters are missing, is the team's official record, and at the varsity level, MUST be included on the team's official record for IHSA seeding purposes.
- J. Because coaches who moderate are performing two functions at once that are in some senses contradictory, they must be especially committed to the fairness of the competition.
1. In the absence of a qualified neutral moderator, coaches or their adult designee are to split the duties of reading. If one coach chooses to give up that right and permit the other coach (or designee) to read for the entire match, that is his/her right. Tournament directors are allowed to choose moderators, and, especially during frosh-soph tournaments, it is well within their rights to permit upperclassmen to read.
 2. When coaches are reading, they are expected to avoid penalizing the opponent unless an obvious violation occurs or a warning has been given previously.
 3. When a coach is moderating, any error or possible error on his/her part that causes the opposing team encumbrance (penalty, loss of opportunity, etc.) should be handled so as to give the benefit of the doubt to the opponent.
 4. Though coaches are sometimes assigned to split moderating duties, coaches who are aware that they are poor moderators should bring a more competent reader along to take that duty, ask the host if there is a neutral moderator available, or waive the right to read to the other coach.