

Illinois High School Scholastic Bowl
Coaches Association
Ethical Standards for Tournament Hosts

Tournament hosts have great latitude in how they organize their events. What they use as their question source and how they decide to place teams within pools can strongly impact the outcome of the event and the quality of each team's experience.

- A. Tournament hosts should include information regarding the source of questions, the basic format of each round, their method of seeding pools/brackets, and rules about A/B teams in the initial contact letter to potential participants.
- B. Tournament hosts have an obligation to try to keep the tournament running on time. In order to do this, they may request that a coach waive the right to read if (s)he has a history of being a slow reader, and thus may place the tournament behind schedule.
- C. Tournament hosts have the right to moderate matches, with the following caveats:
 1. If the host team is playing, the host must split moderating time with the opposing coach or designee, unless the opposing coach allows the host to read the whole match. To do otherwise may give the host school an advantage.
 2. If the host school is involved, and a moderator of equal or better ability is available, the neutral moderator should read the entire match.
- D. There are several ways of setting up pools/brackets for the morning preliminary rounds of play. Tournament directors are encouraged to seed the teams to the best of their ability based on the information they have, recognizing that the outcome won't be perfect. Factors to take into account include (but are not limited to) the teams' performance to date for the season, strength of schedule, geography --- that is, conference/league affiliation (e.g. splitting up teams from the same conference), and the schools' IHSA class (A or AA). Methods of setting up pools include the following:
 1. *True seed*: Teams are seeded according to record or some other such objective criteria, and are split up accordingly. For example, in a six-pool tournament of 30 teams, one pool would contain the teams with seeds 1, 12, 13, 24, and 25; another would contain the teams with seeds 2, 11, 14, 23, and 26; a third would contain the teams with seeds 3, 10, 15, 22, and 27; a fourth would contain the teams with seeds 4, 9, 16, 21, and 28; a fifth would contain the teams with seeds 5, 8, 17, 20, and 29; and the sixth would contain the teams with seeds 6, 7, 18, 19, and 30.
 2. *Separation of top seeds*: This method separates the top teams (based on tournament experience or record to date) into different pools, with one or two "top teams" in each pool. The remaining teams are placed randomly. That is, in a 30-team, 6-pool tournament, one pool would contain the teams with seeds 1 and 12, plus three other teams chosen randomly; another would contain the teams with seeds 2 and 11, plus three others chosen randomly; a third would contain the teams with seeds 3 and 10, plus three others chosen randomly; a fourth would contain the teams with seeds 4 and 9, plus three others chosen randomly; a fifth would contain the teams with seeds 5 and 8, plus three others chosen randomly; and the sixth would contain the teams with seeds 6 and 7, plus three others chosen randomly.
 3. *Random draw*: Pools are decided based completely on random draw. To avoid problems and possible accusations (about the "randomness" of the draw), coaches could draw for their places on the day of the tournament. That way, replacement teams for those who have to cancel at the last minute are written into the schedule along with the rest of the teams. A central board can be used to display the draw results for coaches to write on their copy of the schedule.

4. *Swiss pairings*: The first round is scheduled based on team strength (1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, etc.). After the first round, the winning teams are seeded to play each other, with the highest 1-0 seed playing the lowest 1-0 seed (based on scores), and the losing teams are seeded to play each other. Accelerated Swiss pairings provide for the two highest seeded teams with 1-0 records to play in the second round.
 5. *Power draw*: The best teams (based on some criteria such as record or previous performance) are seeded into one bracket. The remainder are then drawn randomly, or placed in groups by ability. This type of seeding assures that some relatively weak teams will advance, and will restrict the number of strong teams advancing. This system is generally seen as a way to give weaker teams a chance to advance, or to discourage top teams from attending.
 6. *Multiple divisions*: Some tournaments have more than one division, generally based on either school enrollment (large schools/small schools) or team strength (top teams in one division, weaker teams in another). Sometimes a separate division for B (and C, and so on) teams is scheduled. Playoffs are held and trophies are awarded in all divisions.
- E. When seeding teams for the afternoon playoffs, the strongest team in the morning rounds should be scheduled to play the weakest team (1 vs. 8 or 16) in the first round of the playoffs. To do otherwise does not give the stronger team the advantage it earned by its performance in the preliminary rounds.