



TEAMDance Illinois Position Statement

RE: Season Limitation Bylaw Amendment Proposal Submitted to IHSA

November 3, 2009

Background

IHSA recently received a proposal submitted by Ron Conner, Principal of Clinton High School which is an IHSA member school, seeking an amendment to the bylaws of IHSA that would impose a competition season limitation on competitive dance teams. Flag and guard teams were not included in the proposal, and therefore, are unaffected by any final vote on the amendment. The amendment proposal seeks to declare a season for competition dance that runs from week 18 to week 39 of the IHSA Sports calendar (eg...November 8 to March 29th). It is TDI's understanding that declaring this competition season declaration will NOT affect or dictate the beginning of practice schedules, tryouts or performance season. The passage of this proposal is NOT necessarily a required first step to begin the process of IHSA offering a State Championship series for competitive dance. However, many of the recently created IHSA State Tournament series have begun with first declaring a competition season, but again, this is not necessary but could be simply considered a typical course of events.

The [IHSA Legislative Commission](#) reviewed the proposals at its first meeting on Monday, November 2 and decided to move forward with the town hall process. Next, the proposal will be discussed at [town meetings](#) held at various sites throughout the state between November 5 and 18. The Commission will reassemble on Monday, November 23, to decide whether to submit each of the 15 proposals, including #14, to a vote of the general membership. The final vote by IHSA member schools will take place between November 24 and December 23.

You can click on this link to get the full text of the by-law amendment proposals.

<http://www.ihsa.org/announce/2009-10/09-10%20proposals.pdf>

Click on "Text of all Proposals" and look for proposal number 14.

TDI's Position

TEAMDance Illinois recommends voting against the proposal for several reasons.

1. TDI has had extensive discussions with Athletic Directors from around the state at the Annual Athletic Directors Conference over the past few years. The vast majority of Athletic Directors TDI has spoken to want a *shorter* competitive season for dance.

2. Within its mission and objections, TDI has committed itself to *“offer a competition/education season which allows coaches and students to balance their school work and activities, training, volunteer work, family life and participation in this organization.”* **TDI Bylaws, Article IV, Section II (N)**. In fulfilling this objective, TDI has advocated and instituted a true “winter season” for dance/drill/pom with the competition season running from November 1 through early March (week 17 through week 36). The advantages to this shorter season is that dance becomes a true “winter sport” and students are free to participate in spring sports such as tennis, track and softball or activities such as musicals or plays. This is something they are unable to do or proves to be very difficult if they are not released from their dance teams until mid to late March. Another benefit is that coach “burn out” is reduced and coach retention is increased when they have a shorter, more manageable season with a clear end date.
3. Although TDI believes in a competition season limitation, this is not it. TDI believes the competition season should end no later than the first weekend in March.

Recommendation

TDI recommends that its coach members and team members discuss the amendment proposal with the IHSA voting member of their school (which is either the principal or the athletic director), educate them about the proposal, and encourage them to vote NO.

At this time TDI does NOT recommend the need for a season limitation by-law amendment because within TDI’s mission statement TDI pledges to not extend the competition season later than week 36.

Should a season limitation by-law amendment come to a vote, TDI STRONGLY recommends that the language be altered to end the season at week 36 not week 39. Ending it at week 39 opens up the possibility for teams to still be competing into the spring sports season and this is a situation that puts a great deal of stress on students, coaches and school programs.

TDI firmly believes in maintaining a balance of priorities by keeping competitive dance a winter sport!