

MIAA Ice Hockey Committee

January 28, 2026

Minutes

1. **Call to order:** Dan Shine, Bob Ware, Tim Brillo, Lori Stattenfield, Chris O'Donnell, Jack Owens, Mike Mead, Mark Albright, John Brown, Scott Palladino, Billy O'Connell, Marc Talbot, Scott Paine, Richard Greer, Brad Morgan, Mike Flaherty, Tim Hooton, Phil Napolitano, Jim Clark.
2. **October 1, 2025 minutes approved (16-0-1)**
3. **2026 Ice Hockey Tournament Update- Bob Ware**
 - a. Provided timeline – Venues from Round of 8, flexibility from rinks has been helpful (The Bog and Watertown offered flexibility).
 - b. Final 4 flexibility with Loring and Gallo on Sunday March 8th.
4. **2026-27 format with edits, approved 16-0-1**
5. **1A/All-State Tournament – subcommittee report – Jack Owens**
 - a. Data showed pattern of dominance in the sport
 - b. Top 8 power ranked teams would play in the 1A/All-State
 - i. May entice our players to stay at our schools, over playing for other prep schools or junior hockey teams.
 - ii. 21 different D1 State Champions over 29 years when Super 8 was in play.
 - iii. Creates competitive equity
 - iv. Timeline – Implementation for 2027-28 season.
 1. Falls in line with new alignment cycle, which may result in less divisions in boys and girls ice hockey
 2. Allows more time to prepare
 - v. Based on final rating, regardless of divisions
 1. No opt out, other than current rule where a school opts out of entire postseason.
 2. If you allow an opt out, diminishes integrity of the tournament.
 - vi. Pool play (groups of 4)
 1. Top 2 teams in each group come out to play a semi-final. Winners play at the Garden.
 2. Other divisions still get top 32 plus .500 to replace the 8 teams who qualify.
 3. Format creates 5 game path to a championship, which is consistent with current tournament.

4. Looked at all different formats, including 10 or 12 teams. 8 was the best in our opinion.
5. Securing rinks is a big factor in pool play at predetermined sites, over home and away (best of 3).
 - a. MIAA assigns sites, same as the other round of 8 tournaments. Not preferential treatment.
6. No ties- will use overtime format (3 OTs) and shootout.
 - a. Same as outlined in the ice hockey tournament format
7. Tie breaking process and mechanics will be established and clear.

1A/All-State Discussion

- Scott Paine - The focus should be on whether this tournament proposal is good for ice hockey. If it is, we can work through the details that some may pick apart. The key question is whether this is the direction we want to take as a committee.
- Mike F – Coaches are in full support of this proposal.
- Jack – ADs were 85% in favor based on the survey we sent and those who responded.
- Lori – What would the criticism be?
 - Jack- Some don't think it should be more than single elimination. However, the top eight teams in the state typically do not lose in the early rounds.
- John Brown – I see two issues from my district and leagues:
 - First, the vote is whether we want a Super 8 as an ice hockey committee.
 - Second, the format may be an issue with District 7. All three leagues support the Super 8 concept but do not support this format.
 - They don't like pool play and three guaranteed games; they would prefer a best-of-three format.
 - I am a huge proponent of the Super 8 tournament.
 - TMC may want consistency in how these tournaments are executed (pool play vs. home/away best-of-three).
- Jack – A best-of-three format creates challenges with booking rinks and potentially not using a scheduled third game, which causes financial issues.
- Dan- A single district should not hold back the entire tournament proposal. This decision rests with the committee, which represents all districts in the state.
- Tim- We have more than a year to make adjustments if TMC has concerns. This is a working document.
- Dan – We need to go through the process, and this is the first step. If TMC pushes back, we can meet and make adjustments.

- Jack- There are advantages and disadvantages to every format. As chair of the subcommittee, we worked hard and evaluated multiple formats. Just because baseball presented first does not mean we need to align as they are completely different sports from a tournament management and venue perspective.
 - Considered an 8-team single-elimination format
 - Considered a 10-team, junior-style tournament
 - A major factor was maintaining a five-game path, as it best mirrors the current tournament
- Scott- Agreed, they are two very different tournaments. Full consistency isn't realistic. We can aim to be similar, but the financial implications are much greater for ice hockey.
- **FIRST VOTE – Motion to approve a 1A Tournament for Boys and Girls Ice Hockey for 2027-28 school year (Tim B, 2nd John Brown) - APPROVED 16-0-1**
 - Brad Morgan- any consideration to have Public Schools have option to join if they want?
 - Mike F – Public Schools are all for it. 80% of coaches want it badly. Losing kids to USHL, to Canada, to Preps. This allows us to keep our players in the MIAA.
- **SECOND VOTE – Motion to approve subcommittee 1A Tournament proposal, which includes pool play (Mike Mead, 2nd Richard Greer). APPROVED 14-2-1**
 - Bob- If you took out top 8 teams in D1, wouldn't everyone now qualify for D1?
 - Mike F– No, ice hockey is going to be down from 4 divisions to 3 based on the number of teams, so there will be more teams in each division.
- **NEXT STEPS – SEND TO TMC**

6. Margin of Victory – Mike Flaherty

- a. Discussed his survey results that was sent to all coaches
 - i. Current MOV of three goals causes challenges with how we coach the game, pulling goalies, playing all kids, etc.
 - ii. Parents don't understand it.
 - iii. Not pulling the goalie does not prepare teams for the postseason, where it is an elimination tournament and MOV is not a factor.
 - iv. Reducing the MOV will have minimal negative impact.
 - v. The goal is to increase player participation and allow coaches to utilize more of their roster during games.
 - vi. Maintain the integrity and competitiveness of the game while reducing unintended strategic constraints.

- vii. Proposal from Coaches Association is to reduce the MOV from 3 goals to 2 games.

Questions

- Dan- It has been suggested that reducing MOV from 3 to 2 would give coaches more opportunities to play additional players. I respectfully disagree, as I believe it will create more restrictions. Coaches will continue to play their top players as long as possible to try to tie or win the game.
 - Mike- It's not really about a one- or two-goal lead, I agree with that. It's about reaching a three- or four-goal margin. At a three-goal lead right now, my fourth line isn't seeing the ice. If MOV is 2 and I'm up by 3, I would play my fourth line.
- Bob- Do you think coaches will pull their goalie when down one goal if MOV is 2?
 - Mike –Yes, I believe the majority of coaches would pull the goalie when down one goal, as there is no strong rationale not to.
- Mike- Lacrosse and basketball have recently lowered their thresholds, so there is already precedent.
- The recommendation is for implementation in the 2026–27 school year.

Motion to accept the Coaches' Association proposal to lower the ice hockey Margin of Victory from 3 goals to 2 goals for the 2026–27 school year (Motion by Mike Mead, 2nd by Jack Owens). APPROVED 15-1-1

Next steps, move to TMC

7. **Officials** (Tim H)– Hoping to bring back goal judges

- Bob- Most rinks don't have capability and mechanisms to have goal judges. You have 4 officials on the ice, why do we need a goal judge.
- Dan- concerns about putting an official behind the goal, in with the crowd and no protection from spectators.

Tim- can we have copy of overtime procedures in the penalty box area, so the clock operators know MIAA OT procedure.

Adjournment