



# ILLINOIS CHESS COACHES ASSOCIATION

[www.ILChessCoach.org](http://www.ILChessCoach.org)

Chess competition enables individuals to recognize the importance of their thought processes and to accept the consequences of their own decisions. The ICCA provides instruction, competition, and camaraderie in which physical power does not control the outcome of the contest and no physical disability prevents any boy or girl from participating.

## MARCH NEWSLETTER 2025 – Vol 10, Issue 03

### CONTENTS...

1. From the IHSA's Desk ( <i>Dan Le</i> )	1
2. This Train Runs on Time ( <i>Scott Johnson</i> )	2
3. Thoughts for Coaches from years of experiences... ( <i>Ken Lewandowski</i> )	3
4. ICCA Coach of the Year	4
5. IHSA Advisory Committee	4
6. IESA Advisory Committee	4
7. ICCA Division Awards, new calculation	4
8. Upcoming Tournaments	6
9. Some Thoughts... ( <i>Erik Czerwin</i> )	6
10. APPENDIX: Full Results Of 2024-25 ICCA Survey	7

### From the IHSA's Desk...

*Dan Le – IHSA Chess Administrator*

Greetings Illinois Chess Coaches,

On behalf of the IHSA, I want to thank you all for your contributions to high school chess in the state of Illinois. Your commitment to the sport and your students as well as the time you have dedicated are to be commended. It's hard to believe that I have completed my third year as the chess administrator for the IHSA. From adding Chesscalate to the sectional tournaments to implementing a certification feature for coaches in Chesscalate to the improvements in operations at the IHSA State Finals, it is rewarding to see the positive changes that have been made just in the last three years. I know there are still some improvements that can be made for the State Finals, and I intend to continue working with the appropriate personnel to make that experience as best as it can be. A tremendous amount of gratitude goes out to Scott Johnson for his work in developing and improving the Chesscalate program, and I am thankful for the leadership demonstrated by Chris Merli, Erik Czerwin, and all sectional and state tournament officials. We could not conduct these tournaments without their knowledge, integrity, and overall passion for high school chess.

The IHSA chess advisory committee just met for their annual meeting on Friday, March 21st. The minutes from that meeting are available on the chess advisory committee page of the IHSA website. I want to thank each of the committee members for their time to discuss items to improve the IHSA Chess State Series.

Recommendations from the committee will go through a review process over the next couple of months, and the IHSA Board of Directors can take action on any or all recommendations in June. Coaches can expect the 2025-26 updates to be published in late September or early October.

Last but not least, our office is in the process of seeking hosts for the 2026 sectional tournaments, which are scheduled for Saturday, January 31st. If your school interested in hosting, please have your athletic or activities director email me.

Thank you again for another great season. Best of luck this offseason, and I look forward to reconnecting next fall and winter.

---

## **This Train Runs on Time**

*by Scott Johnson, Chesscalate guy/former IHSA admin*

Over the past few years, with lots of help from the chess community, the IHSA state tournament has really hit its stride. Smartphones have really changed the way we do business at the state final, not just with how we get information to coaches, but also how we get information from coaches. The end result has been a super-efficient event that runs like a Swiss watch.

Last year in Round 7, we set a record when 95% of the individual results were reported by coaches using the Chesscalate app. This year, every round scored 95% or better, and four rounds (1, 3, 5, and 7) finished at 97%. At the sectionals two weeks earlier, coaches at both Franklin and Hinsdale Central recorded three perfect rounds. I am tempted to say "we can still do better," but honestly, that's pretty darn good. Bravo, coaches!

On the other hand, the new requirement that coaches certify every result electronically will need some work. During the tournament, 54% of the team matches were certified by both coaches, 34% by just one coach, and 12% were not certified by either coach. Luckily, only one score was disputed: a coach mistakenly entered a wrong result, but it was immediately detected by the opposing coach and corrected within a minute.

Certification is absolutely critical if we want to ensure that all the results are correct before pairing the next round and moving forward. We understand that the logistics at state are complicated, and that timely certification was difficult for some coaches. We've already implemented a change that will allow a coach to certify or dispute a result right up until the pairings are made for the next round. Hopefully we'll see a significant increase in certification next year.

### **Tracking Competitive Matches**

Over the course of the state tournament, we expect matches to get more competitive as teams are paired against opponents that are similar in strength. How can we quantify that?

The table below shows results from the last two years. The columns indicate the winning team's score (or the score of a draw) in each match. We'll say that matches where the winning team (or the teams that draw) scored in the 30s were nailbiters where the result might have gone either way.

Not surprisingly there is a steady increase in competitive matches and a corresponding decrease in blowouts as the tournament rolls on. In Rounds 4 through 7, nailbiters occurred in 129 of 512 matches, or just over 25% of the time.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Round</b>	<b>30s</b>	<b>40s</b>	<b>50s</b>	<b>60s</b>
<b>2024</b>	1	4	11	23	26
	2	12	20	19	13
	3	9	26	22	7
	4	16	26	13	9
	5	10	27	23	4
	6	20	27	11	6
	7	15	29	17	3
<b>2025</b>	1	1	14	21	28
	2	11	19	20	14
	3	5	19	27	13
	4	17	27	16	4
	5	18	30	12	4
	6	14	32	15	3
	7	19	23	20	2

We're looking forward to a new round of nailbiters next year. Thanks, coaches — see you in 2026!

---

### Thoughts for Coaches from years of experiences...

*Ken Lewandowski*

Qualifying for IHSA State.... ie: 'GOING DOWNSTATE'

As recently as 2000 there were less than 100 schools participating at the IHSA State Tournament. The event now 'boasts' 124 teams with the NEED for Sectional Tournaments to keep it at this number. This limiting number is based on 2 to the 7th power...which provides a single winner for the 7 round event. This year, many teams that played in leagues and Saturday events did not sign up for the Sectionals. Many teams that did play at Sectionals did not earn enough points to "Go Downstate". I noticed that many teams that have traditionally been at the State Tournament over the years did not qualify this year, so missed playing in Peoria. Illinois High School Chess has grown, both in numbers and in quality, since I started coaching (1986). I am sure many of my early competitive teams would have trouble facing this year's top half teams. It is now truly an HONOR to qualify for IHSA State!! Next time you earn this HONOR, be sure your team feels like they earned something special!.

Finding Funding...

Finding enough resources is always a challenge for High School Programs. Some schools support all their programs with budgets, some do not but hope to continue programs. IF you have a way to increase your resources, please share it with the ICCA so everyone can benefit.

One source of funding I did not learn about until I coached for a few years was the local Booster Club. Most schools have a parent organization that provides resources and funding for teams and clubs. At my school, when a someone joins the Booster Club, part of their Dues can be allocated to specific activities. Many Booster Clubs count as charitable organizations (501C3) so parents can deduct their dues. This may not be much but if you encourage your parents to join and find the right boxes to check, this money accumulates over time. Often these funds CAN NOT be used for travel/entrance fees but they can be used for (major) equipment. I discovered that over a few years, about the time our clocks/sets got run down (or missing), there would be enough funds in this account to buy some new ones. Many Booster Clubs will have an application process for funds for these purposes.

Another item you can consider when looking at funding, specially for the IHSA State trip.....ask your administrator.."Would the Football/Basketball team players need to provide \$\$ for a trip downstate if/when they qualify?". With the IHSA Chess program growing as it is and it becoming more of an "honor" to make it to state....this is worth asking.

My (Evanston) usual plan for state was to get a hotel that provided breakfast and then pay for one meal each day for the team with club/school resources. The players were expected to provide the rest of their meals/snacks. I would explain these details in a letter home to parents (which I hope everyone does in some way before the trip anyway). I would also mention that if the parents wanted to donate \$\$ to provide additional (or upgraded) meals, they could do that. This way, the families are still providing the extra meals, the coach could be confident that all the players would get food and the players could feel good about being supported by their families in addition to the school.

Team meals are also a way of being sure the players get what they order, the meals and snacks at least have the illusion of being heathy and proper tips are provided for restaurant workers.

What are your favorite (successful) funding activities? Please share them with other coaches!

Chaperones/School Representatives

The IHSA Rule Book 'Requires' an Official School Representative to be in the playing room at the start of each round. For those of you who have experienced the Peoria Civic Center....it is a very large space. Many coaches operate on their own and bring their teams down by themselves.

We are all experienced enough to know that 'things happen'. I have had a few (minor) medical issues that had to be dealt with, some 'behavioral' issues and even some bus/van problems. These issues often take time and require a coach to be away from their team in the playing area or even the Civic Center completely.

It is not always easy or possible to find someone to travel with you. Since most teams play in leagues or are part of a multi-school district, I encourage everyone to find a 'buddy' they can list as an assistant coach in case of emergencies. In the North Suburban League, many of the coaches know the players on other teams, at least by sight and the players are aware of opposing coaches. This is a great source to list someone to help, just in case. You may have to get 'approval' from your school admin to list someone but this really can help. Also, let your team know who they can rely on for help. (AND I hope you never need this advice.)

---

### **ICCA Coach of the Year**

Every year, the ICCA nominates and elects a Coach of the Year. It's an honor bestowed upon coaches who do great work with their teams, with their conferences, and with the ICCA. This year, we were happy to elect Adam Levy (Palatine HS & Glenbrook North) as the 2025 ICCA Mike Zacate Coach of the Year. You can read the nominating information on the website. Remember, we're always taking nominations for next year, so click on the [Coach of the Year](#) page, then click the link to nominate a coach that you think deserves recognition. Or, if you're ready to nominate someone, got to: <https://goo.gl/XbiY8D> and submit your nomination. Students, coaches, parents, etc. can all nominate a coach.

---

### **IHSA Advisory Committee**

The IHSA Chess Advisory Committee will meet on Friday, March 21st. Each committee member represents a region (or regions) of the state and should carry the will of those coaches to that meeting to help shape, improve, and continue to grow the IHSA chess program. Please keep in mind that nothing the Committee discusses, decides on, or recommends is official IHSA policy, rules, terms or conditions until those decisions make it through a couple more layers of approval (Activities Directors Committee, IHSA Board of Directors, etc). If you have any questions, please direct them to your IHSA Advisory Committee Representative. Official minutes from the meeting will be posted at the IHSA Chess Advisory Committee website as soon as they are available. You can also find your district representative at the site: <http://www.ihsa.org/SportsActivities/Chess/AdvisoryCommittee.aspx>.

---

### **IESA Advisory Committee**

The IESA Chess Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 19th. Each committee member represents their respective viewpoints to that meeting to help shape, improve, and continue to grow the IESA chess program. Please keep in mind that nothing the Committee discusses, decides on, or recommends is official IESA policy, rules, terms or conditions until those decisions make it through a couple more layers of approval (Activities Directors Committee, IESA Board of Directors, etc). If you have any questions, please direct them to an IESA Advisory Representative. Official minutes from the meeting are posted at the IESA Chess Advisory Committee website.. You can also find more info at the IESA Chess webpage: [IESA.org/activities/chs/](http://IESA.org/activities/chs/).

---

### **ICCA Division Classifications, a change in calculation**

*Erik Czerwin, ICCA Secretary & Jon Berry, Coach at Chicago (Mt. Carmel)*

Each season, the ICCA awards 6 Division awards to top-performing high school teams. This began as a way to celebrate the success of schools across the population spectrum, considering the disparity of size and scope of programs. One of the miracles of the IHSA tournament is the diversity of players, coaches, and programs represented from every corner of the state. When Mike Zacate showed me how he used to divide up the divisions, I continued that practice for many years. The past results can be found at the website here: <https://www.ilchesscoach.org/Results/ihsa-state-chess-team-tournament>. Over the years, coaches like Joel Penne of Sterling HS have helped to refine that process to what it is today. A complete explanation can be found [here](#) (there is a link at the bottom of the results sheet, as well). As closely as I can, I try to use the same principles that Mike taught me within the same structure that the IHSA uses to classify schools by population. It's a cumbersome process, but well worth the effort, I believe, to continue awarding team success at the State Tournament. It's also an imperfect system, and one that is open to constant revision. This year, coach Jon Berry and I have worked together to update our process yet again. It's been great to work with another coach so dedicated to the sport and the spirit of the ICCA principles. When I say "we," let's be honest, Coach Berry did most of the research and compiled all of the numbers and results. His work is written up below. Much gratitude to him. Next season, we'll work together to divide the teams, and I'm glad to have his support.

## **Adjustment in Enrollment Numbers for Single-Gender Schools** *Coach Jon Berry, Chicago (Mt. Carmel)*

For the purpose of the post-tournament Division Awards, the ICCA will no longer use the 'doubled' enrollment numbers found on the IHSA website for single-gender schools. The rationale is as follows:

During the 2024-25 chess season, there were seven single-gender schools that competed in the state series:

- **Aurora: Marmion Academy**
- **Chicago: Brother Rice**
- **Chicago: Mt. Carmel**
- **Chicago: St. Patrick**
- **Chicago: St. Rita**
- **Georgetown: La Salette**
- **Niles: Northridge**

When allocating schools into the 6 divisions after the completion of the state tournament, the ICCA uses the enrollment numbers made available for all schools on the IHSA 'school-data' website. For the single-gender schools, the IHSA automatically doubles the enrollment, pursuant to IHSA Policy 17.2, which states that "[t]he enrollment of a single-gender high school is multiplied by 2 to bring it into line with coed schools having the same number of boys or girls." Thus for example, Mt. Carmel, which currently has an enrollment of approximately 590 boys, is listed by the IHSA as having an enrollment of 1189.

In the case of most IHSA sports and activities, the IHSA has a clear reason for doing this: a school with 600 boys, for example, can be expected to field a football or basketball team from the same size pool of a coed school of 1200 students. This is not, however, the case with chess, which is a coed activity. The chess coach of a school with 600 boys is able to draw from the same size pool as the chess coach of a coed school with 600 boys and girls. Therefore, a disparity arises when a single-gender school of 600 students is placed in the same division as a coed school of 1200, since the coed school has double the number of students available.

Therefore, beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the IHSA-listed enrollment for each of the above single-gender schools will be cut in half to reflect the actual number of students in the schools. Using the data currently available, the enrollment and division changes would be as follows:

- **Aurora: Marmion Academy\*** - Enrollment: 1041 to 520.5 - Division: 2A to 1A
- **Chicago: Brother Rice** - Enrollment: 1301 to 650.5 - Division: 3A to 2A
- **Chicago: Mt. Carmel** - Enrollment: 1189 to 594.5 - Division: 2A to 1A
- **Chicago: St. Patrick** - Enrollment: 983 to 491.5 - Division: 2A to 1A
- **Chicago: St. Rita** - Enrollment: 972 to 486 - Division 2A to 1A
- **Georgetown: La Salette** - Enrollment: 171 to 85.5 - Division: remains in 1A
- **Niles: Northridge** - Enrollment: 366 to 183 - Division: remains in 1A

*\*going coed beginning with the 2026-27 school year*

Please note that this issue is separate from any issues related to the use of multipliers for 'non-boundary' schools, which currently would not apply for these schools. Having said that, as is the case with all 'non-boundary' schools, there should be some mechanism in place for making sure that a school with a history of success is placed in the most appropriate division. But that is a separate conversation. We should also note that some of these schools might actually prefer to be in the higher division (perhaps for marketing reasons or because they want to be seen to be competing with rival schools), and that schools should be allowed to request to be moved up into the next higher division. Finally, an argument could be made that while chess is technically a coed activity, most of the participants are boys and that, practically speaking, single-gender schools are not actually at a disadvantage when competing against larger coed schools. Although I personally disagree with this, I don't see a problem with having this conversation.

Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns.

- Jon Berry - Mt. Carmel High School, Chicago, IL - [jberry@mchs.org](mailto:jberry@mchs.org)

---

## **Upcoming Tournaments**

Though the IHSA and IESA seasons have ended, there are still plenty of great competitive chess events for your players. Below, we've listed some resources to find events and highlighted a couple events that are well worth your careful consideration. If you have any questions, let us know!

- The Illinois Chess Association ([il-chess.org](http://il-chess.org)) maintains a tournament list of Illinois tournaments that range from club-size events to state championships (found here: <http://il-chess.org/all-tournaments>).
- USChess has two pages that are worth looking into for events:
  - Upcoming Tournaments – a list of events broken up by state: <http://www.uschess.org/tlas/upcoming.php>
  - National Events – a list of National USChess events: <http://www.uschess.org/tlas/upcoming.php?CAT=NAT>

---

## **Some thoughts on this season...**

*Erik Czerwin - ICCA Secretary*

This is usually the spot where I break down the numbers on the website traffic, the number of tournaments processed, and the number of players we've reached through our coaching and events. This year, however, I've not had as much personal time to devote to this important analysis, so it's taken a back seat. Next year, I hope to do the analysis again, and an every-other year cycle seems appropriate. What I'd like to do this year, instead, is simply share some thoughts that I've had this season.

As I drove around the state every Saturday, I was surprised at the enthusiasm from the players. It has been great fun watching the players form new friendships and bonds week after week. The competitive spirit of the ICCA circuit is fun, light, and full of camaraderie. It's a community I'm incredibly proud to serve. Coaches are creating meaningful experiences for their players. Those experiences change lives. The tournaments are amazing, but it's the after-school practices, the paperwork processing, the e-mailing and calling, and the hours and hours of work that YOU all do that makes it all happen.

I recently reconnected with one of my first chess players. When I met him at 16, he was a bit of a basket-case. His nickname was "bonehead" for all the blunders in his chess game. He was an incredible, brilliant kid who didn't care much for school but loved the acceptance and challenge of the chess team. He's over 30 now. He's running a business selling bugs to pet stores as feed for lizards and other animals. He does this across the country, focused on the southeast. He told me that the only reason he was able to build this multi-million dollar business was through the principles I taught him on the chess team. Whoa. That was a humbling conversation. We've made plans to get together soon.

And we've all got stories like that if we stick around long enough. This Illinois team-chess thing is unique in the world, at least the way that we do it. And it's incredible. You, the coaches, make it happen every day in your classrooms and meeting spaces. The Conference Reps who help to organize conferences and inter-school competitions, they make it happen. The IHSA/IESA events staff make it happen. It takes an army, and we're crushing it.

So this off-season, take a break. Relax. Enjoy the journey. And then start making plans for next season. The ICCA is here to support the work you all do, just let us know how we can serve you, the incredible community of coaches that make it happen. Thank you, all, for your service.

---

## **Call for Newsletter Submissions**

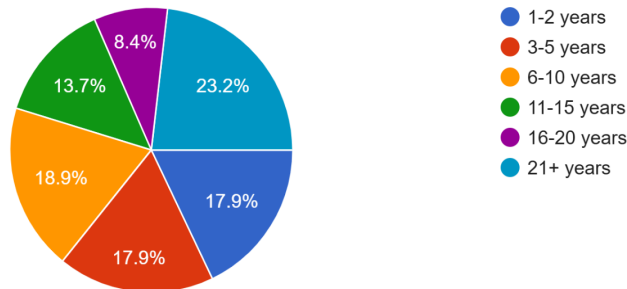
If you're willing to write an article or have ideas on how to improve the newsletter, please send those ideas to the ICCA Secretary ([Secretary@ILChessCoach.org](mailto:Secretary@ILChessCoach.org)). We want to make sure that the newsletter is more than just a listing of important information, we want it to be something you look forward to reading! We've got the talent in our ranks, just send us your thoughts, and we'll help turn it into a high-quality article.

## 2025 ICCA SURVEY RESULTS

- Coach of the Year – Adam Levy, Palatine (H.S.) & Northbrook (Glenbrook North)

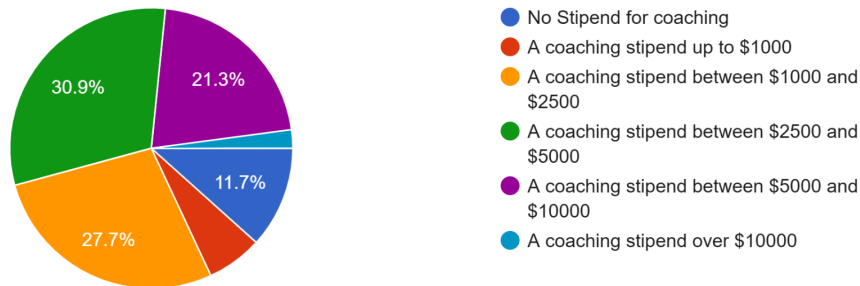
### Coach Experience

95 responses



### Stipend

94 responses



### Budget

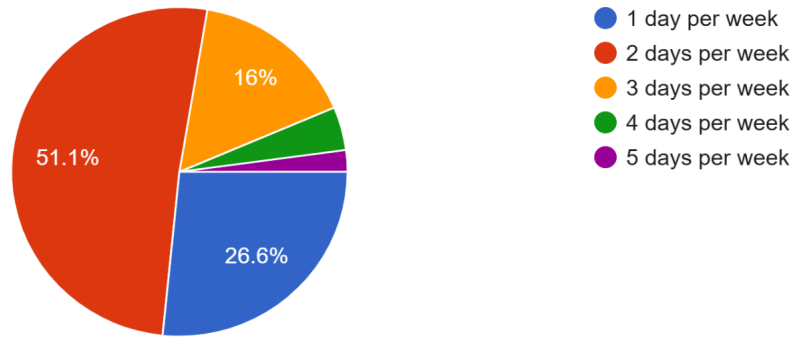
94 responses



- 32 - Our team has no budget, but we can get most costs covered by the school
- 20 - Our team has an annual budget that covers all of our expenses, and we can fundraise for additional costs
- 18 - Our team has no budget and has to fundraise/pay for all things
- 17 - Our team has an annual budget that covers some of our expenses, but we have to fundraise
- 4 - Our team has all of our expenses paid for and can get additional resources easily
- 1 - No budget, the school covers some costs.
- 1 - Our team has a budget for miscellaneous things (new chess sets), but the school covers all travel/tournament expenses.
- 1 - Our team has no budget, but we can get mandatory things like uniforms, bus rides, dues covered. Everything else we need to fundraise for.

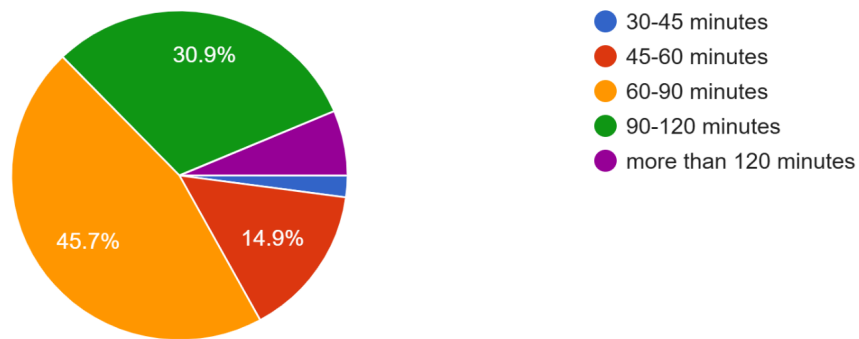
### Practice frequency

94 responses



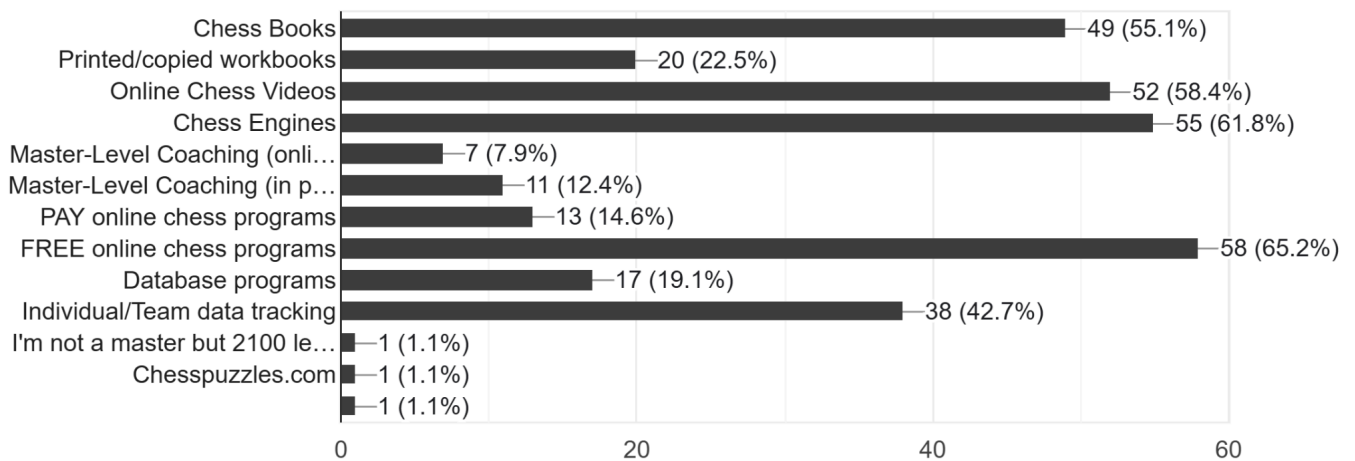
### Practice length

94 responses



### Resources

89 responses



## Survey Results...

### Wishlist

- Need more clocks
- More clocks for practice
- A better chess opening resource.
- Master level coaching
- A coach who could actually really help our top boards.
- an assistant coach
- Transportation to tournaments.
- funds to provide a visit by a chess master
- a notation sheet scanner, that I can use to easily digitize players notation sheets to help them analyze. It'd be great if it came with AI feature to catch mistakes and suggest most probably move that was made in their actual game. Also I'd like an account where I can sign up the team to practice courses, tactics, openings, end games, and monitor their completion, progress, and rating improvement. It'd be great to be able to share this with the whole team if desired also.
- unsure, still learning what is out there
- An in school student activities director
- An online training program that offers individual lessons based on ability that comes with a dashboard for coaches to track their students' progress.
- with Chess.com and Lichess.org we have many available resources available for students to access, more time to practice on the board, small school, students in many activities and difficult to get them after school to practice in person
- I'm not sure.
- Master level coaching
- Online membership, free books
- More Clocks
- Master coaching for my elite players
- More funds for meals and equipment
- Mostly, funding. The school will cover a handful of tournament entry fees during the year, but nothing outside of that. It's my first year and it was far more expensive to coach than I anticipated. We attended 5 tournaments this year and I spent just shy of \$500 on food alone at these tournaments. I'll need to replace some sets and clocks next year too.
- Wish I had access to more to better programs for my kids to learn from and more funds
- Chess.com Memberships
- Private grandmasters
- An in-person gm level training
- Still learning what's out there
- I'd like for our school to purchase a chess board, possibly a DGT chess board, specifically for using for broadcasting a chess match as is done for other sports. I would like to improve the media for our chess program and chess in general. We did an experimental match broadcast for the first time this year, and I'd like to improve upon it for next year.
- Master-level coaching in person.
- In person chess teacher
- A second coach

### Obstacles

- Competition with other clubs and sports.
- Time
- Having everyone show up to tournaments and individual matches.
- Too many other clubs and students involved in too many
- finding eligible and interested students
- Getting players to spend as much time practicing as they should. Getting the top players in the school to choose chess over other activities.
- Sharing players with other activities.
- Finances and the kids having competing clubs and activities.
- The size of our student population

- Getting kids join the team. It's getting better but we'll struggle to get more than 8 again next year.
- Lack of a good feeder system
- competition for kids with other things that go on in same season
- Over scheduled students. 10% of our students fill 100% of the clubs (Chess/ Scholastic Bowl/Band/Math Team)
- The more than 60 competing activities offered within the school as well as my own limited time--at least if I want to stay married.
- small school lots of activities competing for the good students
- Number of participants
- Managing with other winter activities - Scholastic Bowl, E-Sports etc
- Student participation. We have a small school, and many of the students are over-committed with other activities.
- Finding kids who are not already committed to winter sports
- Finding committed players. Many start off, but few continue on.
- Availability. Students are in several sports/clubs and the events seem to all occur on the same days - conf, sectionals, NLCC tournament conflicts with fall Play, etc.
- Lack of player participation because of athletic sports
- Numbers
- consistent attendance.
- Season length...getting kids to commit.
- Attendance
- getting students committed to practice every week
- Nowadays more than ever--player commitment
- One big obstacle is the number of activities that students can now participate in. I'm glad they have these opportunities, but it creates competition for students' time. Also, chess is not looked upon very favorably by many of their peers.
- other programs and sports
- Math Team and video games. Math competitions caused quite a few scheduling conflicts and my team were more beholden to the math team than chess. Video games just because none of them want to actually study the resources I provide on opening theory or endgame technique. Their free time is spoken for with either other clubs or video games.
- We are a small school, so team members are involved in other programs.
- Getting players to commit to Saturday tournaments. Other co-curriculars such as robotics, e-sports are cutting into our program. Also getting a full roster to commit to Tuesday matches.
- Small number of schools in our area have chess teams.
- Size of school
- Recruiting and retaining players.
- Kids showing up
- Maintaining a full team is difficult due to the many sports drawing kids away. Maximizing interest in the team at the school is difficult, while many students play chess casually but don't even go to the chess club. I believe running an effective school-wide chess tournament could increase engagement and generate interest.
- Conflicts with sports and other extracurricular activities as well as difficulty recruiting due to lack of a feeder program
- Recruiting players Small school; students spread too thin.
- No feeder programs
- No feeder programs.
- Keeping continuity with the feeder school
- feeding the team. Tournaments should have a chess and meal plan as one price
- Funding
- Attendance
- Better coaching
- no administrative support
- Money
- Transportation, dealing with school district bureaucracy, and of course, money.
- Me having time to have more frequent practices, knowing which openings to teach, and how to do so for the entire team.
- Time for practice
- Time — getting students to play in rated tournaments and practice outside of team meetings

- Individual competitive play
- CPS
- Ensuring student practice outside of the team meetings.
- As I said earlier, there is an enormous disparity between the top 25% of the schools, and the next 50%, with the bottom quarter not remotely competitive. This should be addressed somehow. Personally I think there should be a 2-class system. Two classes of 64, play 6 rounds instead of 7. Maybe make the split at enrollment of 1800. It is very difficult for small schools, where few kids have experience playing competitive chess, to compete against enormous schools with multiple players with competitive experience. Perhaps there should be a separate survey question about the value of the state tournament for non-competitive schools. Do we just go to the state tournament so as to provide a unique experience for our students (which is pretty much the case for me and my players)? Or do we get some other benefit? Also, the post-tournament division into classes doesn't completely solve the problem, since it doesn't alleviate the difficulties of non-competitive teams playing against highly competitive teams during the competition itself.
- Access to high-level and in person training from masters of the game.
- Master coaching for my elite players

### Memories

- When a student gets their first win at a tournament.
- Seeing skinny Erik
- Our Board 6 solving a middle game mate in 8 in round 4 of the Joliet tournament.
- Eating at the burger barge in Peoria early in the season
- Tournaments with my players!!
- my team giving it their all!!
- Watching the players grow as people and building supportive relationships with other coaches.
- Making the state tournament in only our second year of being a coop.
- Being able to bring many more kids to the Saturday tournaments than in previous years due to a change in our chess club management.
- Seeing the kids enjoy being with each other.
- This has been our first successful season in memory. We placed third at West Chicago and got a trophy. I don't think I've ever seen a chess trophy in our school. The kids were very, very, excited. Pictures posted around the school and all. We also placed third in sectional (still don't know how). Wish we would have a trophy for that. Looking forward to state.
- 3rd Place finish in our conference
- The fun the players had
- As always, having fun playing chess and goofing with the kids.
- Winning 3 rounds at Sectionals.
- The large number of freshmen (7) who have committed to our chess club this year
- sterling tournament where I believe all 8 finished in the top 3 and received medals.
- Building strong relationships with my students and playing super smash (video game) in between matches at tournaments.
- making the cut to go to state for the first time
- A 40.5-27.5 win over Payton and a 35-33 win over Lane
- Dylan's spread at the Hinsdale tournament.
- smiles on students faces when they win a match, doing well at sectional, competing in tournaments, playing in the NICL conference
- Switching to the open section for the Huntley Raider Tournament. We were short handed, and we were still able to play.
- The play of our freshman that brought us to State.
- Too many to list! But winning the CCC conference was definitely a highlight!
- Meeting all my students for the first time and getting to know them. Attending tournaments and getting to connect with other coaches who have more experience than I do.
- The NSCL Friday Double matches! Team got to try Costco pizza for the first time and they were in love!
- State
- Stronger students are willing to help new students. Competitions with other schools, meeting new people and players.
- Student interactions, positive outlook

- Starting a middle school feeder program
- First time for most of the students ever participating in a chess tournament
- All the bus rides with my silly team. Watching them share camaraderie at multiple tournaments. Winning our 4th round at sectionals after having our first really disappointing loss in the third round.
- My best memory this year was meeting a new coach from another team - we had a lot in common including mutual friends. At that tournament we also won a trophy that I wasn't expecting.
- just being around the kids, it's been a great group
- Winning our last round at sectionals to make it to state.
- Winning back-to-back conference championships
- Watching my freshman grow into competitive players
- It chess players on my team winning some ribbons and medals
- Adam levy
- The way are students fought at Sectionals. We won only one match in a tough sectional seeding. I was super proud. We have a super young team, freshman and Sophomores so we are looking forward to next year to get back to state.
- STATE
- Qualifying for state for 3rd year in a row
- Player saying - that's why you made us watch that video on opposition!
- The togetherness.
- Taking my team to my son's school for a couple of matches, and seeing my son and my old team at state.
- The state trip has been a challenging yet fun experience overall.
- Strong team, but did not qualify for state.
- Chess in the park at RB!
- Making it to State for the first time in school history
- The watching fun and camaraderie of the players. Chess has great kids.

ICCA Feedback –

**Website Feedback**

- I only use for tournament information.
- Thank you
- Great job!
- I use it all the time for the schedule of tournaments and for results.
- perfect!
- Keep up the great work!
- Excellent Website
- I love it.
- I'm on this website all the time.
- Like it. Refer to website for Tournament info and results
- Great source of information
- outstanding website that helps chess coaches learn,teach, and promote chess with students and the public, thank you for keeping chess going
- The website is wonderful, and I'm glad to have it as a resource.
- I love the "Resources" tab. It has been and is always helpful.
- Great resource of information
- Great resources
- The website is great. Especially with the access to resources and information about tournaments.
- It is a great resource
- It's great!
- I don't use it.
- It is an excellent site, It fast and the information is up-to-date and easily accessible
- Excellent
- The website is terrific and offers great information especially upcoming tournaments
- It's fantastic
- It's essential for keeping up with what's going on in IL high school chess.
- Being fairly new in the chess coaching world, I feel the website is very informative and easy to navigate.
- The website has a ton of great information and I appreciate all the results being available.

- I use the website all the time. It is a great resources.

### **Newsletter Feedback**

- The newsletters are interesting, and I like that they include articles from different members of the community.
- I do enjoy it, but I don't know how many other coaches read it/ value it. Initial thoughts, maybe include something in it to grab their attention or spark interest. Opening of the quarter or Newsletter - Ruy Lopez - Average ranking 1200-1400 etc.
- They are informative, thanks for sending.
- Great
- Lots of useful information, specially for new coaches/programs.
- I do look through these, but probably dont spend the amount of time that makes it worth doing.
- It's good
- I enjoy the newsletters
- I like them
- I read through every issue.
- I read them thanks
- Timely and informative
- helpful and timely information
- Very helpful
- Great newsletter
- Full of useful and timely information, especially as we approach the state tournament.
- I don't spend enough time reading them
- Love it!
- I like getting this.
- I don't read them as much as I should, When I do itis always good.
- This is also fantastic
- Some of this I know, but it's useful for filling in the gaps
- I love the newsletter.
- I appreciate the news letter. As someone who is not fully immersein the chess world it is helpful.

### **ICCA e-mail blasts Feedback**

- These I really like. It has the most important information, and I dont have to open an attachment.
- Monthly is the perfect amount of times to send this out.
- Great
- Very informative
- I like them
- Again, I read through them.
- read them for current info thanks
- again helpful and timely
- EXCELLENT !!! They remind me of upcoming events!
- Again, very helpful, full of information
- Also very useful.
- They are very timely and helpful reminders
- Keep them coming
- It is good to hear what is going on in
- Great info
- Seem to always have the info we need
- Very helpful, appreciate them.
- Thank you!!

### **IHSA, IESA, USCF events support**

- I am getting very familiar with IHSA events. I need to get to know IESA better to grow my youth program. I will be looking at those resources soon.
- It would be nice to have a link to upcoming USCF tournaments.
- Maybe highlight or provide a quick video tutorial of any of the following: openings, end game, rules (#17) or something like that.

- All good
- Very nice
- I am sure newer coaches appreciate it
- helpful
- We only focus on IHSA events, and the resources are good.
- Very helpful. The bigger problem is my own ability to find the time and energy to take advantage of them.
- I plan to host a tournament in the future, I might need some help with that
- It seems to get better every year.
- I felt I had all the information I need. I appreciate all the communication.

**Additional feedback**

- An online membership sign up would be great
- I think there needs to be a serious conversation about disparity among the schools.
- In ICCA tournament play, Have Allstar teams score's count as regular teams. It will make the tournament better and a growing experience for all who are involved
- For the first e-mail blast/newsletter for the year, the chess clock information (kinds of chess clocks, costs, pros and cons) that is on the website would be good to share at the start of the season. Additionally, an introduction to running a tournament for local grade schools or your own high school (on a budget) would be useful.
- Keep up the good work.
- Thank you for all that you do. I know it's a thankless, time consuming job.
- thanks
- thank you for all that you do to promote chess in school, the community and public
- As a new coach, ICCA has been incredibly helpful!
- Already mentioned previously. Thanks for all you do!
- Nope. Great job
- Nope!
- Not at this time. Keep being great.
- Not at the moment
- You are doing a great job!