

Talking Points & Background Information for Indiana High School Bowling

Updated: August 1, 2019

- The 1999-2000 season was the first season for Indiana High School Bowling (IHSB). The season culminated with the Indiana High School Bowling Finals at Western Bowl in Indianapolis on March 18. This program was developed by the Indiana Bowling Centers Association to provide competition for student bowling enthusiasts throughout Indiana.
- The IHSB added schools every year until the 2010-2011 season. We have gone from 94 schools the first year up to 209 in both 2012-2013 & 2013-2014. The conference play offers competition in local areas from October through January and our 4-week tournament series completes with a taped state finals for boys and girls, singles and teams in February.
- Competition is open to both boys and girls. A 'Varsity' program is running throughout the state and many conferences have added 'Jr Varsity' competition as well. Individual and team events are offered.
- Each conference has its own constitution and copies of the Indiana High School Bowling rules, which are available for review. Indiana High School Bowling rules and Rules Committee meeting minutes are available online at www.indianagobowl.com. All high school bowling matches are non-smoking events and IHSB does not allow the use of tobacco or alcohol by students, coaches, or anyone affiliated with the team during meets or practices.
- The cost of the program is covered in several different ways. The bowling centers and the Indiana Bowling Centers Association are ultimately responsible for the finances. They host the clubs & teams and work with the schools and bowlers to underwrite the program. Some schools are active in the funding. The source of income for many teams is fundraisers. Some costs include trophies/awards/scholarships, uniform shirts, coaching, program materials, USBC certification, lineage and awards for the state finals tournament series.

Seasons	Conferences	Bowling Centers	High Schools	Teams
2018-2019	24	94	191	298
2017-2018	24	96	199	319
2016-2017	24	99	202	324
2015-2016	23	102	200	336
2014-2015	23	106	208	353
2013-2014	23	110	209	352
2012-2013	24	108	209	354
2011-2012	24	101	200	346
2010-2011	23	102	194	342
2009-2010	24	106	198	352
2008-2009	24	106	193	349
2007-2008	22	101	184	336
2006-2007	20	99	170	319
2005-2006	18	95	167	319
2004-2005	20	94	163	316
2003-2004	18	92	152	295
2002-2003	18	90	149	286
2001-2002	21	87	143	274
2000-2001	16	82	132	250
1999-2000	10	60	94	173

Regarding IHSAA:

Currently we are at 191 Schools participating in our program.

The IHSAA By-Laws suggests that when 50 percent of the member schools have a sport, the Association will consider sanctioning that sport. At that point in time a member school principal would have to recommend that the sport be added, and the Board of Directors would have to approve the request.

After meeting with IHSAA Commissioner, Bobby Cox, in May of 2017; that IHSAA Board of Directors agreed to petition the member schools to see if they would like to make bowling an official IHSAA sport. In a short email survey, only 53% of the responding principals wanted to see bowling added. The IHSAA needs to see that number around 75-80% before they would move to approve.

In the early years as the program was growing every year it didn't seem as though we needed the IHSAA. Now as we have hit a downward trend, we are looking for ways to put the program back on the upward swing. We feel more communication with and participation from the high schools would be a good start. If the school accepts and supports the club, it gives the student the best of both worlds. Schools can award letters even though it's not an IHSAA sport. There are several schools around the state that do consider bowling a varsity sport and award letters. There is nothing in stone if we were to be accepted by IHSAA. They understand that bowling is different from other sports and the rules may also have to be different. Since many schools have had to trim their budgets, they would have to be convinced that bowling in a good and worthwhile program that reaches many students not in other extra-curricular events and they should support it. Initially it was thought that IHSAA would not allow scholarships, but after hearing how our SMART Program works this doesn't seem to be an issue. Some thought our conferences and format would be dissolved in favor of already established athletic conferences, but Mr. Cox doesn't think that is likely either. Finally, if bowling would become an official IHSAA sport, participating bowlers would be limited to bowling in only high school matches during the 3-month season. However, if bowling is accepted, it would be an individual sport. Other individual sports are allowed 2 exemptions during the season. At this time, it's uncertain what these exemptions might be. Mr. Cox indicated a league season, or a tournament series could be 1 exemption.

Benefits of a Varsity Bowling Program

- No age, size, strength or gender limitations
- Won't tax school budget or facilities – even coaches will be provided if needed
- Doesn't compete for the same athletes as other varsity sports (90% of high school athletes who compete in bowling don't participate in any other sport)
- Offers another winter sport for schools to add to their programs
- Costs a school nothing to start
- Offers students a safe, clean, supervised, alcohol and tobacco-free environment
- Gives youth additional opportunities to compete and in some cases earn high school varsity letters

USBC High School

USBC has a goal of a day when high school bowling will be available in every state. Considering how far high school bowling has come over the years, that goal is closer than ever to becoming a reality.

High school bowling has made incredible strides since the first high school league hit the lanes in the 1930s. Thousands of schools across the country now offer high school bowling competition.

USBC High School actively offers guidance to all levels of high school bowling programs by providing rules, instruction, membership, awards and industry resources to ensure the success of high school bowling nationwide. To help achieve those goals, USBC High School maintains strong relationships with the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS), state athletic associations, the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America (BPAA) and USBC Coaching, as well as providing a stepping stone to further opportunities such as college bowling and the USBC Junior Gold program.

Whether you're a student, parent, school administrator, high school state athletic association official, state proprietor association representative or bowling industry leader, USBC High School is your ONE resource that will help you to create and maintain high school bowling programs.

Today: Currently, 48 states have a club or varsity high school bowling program.