



*IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION*

# 2026 IHSAA Tennis Rules Meeting

Andy Umthun, IHSAA Assistant Director

Tennis Administrator

[aumthun@iahsaa.org](mailto:aumthun@iahsaa.org)

515-432-2011 ext. 237





## **IHSAA Tennis Advisory Committee**

Eric Wetzel, Waukee NW

Patrick Kruger, Mason City

Aaron Ratliff, Denison-Schleswig

David Zelle, Cherokee

Kevin Wadle, Knoxville

Ryan Isgrig, Marshalltown (AD)





## First Practice & Competition Dates

### FIRST TENNIS PRACTICE DATE

- **Monday, March 16**
- There are no restrictions on where a school may practice, as long as there is approval from the school's administration.
- **ALL** practices must be under the supervision of the school's coach, and all coaches must hold up-to-date BOEE coaching licensure.

### FIRST TENNIS COMPETITION DATE

- **Monday, March 30**
- **Students ineligible under the Scholarship Rule begin their ineligibility on the first competition date and are ineligible for 20-consecutive calendar days.**
- **Eligibility is regained on the 21<sup>st</sup> day – April 19.**





# IHSAA Tennis Meet Limitations

- The meet limitation for tennis is 12 regular season dates. A school may schedule 12 varsity and 12 sub-varsity dates.
- Multiple duals held on ANY DAY count as ONLY ONE date.
- Each individual player may only participate on a MAXIMUM of 12 regular season dates TOTAL, regardless of the level of competition.
- Each school is allowed **ONE preseason scrimmage date** and **ONE scrimmage date** to be used after the completion of district play and before the State Team Tournament.
- Postseason competition is NOT included in this limitation.





# **IHSAA Tennis Participation Clarification**

- Varsity competition is intended for varsity teams and players and sub-varsity competition is intended for sub-varsity teams and players.
- Sub-varsity teams or players may play in varsity competition in special circumstances when needed to complete brackets.
- The respective state office tennis administrator should be contacted before sub-varsity teams or players compete in varsity competition.





# IHSAA Tennis Regular Season Lineups

- Coaches will exchange line ups at the same time before play begins.
- The official doubles line up in team play is the one submitted, or reaffirmed, immediately before the doubles teams take the court.
- Local control on format and order of play in regular season
- Ethics for coaches dictate that the doubles teams be listed in the position of strength with the best doubles team submitted **that day** playing #1, the second-best team playing #2, etc.





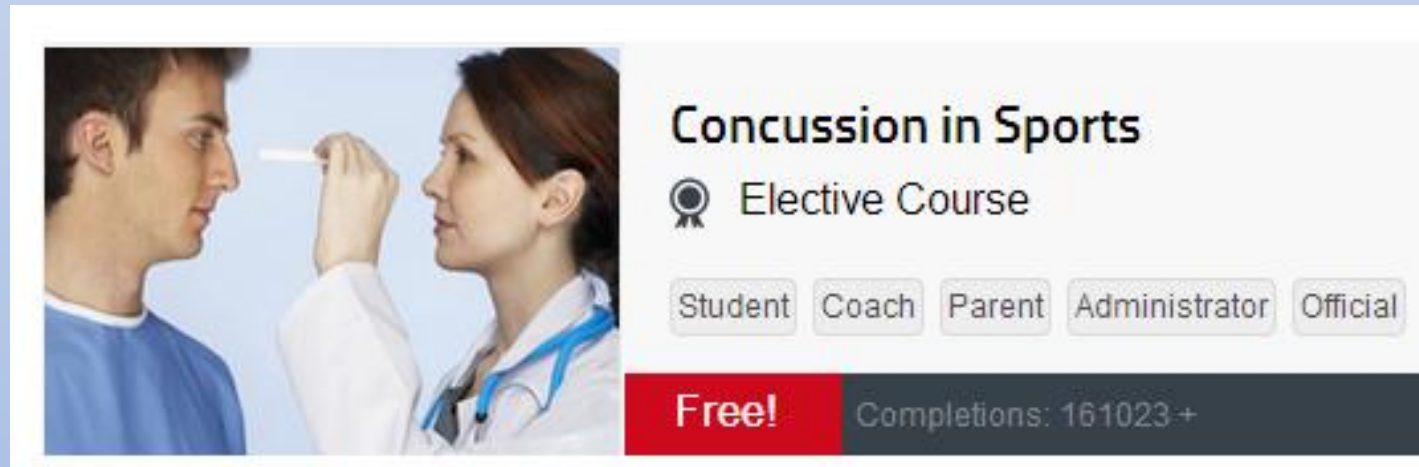
# COED Tennis Participation

- There is no coed interscholastic competition in tennis EXCEPT for the State Co-Ed Tennis Tournament.
- The State Co-Ed Tennis Tournament will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2026.
- **Students in grades 9-12 during the current school year are eligible to compete in the State Co-Ed Tennis Tournament.**





# MANDATORY CONCUSSION COURSE FOR ALL 7-12 COACHES



**ALL 7-12 coaches (paid or volunteer) are required to view the NFHS course, “Concussion in Sports” before the beginning of their respective sport season. Information regarding accessing this course has been sent to your school administrator.**





# Concussions

*Iowa Code Section 280.13C states, in part,*

- “... each school district and nonpublic school shall provide to the parent or guardian of each student in grades seven through twelve, a concussion and brain information sheet as provided by the Department of Public Health, Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union.
- The student and student’s parent or guardian shall sign and return a copy of the concussion and brain injury information sheet to the student’s school prior to the student’s participation in any extracurricular interscholastic activity.”





# IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## Concussion Form

- Required to be completed annually.
- Must be in school possession, signed by both athlete & parent, before athlete can start participating.

### A FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

## HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports

The Iowa Legislature passed a new law, effective July 1, 2011, regarding students in grades 7 – 12 who participate in extracurricular interscholastic activities. Please note this important information from Iowa Code Section 280.13C, Brain Injury Policies:

- (1) A child must be immediately removed from participation (practice or competition) if his/her coach or a contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity.
- (2) A child may not participate again until a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries has evaluated him/her and the student has received written clearance from that person to return to participation.
- (3) Key definitions:

"Licensed health care provider" means a physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or athletic trainer licensed by a board.

"Extracurricular interscholastic activity" means any extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice, including sports, dance, or cheerleading.

#### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

#### What parents/guardians should do if they think their child has a concussion?

1. **OBEY THE NEW LAW.**
  - a. Keep your child out of participation until s/he is cleared to return by a licensed healthcare provider.
  - b. Seek medical attention right away.
2. Teach your child that it's not smart to play with a concussion.
3. Tell all of your child's coaches and the student's school nurse about ANY concussion.

#### What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You cannot see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your teen reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your teen out of play and seek medical attention right away.

#### STUDENTS:

If you think you have a concussion:

- Tell your coaches & parents – Never ignore a bump or blow to the head, even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if you think one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- Get a medical check-up – A physician or other licensed health care provider can tell you if you have a concussion, and when it is OK to return to play.
- Give yourself time to heal – If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get the OK from your health care professional.

#### Signs Reported by Students:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

#### PARENTS:

##### How can you help your child prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion and other injuries.

- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. It should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Ensure that they follow their coaches' rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

#### Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Information on concussions provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion)

IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE CONTEST THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

**IMPORTANT:** Students participating in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading and dance; and their parents/guardians; must sign the acknowledgement below and return it to their school. Students cannot practice or compete in those activities until this form is signed and returned.

We have received the information provided on the concussion fact sheet titled, "HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports."

Student's Signature

Date

Student's Printed Name

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

Student's School





# Concussions

## *Iowa Code Section 280.13C continued –*

- “If a student’s coach, contest official, or licensed health care provider, or an emergency medical provider observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity, the student shall be immediately removed for participation.”
- **Coach Removal** - If the student’s coach observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury, in ***any kind of participation***, i.e. **practices, scrimmages, contests**, etc., the student shall be immediately removed from participation and shall not return until the school’s designated representative receives written clearance to return from a licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C.





# Return to Play Protocol

## **641—54.3(280) Return-to-play protocol.**

The return-to-play protocol will be developed by the IHSAA & IGHSAU and disseminated to Iowa public schools and accredited non-public schools. The protocol will be based on current evidence-based practice and include the following process.

Following an initial period of relative rest (approximately 24-48 hours after injury), students should follow a gradual, stepwise and symptom based return to play protocol under the guidance and supervision of a licensed healthcare provider. Each step of the return to play protocol should be separated by a minimum of 24 hours and completion of the protocol must be a minimum of 7 days. Each student's recovery timeline will be individualized with some requiring a delayed protocol. Students should continue to follow a return to learn progression to reintegrate back to academics. Final return to play clearance will occur once a student is fully back to the classroom and has completed the return to play protocol.





# Return to Play Protocol

Step	Activity	Goal
Step 1 (approx. 24-48 hours after injury) Symptom limited activity	Daily activities that do not exacerbate symptoms (e.g walking, more controlled environment)*	Gradual re-introduction to school and work
Step 2: Aerobic Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2a Light Exercise (up to 55% maxHR)</li> <li>• 2b moderate exercise (up to 70% maxHR)</li> </ul>	Stationary cycle or walking at slow- medium pace at 55% to 70% of Maximum heart rate. *  Light resistance training if more than mild/brief increase in symptom severity *	Increase heart rate
Step 3 Individual sport specific exercise	Sport specific training away from team environment ( running, individual skill drills). No activities at risk of head impact*	Add movement, change direction
*Steps 1-3 may be completed while symptomatic with no more than 0-2 point increase in symptoms on a 10 point scale for less than an hour		
Steps 4-6 can be done only if no concussion related symptoms are present and the student has returned to pre-injury cognitive activities and school without accommodations		
Step 4 Non-contact training drills	Exercise to high intensity including more challenging drills (passing, multiplayer training). This can be integrated into a team environment	Usual intensity of exercise, coordination and thinking
Step 5 Unrestricted contact practice	Participate in normal training activities (e.g contact practice)	Restore confidence and assess functional skills
Step 6 Return to sport	Normal game play	



- Steps 1-3 may be started while the student is still symptomatic and being monitored by a licensed healthcare provider. Steps 4-6 must be done with the student fully returned to academics and demonstrating no symptoms. Ensure that students are reintegrating into the classroom through a return to learn plan. Using a stepwise approach to returning back to academics is essential to recovery.



# DISCUSSION POINTS FOR PRE-EVENT MEETING WITH TENNIS COACHES AND PLAYERS FOR TENNIS MEETS

- Indicate what kind of **scoring** will be used for the meet.
- Discuss **coaching opportunities**, changeovers, breaks between sets, and the tie break procedure.
- Review the rule regarding when coaching can take place and that only coaches, or teammates, may talk to players during a match, including set breaks.
- Remind coaches that the coach from any school at the meet may issue **sportsmanship warnings** to any player.
- Remind players and coaches to follow the **10-minute warm up** period.
- Remind players the server **MUST announce the score before every point**, loudly enough for the receiver to hear.





## DISCUSSION POINTS FOR PRE-EVENT MEETING WITH TENNIS COACHES AND PLAYERS FOR TENNIS MEETS

- Ask players to **confirm the match score on every changeover** and, if score cards are being used, to **change the score cards on every changeover**.
- Emphasize that **players are calling their own lines** and should not allow spectators to influence their calls. Once a player makes a call, it becomes history and everyone moves on.
- Remind players to **avoid foot faults** when serving.
- Ask players to **leave the court when their match is over**. They may watch any remaining matches with the other spectators.
- **Introduce respective coaching staffs** to each other prior to the start of the tournament/meet.





# DISCUSSION POINTS FOR PRE-EVENT MEETING WITH TENNIS COACHES AND PLAYERS FOR TENNIS MEETS

**In the event inclement weather causes play to stop** during the regular season the following procedure should be used:

- The head coaches from each participating school will jointly decide when to suspend play due to inclement weather, with the athletic director or head coach from the **host school having the final authority.**
- Players are responsible for game score, match score, who was serving at the time of suspension and from what court.
- **Coaches are responsible for notifying their respective athletic directors about the suspension** of play so the athletic directors can discuss completing the suspended contest.





# IHSAA Tennis Coaching Opportunities

- **Only school-approved coaches may coach their players** from the time the players take the court to warm up for their match until the match is over.
- **Coaching opportunities exist during 90-second changeovers and during set breaks.** The clock starts on changeovers and set breaks when the last point is scored. There is no need to wait for the opposing coach.
- At the end of game #1, and during any tie-break, there is no delay when changing ends, so no coaching opportunities exist during those times.





# Time Between Sets & Singles/Doubles

- When 2 out of 3 sets are being played:
  - Maximum of 2 minutes is allowed between the 1st and 2nd sets.
  - Maximum of 10 minutes is allowed between the 2nd and 3rd sets.
  - Maximum of 3 minutes is allowed between the 2<sup>nd</sup> set and 10-Point Match Tie-Break, when a 10-Point Match Tie-Break is played in lieu of a 3<sup>rd</sup> set.
- Maximum of 2 minutes is allowed when one player has won half of the games during a Pro-Set.
- Review the tennis handbooks for complete information on breaks.
- **A maximum of thirty minutes is allowed between a player's singles and doubles matches, unless the coaches mutually agree to shorten the break.**
- Review the tennis handbooks for complete information on breaks.





# Reporting of Team Scores & UTR

- **The use of Bound & UTR will continue to be used to report team scores for all dual meet play during the regular season.**
- In a continuation from a rule change from last season, all schools are required to utilize UTR:
  - 1A schools are required to enter rosters and encouraged to enter match results
  - 2A schools are required to enter rosters and results from each match played
  - UTR data will be a metric used in seeding.
  - Teams not fulfilling requirement will not be eligible for postseason seeding.
- Results entered in Bound set to sync with UTR
  - Enter roster information, matches, etc. all entered identically to ensure proper syncing.
  - School's responsibility to ensure this syncing of results is taking place.
- See IHSAA Tennis Manuals for more information.





# Sportsmanship of Players

- Profanity, racket throwing or other unsportsmanlike acts cannot be tolerated.
- Each coach is responsible for ensuring that their players comply with the sportsmanship code.
- An opposing coach has equal responsibility, and authority, for enforcing the sportsmanship code for any players.
- A contestant may be given a warning, or ejected and disqualified, on the first violation depending upon the severity of the acts determined by the meet management. **THE SECOND WARNING TO THE SAME INDIVIDUAL IS AN AUTOMATIC EJECTION & DISQUALIFICATION.**
- **WHAT YOU ALLOW – YOU PROMOTE!**





## Sportsmanship of Players (cont.)

- If a student-athlete is ejected & disqualified from a singles match, the ejection rule is enforced for that particular player in both singles and doubles.
- The player's doubles partner will not be penalized as a substitute may replace the ejected player in doubles play. This substitute player must be one who was not originally in the doubles line-up, and the doubles team positions cannot be realigned.
- ***If either partner of a doubles team is ejected and disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct during doubles competition, the doubles team forfeits the match.***





## Controversy on the Court

- Controversy on the court should **be resolved by the players involved, whenever possible!**
- Player **discussions should be held at the net**, not from the baselines!
- If players cannot resolve the issue, the coaches and players should meet at the net to discuss a resolution.
- If this meeting is not successful, meet administration should visit with the players and coaches at the net.
- An appeals judge can be appointed by meet management as a last resort. If an appeals judge is appointed, they make a ruling only when asked by one of the players, and the state office should be notified if an appeals judge is appointed.





# Uniforms

## IHSAA UNIFORM POLICY

- **Only school-issued/approved uniforms are acceptable for boys' tennis.**
  - Football jerseys & tanks tops are **NOT** acceptable.
- If a team does not have a school-issued uniform, a plain T-shirt of a single color with no design, exclusive of the manufacturer's logo, or a high school tennis tournament T-shirt, is acceptable.
- **Tennis shorts shall be worn.** Players are NOT permitted to wear an undergarment, or tights, which extend below the tennis shorts, except through a medically authorized waiver.





# Medical Time-Outs

- One medical time-out, including those for bleeding or cramping, is allowed per match.
- Anytime a player defaults due to injury, he or she may not play the remainder of the meet or tournament.
- The timeout may be of a reasonable length to evaluate and treat an injury and clean blood from players or any surface.





# Time-Outs for Muscle Cramping

- A medical time-out may be taken for the 1<sup>st</sup> instance of muscle cramping.
- Subsequent occurrences of muscle cramping during the match, *even if the cramping is in different areas of the body*, are subject the point penalty system according to USTA rules.
  - The second time a player, or doubles team, must stop playing due to muscle cramps a match point is awarded to the opponent.
  - The third time a player, or doubles team, must stop playing due to muscle cramps one game is awarded to the opponent.
  - The fourth time a player, or doubles team, must stop play due to muscle cramps the player, or doubles team, must **INJURY DEFAULT**, for the entire meet or tournament.





## Time-Outs for Muscle Cramping (cont.)

- **Note 1:** After each individual cramping occurrence, play must continue or the player, or doubles team, must injury default.
- **Note 2: ONLY ONE medical time-out may be taken in a match for the same injury or condition, i.e. cramping - even if the cramping is in different areas of the body.**
- **Note 3: The cramping penalty system is sequential and does not start over with each set. It carries over throughout the entire match. Example: If a player, or doubles team, has already been assessed a one match point cramping penalty in the second set any muscle cramps occurring again in the 3<sup>rd</sup> set, to an individual player or either member of the doubles team, shall result in a one-game cramping penalty being assessed.**
- **Note 4:** Singles and doubles competition are considered separate matches when applying the time out procedure for cramping. **However**, anytime a player defaults due to injury, he or she may not play the remainder of the meet/tournament.



## IHSAA Tennis Advisory Committee Approved Recommendations

**We had a few proposals that were brought to our board and approved for this upcoming 2026 tennis season and referenced in fall memo sent out to schools:**

- Substate Team Tennis will now only include the top 32 teams in each class and selected based off ranking, overall record/strength of schedule, UTR rating as metrics.
  - District Singles & Doubles will still include the entire field.
  - State Team Tennis Tournament will remain as is
- All postseason team tennis matches will be played doubles first, followed by singles.
- With change in team postseason format, the calendar was discussed and pushed back to create another week of the regular season before postseason play. This will be highlighted on the next slide of important dates.
- Scoring was discussed but will remain best 2 out of 3 sets, ad-scoring, with super tie break instead of a full third set. (consolations remain no add scoring)





# 2026 Tournament Dates

## IHSAA Tournament Dates – DATES HAVE CHANGED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- District Singles & Doubles – **Saturday, May 16**
  - Rain date – Monday, May 18
- Substate Team Meets – **Wednesday, May 20**
  - Rain Date – Thursday, May 21
- State S&D Meet – Wednesday & Thursday, May 27-28
- State Team Tennis – Tuesday & Wednesday June 2-3
- State Coed Meet – Tuesday, June 9





## 2026 IHSAA State Tournament Sites

- Class **1A Singles & Doubles** – Black Hawk Tennis Center, Waterloo
- Class **2A Singles & Doubles** – Hawkeye Tennis & Recreation Center, Iowa City
- Class **1A Team** – Hawkeye Tennis & Recreation Center, Iowa City
- Class **2A Team** – Waukee NW High School
- Class **1A Team & Coed Tennis** – Pella High School
- Class **2A Team & Coed Tennis** – Marshalltown High School





# State Individual Tournament Qualifying

## IHSAA State Singles & Doubles Qualifying System

- Singles and doubles champions and runners up from each of 8 district meets determine the 16 singles & doubles qualifiers for state tennis in each class.
- Seeding is done via zoom seeding meeting prior to the start of the tournament, with the coaches of the district champions voting. Coaches must complete UTR requirements to be eligible for seeding as well.
- All district champions are eligible to be seeded at the state tournament.  
**Coaches: By your request, district runners-up are eligible to be seeded in specific circumstances, which will be explained more completely in the postseason manual. Read it!**





## Seeding IHSAA District Runners-up

District runners-up are ONLY eligible to be seeded at the state tournament if:

- A district singles runner-up was a state individual tennis tournament singles champion or runner-up the previous year, in either class;
- Must fulfill UTR requirement in regular season
- *BOTH* players on the district doubles runner-up team were part of the same doubles team that was a state individual tennis tournament doubles champion or runner-up the previous year, in either class.





# State Team Qualifying

## **IHSAA TEAM Tennis Qualifying System**

- Through a change from our advisory committee and approved by our board, only the top 32 teams in each class will participate in the team portion of the IHSAA tennis postseason.
- If you do not wish to be considered for the team portion, your program must submit removal request in writing signed by head coach and AD on school letterhead.
- 8 Substates with 4 teams in both class 2A & 1A
  - Substate semifinal and final will be played on Wednesday, May 20
- Substate assignments posted week of May 4.
  - Seedings determined by coaches meeting, held on Friday, May 2 or Saturday, May 3
  - Substate pairings released week of May 5





# State Tournament Scoring

There will be consistent scoring procedure throughout the IHSAA postseason for the Singles/Doubles as well as Team Tournaments.

- Team Tournament scoring will now reflect scoring procedures already in place for singles/doubles tourney.
  - Scoring is as following:
    - Best 2 out of 3 sets with ad-scoring
    - A super tie-break instead of an entire 3<sup>rd</sup> set.
  - All consolations will be no add scoring
  - COED Tournament will remain the same due to the unique nature of this event.





# Postseason TEAM Substitutions

## IHSAA Team Substitution Rule

- In singles play, all players will move up in position with the substitute taking the #6 position.
- In doubles play, the substitute will take the place of the missing player already listed on the line up with no other realignment of players allowed.
- Once a substitution is made, the line up remains the same for the remainder of the day.





# Prohibited @ IHSAA Sponsored Events

- Pets are prohibited from IHSAA sponsored events, except service dogs or assistive animals. Pets are permitted in the parking areas, but not in the spectator areas.
- Iowa Code does not allow the use of tobacco or alcohol products on school grounds or at any venue leased by the Iowa High School Athletic Association.
- This includes all post-season sites for IHSAA tennis.
- For complete information regarding IHSAA tennis please refer to the online manuals that are available.
  - The IHSAA web site is <[www.iahhsaa.org](http://www.iahhsaa.org)>
  - Click on “Tennis”





## Contact Information

IHSAA – Andy Umthun

[aumthun@iahsaa.org](mailto:aumthun@iahsaa.org)

515-432-2011x237





# **You're Almost Finished – Need to Verify How Meeting Ends**

**DO NOT STOP THIS PRESENTATION OR CLOSE YOUR BROWSER**

**At the conclusion of the verification page, you will be provided with a certificate of completion.**

**Coaches – please print three (3) copies of the verification certificate**  
**One for your records**  
**One for your administrator**  
**One for your coaching authorization renewal**

**Officials – please print one copy of the verification certificate for your files**

**You may now click on the button to the right of your screen that says:  
I'm FINISHED Watching the Rules Meeting Video  
You will be directed to the verification screen followed by the verification certificate**

