



IHSA Announces Venue Change For State Football Championships

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BLOOMINGTON - The IHSA football state finals will be coming back to Hancock Stadium on the campus of Illinois State University. This was the original site for the finals from 1974-1978.

Since then the state championship games bounced around from a couple of different locations including the University of Illinois and Northern Illinois University.

Since 2020, a year in which no championship games were played with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the games have been played at both NIU and most recently U of I.

The two schools alternated years from 2013-2022.

The new contract will see the championship games be played in the Bloomington-Normal area from 2023-2027.

Since the last time Hancock Stadium hosted the games it has gone over an estimated \$23 million renovation and is now one of the best overall facilities in the state.

"The decision wasn't made lightly, as Northern Illinois University and the University of Illinois have been incredible hosts throughout the years," IHSA executive director Craig Anderson said in a press conference.

The new stadium will feel a little more intimate as it only seats just over 13,000 people compared to the massive Memorial Stadium which can hold 60,000 plus. Huskie Stadium can fit somewhere around 30,000 fans in comparison.

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and NIU both put in five-year bids to host, but the IHSA subsequently chose Illinois State.

Anderson also mentioned that ISU is a little bit easier to get to from both Southern Illinois teams and ones coming down from Chicago.

It's also good for the IHSA to have its finals in the same location for multiple years to come. For almost everyone, it's a win-win situation.