

**Minutes of the Boys/Girls Cross Country Advisory Committee
December 7, 2016**

The IHSA B/G Cross Country Advisory Committee met at the IHSA office in Bloomington, Illinois, on December 7, 2016, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Andrew Adelman, Chicago (Jones); Tim Burkhalter, Lake Forest (H.S.); John Sipple, Downers Grove (North); Ryan Bustle, Principal, Champaign (St. Thomas More); Gregg Meyers, Elmwood; Brandon Shaver, East Peoria; Carl Florczyk, Freeburg; Geza Ehrentreu, Coordinator of Officials, Rockford; Chris Perry, Meet Manager, Peoria; Others in attendance, Matt Grimm, Peoria H.S. ; Mark Tacchi, Mike Stokes, Mike Garcia, (ITCCCA); John Polka, Oak Park (Fenwick); Brien Dunphy, Meet Manager Elect, Peoria H.S.; Jerry Riebling, State Final Scorer; Kraig Garber, IHSA, Assistant Executive Director. The meeting concluded at 1:45p.m.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) **III.I – Online Entries – Regional/Sectional Online List of Participants; VIII.A – Roster**

Recommendation: Change the roster maximum size in cross country state series from 12 to 14.

Rationale: As with other team sports, the number of athletes competing should be at most half the number of available athletes on the roster. While the comparison is not perfect, sports such as baseball, basketball, football, soccer, and volleyball all have rosters that exceed twice the number of athletes competing. In a more direct comparison, relay teams in track can have a roster of eight athletes while only four can compete at one time. Increasing the roster limit in cross country to 14 would serve to put the sport on par with other team sports and give coaches added flexibility during the three-week state series. Members of the advisory committee also expressed that this would allow more opportunity for students to experience the excitement of the state series which would help grow their programs and the sport of cross country.

Passed 6-2-1

Died for lack of motion

2) **VII.C – Regional/Sectional Team Ties**

Recommendation: Clarify the language regarding team ties at the regionals and sectionals to read: For purposes of advancement of teams from regional to sectional and sectionals to the State Final, ties for all team places with the exception of the last qualifying spot will be broken per NFHS Rule 8-2-4 (i.e. comparing the 6th runner from the tied teams). If a tie occurs at the last qualifying spot, the teams tied advance. Note: In the State Finals, team ties for the first three places will be broken by comparing the 6th runner from each of the teams involved in the tie.

X. A (Regionals) & B (Sectionals)

As a result of the clarification in VII.C regarding regional and sectional team ties, section X.A & B also need clarified to eliminate the potential for confusion.

Recommendation: In both X.A & X.B, combine numbers 3 and 4 into one to read:

3). **Duplicate Awards:** The Duplicate Awards order form can be found in the online Cross Country Manual for Managers or Manual for Schools.

Rationale: Cleaning up this language will create consistency for how officials and regional/sectional managers handle team ties at the regional/sectional levels. It will also ensure that NFHS Rule 8-2-4 regarding team ties is being applied appropriately.

Passed 9-0-0

Died for Lack of Motion

3) **X. Awards: C. State Final**

Recommendation: Add a 4th Place Team Award (trophy and medallions) at the State Finals.

Rationale: Members of the advisory committee recognized that with the growth of cross country in our state the number of team honors at the State Finals should be increased to 4. They further noted that this would put cross country in line with other sports that have three classes (i.e. soccer and wrestling).

Passed 5-2-2

Died for Lack of Motion

4) **X. Awards: A. Regional**

Recommendation: Increase the number of medals at each regional from five (5) to seven (7).

Rationale: The advisory committee would like to see the IHSA provide medals in a similar allotment that was previously distributed when the IHSA had 5 regional sites.

Passed 7-0-2

Died for Lack of Motion

5) **XI.A. Appointments and Fees**

Recommendation: Require that the Regionals be conducted using two licensed officials, but under extenuating circumstances, one licensed official may be used. In such a case, the meet would still be considered official.

Rationale: With cross country regionals taking place at 45 locations on the same day for boys and girls, it can make securing licensed officials a difficult task. This recommendation would still make hiring two licensed officials for the Regionals a requirement, but it would provide for some flexibility when extenuating circumstances arise.

Passed 9-0-0

Died for Lack of Motion

6) **XI.A. Appointments and Fees**

Recommendation: Require that the Sectionals be conducted using three licensed officials as Meet Referee, Clerk/Starter, and Assistant Clerk/Starter, but under extenuating circumstances, two licensed officials may be used. In such a case, the meet would still be considered official.

Rationale: The number of teams and runners at the Sectionals dictate having a third official, and a good number of these meets already have extra officials because some schools feel it is necessary and opt to provide it on their own. This would also help ensure that all decision making pertaining to the meet are made by officials.

Passed 9-0-0

Died for Lack of Motion

7) XI.A. Appointments and Fees

Recommendation: The IHSA will assign all licensed Cross Country Officials for all Regional and Sectional Meets beginning in 2017.

Rationale: This will help streamline this process, provide for quality control, and establish more consistency in how IHSA meets are conducted throughout the State Series.

Passed 8-0-1

Approved by Consent

The Cross Country Advisory committee reviewed and discussed the following topics which were submitted by state series hosts and others. No action was taken on any of the following items.

1) IHSA Road Race

The IHSA is planning a road race for this spring. The idea is to provide more opportunity for student athletes including athletes with disabilities. Tentative plans for a race will be discussed at the December 12, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting. There will be more information to come.

Committee Discussed this Recommendation. No action taken.

2) NFHS Rule Change Proposal – Procedure for Breaking Team Ties

Rule 8-2 -4 "Ties in team scoring shall be resolved by comparing the sixth-place finishers from the tying teams. The team with the best sixth-place finisher shall prevail. If one team does not have a sixth-place finisher, the team with the sixth-place finisher shall prevail."

Change: Ties in team scoring shall be broken by comparing IN ORDER the place finish of each of the five scoring members of the tied teams. The team with the majority of winning comparisons shall be awarded the higher finish.

Rational: The definition of a cross-country team is seven runners, with five scoring and two pushing. The present rule allows the sixth man to become a scorer which is contrary to the team definition. It also favors teams with a large number of runners. The proposal would also eliminate rule 8-2-5 "If only five competitors of tying teams finish, the tie shall be resolved by totaling the scores of the first four finishers." This rule favors the team with the slowest fifth runner.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

3) Sectional Assignments

Several proposals were sent to the advisory committee for review. Many of the proposals expressed concerns for the strengths or weaknesses of the schools in a geographic area indicating that there is a clear imbalance of strong teams in some sectionals over others. The other point of concern was the imbalance in the number of teams assigned to some sectionals over others. The committee discussed IHSA Policy 18 (Grouping and Seeding the State Tournament Series) and how it is based on the Geographic Principle. This policy indicates that the State Series is not intended to advance the best teams in the state, but rather it is intended to provide a representation of geographic areas in the state in a State Final Tournament. Furthermore, Policy 18 explains that win-loss records and strengths or weaknesses of a geographic area are not among the things that can be considered in post season assignments. The policy also calls for a reasonable balance in the number of teams assigned to each location, but it recognizes that there are factors that may create an imbalance. Members of the committee asked that the IHSA continue to focus on balancing the number of teams assigned to each sectional.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

4) State Final Admission

The committee discussed increasing the cost of admission at the State Final as there has not been an increase in admission in the last nine years.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

5) Bib Placement

The committee discussed the need for placing the bib number high on the jersey throughout the State Series. The committee recognized the need to maintain this practice to ensure accuracy in determining results, and for the purpose of consistency through the State Series. Committee members discussed alternatives to school logo placement on the jersey to avoid the logo being covered by the bib number.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

6) Box Assignments at the State Final

Change the box assignments for the state meet from randomized to assigned based on sectional finish. A committee member provided some data for discussion. The data pertained to 3A from 2007 to 2016 for boys and girls. Here are a few summary points of the data.

For the Boys 3A boys:

- Typical state meet uses a total of 35 boxes
- There are a total of 25 team boxes
 - Inside team boxes are 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15-17
 - Outside team boxes are 19-21, 23-25, 27-29, 31-32, 34-35

- Top 10 best boxes in order from “best” to “worst” are (based on average finish for 3A boys) are: 15, 32, 35, 25, 17, 7, 4, 34, 20, 28 = 60% outside boxes (and if you include 15 and 17 as middle then 80% are middle out)
 - Best average finish is box 15 with an 8.11 average finish
- Top 10 worst boxes in order from “worst to better” are: 11, 31, 1, 16, 9, 13, 12, 27, 19, 5 = %70 are inside boxes (and if you remove 16 and consider it more middle then still 60% are inside boxes).

Worst average finish is box 11 with an 18.33 average finish.

With some additional information, the committee realized that this was largely an issue for 3A Boys and not as much for any other class or gender. The committee agreed to maintain the use of the current system for assigning boxes at the State Finals.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

7) State Finals Required Coaches Meeting

The committee discussed the importance of the required attendance at one of the coaches’ meetings held on Friday and Saturday of the State Finals weekend. The committee felt that this practice is important to new and veteran coaches, and it should continue. They also expressed that attendance should be tracked, and that the IHSA Administrator should follow up with the administration of those coaches who fail to attend.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

8) Consequences for Meet Hosts or Officials for Failing to Follow Meet Policies and Procedures

The committee discussed whether or not consequences should be outlined in the Terms and Conditions for when meet hosts or officials don’t follow meet protocols and procedures. Members of the committee expressed that if the IHSA will be assigning Regional and Sectional Officials, then this would eliminate much of this concern.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

9) Prohibit Coaches from Serving as a Meet Official During the State Series

Again, the committee expressed that if the IHSA will be assigning Regional and Sectional Officials, then this would eliminate much of this concern.

10) Allow the Regional to be Conducted on a Thursday or Sunday.

Due to religious reasons, there was a school that expressed that their athletes can’t compete in a Cross Country Regional since all events are held on a Saturday which is their Sabbath. The committee discussed, but could not establish a viable option.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.

11) The Start of the Race at the State Finals

There was a concern raised about the start of the 3A Girls State Final Race in that there were competitors that did not hear the starter's whistle and reports of a band playing near the start/finish line during the start of the race. Secondly, it was mentioned that the start of that race was 2 ½ minutes early. The committee agreed that meet management should identify ways to resolve these issues.

Committee discussed this recommendation. No action taken.