

**Minutes of the Boys/Girls Cross Country Advisory Committee
December 6, 2017**

The IHSA B/G Cross Country Advisory Committee met at the IHSA office in Bloomington, Illinois, on December 6, 2017, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were Dan Daly, Chicago (Latin); Tim Burkhalter, Lake Forest (H.S.); John Sipple, Downers Grove (North); Gregg Meyers, Elmwood; Victoria McDonald, Robinson; Brandon Shaver, East Peoria; Carl Florczyk, Freeburg; Geza Ehrentreu, Coordinator of Officials, Rockford; Others in attendance, Matt Grimm, Peoria H.S.; Mark Tacchi, Kelly Haas, Mike Garcia, (ITCCCA); John Polka, Oak Park (Fenwick); Brien Dunphy, Meet Manager, Peoria H.S.; Jerry Riebling, State Final Scorer; Kraig Garber, IHSA, Assistant Executive Director.

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. It has been 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.

Approved by Consent

2) **III.I – Online Entries**

Recommendation: Move List of Participant deadline up from Noon on Tuesday of the Regionals week to 11:59p.m. on the Monday of the regionals week.

Rationale: The current time for coaches occurs when many of them are teaching or working. The Monday deadline will allow them all evening after practice or a meet to complete. This earlier deadline would also help the IHSA Office tie up loose ends on Tuesday morning so that we can get the LOP files to the regional hosts sooner.

Approved by Consent

3) **VIII.G.3 – State Series Bib Requirements**

Recommendation: Make the following adjustments to the language:

- a. Regional and Sectional Bib Requirements: At all Regional and Sectional Meets, bibs are required (7 ½" x 6"). Bib placement on the front of the uniform will be at the discretion of the Meet Management. Bibs should be white with dark black numerals.

- b. State Final: At the State Final Meet, computer scoring will be used. The (RFID) computer tag will be attached to the front bib. The bib/chip will be attached with 4 safety pins in a position that is visible on the front of the competitor's uniform. The bib/chip will not be returned to meet management. Competitors must be careful not to bend the front bib as this may damage the computer chip which is attached to the bib.

Rationale: Members of the committee felt that the current requirement to place the bib high on the front of the uniform made it difficult to identify the schools that runners were from during competition. Relaxing this policy by simply allowing runners to place the bib anywhere on the front as long as it is visible would help resolve this concern. The State Meet Timing Operator expressed that he feels that the video equipment at the state final meet has become better and more abundant. Therefore, he did not feel that this change would adversely affect his ability to accurately determine order of finish.

Approved by Consent

4) **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. The committee recognized that this would likely cause a need to change the current IHSA Awards Policy regarding bracketed and non-bracketed sports. Therefore, members of the committee asked that it be noted that they would like the Board of Directors to consider revising the IHSA Awards Policy to allow for non-bracketed sports to award trophies and medallions to the top 4 teams.

Died for Lack of Motion

The Cross Country Advisory committee reviewed and discussed the following topics which were submitted by state series hosts and others. None of these items advanced beyond this committee.

a. **IHSA Cross Country Sectional Proposal**

There was a lengthy discussion followed by a motion and a second to eliminate the regional round of competition in the cross country state series and adopt the following format:

1. The first round of the state series would be the sectional.
2. There would be no change to the dates on which the cross country sectional and state final occur.
3. Class 1A would consist of 8 sectionals and qualify 4 teams to state (32 total) and 7 individuals to state (56 total).
4. Class 2A would consist of 5 sectionals and qualify 6 teams to state (30 total) and 7 individuals to state (35 total).
5. Class 3A would consist of 5 sectionals and qualify 6 teams to state (30 total) and 7 individuals to state (35 total).

The committee discussed the following rationale for this proposal. First, in many cases for classes 2A and 3A, there is data that makes the current level of competition at the regional round of the state series questionable. It has been reported that many of the 2A and 3A regionals are just a "pass through level", and there are reports of teams not even running their top runners because they feel that they are almost guaranteed to advance. There were also members of the committee that did express that they felt that their regionals have been competitive.

Second, schools have been dropping from the regional/sectional rotation because of the increasing costs of hosting this event. A member of the committee expressed that it costs approximately \$3000 for his school to host a cross country regional or sectional. This is reportedly occurring because, in some areas, forest preserves, and park districts have been increasing costs for the use of their parks. In addition, it was reported that chip timing services can be expensive as well. This dilemma has made it difficult to secure hosts for the last two or more years. All hosts for the 2017 state series weren't completely secured until two weeks prior to the regional. Many of the schools that declined to host did so because of the financial burden of conducting this meet. There were others that declined because of conflicting events.

Third, the number of cross country officials has been dwindling over the last several years. The Cross Country Officials Coordinator shared with the committee various factors that really limited the IHSA's ability to secure the required number of officials this past state series.

The committee debated on potential solutions such as charging a mandatory entry fee, charging admission or for parking at the regional and sectional level, but these ideas were met with additional questions/concerns.

This motion failed to pass through the advisory committee.

- b. There was also a motion made by a committee member in an effort to address some of the concerns listed above to eliminate one round of the regionals in all three classes. The proposal was to change the current number of regionals that feed into each sectional to two (there are currently three regionals that feed into each sectional). This motion specified that each of the regionals would advance 9 teams and 10 individuals to sectionals, and the current sectional format would remain as it is. This motion died because it failed to receive a second.
- c. The committee discussed whether there is a need for hip numbers. The State Meet Timing Operator expressed to the committee that the hip numbers really have helped with the speed and accuracy of determining order of finish. There was no action on this item.
- d. There was a discussion about a concern with a state series meet that did not use chip timing and that it was done manually. Members of the committee expressed that although times are important, video review and determining the correct order of finish is the primary goal for regional/sectional hosts. There was no action on this item.
- e. The idea of charging a mandatory entry fee for the cross country state series was discussed. This was brought before the committee as an option for addressing the concerns related to securing regional/sectional hosts. The committee discussed circumstances that would make this idea a challenge to implement. Therefore, the committee felt it appropriate to note in the minutes that schools who are participating but not hosting a cross country regional or sectional should volunteer to assist with the meet. This could be through human resources, financial resources, equipment, etc. The more that schools opt to combine their resources, there will be less of a burden on those schools who are considering to host. There was no action on this item.
- f. There was a discussion on a Sectional finish line issue and the need to emphasize to officials to closely monitor everything leading up to the finish. There was no action on this item.
- g. A committee member observed that in the state series, there was inconsistency at the check-in regarding whether competitors had to be wearing spikes or not. The committee member was advised that spikes may be worn, but are not required. Therefore, there should not be a requirement that competitors put spikes on at check-in. There was no action on this item.

- h. A committee member made a motion to seed starting boxes for teams at the state meet based on sectional results instead of the current practice of using a random draw for boxes. Members of the committee also expressed that there are variables that would make this system complex and difficult to implement fairly. There was no 2nd to this motion, so the motion died. A committee member did express that the random process for determining the starting boxes was not transparent. Therefore, the IHSA administrator expressed that he would work with the IHSA tech administrator who designed the computer program that completes this process in order to communicate how it works to member schools. Possibilities for how this will be communicated are through the manuals, the bulletin, and/or the cross country rules video.
- i. A committee member asked if there could be a waiver to allow coaches to work with athletes who will compete in non-school competitions for a few weeks after the high school season has ended. The IHSA administrator explained that this would require a By-law change which is not a function of the Cross Country Advisory Committee. No action was taken on this item.
- j. A committee member asked if the classes can rotate each year regarding when they race. It was mentioned that this has come up before, but there are logistical challenges that would be encountered with such a change. It was also mentioned that there are some coaches who like the consistency of running at the same time each year. There was no action taken on this item.
- k. There was a discussion on distributing parking passes and providing easier parking access for buses. There was no action taken on this item.
- l. The committee discussed a proposal to establish a coaches'/participants' area behind the starting boxes at the state finals. In addition, it was proposed that port-a-potties be placed in this area so that athletes have easier access to them prior to races. The committee asked meet management to consider ways to place coach/participant only port-a-potties in a closer proximity to the starting area.