

CROSS COUNTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 28, 2018

A meeting of the Cross Country Advisory Committee was held at the Iowa High School Athletic Association office in Boone on Wednesday, November 28, 2018. Committee members present were Nate Boock, Ballard – CHAIRMAN (2021); Kevin Kearney, South Winneshiek (2020); Travis Nuss, Southeast Valley (2021); Abby Schmitz, Waukee (2021); Sheryl Book, Westwood, Sloan (2018); Dan Sauser, Monticello (2019); Erik Belby, Pleasant Valley (2019); and Bill Neal, Iowa City – OFFICIAL (2021). Also present were Jared Chizek, IHSAA, and Gary Ross, IGHS AU.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Boock at 9:30 AM. The committee was introduced and informed of the role of advisory committee by the state office staff members.

(MM-S) Book-Sauser to approve the December 29, 2017 advisory committee minutes.
Motion carried unanimously.

The regular season was discussed. Items discussed included:

Combining Varsity and Subvarsity Races - The committee discussed the increase of hosts running a single boys and girls race rather than separate varsity and subvarsity races. Many reasons were discussed as to why meet managers elect this option rather than separate races: lack of subvarsity participants, timing company preferences, and daylight were some of the reasons discussed. As a result, individuals who are ineligible under the General Transfer and Open Enrollment rules cannot participate in these races due to interpretation of the state code from the DE. The committee would like to all host schools to communicate if a single race is to occur or if two races were to be combined in a timely manner so all participating schools can communicate said changes to their athletes and fans as this was not being done by all host schools throughout the year.

Weather Concerns – Weather was a topic discussed by many coaches throughout the year due to the heat during the first part of the season and the heavy rain throughout the entire competition season. The committee discussed what precautions were put into place at some of the meets they participated in early in the season, such as EMTs on site, ice towels and water/other fluids. Each member also shared what his/her conference’s backup date is for its conference meet. Chizek and Ross shared that one conference even inquired about running a road race for their conference meet, and after consulting the rules editor at the NFHS, a road race could constitute a cross country course. In general, the committee understands that when running on a golf course, the golf course manager has final say on cancelling or postponing the meet; however, the committee would like to see schools hold off on cancelling or postponing a meet multiple days out when the race is run on school grounds.

Chips and Timing Companies – Neal led a discussion on bib chips, shoe chips and traditional tear bibs as a way to place athletes. The committee would recommend all hosts to use bib chips as it’s the most efficient method to accurately place athletes during a race. While they understand the cost of the chip would turn away some host schools, the committee believes the costs can be covered with an increase in entry fees. Chizek did point out that he was unaware of anyone in

southwest and west central Iowa who offered chip timing of any kind. For those schools who elect not to use chip timing, the committee asked for those schools to lengthen the chute area, so athletes wouldn't get out of order or interfere with athletes finishing the race.

Other topics briefly discussed were drones and using a scoring method other than scoring five athletes.

The state qualifying meets were discussed. Items discussed included:

Site Selection – Committee members had received emails about specific host sites, so Chizek and Ross walked the committee through the process used to select sites for qualifying meets. The group looked at each class's map of participating schools and compared the map to a map showing which schools indicated a willingness to host a qualifying meet. The 55 schools that indicated a willingness to host a qualifying meet this fall were not geographically distributed. With the recent turnover on the committee, the goal of the exercise was to show all committee members how the process is completed and some of the issues that both the IHSAA and IGHSAA run into each year.

Team Distribution and IATC Rankings – Similar to the site selection exercise, Chizek and Ross showed the final ranked team qualifying meet assignments. All understand the goal is to have three IATC ranked teams at each site, and geography sometimes dictates that a fourth ranked team be assigned to a site. Chizek and Ross stressed the importance of the IATC ranking committees taking the time to rank appropriately as assignments are based on these rankings. As the committee talked about the topic, the consensus was the current assignment and ranking process is much better than the process used 10-15 years ago as the best teams, according to the coaches rankings, are having the opportunity to qualify for the state meet.

Classifications – Multiple emails were shared with the committee regarding the current classification structure used for cross country. The committee looked at multiple pieces of data including 1A and 2A teams who field full teams, the largest 24 schools in 1A and whether or not they field a full team, participation numbers in the sport in general, enrollment rank of 3A and 4A qualifiers over the last handful of years, and 4A enrollment history and girl team qualifiers. Kearney brought his own data and showed that if a fifth class was added to cross country, 28-32 full teams would participate in Class 1A. Chizek did share that each sport hears classification concerns and the IHSAA does have a classification committee that meets every other year. After a lengthy discussion, the committee supported the current classification structure and did not elect to make any recommendations to change the current classifications.

The state meet was discussed. Items discussed included:

Shuttle Service and Parking Changes – Chizek and Ross asked for feedback on the shuttle service and parking changes that was implemented for the 2018. Some of the committee shared that they were initially leery of the changes, but after seeing how easy it was for teams to come and go from the park and how frequent the shuttles were running for fans, those doubts went away. Other than needing better signage for fans, the service seemed like a success. Chizek and Ross are scheduled to meet with Fort Dodge in the coming weeks to discuss plans for 2019 and whether or not to implement the shuttle service for the meet again.

Video Board – Feedback was also sought on the video boards used at the meet site. The committee would like to see the results on the board longer and more frequently and would like both the IHSAA and IGHSAU to investigate having a live feed of the finish line on one of the boards.

One final item discussed was the possibility of implementing a standard protocol before the start of each race throughout the year. Chizek asked Neal and the IATO to work on a draft of a protocol, which would be shared at next fall's meeting.

The date for the 2019 Cross Country Advisory Meeting will be December 4, 2019, at the IGHSAU office in West Des Moines.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Chizek
Assistant Director