

CROSS COUNTRY ADVISORY MINUTES

December 2, 2021

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Nate Boock with the following members present: Katie Tesch, Travis Nuss, Cristy Nimrod, Abby Schmitz, Kelli Kersten, Ben Robison and Bill Neal. Gary Ross represented the IGHSAU and Jared Chizek the IHSA.

Committee members were introduced and review of committee purpose was given.

Motion by Neal to approve the December 2, 2020 Advisory Committee minutes, second by Nimrod and unanimously approved.

Chizek stated the participation numbers have increased over the last several years. A survey is given annually to Iowa high schools with results sent to the National Federation.

Under review of the regular season Ross asked for feedback regarding allowing 10 competitors in a race. Schmitz stated it gave girls more opportunities to run and it was nice to not have limited numbers.

Due to covid many sites did not have an awards ceremony at the end of their meet. Everyone is hopeful this will return in 2022 as it is good to recognize achievements.

Neal stated the importance of having a mandatory coaches meeting prior to the start of a meet. Vital topics such as course concerns, weather protocol, attire, type of timing system, trainer location, assisted runner, etc. is information that coaches should know prior to the start of a race. Ross stated a reminder of a coaches meeting will be posted in a pre-season memo.

Kersten asked for ruling on accommodations for assisting runners (such as blindness, etc). Ross stated the coach must contact the state office to get a letter providing accommodations for the assisted runner. This letter should then be given to the starter at each meet for verification.

Committee was asked for feedback regarding Varsity Bound. Committee was informed cross country is the only sport that does not require updated stats/times with deadlines. Schmitz feels it is important for both fans and teams to have a tool like Varsity Bound as it promotes the sport. All concur it is easy for coaches to upload times, etc. once names have been submitted. It was asked if it could be compiled to show the complete set of results. All concur it can be frustrating when not all coaches update information prior to a meet, and if individuals are not registered it is not accurate. All concur this is a sport where EVERYBODY is important. **Motion by Schmitz to require coaches to update all varsity members on Varsity Bound following the conclusion of each meet. Kersten second and unanimously approved by all members present.**

Under state-qualifying review:

Currently there are 8 sites in class 1A and 5 for Classes 2A-4A.

Kersten discussed the pluses of going back to 5 sites rather than the current 8 sites. Some sites had as few as 5 complete teams. Can't guarantee teams won't have a full team (volleyball, illness). A suggestion would be to look at the # of runners participating at each site and not the # of teams. This could cause some confusion from spectators/parents-seeing a larger number of teams being assigned to one site in relation to another site. With the current format of 8 sites, the top 16 teams were spread out among the 8 sites. With having 8 sites, this allows teams to be split up more effectively – generally with less travel. In addition by having less teams at a site, more locations are able to host since less space is needed at the starting chutes.

Committee discussed the difficulties when sites must host two classes. Parking and restroom lines can be difficult. Due to these thoughts, the current structure will remain in place for using 8 sites in Class 1A.

The committee also discussed possibly running 6 and scoring 4. The committee was reminded the NFHS does not allow to run 5 or 6 and score 4. Chizek stated that in Class 1A there were 63 complete girl teams in the state qualifying meet. In Class 4A there were 6 teams out of 48 teams without a full team.

The time between races at the state-qualifying meet was discussed. As a starter, Neal appreciates getting to watch the finish of the first race before the second race starts. Schmitz stated there is less traffic when there is more time in between the two races. This also helps to review all places and gives a coach who coaches both boys and girls the opportunity to coach both teams. **Motion by Neal to start the first race at 4:00, and the second race at 4:40 during the state-qualifying meet. Robison second motion. Unanimously approved.**

Schmitz stated the issue at her state-qualifying meet with timing difficulties. Though not mandated, all concur filming at the finish line is crucial. **Motion by Schmitz to film the finish of the state-qualifying meet. Second by Nuss and unanimously approved by all members present.**

Schmitz stated at the recent IATC meeting it was discussed to move the state-qualifying meet to a Thursday. It was felt by some the time frame between the state-qualifying and the state meet would be consistent with meets throughout the year. Discussed with no action taken.

All members concurred the timing system used at the state meet was incredible. The rotating video board with photos of last year's champions, qualifying teams, and results was well received. Splits given were appreciated. Wayzata is the new timing system used, and both the IGSAU and IHSSA have had great experiences with Wayzata as they are also the timing system used at the state track and field meet.

Lodging in Fort Dodge was briefly discussed. Coaches stated inaccurate rates were given at check-in, along with less than desirable conditions in some hotels. Ross stated a meeting will occur with the Fort Dodge Chamber of Commerce/Park and Recreation regarding lodging issues during state events.

Committee discussed rotating days and start times at the state meet. Currently 4A runs on Friday, followed by 3A. Nimrod stated with the running order not changing on Friday, some schools miss an entire day of school, and often Class 3A spectators/teams have to contend with football playoffs. Schmitz stated some coaches like the consistency as they like a routine

(hotel stay, etc). Due to dual athletes in Class 1A and 2A and participating in volleyball regionals and football playoffs, committee agreed running on Saturday is beneficial for Class 1A and 2A. After discussion, **motion by Robison to rotate the running order with Classes 3A and 4A on Friday and Classes 1A and 2A on Saturday, on a two-year then rotate basis. Tesch second and unanimously approved by all members present.**

Due to covid restrictions, management stretched out the schedule on both Friday and Saturday, with an extra amount of time between classes. Committee felt the time prior to the awards ceremony for each class could be moved up 10 minutes.

Due to covid, the time schedule for each class was expanded. Currently there is 2.5 hours between one class's awards ceremony and the next class's first race. Committee realizes there are traffic and spectator issues when times are closer. Committee felt the next class could start ½ hour earlier than is currently scheduled. Chizek stated this will be taken into consideration when the schedule is released.

Chizek informed committee Lakeside Municipal Golf Course has been contracted through 2026.

Committee briefly discussed the cost of merchandise at the state cross country meet. Some communities expressed concerns on the cost of the merchandise compared to past years. All concur it was nice to have multiple choices to choose from though.

Committee discussed state awards. Committee was reminded boys have photos taken for plaques and girls are given bag tags and coins. Ross stated additional awards can be ordered from the order form on the IGHS AU website. Schmitz asked about the number allowed on the deck during the awards presentation. After discussion, **Nimrod motion for up to 12 people (including coaches) can be recognized on the awards stand. Schmitz second and unanimously approved.**

Ross reminded committee awards are picked up for female participants at the check-in. This helps alleviate awards not being picked up.

Schmitz stated some at the recent IATC meeting would like to see improvements (ie running clock/video boards at the mile markers, inflatable finish line arch, etc.). Neal suggested tall flags at the start and finish line and mile markers. Chizek informed committee the price of the videoboard had increased dramatically, but enhancements will be considered.

Management is aware of wifi issues at the state meet site and is constantly working on improvements.

Brief discussion was held regarding reclassification. Chizek informed committee the IGHS AU and IHSAA has worked on classification in all sports. Of concern are the number of schools within a class and schools in sharing agreements. All agree a change in cross country would mean a change in track and field, and members realize the number of state qualifiers would have to be cut down. Discussion but

The committee wishes to express appreciation to Schmitz, Nuss, Boock and Neal for their years of service on the Cross Country Committee as their terms are expiring.

The date for the 2022 Cross Country Advisory meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 30 at the IHSAA in Boone.

With no further business, **motion to adjourn by Neal, second by Nuss and unanimsoulsy approved.**

Heidi Reed
Recorder