

**CROSS COUNTRY**  
Coaches Advisory Committee  
November 15, 2016

**MINUTES**

This summary represents the recommendations of this Committee and is not to be construed as a change or revision of existing rules or regulations. Final action on all items will be taken by the Board of Control at their January meeting.

Committee Members: Matt Polzin (Deerfield), Ryanne Bell (Fennimore), Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy), Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial), Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago), and Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights). Jim Newman (On-Site Coordinator) was in attendance for State Meet discussion. The meeting was chaired by Matt Polzin and Paige Patenaude recorded the minutes.

Paul Brown and Casey Hopp received a pin for their first year on the committee. Ryanne Bell and Paige Patenaude received a certificate of appreciation for their three years of service on the Committee.

**I. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 16, 2015**

Last year's minutes and action taken by the Board of Control were reviewed. The minutes from last year were approved.

**II. SEASON REGULATIONS**

**A. Review of 2016-17 Season Regulations, pages 3-6**

- B. “Flag Snapping” and Disqualifications** – There was discussion regarding concerns of “flag snapping” and the resulting disqualifications of two athletes from competing at Sectionals.
1. Clarification was made that if an athlete has been shown to INTENTIONALLY snap/pull a flag they will be disqualified for the next meet due to unsportsmanlike conduct.
  2. If the violation occurs at the Conference meet the individual is disqualified from the Sectional meet, but if their team qualifies for State they are able to compete at State as the violation suspension is for one meet (Sectionals).
  3. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) also suggested that if a tight turn is unavoidable on a course that a course marshal be stationed at that flag/course location.

**C. Junior High Courses** – Matt Polzin (Deerfield) asked if we needed to bring up a suggestion for middle school meets to have a more standard distance?

1. Stephanie Hauser confirmed that there are suggested distances in the National Federation Handbook.
2. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) wondered if we should be making a more clear suggestion directly to our middle school coaches to have a 2.0 mile course for the official middle school distance. Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy) thought this would help to make a more uniform sport across the state rather than our current “wild west” of middle school meet distances across the state.
3. Stephanie Hauser suggested that the WCCCA make this official recommendation and Matt Polzin (Deerfield) agreed this could be a message through the WCCCA.
4. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) thought it may be worthwhile to be prescriptive in this recommendation in terms of who should be relaying this information to the middle school coaches/ middle level club organizers (ensuring district representatives tell high school coaches they should be contacting the lower levels in regards to this whenever possible).

**III. TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES**

**A. Review of 2016-17 Tournament Regulations, pages 7-10**

**B. Sectionals/State Concerns** - Matt Polzin (Deerfield) brought up the concern of practicing on the Sectional course by both the hosting school and non-hosting schools.

1. Stephanie Hauser posed the question of adding in a question in the proposal to host Sectionals of whether hosting teams regularly practice on their site and whether they are able to regulate other teams practicing on that site (public parks vs. course on school grounds).

2. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) and Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) expressed concerns about losing hosting schools for Sectionals because of this additional question. It was decided not to add this question to the Sectional hosting form, but will be shared at the WCCCA Clinic.
  3. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) posed the comparison of golf where a team can practice on a Sectional course but must count it as a meet. Could our cross country teams have a practice on a Sectional course if they count it as a meet? It was decided to bring up this conversation within the District.
- C. **Course Map Distribution by Hosts In a Timely Manner** - Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) brought up the question of expectations surrounding the sharing of the course map by Sectional host schools in a timely manner (there is no firm timeline currently set). It was decided that a course map, and if available a course video, should be made available by the Sectional host to participating schools a minimum of two weeks prior to the Sectional Meet.
- D. **Quality Sectional Courses** – Matt Polzin (Deerfield) brought up a shared concern about the quality of courses for Sectional hosts and should there be specific course requirements in terms of spacing, etc? Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) expressed the same concerns with the quality of some courses; especially those hosting a Sectional meet. Stephanie Hauser suggested this be brought up within the WCCCA as a further discussion.
1. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) suggested a survey within the WCCCA after Sectionals asking to rate the Sectional host/site. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) agreed this was a good idea and will look into incorporating this for next year.
  2. Stephanie Hauser mentioned that it may be worth pointing out that if you are wanting to host, but your facility is not up to par a school can host a sectional on a site other than their own “home site.” It was decided this would be shared through Matt Polzin (Deerfield) and the WCCCA and not as an official statement from the WIAA.
- E. **Conveying of Sectional Information/Regulations** - It was suggested to consolidate information (such as lane assignments regulations) for general invites and Sectionals into one location to avoid confusion amongst coaches/hosts. Coaches would like the Sectional Time Schedule requested earlier so it can be published sooner.
- F. **Starting Lanes at State Meet** - Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) brought up concerns with the starting lanes at the State Meet and the jockeying that can at times occur with individual qualifiers, especially with athletes unfamiliar with one another (from different Sectionals). Stephanie Hauser asked whether larger lanes were the answer? Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) suggested that keeping individual Sectional qualifiers together rather than random draws would allow for a “pecking order” to naturally allow a more representative location in the starting lane (I’ve beat you all season/beat you at Sectionals so I should be ahead of you). Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy) wondered if placing two sectionals (10 runners for Division 1/ 8 runners for Division 2 and Division 3) in one larger lane was a solution? Stephanie Hauser confirmed that we will move forward with individual qualifiers being grouped in starting lanes with their own sectional qualifiers. It was decided to “look into” dimensions of lanes and what flexibility there was there.
- G. **“Double Header” Sectional Sites** - Confusion surrounding “double header” Sectional sites and what the timeline is and when teams MUST arrive, etc.
1. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) mentioned a coach’s confusion about needing to be at the meet with his team at the very start of the meet when he was the second race of the “double header”.
  2. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) wondered if there should be some further recommendations expressed in regards to double header meets (example: all female races/ then all male races).
  3. Stephanie Hauser pointed out that there is some inconsistency in some double header meets having two coaches meetings versus one.
  4. Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy) and Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) agreed that clarifying how a double header should be run would help to clear confusion for coaches.
  5. Stephanie Hauser suggested that at the WCCCA Clinic we compile a list of recommendations for double header meets that Stephanie Hauser would then share with coaches/athletic directors as a WIAA recommendation.

6. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) asked for suggestions: keep gender races together Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy), set a time recommendation between races (Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy)/Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial)).
- H. **Divisional Rotation at 2017 State Meet** – Matt Polzin (Deerfield) pointed out that we need to remind coaches that the first major divisional rotation at the State Meet will be in the 2017 fall season (Division 1 will race first).
- I. **Selection of Sectional Date (Friday vs. Saturday)** - The question was brought up about whether the language surrounding when a Sectional meet should be hosted should be altered. Currently it states that Sectional meets should be hosted on a Saturday whenever possible. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) said timing companies have urged to host Sectional meets on both Fridays and Saturdays so they can better spread their resources.
1. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) wondered if that wording was necessary and whether it inhibited schools interested in hosting on a Friday from doing so.
  2. Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) and Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) said that they would need to adjust their season schedule if a Sectional was going to be on a Friday and that would require more advanced notice.
  3. Stephanie Hauser suggested this be brought up at the WCCCA Clinic, as she does not feel comfortable removing that language without gauging the feedback of the association. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) will bring it up at the WCCCA Clinic with the instruction that we will only discuss it for 5 minutes.
- J. **How Divisions are Comprised** – Matt Polzin (Deerfield) wanted feedback on what people are hearing about the way divisions are comprised.
1. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) said he has heard that as smaller schools are adding teams it is creating a type of “trickle up” effect that is bumping teams up as a result.
  2. Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) said that he has heard in his area people would like to figure out how to get the “best teams” at State more so than getting more teams to State.
  3. Stephanie Hauser reemphasized that the idea of a seeded Sectional is not likely to ever happen since the WIAA’s philosophy is to have geographical representation within the state rather than focusing on getting the best teams.
  4. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) brought up the push for some form of “at-large” qualifier.
  5. Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) wondered if the size of the school should be a firm indicator of what division you are in rather than saying the largest 122 teams are Division 1, next largest 122 are in Division 2, etc.
  6. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) and Matt Polzin (Deerfield) brought up the example of Pewaukee in which their enrollment barely changed from last year to this year, but because of the current system they went from being the Division 2 State champion to not even making it to the State Meet this year in their Division 1 Sectional placement.
  7. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) stated if there were a fourth division what would that fourth division look like - maybe too easy to qualify?
- K. **Four Divisions vs. New Standards for the Current Three Divisions** –
1. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) inquired how concerned the WIAA was with keeping the number of schools at each level at a certain amount. Could the Division 3 absorb more teams (especially due to incomplete teams, etc.) to shrink the Division 2 and 3 to some degree? Stephanie Hauser stated the WIAA did not have a stance on this and that this could address the number of incomplete, no show teams in Division 3.
  2. Ryanne Bell (Fennimore) posed the question of whether an extra Sectional would then be added. Stephanie Hauser, Jim Newman, and Matt Polzin (Deerfield) confirmed that it would not likely add a sectional because it did not make sense logistically or from a qualifying opportunity standpoint.
  3. Stephanie Hauser said we needed to look at the number of dropped/incomplete teams to see what a reasonable final number for Division 3 would look like. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) is going to bring this up as a discussion topic at the WCCCA Clinic.

4. Paul Brown (Lourdes Academy) pointed out that the discrepancy in sizes of Division 3 schools would be larger than acceptable.
  5. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) is going to look into different sports and see changes and standards in their divisional placements.
  6. Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) requested that teams be notified earlier of their divisional placement to allow for better planning. Stephanie clarified that while the division information could perhaps get out earlier the Sectional placement would not.
  7. Stephanie Hauser stated that any requests for information she could get it. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) requests it and then distributes it as needed. Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) agreed this would satisfy her earlier division placement information request).
- L. **Rule Change - Rule 8-7e: Assisting Runners on the Course** - A runner who assists another runner out of medical necessity will not be disqualified, only the runner receiving the assistance will be disqualified. This would be determined by a course official whether it was a medical necessity to provide assistance (no medical personal around, etc.)
- M. **National Rules Survey** - Stephanie Hauser encouraged everyone to take that survey when you receive it via e-mail as it does have a direct impact on those national rules and guidelines.
- N. **Rule Allowing Athletes to Compete in Outside Races/Fun Runs with School Permission** - Stephanie Hauser asked about reactions in regards to the rule allowing athletes to compete in outside races/fun runs with school permission. She pointed out that 3 runners this year were suspended for one meet this year due to running a fun run without school permission (which is required).
- O. **Rules Proposals/Changes** – Stephanie Hauser reviewed the process of rules proposals/changes for new members of the Cross Country Coaches Advisory Committee.
- P. **State Championship Meet** -
1. Stephanie Hauser brought up the timing of the national anthem and the clerk's concerns of that timing being in the middle of checking in teams/runners. Currently the national anthem is at 11:45 a.m., there is the suggestion of moving it to 11:30 a.m. Everyone agreed that this made sense, Stephanie Hauser will be officially making that change.
  2. Stephanie Hauser and Matt Polzin (Deerfield) shared concerns about the possible sale of The Ridges. Jim Newman and Stephanie Hauser confirmed that it does not seem that sale is immediate, but that we should not completely rule out the possibility of the meet eventually moving to another location.
  3. Concerns were expressed about the course having a tough time accommodating the larger Division 1 races at some points and there being some "bubbles" where kids get stuck and lose 3-4+ seconds.
  4. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive in terms of the logistics with the shuttles, etc.
  5. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) is going to ask at the WCCCA Clinic how many people decided to actually stay in Wisconsin Rapids/Stevens Point with the change in time schedule and the later start. Did this affect how many people stayed over? If we were eventually forced to move the meet would a new location be able to support that move in terms of overnight accommodation?
  6. Stephanie Hauser recapped the feedback on the new course, which was largely positive. Jim Newman mentioned some potential changes especially relating to tree roots/erosion that are currently impeding the course. Stephanie Hauser brought up low hanging branches that could be further addressed next year.
  7. Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) mentioned that the left then right turn on the opposite side of the pond was pretty tight in the warm up. There were concerns about getting pinched off if you are on the inside of that right turn. He said he was not at that point during the race so couldn't speak to it then. Jim Newman watched that point in the race and it did not seem to be a major issue. Casey Hopp (Madison Memorial) will make a trip to Wisconsin Rapids to walk the course with Jim Newman to discuss possible adjustments.
  8. Stephanie Hauser mentioned that Saucony paid \$3000 to be an official sponsor of the State Meet. Matt Polzin (Deerfield) pointed out that it makes the kids feel like it is an even bigger deal.

9. Parking seemed to be a major issue with such concerns as: meet managers forgetting to hand out parking passes at Sectionals, some coaches/principals photocopying the parking passes and giving them to parents, athletes driving themselves, etc.
10. Ryanne Bell (Fennimore) mentioned that she thought/heard feedback that the awards program was much improved - that sentiment was echoed by the group. There were some concerns about accessibility of results from PTTiming both online and with the results for boys Division 1. The group shared a great deal of praise for pausing the team results which may affect accessing those results.
11. Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) mentioned that the signs for the athlete only port-o-potties were taken down throughout the day. Stephanie Hauser confirmed it was noted to increase signage next year, but there will not be a person stationed there to enforce. Sara Lazarescu (Wisconsin Heights) mentioned coaches did a good job of policing the athlete bathrooms. Stephanie Hauser suggested adding restroom locations on the course map.
12. Paige Patenaude (Mukwonago) expressed concerns about access to athletes both on the course and at the finish. Request was made to keep the finish area clear for coaches and athletes only as well as some "coaches boxes" throughout the course. This would be similar to State Track where coaches are provided a wristband and official neon t-shirts to volunteers to enforce that coach's box.
13. Race Day Reminders should be clearer regarding bib instructions.

**IV. CROSS COUNTRY RULES**

- A. **Review 2016 NFHS New Rules** – Discussed.
- B. **NFHS 2016 Questionnaire** – Discussed.
- C. **Suggestions/Points of Emphasis for Rules Video:**
  1. Flag Snapping and Disqualifications
  2. Season Maximums
  3. No Practice at Sectional Sites
  4. Course Map Distribution by Host in Timely Manner
  5. Rule Allowing Athletes to Compete in Outside Races/Fun Runs with School Permission

**V. MISCELLANEOUS**

- A. **Suggestions for New Committee Members** - Jill Werner (Waukesha North), Taylor Reynolds (Lancaster), Roy Ward (Webster), Jeff Martin (Chetek), and Kevin FitzPatrick (Lakeland).

Matt Polzin (Deerfield) motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ryanne Bell (Fennimore) seconded it at 1:58 p.m.