

Celebratory Newsletter

May 12, 2005

Washington State Cross Country Coaches Association

Executive Board

Mark Cullen, University Prep, President
Joe Clark, Lakes, Vice-President
Craig Bowen, Jackson, Treasurer
Patty Ley, Gig Harbor, Secretary

Service Board

Tom Campbell, Hall of Fame Coordinator
Joe Clark, Lakes, East-West All Star Race Coordinator
Doug Fulton, South Whidbey, Website and Scholarship Coordinator
Ernie Goshorn, Lake Stevens, Scholarship Fund-Raising Coordinator
Dr. John Robertson, Seattle Prep, Medical Advisor

Advisory Board

- 1 - Bill McClement – Bellingham – 3A
- 1 - Dan Parker – Snohomish – 4A
- 2 - Leo Genest – Blanchet – 3A
- 2- Bruce McDowell, Cedarcrest – 3A
- 3 - Bill Sumner, Auburn-Riverside – 4A
- 3 - Matt Ellis – Bellarmine Prep – 4A
- 4 - Richard LaLonde – Rochester – 2A
- 4 - Frank Swenson – Centralia – 3A
- 5 - Phil English – Eisenhower – 4A
- 5 – Pete Steiner – East Valley (Yakima) 2A
- 6 – Jennifer Carpenter, Moses Lake – 4A
- 7 - Bill Kemp – Riverside – 2A
- 7 – Mary Downey – Odessa - B
- 8 - John Preston – Central Valley – 4A

Greetings, Coaches,

The last week of April was a memorably good one for cross country in Washington State. Here's our report:

1. Minimum Practice Requirements

The WIAA Representative Assembly voted unanimously to reduce the minimum number of required practice days for cross country from 12 to 10 at our annual voting meeting on April 29. This goes into effect this fall.

2. Medals at State

The WIAA Executive Board approved WIAA Executive Director Mike Colbrese's proposal to award medals to all of the top 12 finishers in State cross country.

This goes into effect this fall as well.

3. Length of XC Season

The third is a little more complicated.

First, the good news. As I indicated in the minutes of our January 15 WSCCCA Executive Board meeting, we were about to embark upon an exploration of the proposal to extend the cross country season by one week, beginning with the 06-07 season. The proposal received nearly unanimous support from our statewide WSCCCA Advisory Board.

On Wednesday, April 27, Joe Clark and Patty Ley, our vice-president and secretary, and I, appeared before the WIAA Executive Board to make this proposal.

On first reading, the WIAA Executive Board approved our proposal.

This is where it gets more complicated.

The purpose of a three-reading system is for the Executive Board to consider the idea of a proposal first; it decides if it likes the idea or not, and if it does, gives the green light to explore it further.

That's what happened with our proposal. We made our proposal knowing that meet management in Pasco had concerns about their ability to host both State cross country and regional football on what would usually be the 2nd Saturday in November.

As I'm sure virtually everyone knows by now, the Rep Assembly approved a 6th classification. This would create a 6th volleyball tournament, and the question becomes: where would the small schools volleyball tournaments be held?

Right now the only available site is the Tri-Cities. So the new question becomes: could the Tri-Cities host two volleyball state tournaments as well as State XC and regional football - all on the same weekend?

There is not an answer yet, and it will take time for one to emerge. I had a good discussion with Mike Colbrese about this last week, and he indicated that our best course right now is patience as WIAA staff tackles this complex question.

Remember, the good news is that our proposal to lengthen the season by a week was approved in concept. And it's a proposal for a year-and-a-half from now (the first year in an allocation cycle), not this fall. So there is plenty of time to explore the practicalities of our proposal thoroughly. It is at the very least getting a clear and thorough hearing.

4. State Tournaments/End of Opt-Up Penalty

As I mentioned in the January 15 minutes, I had written an amendment proposal to translate our 40-16 and 20-8 (40 schools to get a 16-entry tournament and 20 schools to get an 8) state tournament guidelines into percentages to go hand-in-hand with the new percentage system for classification. It passed the Rep Assembly unanimously; here's how it works:

Beginning in 06-07:

It will take 60% of the schools in a classification participating in a sport to earn a 16-entry state tournament.

It will take 30% to earn an 8-entry state tournament.

So, where we once read: 40-16, we'll now see: 60% - 16.

And where we once read: 20-8, we'll now see: 30% - 8.

In addition, it solves the problem of opting up that has plagued our classification systems for so long.

Example:

In a classification with 100 schools, 10 opt up, and the higher classification now has 110 schools.

The classification that lost the 10 schools is left with 90.

The size of state tournaments will now be determined as follows:

60% of 110 = 66.

60% of 90 = 54.

The constant now is the percentage, not the hard number.

So the classification whose number is reduced by losing schools that opt up will *not be hurt* by those opt ups when it comes to determining the size of that classification's state tournament.

(For the record, I used an example here that is not realistic for our upcoming new classification system, just one that is easier to present; in fact, each classification is projected to have about 65 schools.)

5. Gratitude

There are several people I'd like to acknowledge for helping to make this such a successful time for our sport:

- Joe Clark and Patty Ley: for their terrific presentation to the WIAA Executive Board on the length of XC season proposal (thanks to Joe's excellent weather chart, we now know that in Pasco, the 2nd Saturday in November is statistically 82 one-hundredths of a degree warmer than the first!);
- Mike Colbrese: for advocating to the WIAA Executive Board that all 12 runners on the podium receive medals;
- Our WSCCCA Advisory Board: for such thoughtful advice regarding the length of XC season proposal, as well as timely replies in a short time-frame when I needed some statistical help in a hurry;
- And Tim Tubbs of Enumclaw: for writing the minimum practice requirements amendment proposal;

THANK YOU, all; it takes a XC village...

I'd like to close with a very special and personal thanks to Alli Bennett, Athletic Director at Garfield-Palouse, my dear friend and "pal from Gar-Pal," whose friendship, support, optimism, and faith in me have sustained me in the Rep Assembly for well over a decade. It was her courageous vote in '96 that got the first state tournaments amendment to pass, and she has supported every cross country proposal to come before this group. Now, as Alli faces a serious illness, I hope we will all send encouragement and warm wishes to our longtime supporter in the southeastern corner of our state. This Rep Assembly was for you, Alli.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Cullen, University Prep
President, Washington State Cross Country Coaches Association

