



### **New Beginnings & Old Memories**

It's spring, a time of new beginnings and fresh starts, along with the promise of great days to come. At least, that's the way I look at spring. The glass is always half full and I'm looking for the fountain to fill it up the rest of the way. Unfortunately, this spring finds the cross country coaching community a bit short. Hall of Fame coach Bob Guenther of Tyee recently passed away. I was lucky enough to get to know Bob a bit in the past few years, and I consider myself fortunate, as many of you who know him also do. Long after most coaches step down, Bob kept coaching at Tyee "because the kids needed him." He was a coach to the end. He was one of those coaches who always had his camera, and he knew how to use it. He took kids and made them believe in themselves, and made them fast. But more importantly, Bob was a nice guy. I never heard him say a negative thing about a fellow coach or an athlete. He was always ready to chat. I'm going to miss him as I know many of you will. For those of you want to pay your respects, there will be a celebration of his life at Tyee High School on Saturday, June 2 10:00 a.m. in the Tyee complex large gym. Part of the event will be pictures and movie clips of his long career at Tyee.

### **Length of Season**

Your coaches association has been working on several things this past season. The most obvious is the proposal to add one week *to the end* of the season to bring it back to what it was back in the 80's. You should have gotten our proposal via your athletic director this past week. Please read it over, there have been some changes to the initial proposal submitted two years ago. You can also find the weather data, common questions and answers, and more on line at <http://www.watfxc.com/XC/WSCCCA/Main.htm> There are a couple of quick points though that we would like to make. First, we are asking every school with a cross country program for their vote, regardless of whether their coaches are WSCCCA members. Second, we are asking that all votes are in by June 15. Even if you had let us know previously, ***please use the ballot and make it official.*** Third, if the proposal is enacted, it would not take effect until 2008. Finally, while we strive to see the big picture, we are a cross country association. We all coach multi-sport athletes, but as representatives of the cross country coaches, our priority as your executive board has to be for athletes in our sport first. I'm thankful that so many of you take the time to let us know what's important so that hopefully, we are representing you in the best possible manner.

### **But wait...there's more**

The length of season proposal isn't the only thing we've been doing though. We are looking at expanding our coach of the year awards. With so many classifications, and so many great coaches, it's probably time to recognize a few more. We will have more information following our "White Pass Board Meeting." This coming fall, you will be able to access a guide to help beginning coaches in our sport. We have also established "career recognition" guidelines for coaches. Since our sport doesn't always relay on dual meets or regular season contests, career recognition will be based on the state meet. Here are the guidelines. Both steps would require a minimum of 12 years as head coach

- Level 1 - 8 years of teams at state (one gender) or 16 athletes (one gender) who place in the top 12 (podium position at state)
- Level 2 - 8 years of teams at state (one gender) who place in the top 8 at state.

Coaches will be responsible for tracking their own statistics and submitting them for recognition. Honorees will be recognized at the state meet and also on the web page.

And last but not least, we will be purchasing plaques for all of our Hall of Fame winners and putting them on a dedicated Cross Country Hall of Fame Wall at the WIAA headquarters.

### **East/West All Star Race & Scholarship Awards**

We are getting closer to our All Star Race and scholarship presentation this spring. The All Star team has been posted on-line at <http://www.watfxc.com/XC/EastWest/EWMMain.htm>. This year we expanded the team to 60 athletes in order to reflect the additional WIAA classification. Coaches may also submit the names of athletes who may be deserving of All Star status but failed to qualify due to injury, illness, or other reasons beyond their control. All nominations will be reviewed by the WSCCCA Executive Board. All Stars get team uniform and other items from our sponsors Brooks and Super Jock and Jill. We will also honor all of the 2006 state champion coaches as "honorary All Star" coaches. On Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, there will be an evening social and easy run for participants, coaches, and anyone else interested in attending at Super Jock & Jill in Seattle. The race is also open to underclassmen, coaches, and the general public. All entry fees go back to supporting cross country and the scholarship program. We strongly encourage graduating senior cross country athletes to apply for one of the scholarships we offer as well. You do not need to be an "All Star" to apply, but your complete application must be received by June 30.

The All Star program, like so many things, is a labor of love, and requires the support of the cross country community. There are several ways you can do this. Encourage your athletes to attend, come take part yourself. It's a lot of fun.

You may be asking yourself, how do we get the money for all of these scholarships? That is an excellent question, and we're glad you volunteered to help. Seriously, we raise money from several sources. Brooks donates \$1000 annually, as does Seafair. We have a fund donated by the family of Jeff Munroe, a former runner whose life was cut short, and several other smaller sources. If you have a potential donor, please contact us. Last year the Run of The Mill made a generous donation of \$1000 in return for some significant support with the running of their race. They would like to do so again, and so we are making a call for volunteers. It's pretty important that we try to

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support them with as many volunteers as possible. Please contact me at [jclark@watfxc.com](mailto:jclark@watfxc.com) if you can help out.

### **The WSCA, our umbrella organization**

In a similar vein, our umbrella organization, the Washington State Coaches Association is providing funds to help the individual sports with their all-star events. This is significant for several reasons. It allows us to do more for the all stars, frees up more funds for scholarships, and just makes for a better event. These monies come from your membership dues. Thanks to all of you who are members. Those of you who aren't members, please consider joining. Not only do you get liability insurance, a free pass to state (and most district) sporting events, but you're helping kids. You probably wouldn't be a coach if that wasn't important to you. You can find out more at <http://www.washcoach.org/>

### **Don't forget to write...**

Please keep in touch. We want to hear from you. Contact your advisory board member from your district (<http://www.watfxc.com/XC/WSCCCA/Main.htm>). If you have a thought, a comment, or something to share, let us know, whether it's good or bad (good preferred). We want to hear from you. We have a strong organization because we have outstanding coaches. Enjoy your spring, have a great summer, and good luck next season.

*Joe Clark*  
*President, WSCCCA*

*-You cannot win if you do not play.*