

Washington State Cross Country Coaches Association
Winter Newsletter
January 2008



Well another season has come and gone, I believe that makes about 46 of them now for the old timers. Hopefully, it was a great one for all of you. Our sport is a little like Lake Wobegone, where the children are all above average. As you begin a new year I hope you took some time to reflect on why it is that you coach, and how much of an impact you have on the lives of those athletes you work with. I often get teased by my family and assistants that almost all of my friends are coaches. Is that such a bad thing? To have friends who care about the lives of young men and women, who are tireless in their devotion to their craft, and who spend more time trying to make things better for their sport and athletes than worrying about the shortcomings and challenges we face. I consider myself lucky. I hope you do as well.



This year, the coaches association was able to honor more coaches than ever before, giving coach of the year awards to boys' and girls' coaches in every classification. I received a great e-mail from a coach who mentioned that one of the things he likes about our sport is how we do work together, and how coaches and athletes from all levels are recognized. Certainly that is not completely true. The press still tends to hit the big schools but we are trying as an association to keep things in perspective. A complete listing of this year's winners and Hall of Fame honorees is attached in the e-mail with the newsletter.



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And speaking of the awards, the topic arose again during our annual post state feedback about the difficulty of caring for one's team and attending the coaches' meeting. Those are very valid concerns, and honestly, it's a difficult challenge. The coaches' meeting has evolved into a night of awards and honors as much as anything else. In this information age, there is very little in the way of new information about the state meet that is put out that night. Most of the coaches' association news goes out by e-mail as well, so the opportunity to receive it is there. But the chance to honor our coaches in front of their peers has been an outstanding success. In our sport, there really is no other time when we can do that appropriately. We also use that as one of our election tools along with e-mail balloting. At this year's elections, there were three constitutional amendments that were approved (in combination with on-line votes). Two were minor procedural changes. The third resulted in long time web master, scholarship coordinator, and over all "do everything guy" Doug Fulton being appointed as a member of the executive board. The complete constitution is on-line at <http://www.watfxc.com/XC/WSCCCA/Main.htm> We appreciate the challenges you face to attend the meeting, and understand if you don't as well. If you have never been to one, consider it.



And speaking of the state meet, the feedback is in. In general, these are the thoughts that were shared. Everyone loved the weather, and there were numerous comments about the meet's efficiency. A lot of coaches shared their appreciation (as we do as well) for John's tireless efforts. To be sure, there were some concerns as well. Specifically, there were concerns about the course layout (length, flagging and turns), number of port-a-potties, and spectator access. Several coaches suggested looking at a two loop course. All of the comments (positive and otherwise) have been compiled and sent on to the WIAA for review. As we all know, John is stepping back from heading up the meet operations this year. Additionally, the meet contract is up at Pasco as well. Whether the meet remains in Pasco or moves to another location is a decision made by the WIAA. As an association, the WSCCCA has not taken a position on the state meet site. Our focus is on doing what is best for our sport and our membership and working with meet managers at all levels to make this the best possible experience for our athletes, coaches, and their fans. We will certainly pass along any feedback from our members to the WIAA, and provide any other information should they ask. Pasco has been an excellent home for state cross country. We have the longest standing meet site of any sport in Washington, and it's because of the continuing efforts to make a great meet better. Whether the meet is in Pasco or a new location, the new meet managers have a huge pair of shoes to fill. We will certainly do all we can to help with the transition. Mike Colbrese of the WIAA has told us that he hopes to have state meet information by the board meeting in March.

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While we are on the topic of the WIAA, you can now start to see the names of our Hall of Fame members on their walls. We had the first round of plaques at the state meet and will be adding the rest in the coming months. We also have the on-line applications for career recognition on line at our site <http://www.watfxc.com/XC/WSCCCA/Main.htm> as well as the Washington Coach website at <http://www.washcoach.org/index.php> They also have **WSCA membership forms** (just in case you still need to join), a list of all of our Hall of Fame coaches and more. It's a good site to have bookmarked.



This year marks the return of the White Pass Coaches clinic August 5-8. You should be able to get more information at sunfairrun.com. Unfortunately, the popular distance clinic held in Portland each winter is on at least a temporary hiatus. There are also clinics in Spokane and Seatac and the Track Convention in Everett. Hopefully you can attend one of these and connect with those coaches you may not run into normally. As you receive this, you may be one of the many schools facing changes in your league or district (I personally m looking forward to making my 5th league change in a little less than 15 years at the same school). It is a work in progress, but it seems to be providing more opportunities for our student athletes. The WIAA website is a good place to keep up on these changes.



If you receive this on the first go-around (rather than from your district representative) that means I have your e-mail as a member of the coaches' association. That is a good thing. It's your dues that help us fund our awards for the EW All Star race, Hall of Fame, and other recognitions. We don't get a salary. Heck, we haven't even taken an "association junket" to Footlocker, NTN, or Guadalajara. ☺ Please, if you aren't a member, consider joining to help the sport that you obviously care so much about.



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Along those lines, the East West All Star race has continued to expand the number of scholarships awarded. We are looking at a way to balance the teams for the All Star Race, since logistically it is hard for the East to compete on a team level. We are also (always) in need of volunteers to help with the race, as well as the Run of the Mill in Mill Creek (one of our major fund-raisers). Our scholarships are awarded to athletes statewide but the sad truth is that well over 90% of the scholarship funds come from the Puget Sound Region. If you know of a possible supporter (running store, local business, road race, etc.) that would be willing to help out, please let us know. Our fund raising coordinator is Jeff Sowards (jsowards@lwsd.wednet.edu) of Lakewood High School. Along those lines, please understand that we aren't asking you to write a check yourself. While we will never turn away a donation, the scholarship fund should come from cross country alumni, running related businesses, and other businesses in your community.



Speaking of the East West All Star race, the invitations are out and we hope to finalize our team soon. If you have an athlete who has been offered a spot on the team, we would encourage them to participate. The race has become a great event, with athletes receiving team uniforms, t-shirts, and other "swag" from Brooks and Super Jock and Jill. Coaches of state championship teams are our honorary coaches (you must be a WSCA member though at the time of the race). The race is followed by a fine barbecue with some of the best cross country coach/grillmasters around. Unfortunately, we do have one problem. We simply do not have enough applicants for the scholarships. In a sport where high gpa's, community service, and involvement is the norm, this is troublesome. Please encourage your senior athletes to go on-line at watfxc.com and fill out the scholarship application. Helping our athletes is a driving mission for us. Please help us help your kids.



As we enter into 2008, it is also time for elections. You can read the guidelines in our constitution at <http://www.watfxc.com/XC/WSCCCA/Main.htm> In a nutshell, here are the basic guidelines.

- Advisory Board: Any active coach can run. The top two vote getters in each district serve for a two year term.
- Executive Board (Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) are elected from members of the executive board and/or the advisory board.
- President: The president is elected from current members of the Executive board.

If you want to run for a position on the advisory board, please get your name, WSCA #, and district into Joe Clark ASAP. A little bio information would be great as well. We also need to hear from you. What are the issues that concern you? What path would you like us to follow? We are your association. Let us know how you can help.

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Finally, it's well known that we face a number of challenges in our sport. In an increasingly sedentary society dominated by videogames, TV sports, and a host of other options, developing a team is more and more of a challenge. This is perhaps even more difficult in the urban areas, where smaller teams (or no teams at all) are becoming more and more prevalent. Renton High School was one of those schools, but Lance Winmill has been turning it around on both sides, both boys and girls. I asked him to share what has been successful for him. Perhaps there are some things there that you can use. And of course, Lance isn't the only one. I would like to use this newsletter to share what's working around the state. Please feel free to send me what works for you. Whether you are big or small, urban, suburban, or rural, affluent or economically challenged, we can all learn from each other.

Remember, you cannot win if you do not play.

Joe Clark

President

WSCCCA

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Jogging is very beneficial. It's good for your legs and your feet. It's also very good for the ground. It makes it feel needed.

Charles Schulz

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