

NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

1161 Route 130 North, P.O. Box 487

Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691-0487

2005 Outdoor Track Committee Minutes
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Date: June 14, 2005
Time: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
Place: NJSIAA Administration Building

Members present: Lou Fraulo, Clifton High School; Jim Camburn, Buena High School; Ed Colona, Burlington; Wayne Gardiner, Delbarton High School; Bill Milone, Flemington; Carl Rickershauser, Cherry Hill; Marty Holleran, Metuchen High School; Steve Kordos, Buena High School; John Schwarz, Nutley High School; Pam Willson, Hackettstown; Rich Refi, Hillsborough High School, Dr. James Sarruda, Executive Committee; Don Danser, NJSIAA Staff.

A. Correspondence

1. Nicole McMullen asked for a state relay championship for outdoors. The committee instructed NJSIAA staff to survey the schools to see if there was an interest in such a meet. Such a meet would probably require 4 sites (one for each group) and would have to be on the 1st or 2nd Saturday of the May, and it would include field events (probably three per field event relay team). If the survey is favorable, then the proposal would be made to the Program Review Committee, with final approval having to come from two readings at two executive committee meetings.
2. Bill Klimas, meet director for the Union County Relays, asked that the "No athlete may compete three consecutive days under any circumstances" rule be amended, perhaps to read "No athlete may compete in more than eight events over three consecutive days." When the 3-day rule was written, there were no such things as two-day meets. Even Penn Relays had only one high school day. Now, a high school team may run on Thursday at Penn Relays in the 4x100m relay, qualify for the semi-s on Friday, and the Finals on Saturday. Under the present rule, this is illegal for high school students from New Jersey. The rule was amended for the Penn Relays a few years ago, but now county and leagues, with the advent of girls' pole vault and boys and girls triple jump, are finding it difficult to run anything but 2-day meets. This makes scheduling and fitting make-ups into the schedule very difficult if the weekend contains a 2-day meet (Friday and Saturday), because it limits dual meets to Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, since you can't schedule on Thursday because of the 2-day meet on Friday and Saturday. The present rule allows for eight events to be run in two days; therefore, eight events over three days would not likely add more stress to the athlete. It would still prevent 3 consecutive dual meets, unless the athlete runs in less than four meets each day, and would not prevent a dual meet on Thursday with a 2-day meet on Friday and Saturday. After a lengthy discussion, the committee thought no change was needed, since the staff could grant a waiver on a case-by-case basis.
3. Chip Tamar of Paterson wrote that the Meet of Champions was a "big disappointment. ...There was nothing special about the Meet of Champions. You did NOTHING to make it special. If you must run 4-5 heats of an event ... at least you could announce the seeded heat. You have an announcer who is giving results of earlier events while the starter is giving his commands to the runners. This is garbage." Committee agreed that this area can be improved on. We will probably need an assistant to the announcer to keep an eye on the starter so that announcements do not come during the start of races, and the mechanics on getting the lineup for final races and top-seeded races to the announce will need to be worked out between the clerks, Finishlynx and the announcer
4. Several communications between this office and the parents and coaches of a South River student concerning the athlete missing his/her race were discussed in length. A thorough investigation by the referee and clerks could find no evidence to the claims that the youngster turned in a seed card. No evidence could be found to support the claim that the youngster was assigned a heat and lane, for if that had happened, one of the lanes would have been empty in the event in question. Even the cameras showed that all lanes were accounted for. The youngster in question had a hip number, but hip numbers were readily available for the taking because of the wet conditions. Athletes were free to take whatever hip number they needed when the one they were given would not stick. No one could even place the athlete in the paddock area while the race in question was being seeded. The committee decided that the meet officials acted within the rules and regulations of the meet.
5. Brendan M. Donegan wrote to express his disappointment and frustration with meet management, site management and the officials at the North I sectional held at Wayne Hills High School. His three major

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concerns were restrooms (not enough portable toilets – just 3 – with the school restrooms at least 800 yards from the track); pole vault standards guide tracks were not long enough and were not anchored; and the long jump, where he claimed that the pit was not long enough (24' from takeoff to end of pit). Mr. Fraulo replied that his first concern was the only valid one, since the pole vault problem was rectified as soon as it became known to him, and that the actual distance was 26 feet from takeoff to end of pit.

6. Several communications were received from Derick Adamson, coach of Woodrow Wilson. His concern was that the finish judges “got it wrong” when they placed one of his runners 7th instead of 4th. He protested in writing. By rule, his protest was denied because finish line judgments are final. He based his case on the fact that the Head of neither the Finish Line nor the referee saw the finish. Although it is in the job description of the Head of the Finish Line to oversee each race, it does not warrant a change in the order of finish if the head finish judge does not see anything wrong with the way the event was judged.
7. Sectional appeals: Coach Deboney Braithwaite of Keyport wrote to ask that her athlete be advanced to the group meet because a clerical error did not list the athlete as a finalist, in the 100m dash when she should have been. The athlete was advanced by the meet director committee the Sunday after sectionals. The same thing happened to A Bound Brook male athlete. He, too, was advanced. Three jumpers from New Brunswick missed their event. The referee did not allow them to compete because the event had been closed. They appealed for advancement, but were denied. You must compete to advance. Columbia coach appealed a disqualification. The committee cannot rule on the merits of a disqualification, only the referee at the meet can do so; since the referee let the disqualification stand, the appeal to advance the disqualified athlete was denied by the committee on Sunday after the Sectionals. Another appeal, before the meets started. A parent became aware that there would be a conflict between her daughter's graduation and the running of her favorite event. The parent asked that her daughter be allowed to run either later with another group or to be waived into the meet of champions. The parent was informed that neither was possible and we regret that the athlete has to make a choice, but nothing could be done within our rules and regulations to give her relief.
8. Because this was the first year wild cards were used outdoors from the Group Meet to the Meet of Champions, errors were made that resulted in two athletes from finding out in a timely manner that they were invited to participate in a field event in the Meet of Champions. Parents of the two athletes want to give these two athletes the opportunity to do the field event with an official present and have their results entered into the Meet of Champions records, even though the meet has been declared officially over. The committee made the following points:
 - a. Errors are part of all games. Umpires call outs when everyone knows their safe, athletes fail to appear for an event. Any error that can be FAIRLY corrected is. Allowing these two to compete without the other 38 athletes present would go against the basic rule of track and field: Head to Head competition.
 - b. The wildcard is an INVITATION and not a right or guarantee. Hindsight is always 20-20. Coaches, too, have a responsibility to check. Any doubt should have prompted a call to the NJSIAA. Several coaches had done so to make sure their athletes qualified or didn't.
 - c. Doing what the parents are requesting has never been done before in any sport and would open the door to anyone who missed the meet or event for any reason. The tournament regulations state on page 16: “Failure to be present at the time the event is called due to transportation problems, misunderstanding of instructions, tournament regulations, other similar excuses, will result in disqualification.”
9. Stefan Moorhead wrote to ask the committee to make fully automatic time a priority for all sectional meets. Every available timing system was used this spring. We lost the services of Ed Scullion who had commitments to work college meets that weekend. Coach Moorhead also asked the committee to make the 100, 200, and 100 hurdles (and probably the 400) a two section final on six-lane tracks. The committee decided to stay with the same format because it was coaches who had asked for this format in the first place. Coach Moorhead wants the committee to add wildcards from the Sectionals to the Groups and to add 4x100 and 4x800 to the events list. The committee felt neither of these suggestions was practical at this time.

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10. Coach Steve Opremcak wrote offering Indian Hills as the second site for the Group Meet in place of Notre Dame. Since they have a six-lane track with 8-lane straightaway, there would be no real advantage to moving the meet there. However, this did provoke a long discussion about Notre Dame. Several shortcomings were expressed by committee members: the throwing event venues were poor, gate setup and parking were poor, the v traffic problems in and around the school at 2:30 to 3:30 pm on Friday were very bad, and the fact that it is basically a six-lane track. As a result the committee wants to hold the meet at South Plainfield. Next year Group 3, A, and B will go to South Plainfield, while Groups 1, 2 and 4 will go to Egg Harbor. The following year, Groups 1, 2 and 3 will go to South Plainfield and Groups 4, A and B will go to Egg Harbor.
11. Ms Patricia Ann Redden sent a letter on behalf of her daughter and the children of four other wheelchair athletes. It seems that the Egg Harbor wheelchair events are scheduled each year at the same time a Special Olympics event is scheduled. Added to that, a wheelchair athlete may have to go to Egg Harbor while his/her team is going to Notre Dame. They ask that either everything be done on Friday of the Group Meet or Wednesday at the Meet of Champions. The committee felt that all the events should be held at the Meet of Champions. The addition of the 2 shorter wheelchair events should not add more than 15 minutes to the running events of the meet.
12. Immaculate High School coach, Patrick J. Dyer, petitioned the committee to change the starting time on Saturday from 10 am to 11 am to allow more travel time from Friday night to Saturday morning. The committee did not feel a change was needed.
13. Brian Corcoran, coach at Pope John XXIII offered three proposals: a. Add the Pentathlon to the championship program; b. Allow six athletes per event, but keep a maximum of 45 total athletes and 1 relay for entry to allow schools who have more than 3 exceptional athletes the opportunity to compete in the same event; and c. Have an informed announcer with a wireless microphone at the M of C to call events as they occur and introduce athletes before the start of races etc., in general to be more spectator-friendly. The committee felt that the first two proposals would add too much time to the schedule, while the third has merit and will be looked at to see how it could be done without holding up the meet.
14. Schwann C. Grimes II, Coach at Villa Walsh had several concerns and complaints about the meet at Notre Dame: "My first issue is with the officiating and meet management. In all my years, as a competitor and coach I have never seen such terrible meet management. First, my two 1600 runners were not listed in the official results, though they finished in the middle of the pack and had their cards taken. They use the official marks for potential scholarships and now they have no official state mark. I spoke to the referee, trying to follow protocol, who took me to the meet director. This gentleman was the RUDEST and most abrasive [sic] person I have seen given charge over an activity involving children. I bit my tongue as I watch him berate his staff and blow off my concerns. He indicated the results [sic] were wrong and had to be updated, so I walked away... If this were an isolated incident then I could understand, but all weekend long they kept announcing revisions to the results, the javelin was announced 3 times. I for one seriously doubt the validity of the times run and the results in general, including the times given to my best sprinter, and she ran the best times of her career, but I know she didn't. The integrity of this meet is now in question based on the parade of mistakes and the attitude of the meet director when questioned. Secondly, when announcing the finalists for the 100, they only gave Mr. Grant 3 sheets with photocopies of the entry cards of the top 6 qualifiers and that is what he announced. The problem with that is that 8 athletes qualify for the finals, my second athlete being one of those. She was called over by her teammate with no time to warm up and get ready. So she ran the 100 final, in that foul Friday weather, with no warm up because the officials failed to indicate who the TOP 8 were. I can't say she would have scored, but that should not be decided by inadequate officiating. ...For the last 3 seasons there have been problems with the officiating at the Notre Dame site and I implore the NJSIAA to please do something about it. Please stop hiring officials who are hostile, rude, and callous. We stress sportsmanship to the children and disqualify them for acting the way too many of these officials and the meet director act. My third issue is the site itself. It is substandard, to say the least. The parking is terrible and there are insufficient [sic] side streets to help alleviate the problem. The stands were only sufficient this year because the bad weather kept many from coming, but most years it's standing room only. Finally, the location has limited access. Route 206 is a one lane road that is terrible to try to get down on a Friday afternoon, considering the time

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the meet begins (3:30) happens to be around the time local school buses are on the end of their runs. That means teams trying to get there one time (since we can't arrive before 2:30) get stuck behind local school buses, local business traffic as well as Princeton and Rider traffic. Further, the northern NJ school have to travel, for either Group meet. May I suggest the NJSIAA locate a site further north for the Non Public/rotating [sic] Public Group meet. At the very least, please consider a location with a little more access, more seating and better parking for teams and fans."

Reply: Mr. Grimes' main complaint seems to be with the meet director, who stated that Mr. Grimes just couldn't take "no" for an answer when he wanted everyone to stop and examine his problem. He didn't want to hear about the difficulties the rain was causing everyone nor the promise we would examine the results later and do what we could to correct them. As it turned out, many of the 1600m cards were totally unreadable because the recorder had used a felt-tipped pen on the wet cards to record the auto times.. The complaints about officiating were all very general and non-specific. His complaints about the site have some validity and have been voiced by others. A change in venue is a distinct possibility.

B. General issues

1. The committee decided that updates for WINNERS from the Sectionals to Group Meet and from the Winners of the Group Meet to the Meet of Champions must be done before Noon on Sunday after the each meet via the internet (i.e. e-mail to ddanser@njsiaa.org).
2. Because of the time restrictions at the Meet of Champions, pole vault and high jumpers will be limited to the top 18 medal winners. The committee felt it was just not fair to have half of the pole vault or high jump field waiting for two+ hours to eliminate the lower half of the field at the opening height. Trying to conduct these two events with up to 80 contestants in each is just not practical.
3. Because rosters are getting too long to carry in the program, the committee decided to assess any school that placed more than 60 names on the boys or more than 60 names on the girl's rosters up to \$50 per roster for the excessive names.
4. A continuing problem is partial entries. Lou Fraulo has been instructed not to accept large numbers of rosters from other sources, such as county or league meets, since schools who may participate in a county meet or league meet, may have no plans to participate in the sectionals. If a roster is submitted and a school has to be called to ascertain their intentions, that school will be assessed \$50 for a partial entry if they don't complete the entry process.

C. Correspondence received after the meeting:

1. Steve Opremcak, Coach at Indian Hills, had concerns about the "open pit" at the Meet of Champions. "At the Group meets there were an average of 17 girl triple jumpers who had 45 min open pit to complete their jumps. It was very easy to take your attempts in a timely fashion. At MoC, there were 34 jumpers who were trying to get their attempts in under the threat of a closing pit – only 1 hour. The kids just stood in line. I feel that we have to return to flights or extend the time for the open pit, so that athletes can group their jumps together in a timely fashion."
Tournament Director's reply: "I will add your comments to the 2005 meeting minutes. The committee met yesterday. By the way, the officials were instructed to extent the pit time if they saw a problem developing getting the jumps in. Also as a coach, if you thought a problem was developing, you should feel free to go to the field referee (in this case) to discuss it with him/her. As you know, we walk a delicate line between efficiently running the events and being fair to the kids, and sometimes meet management needs to be reminded when we get too concerned about management at the cost of fairness to the athletes. Thanks for your input. Don D.
2. A letter was received from Mr. Lawrence Hickman who describes himself as an avid track fan who has been coming to the state championships for three decades. He was very upset that "Parsippany Hills put up a canopy tent in the middle of the stands (closest to the finish line.) Granted it rained Friday and Saturday started on shaky ground, but it never rained to the point where the tent needed to be up the whole meet. Many people complained but they refused to lower the canopy. There are a group of us that

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travel from meet to meet and we all felt the same way. At this time I am requesting my \$7.00 fee refunded (actually it is \$56.00 there were eight of us.) Track etiquette allows for tents/canopy to be open along the top of the bleachers (not to impair the view of others) and along the fences on the ground. I've heard many announcements for people to get out of the infield so the starters and timers could see; the same should apply for tents/canopies in the middle of the stands. Finally, the set up the one of the public groups go with the non-public groups is not well received by track fans. " He goes on to make a plea to Rutgers to open up their facilities to more high school events and to get an indoor facility built in South Jersey to house winter events so "our children won't have to spend their Sundays going to New York and other places to run."

Reply: The meet director had no complaints along this line and would have rectified the situation had it been brought to his attention. Also, a copy of the letter will be sent to Parsippany Hills athletic department for their reaction.

4. Mr. Bill Evans, coach at Point Pleasant Beach wanted to know why we don't have an awards stand for the meet of champions.

Reply: Over 30 medals won at the meet were not picked up. They include medals from 8th place up to 1st place. If we can't get the athletes to pick up the medals, what is the likelihood of getting the 8 medal winners together on a stand for a brief ceremony? It's not that we haven't tried in the past. We have and it was a miserable failure. Perhaps part of the problem is the nature of the meet itself and when it is. It is a school night and many schools are into exams. Athletes are generally not with full teams and they seem to want to leave as soon as their performance is over, not even waiting to pickup their awards.