REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 17, 2023, and JANUARY 17, 2024, MEETING

KEY ITEMS.

- **Championship Format.** The committee met with Sam Seemes, president of the USTFCCCA, and various members of the USTFCCCA Division II Cross Country Executive Board to review the USTFCCCA's proposal for a new championship format for Division II cross country. The committee voted to move forward with the proposal and solicit feedback from the membership and conduct a budget analysis. (Informational Item 8.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

   - **None.**

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

   a. **2024 Atlantic Region host.**

      (1) <u>Recommendation</u>. That Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania serve as the 2024 Atlantic Region host.

      (2) <u>Effective date</u>. Immediately.

      (3) <u>Rationale</u>. In reviewing sites for 2024 regionals, the committee noted that the 2024 site was not selected. With only one bid entered the committee assumed that at the time bids were due the committee that was in place had a desire to receive more bids. No additional bids were received and upon being notified that the site was not officially selected the committee voted to approve Lock Haven University. The committee noted that Lock Haven has hosted multiple times and has always done a great job.

      (4) <u>Estimated budget impact</u>. None

      (5) <u>Student-athlete impact</u>. None.

   b. **2025 Southeast Region host**.

      (1) <u>Recommendation.</u> That Wingate University serve as the 2025 Southeast Region host.

(2) <u>Effective date</u>. Immediately.

(3) <u>Rationale</u>. Due to Queens University of Charlotte's transition to Division I there is currently not a confirmed host for the 2025 Southeast regional. The committee noted Wingate has hosted multiple times and has done a good job.

(4) <u>Estimated budget impact</u>. None

(5) <u>Student-athlete impact</u>. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Regionalization review.** The committee discussed a request from the Division II Championships Committee seeking feedback regarding the Division II Regionalization mode and opportunities to revise the current approach to bracketing. The Championships Committee will review the sport committee feedback at the June 17 – 18, 2024 meeting.

2. **Survey results.**
   a. **2022 Results**. The committee noted displeasure with the opening ceremonies being mandatory for all teams to attend as well as how far the course was from the hotel. The committee noted the positive student-athlete feedback and that there is more for the athletes to do during a festival year championship.
   b. **2023 Results**. The committee noted comments citing the need for hosting improvements at the regional level. The committee also noted comments regarding the championship banquet and suggested ways that could be improved and more engaging for the participants. The committee also suggested giving the mementos at the banquet.

3. **2022 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the report from its 2022 annual meeting.

4. **Preview of 2024 hosts.** The committee reviewed the 2024 hosts and noted that a host was not selected for Atlantic Region. Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania was the only institution that submitted a bid. It is likely that the committee did not select Lock Haven initially to allow other institutions the opportunity to bid. The current committee approved Lock Haven to host in 2024, noting that they have been great hosts in the past. (See Action Item 2-a.)

5. **Timing company review.** The committee felt that Leone Timing has done an excellent job timing for the national championship. The committee did raise the question if hip numbers are needed at the national championship. Timing companies for the regional meets dictate what is needed in terms of bib and hip numbers based on the system and process they use.

6. **2025 Southeast Region host**. Due to Queens University of Charlotte's transition to Division I

bids were reopened for the 2025 Southeast Region. The committee reviewed the bids and recommended that Wingate University serve as host in 2025. (See Action Item 2-b.)

7. **Sport sponsorship.** The committee noted that distances of 3,000 meters for the women and 4,000 meters for the men are required for sports sponsorship. For championship selection, a minimum of four contests are required with a minimum of five participants in each contest at a minimum distance of 5,000 meters for the women and 7,000 meters for the men. The committee reiterated that regionals cannot be included in the four contests. The committee also made note of programs that are transitioning to a new conference or division and those that have been dropped.

8. **Championship format.** The committee talked at length about the USTFCCCA's proposal to change the current championship format from eight region sites to one [Attachment]. Some committee members felt as though a change is needed but that going from eight sites to one may be too drastic. It was noted that having a one site regional would allow for the best 34 teams in the country to compete at the national championship. When discussing super regions as a possibility, it was noted that USTFCCCA does not feel as though two or four region sites would allow for the best 34 teams at the championship. Committee members noted if the XCRI model, which would be used for selecting teams in the new format, could be used for only one site and not tailored to multiple sites, it may be a fragile formula. Some committee members also included thoughts that super regions do not solve current issues and feel as though the super region model still selects team based on theory and that it could also still cost institutions more due to at-large teams having to travel outside of their region during regular-season competition. Members of the committee also noted various aspects of the regionalization discussion and how it could affect the format. Ultimately, the committee voted to seek feedback from Championships Committee on the proposal, including whether to proceed with membership feedback and a budget analysis.

9. **Strategic plan.** The committee reviewed the strategic plan and agreed to move considering ways to enhance the broadcast of the championship from a long-term goal to a short-term goal.

10. **Results requirement memo.** The committee reviewed the results requirement memo and agreed to change that all meets are required to submit results electronically, not just meets after Sept. 15, which is currently what the memo states.

11. **Policy review.**
    a. **Entry policy**. The committee noted challenges with the current entry policy for regional championships in which the current limit on entries is 10 athletes. The committee voted to allow teams to enter their entire roster for regional competition and declare the seven that will run at regionals. It will be required that athletes who are entered are eligible student-athletes at that institution. The committee also noted that for the national championship it will be required that four of the seven declared runners at regionals must race at nationals.

    b. **Declaration timeline.** The committee voted to keep the declaration timeline and require coaches to declare their athletes the Friday prior to race day.

    c. **Late entries.** The committee noted late entry issues that have come up often over the last

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few years. The committee agreed that a $1,500 fine will be assessed for not adhering to championship policy and procedures if a late entry is requested. The committee also noted that with a late entry request they would allow for the student-athlete to compete.

d. **Packet pickup.** The committee noted challenges with packet pickup at regionals due to some institutions being in close proximity to the competition venue and not arriving on site until the morning of competition. The committee asked the NCAA staff liaison to inquire if electronic declaration can be made through the entry system.

e. **Minimum contests.** The committee agreed that regional contests will still be excluded from being countable to meet minimum contests.

f. **Credentials**. The committee noted that many teams chose to bring additional athletes to the national championship in case of injury or illness or in the case of an individual qualifier, an additional athlete of the same gender if the coach is of an opposite gender. The committee voted that two additional credentials would be supplied to each team to cover those additional athletes that may come.

12. **Other business.** Due to time constraints some agenda items were not discussed and will be moved to an upcoming monthly agenda. Those items include committee timeline and appointments for 2024-25, manuals, TFRRS updates, NCAA bid cycle and the most recent equal distance memo.

Committee Chair: _Sage Fowler, Southern Arkansas University_
Staff Liaison(s):   _Ashley Jenkins, Championships and Alliances_

NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Committee **November 17, 2023, and January 17, 2024, Videoconference**
Attendees:
Jason Bryan, Catawba College.
Zach Emerson, Franklin Pierce University.
Sage Fowler, Southern Arkansas University.
Elizabeth Hoge, Ashland University.
Andrew Huber, West Chester University.
Randi Lydum, Western Oregon University.
Michael Rosolino, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.
Katelyn Smith, Adams State University.
Guests:
Sam Seemes, USTFCCCA.
USTFCCCA Division II Cross Country Executive Board.
NCAA Staff in Attendance:
Ashley Jenkins, Championships and Alliances.

| Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances. |
| Lance Pedersen, Championships and Alliances. |

DIVISION II CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONHIPS FORMAT PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

The USTFCCCA Division II Cross Country Executive Committee voted unanimously to support the proposed championships format change and at-large selection process. In addition, at the 2022 USTFCCCA convention, 81.7% of NCAA Division II cross country programs supported this proposed championships format and at-large selection process in a unit vote. This proposed championships format would provide a true NCAA Division II postseason championship experience for student-athletes and institutions beyond their conference championships – in that student-athletes would have to qualify for the first round and would compete against the top student-athletes, in the sport, at the final round.

Format Overview:
The national championships, consisting of both team and individual competition, will be conducted over two rounds – a first round and a final round.

Eighty teams and 40 individuals per gender (including automatic qualifiers) are selected for the championships. Conference champion teams and individuals automatically qualify.

Thirty-four teams and 24 individuals per gender will advance from the first round of the championships to the final round.

The first round, held at a single site, will consist of two races per gender with 40 teams and 20 individuals in each. From each race, the top 17 placing teams and top 12 placing remaining individuals who are not a member of one of the top 17 placing teams will advance to the final round.

The final round, held two weeks after the first round and at a different site, will consist of a single race per gender.

Selection:
Using a predetermined selection algorithm and a computer-administered program, the committee selects 80 teams and 40 individuals (including automatic qualifiers) per gender for the championships. The selection algorithm employs strictly objective criteria.

To be eligible to participate in the NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships, a member institution must first meet all sport sponsorship requirements.

Teams. To be considered during the at-large selection process, a team must achieve at least one result versus an NCAA Division II varsity team from outside its own conference.

Individuals. To be considered during the at-large selection process, an individual must achieve at least one result versus an individual from an NCAA Division II institution from outside their own conference.

For NCAA championships selection purposes, competition is countable only when the opponents are from NCAA Division II varsity teams. Competition not in that scope shall be excluded.

The following criteria shall be used in selecting at-large teams and individuals for the championships:

- Regional head-to-head competition.

- Out-of-region head-to-head competition.
- Results versus common opponents.
- Conference championships finish order.
- Derived ratings (XCRI).
  - *The XCRI (Cross Country Ratings Index) is a set of proprietary metrics provided by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. The XCRI rates each individual based on performances throughout the season. Individuals are scored based on statistical analysis of time gaps in relation to other finishers in the race and adjusted based on the relative strength of the competition. Based on these individual metrics, team ratings are derived. XCRI for each individual and team is derived using comparisons among NCAA Division II opponents only.*

Format Comparison at a Glance:

	Current Regional Format	**Proposed Regional Format**
Qualification	All - Comers	Conference AQ (team and individual). At-large participants selected via formula
Number of regional sites	8	1
Total regional participants	Men: avg. 1345 Women: avg. 1353	Men: 440 Women: 440
Regional participants per site	Men: avg. 170 Women: avg. 170	Men: 440 Women: 440
Number of races per site	2 (1 per gender)	4 (2 per gender)
Team Finances	Institution responsible for all costs	Institution responsible for all costs
Travel	Teams travel to in-region site	Team travel to national site
Representation at final site	Top 3 teams per region + top 2 individuals who are not part of a qualifying team advance from each region. Remaining field is selected at large.	Top 17 teams and 12 individuals from each race will advance.