



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD
AND CROSS COUNTRY COMMITTEE
JUNE 15-16, 2022, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Individual relay awards at the outdoor track and field championships.**
 - a. Recommendation. That the Division I Competition Oversight Committee approve allowing for awards to be distributed to all student-athletes who participated on an institution's scoring relay team during any round of the outdoor track and field championships; quarterfinal, semifinal or final.
 - b. Effective date. Immediately for the 2023 outdoor track and field championships.
 - c. Rationale. Currently trophies are provided only to the four student-athletes who ran in the final of the relay events. Providing trophies to all competitors who contributed to the advancement of the relay team throughout the various rounds would be in line with other NCAA championships in which all team members are awarded an individual trophy for their team's success regardless of whether those specific individuals participated in the final competition.
 - d. Estimated budget impact. This would vary year to year based on the number of individual competitors who participate per institution, but the estimated annual impact would likely be no higher than \$3,100 per gender (total of \$6,200).
 - e. Student-athlete impact. This approach provides recognition to the student-athletes who contributed to their team's success during the advancement rounds of the outdoor track and field championships.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Committee.

- a. **Subcommittee assignments.** The Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee reviewed and designated subcommittee assignments for the 2022-23 academic year for cross country, indoor track and field and outdoor track and field.

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- b. Calendar.** The committee reviewed championships travel and monthly teleconference dates for the 2022-23 academic year.
- 2. Strategic plans.** The committee reviewed the strategic plans for the cross country, indoor track and field and outdoor track and field championships. Members noted that for indoor track and field it was important to continue to review how to enhance the ESPN3 coverage. For outdoor track and field the committee noted it was important to continue to evaluate and seek feedback from the USTFCCA Track and Field executive committee on the new four-day first round format.
- 3. Failure-to-participate rule.** The committee discussed whether it made sense to propose any changes to the failure-to-participate rule but elected to take no action at this time, noting that there does not seem to be a better alternative to the execution of the rule than how it is currently written.
- 4. Officials.** The committee spent extensive time discussing track and field officiating and emphasized the need for continued investment into officiating, including more thorough and thoughtful programming surrounding officials' education and training given several concerns that have arisen in recent years. The committee began to identify a possible pool of who they considered to be high-level NCAA referees with which further programming and education could be developed and deployed.

Additionally, the committee noted the importance of a developed evaluation process that could be implemented for officials working NCAA championship events.

These ideas and concerns have been sent to Milan Donley, the NCAA track and field national officials assignor.

- 5. MeetPro.** The committee discussed exploring a possible transition from the use of Hy-Tek results software to MeetPro results software at the NCAA track and field championships, noting the development of MeetPro as a track and field specific software that may more easily support the championship results process.
- 6. Declaration review window for indoor and outdoor track and field championships.** The committee discussed possibly eliminating the review window after declarations for indoor and outdoor track and field, noting that several schools have called during this review window in recent years trying to change declarations once the list has been posted for review. The committee elected to not eliminate the review window but add more specific language to the NCAA pre-championships manuals for indoor and outdoor track and field stating that the review window is not an extension of declarations and is not an opportunity to change student-athletes from scratched to declared or vice versa; rather, it is solely an opportunity to make sure there were no technical glitches that occurred in processing the data from DirectAthletics (declaration site) to the NCAA data specialist.
- 7. Track and field qualifying criteria.** The committee reviewed but did not support a recommendation to not allow any other meets other than conference championship meets to be

contested on the last weekend of the indoor and outdoor track and field regular seasons. Members noted that several conference meets are contested earlier due to venue availability, timing of final exams and the end of the spring semester, and this should not prohibit schools that must contest conference championships earlier from competing in additional competitions on that final weekend of the regular season if possible.

8. Cross country.

- a. **Site selection.** The committee selected host sites for 2023, 2024 and 2025 NCAA cross country regional championships and have forwarded those recommendations to the Competition Oversight Committee for final review and approval. Notification of awarded sites will be announced once final approval comes from the COC.
- b. **Regional qualifying.** The committee revisited discussion on regional cross country qualifying and heard updates from members of the committee who served on a working group with the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) CEO, Sam Seemes, and members from the cross country executive committee within USTFCCCA.

Through discussion it became evident that the current regional system works well and provides the greatest opportunity to ensure the most qualified teams and individuals are advancing to the national championships. The committee found no evidence that other potential regional qualifying models offer any advantages over the current system that would outweigh potential drawbacks.

The committee noted that success in cross country requires physiological peaking and that each competition requires exertion to exhaustion. Energy management throughout the season is important for both competitive success and student-athlete well-being. Coaches must carefully manage the number of contests in which each student-athlete competes. This leads to competitive schedules with very few dates of competition. The current minimum number of contests for sport sponsorship is four.

After reviewing numerous potential regional qualifying models, the committee determined that selecting regional qualifying teams would be problematic given the limited number of dates of competition and data points by which to compare teams. Unlike competitions in track and field, no two cross country courses are alike. Cross country courses vary in important specifications that significantly impact finish time, including course length, hills, turns, footing, running surfaces, etc. These variances preclude finish time comparisons as a metric for selecting teams and necessitate head-to-head competition. With so few dates of competition, the committee sees only two general methods by which to select regional qualifying teams.

1. An open first round that precedes the regional championships (e.g., conference championships) and is used to determine qualification to the regional championships in a manner similar to the current process used to select teams from the regional championships to the national championships. This would create an extra round to the qualifying process but would not solve any of the perceived drawbacks to the current system.
2. A system that uses regular-season win percentage or an RPI-type metric. Such a system would require participation in regular-season contests with very large numbers of participating teams to generate numerous head-to-head outcomes for each team from a single date of competition. However, this would leave cross country teams extremely vulnerable to one off-day (or the converse). Typically, in sports that use win percentage or RPI-type metrics for selection purposes, each regular-season performance or date of competition generates one head-to-head outcome and teams are thereby insulated from situations in which one single performance determines the level of success of the entire regular season. Win percentages and RPI-type metrics do not seem statistically relevant for a sport like cross country with so few dates of competition.

Finally, as far as the committee is aware, cross country is universally contested with an open first round to any championship series regardless of the competitive level of the league or division. This is due to necessity resulting from the factors listed above but is also due to the unique aspect of cross country that makes an open first round possible. Unlike other team sports, cross country competitions can accommodate 40 or more teams in a single head-to-head competition that determines a complete rank-order outcome in about 30 minutes.

With that, the committee concluded that an open first round provides the greatest opportunity to ensure equal access to the championships and that the teams and individuals best prepared to perform late in the season are advancing to the national championships. Accordingly, the committee supports the current system.

- c. **At-large points.** The committee discussed a concept that emerged from the cross country working group to limit the number of teams at a regular-season meet that could score at-large points or be scored against in the at-large process to just the top 15 teams at each meet. However, after review and evaluation, the committee took no action as members felt that after looking at data this concept would have an extremely minimal impact.
- d. **Season timeline.** The committee reviewed another concept that emerged from the cross country working group to change the season timeline for a week off between regionals and nationals, leaving nationals on the current weekend and moving regionals a week earlier. The committee has asked for feedback from the USTFCCA cross country executive committee on this idea and how this impacts the regular season. Notably, the committee wants to hear feedback if this concept is supported, whether shifting from a nine-week regular season

qualifying window to an eight-week window, or shifting the start of the qualifying window one week earlier to maintain a nine-week window.

- e. **Cross country field expansion.** The committee unanimously supported recommending that the men's and women's championship fields for cross country be expanded from 31 teams to 32 teams per gender. The committee noted that the field size has not been expanded since 1998 and sponsorship has grown over this time. The committee feels that the championship field can comfortably accommodate one additional team totaling 262 runners per race, which would be a seven-athlete increase from 255 per race.

NCAA staff will work with the NCAA travel and finance staffs to evaluate the total budgetary impact before submitting a formal recommendation to the Competition Oversight Committee.

- f. **Regional composition.** The committee briefly discussed a recommendation to consider breaking up the Mountain region and going to eight regions in cross country but took no action, thus maintaining the current nine regions.
- g. **USTFCCCA proposal.** The committee voted against a proposal from the USTFCCCA to remove the requirement that individual qualifiers to the national championships must finish in the top 25 at their regional championship. The committee feels strongly about maintaining the current policy of having to finish in the top 25 as members believe it helps ensure a standard of having the better individual qualifiers advance to the national championships.
- h. **Cross country race distances.** Committee members reviewed a letter from the USTFCCCA cross country executive committee stating its opposition to considering any changes to the men's and/or women's cross country championship race distances. Members also again reviewed a letter from RunEqual 2023, which proposed men's and women's championship race distances being changed to 8k each.

The committee agreed with USTFCCCA's stance and stated rationale, noting that a previous vote showed 85% of Division I coaches did not support having the same race distances for men and women and 76% of Division I women's cross country coaches were opposed to increasing the women's distance from 6k to 8k.

Members also noted that differences within track and field and cross country are not uncommon. Currently in track and field, men and women throw different weighted implements, jump over different height hurdles, etc. Additionally, the committee noted that an increase in the women's distance could negatively impact race density and spread at the national championships. Currently with the 6k race distance for women and 10k race distance for men, similar amounts of competition time are spent running per gender.

The committee noted that equal race distances could have the opposite effect and could eliminate or hurt opportunities for women. Ultimately committee members felt strongly that although race distance are different, the experience is of equitable quality for each gender.

- i. **2021 cross country championships.** The committee discussed the championships at Florida State, noting the tremendous job done by the staff, volunteers, and officials. The committee noted that two areas that could be further discussed in the future are allowing for more coaching access on various parts of the course and working with Florida State to have more branding and presence within the community and on local media outlets.
- j. **Timelines for 2022-23.** The committee reviewed the championship timelines and selection procedures in the pre-championships manual and made no adjustments for 2022-23.
- k. **Broadcast review.** The committee continues to be extremely pleased with the coverage and support provided by ESPN and USTFCCCA on the cross country broadcast. Specifically, the committee complimented the timing and scrolling of results graphics. Members noted, however, that there were times when graphics were overlaid on to race footage and that some of the wrong lineups were mentioned during the broadcast. Ultimately the committee felt the addition of ESPN has been great and is excited about the continued ESPN coverage over the next couple of years.

9. Indoor track and field.

- a. **2022 championships.** The committee acknowledged the hard work of the host staff at this year's championships in Birmingham. Members did, however, note that some administrative vacancies left the host short staffed and running thin on support. Members also noted some issues with the sound system and the ability to hear announcements clearly. This information was shared with the host staff to adjust for the future.
- b. **Timelines for 2022-23.** The committee reviewed the championship timelines and selection procedures as outlined in the pre-championships manual and did not make any adjustments for 2022-23 other than to more clearly define the purpose of the declaration review window as noted in Informational Item 6 above.
- c. **Technical manual.** The committee discussed the indoor track and field technical manual and did not make any adjustments for 2022-23.
- d. **Format.** The committee discussed continuing with a schedule similar to the format used in 2021 and 2022 with men and women split into separate sessions. The committee expressed many of the positive aspects to a schedule with separate sessions for each gender but decided to ask for feedback from the USTFCCCA track & field executive committee on this format. The committee will discuss further and determine a finalized schedule in an upcoming meeting.
- e. **Indexing.** The committee plans to discuss the topic of indoor track indexing on a future meeting with members of the Division II and Division III committees to evaluate if any changes or adjustments to the current process should be considered.

10. Outdoor track and field.

- a. **Preliminary rounds.** The committee discussed the preliminary rounds at the University of Arkansas and Indiana University, along with the finals site at the University of Oregon. Members complimented the hosts' hard work and expressed gratitude for their planning and preparation. The committee emphasized continuing to communicate expectations of officials and ensuring they are well prepared to work NCAA championship events.

The committee noted seeding issues that occurred in field events at the finals site in Eugene and has discussed a more proactive plan to ensure seeding issues do not occur in the future. Additionally, the committee discussed the need to address congestion on the infield at the national championships to ensure safety and a cleaner presentation of the competition. This includes limiting people who are on the field of play and removing equipment once competitions are concluded (e.g., high jump pits).

- b. **Timelines for 2022-23.** The committee reviewed the championship timelines and selection procedures as outlined in the pre-championships manual and did not make any adjustments for 2022-23 other than to more clearly define the purpose of the declaration review window as noted Informational Item 6 above.
- c. **Technical manual.** The committee discussed the outdoor track and field technical manual and specifically mentioned the language that states: "At each First Round Site, in each event contested, **no more** than twelve (12) competitors or twelve (12) relay teams shall advance from a First Round Site of the Championships to the Final Championships Competition site. **The stated maximums are absolute and will not be extended.**" Members agreed this language should remain as is and that advancement to the finals site should not exceed the maximums noted. Members noted the 12-person cap from each site was set to ensure the field size at the finals site was protected, not for financial reasons, but for equity from each site and to protect the integrity of the championship format (number of heats/flights, equal numbers of student-athletes in event specific heats/flights, championship scoring opportunities, etc.). With the uniqueness of this event and two preliminary rounds happening at the same time at two different locations under the jurisdiction of different officials, they don't know how their decisions to advance more athletes to the final site from their respective site could impact the previously mentioned items given two different sites are feeding into the final site. While in an event such as the 10,000 meters it may be possible to add competitors without significantly impacting the administration of the event, the same cannot be said across all the various event disciplines at the finals site and therefore applying this policy only to certain events would be inequitable. Additionally, current rules and policies give latitude to officials at each preliminary round to determine if an advancement of an athlete(s) is warranted to another round at the site that doesn't disrupt the administration of the event at the respective site. But the policy to advance only 12 to the finals site is an established policy that has been consistently applied since it was implemented, with established precedent.

The committee also elected to include language within the technical manual that allows for the consideration of long jump and triple jump runway extensions to occur, in consultation

with the host institution and NCAA committee/site representatives, if the venue has the capabilities and it can be accommodated in a safe manner.

In the long throws at the finals site the committee has elected to add five minutes to the warm-up time for the nine student-athletes advancing to the finals. This adjustment would go from 10 minutes of allowed warm-up time to 15 minutes of allowed warm-up time. The committee commented that the current 10 minutes is rushed and does not adequately allow athletes, especially those that have advanced from flight one, to have the appropriate warm-up time.

Lastly, the committee discussed the seeding procedures from the preliminary round sites to the finals site that are currently being used for all running events up to the 1500m. The committee acknowledged the current seeding procedures that are based on place only and not time are used to be as equitable as possible given there could be varying weather conditions at each of the two preliminary-round sites. The committee discussed a seeding process that would give equal ranking to corresponding places from each preliminary-round site so that the fastest heat winner from the west is ranked number one and so is the fastest heat winner from the east. That would produce two No. 1 seeds, two No. 2 seeds, two No. 3 seeds, etc. Traditional patterns would then be used to snake the heat placers from the west into heats and then do the same thing for the east but **in reverse order**. Giving equal ranking to corresponding placers from each region would protect against weather-associated variations in performance. It would be important to flip the order of the snaking between the two regions so that the two No. 1 seeds, the fastest winners from each preliminary-round site, are not in the same heat. The committee plans to seek further feedback from the USTFCCA track and field executive committee before making a final decision.

- d. Relay report times.** The committee discussed the tight relay report times for the indoor and outdoor track and field championships. Currently, teams are allowed to adjust their relays up until five minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the event. The committee noted that although this window is tight, it is in the best interests of the student-athletes and participants to allow as much time as possible and elected to make no changes to the policy.

11. Future meeting dates. The committee confirmed the annual meeting dates for 2023. The 2023 annual meeting will be held June 14-16.

Committee Chair: Ervin Lewis, University of North Florida, Atlantic Sun Conference
Staff Liaison: Jeff Mlynski, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee June 15-16, 2022, Meeting
Attendees:
Jay Arther, Indiana University, Bloomington.
Blake Boldon, Drake University.

Jason Drake, California State University, Fresno.
Elvis Forde, Temple University.
Kerri Gallagher, Manhattan College.
Shawn Green, University of New Hampshire.
Amy Horst, Loyola University Maryland.
Ervin Lewis, University of North Florida.
Natasha Oakes, University of North Texas.
Connie Price-Smith, University of Mississippi.
Matt Roe, Butler University.
Dave Smith, Oklahoma State University.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
None.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Jeff Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Lindsey Eldred, Championships and Alliances.