

2024-25 MHSAA CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK & FIELD COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rick Bauer, Saugatuck
Lewis Clingman, Grand Rapids (ATOM)
David Emeott, Kentwood
Jerry Haggerty, Wayland
Jason Hemgesberg, Chesaning
Steve Linn, Deckerville (MITCA)
Mike Nesbitt, Bay City
Gordie Richardson, Gaylord (ATOM)
Clay Schiman, Hillsdale
Michael Schley, Wyandotte
Cari Scholtens, Greenville

Fred Smith, Bangor
Lesley Starkey, Sturgis
Joe Stephens, Berrien Springs
Mike VanDyke, Grand Rapids

GUEST

Amy Ream, Traverse City (MATS)

MHSAA STAFF

Cody Inglis (Recorder)

The committee met to review specific National Federation sports rules, MHSAA tournament policies, and interpretations applicable to cross country and track & field during the regular season and MHSAA tournaments. The following is a summary of items discussed by the committee, including recommendations to staff for inclusion in tournament materials, as well as recommendations to be advanced for Representative Council consideration. The committee was reminded of the importance of their local perspective, along with providing feedback and input, while maintaining a broad view of the sports of cross country and track & field.

Following the welcome, introductions, statement of committee purpose, and the committee's relationship to the Representative Council, the following business was conducted:

DISCUSSION ITEMS

TRACK & FIELD

1. Reviewed the 2024 Committee Minutes and Recommendations.
2. Evaluated the MHSAA Regional JH/MS Cross Country and Track & Field competitions. The committee agreed to continue these events, noting consistent year-over-year growth in participation. Site selection, event structure, and processes for JH/MS competition were reviewed.
3. Discussed the 2025 National Federation rules and editorial changes for cross country and track & field.
4. Reviewed the Adaptive and Wheelchair Track & Field category post-2024. The committee was reminded that this category is now a permanent part of MHSAA tournaments. In 2024, adaptive athletes competed in four events—100m, 200m, 400m, and shot put—at both Regional and Final levels. Discussion focused on growing participation, with eight athletes involved in 2024. The MHSAA will continue to promote these opportunities statewide, including collaboration with MITCA and emphasizing the program in the MHSAA Track & Field Rules Meeting.
5. Reviewed the work of the MHSAA Track & Field Standards Committee, which met in August and November 2024. The committee developed additional qualifying standards for Regionals and Finals, with particular focus on Early Qualifying (EQ) standards. Updates included plans for communication through the MITCA clinic, coordination with Athletic.net, and development of a comprehensive FAQ outlining EQ meet criteria and Finals qualification processes. The committee acknowledged potential challenges in the first year but expressed optimism about the long-term benefits.
6. Reviewed Participating School Tournament Information and Manager Materials.

7. Confirmed 2025 Track & Field Final sites:
Division 1: East Kentwood HS
Division 2: Hamilton HS
Division 3: Kent City HS
Division 4: Hudsonville – Baldwin Middle School
8. Continued discussion on the policy allowing coaches on the infield at Finals. Finals hosts will implement systems that suit their venues. Balancing coach access with athlete support and safety concerns remains a challenge. Continued enforcement and clear guidelines are necessary.
9. Discussed the impact of a potential fifth division in cross country and track & field. MITCA originally proposed this concept, and data was presented showing enrollment disparities and implications, particularly considering the UP's separate championships. A study group will convene in spring 2025 for further review.
10. Reviewed Emergency Action Plan (EAP), emphasizing the unique challenges of outdoor sports with large numbers of participants spread over a wide area. MHSAA policies were shared, and further education efforts will be directed to coaches and schools.
11. Discussed ongoing interest in Indoor Track and potential MHSAA sponsorship. There is growing support for officially adding the sport. A concern remains regarding misunderstanding or disregard of out-of-season coaching rules during the indoor season. The committee recommends creating a shortened MHSAA indoor track season beginning in 2026-27, allowing time for preparation in coordination with MITCA.

CROSS COUNTRY

1. Reviewed the 2024 Cross Country Tournament:
 - Live Results
 - JH/MS Regional competition
2. Outlined the 2025 Cross Country Calendar:
 - **LP Finals:** Michigan International Speedway – Saturday, Nov. 1
 - **UP Finals:** Host – Munising HS – Saturday, Oct. 18
 - **LP Regionals:** October 24 or 25
 - **First Practice:** August 11
 - **First Competition:** August 15
3. Confirmed Site Selection Committee Meeting – April 30, 2025

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MHSAA STAFF

1. Work with MITCA to explore incorporating a Team State Finals into the MHSAA Track & Field tournament, considering calendar constraints, qualification standards, and meet scoring.
2. Continue emphasizing Emergency Action Plans to promote event safety and security.
3. Include a point of emphasis on reducing heat and flight sizes.
4. Continue promoting the MHSAA track & field wheelchair program in rules meetings with officials and coaches to grow and enhance participation.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, establish an 8-week indoor track & field season starting in January and culminating with an MHSAA Finals in late February or early March. (15-0)