

2020 MHSAA Cross Country Race Management Considerations

- Scheduling of host sites and courses needs to be done ahead of time to ensure the venue can both handle a race and is willing to be the host site. This includes private facilities like parks that may have restrictions on races or congregations of people like cross country races. No spectators may need to be strongly considered.
- Number of teams could be between 2-12 teams dependent upon the size of the teams. Control number of athletes per team and race. Varsity only and JV only races may need to occur to fit the field size number of 70. In addition, time schedules will need to be strictly enforced and moving teams and genders of teams in and out of the race venue. A host school can adjust based on their course measurements and design.
- Multiple races can be held if the field size is limited to 70 and if separated in time.
- Teams should consider arriving no earlier than one hour prior to a race to limit contact. Host schools should connect with all teams arriving to state the arrival time and protocols for prerace contact and communication.
- Course design should be considered and adjusted as necessary to include non-repeating courses and at least 6 ft wide at its narrowest points. In addition, "passing lanes" could be considered as a way to have competitors physically distance during a race.
- If spectators are allowed at the course, there must be a restricted area at the finish that keeps spectators away so they do not interfere with the "quick exit" of each athlete.
- If spectators are allowed there may need to be additional flagging / paint in areas on the course where spectators could get within 6 feet of runners as they spectate / cheer in order to keep those spectators at least 6 feet back from runners.
- Team tents and tent "cities" commonly found at Cross Country races should be for teams only if they are used. Team members should use dividers or "tent walls" if physical distancing between tents can't be done.
- Food and tailgating should be discouraged at all cross country events in order to get teams in and out.
- Consider alternative formats to limit contact and for distributing race information, race and bib numbers, team check in, etc. This may include electronic communication, bags/envelopes with race numbers and safety pins that are given to the coach.
- Team run outs need to be done straight out from the team box, maintain physical distancing from other teams.
- Teams should not mass collect warm-ups at the start area.
- Staggered starts may need to be used. (Either individual starts or waves of up to 10 racers, depending on course configuration).
- Examples of staggered starts include: (These may have to be adjusted according to the course, facility and type of race.)
 - Waved starts where number 1 runners, number 2 runners, etc. from each team start at the same time, physically distanced on the starting line.
 - Waved starts for each team every one minute or another timeframe.
 - Waved starts where times are used to determine when a racer starts with other similar ability racers.
 - "Pursuit" style races where racers start every 15 or 20 seconds and their time is recorded at the end of the race for each participant. This time is then "ordered" when compared to all other times and a team score can then be computed.
 - "Virtual" races where a track is used to compete in a 5K race and then times and scores are compared between two or more schools.
- Any grouping, staggering or waves would need to be coordinated with the finish timer to ensure proper timing of runners. FAT timing and the use of a video camera for finishes would be key in determining proper placement and times of competitors.
- Host schools can add course monitors and marshals to the course in multiple key spots to monitor social distancing and remind runners to run their line for proper distancing.
- Create chutes and finishes that do not encourage congestion.
- Consider creating an open finish corral that would allow runners to immediately exit the finish area and head to their team camp.
- Creative finish line options should be encouraged to maintain physical distancing. This includes:

- An open finish corral which allows runners to immediately exit the finish area and head to their team camp or transportation. No lines or lineups should be done after crossing the finish line.
- Multiple or separate finish lines for teams could be considered as an alternative to the traditional finish line for all.
- Each team should provide a representative in the finish corral to assist each of their team's athletes to quickly exit the corral. Each representative must be wearing PPE and social distancing from individuals not of their team.
- When possible, disposable B tags should be used for timing. FAT timing and video camera systems should be encouraged as a way to expedite timing and results.
- If shoe chips are used, then the coach of each school must collect and turn in following the meet. There will be no chip retrieval in the finish corral.
- Coaches and administrators should work with your timing company to set up timing system that works for your type of meet.
- Team finishes are based on combined places for the first 5 runners. Ties can be broken the same way typically used in the past.
- Individual finishes are ranked by time after races finish and team results are merged.
- Awards ceremonies should be adjusted, potentially even eliminated in order to maintain time schedule, get teams in and out and practice best health precautions. Options could include giving medals to team coaches in envelopes or not giving out medals or awards.