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September 28, 2011

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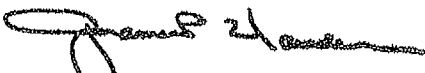
Dear Sheryl:

This past spring the Track and Field Advisory requested that the NDHSAA Board "move regional meet to Friday to allow Saturday as an alternate day if inclement weather causes for a change." The vote among the Class A and Class B coaches was close to unanimous. The vote on that request was 4-6 in Athletic Review and 1-9 with the Board. This is a formal request from the Bismarck Public Schools to appear before the NDHSAA October 19th meeting in Bismarck to re-visit this request.

Attached is a copy of an email you received earlier from Tim Jacobsen regarding the rationale for this request. I can bring additional rationale to the meeting. In addition, Randy Johnson of Hazen has asked to be present at the meeting as a representative for the Class B coaches.

Please call if you have any questions. Let me know if we can get this on the October agenda.

Sincerely,



Jim Haussler, AD
Bismarck Public Schools

North Dakota High School Administrators,

Over the last several years class A and class B coaches have overwhelmingly supported moving our regional track and field meet from Saturday to Friday one week before the state track meet. This issue has been brought to the NDHSAA athletic review and board members, but has not passed largely because it involves loss of school time. At this point, North Dakota track and field coaches are respectfully asking that North Dakota administrators revisit this issue. Our intent would be to host regional track meets on the Friday, one week before state, with a start time not before 3pm. This late start time would cut down on the loss of school time for students. It would also give us the option of rescheduling the region meet to Saturday in case of inclement weather and would provide our athletes with additional recovery/preparation heading into the state meet. At the 2011 NDHSCA coaches convention all 25 class A and B track coaches in attendance at the advisory session (this included the current class A and B track and field advisory members) were in favor of this move. Additionally, at the state track meet coaches meeting, all class A coaches and the majority of class B coaches were in favor of moving the regional meet to Friday.

Rationale

1. If a Saturday regional meet is cancelled due to weather no alternative make up dates are available, since state meet entry deadlines are noon on Sunday. Additionally, athletes should have a full week or preparation and recovery to promote peak performance at the state meet. This would rule out rescheduling a region meet to Monday the same week as state. If a regional meet would occur on a Monday, most athletes would only have 2 days of practice on a track surface (Tuesday & Wednesday) the week of state. Typically the Thursday before the state meet is a travel day, with no practice allowed at the state meet venue.
2. Safety concerns for the athletes, officials and fans. With only one day to complete the regional meet, it forces meets to take place rain or shine. This year at some region meets, kids competed in less than ideal conditions putting themselves, officials and spectators at risk of serious injury. Some examples; slippery implements in the javelin and discus would put people at a greater risk of getting hit, slippery pole vault poles and wind may cause a pole vaulter to miss the landing pit. Lastly, poor conditions could put runners and jumpers at risk of pulled or strained muscles.
3. The region meet is the second most important meet of the year where kids have the opportunity to qualify for the state meet not only by time, but also by place. If a regional meet were canceled due to weather, it would result in deserving athletes being left out of the state meet. In most cases we count on regional placers to fill events at the state track meet. For example, this year in the class A boys high jump we only had 6 state qualifiers by height. If a regional meet would have been cancelled due to weather, we would not have been able to have 8 placers at the state meet. A worse scenario would be if one side of the state had good weather where teams were able to complete the region meet, and another side of the state had bad weather forcing regional meets to be cancelled. The teams that competed in a region meet would have an unfair advantage heading into the state meet over teams that missed out on a regional meet due to weather.

4. Larger track and field venues typically host a Class A regional meet and a Class B regional meet on the same day. This puts considerable strain on workers/meet management and further cuts down on the chances of moving a meet due to weather. An example; The Bismarck Community Bowl traditionally hosts a region meet starting early on Saturday morning, followed by a class A regional meet later in the afternoon. If the weather is bad that morning, there is no option of rescheduling the B region meet for later in the day, because of the scheduled class A meet. If we were given permission to schedule regional meets on Friday, large venues would have the option of hosting a Class A regional meet on Friday, followed by a Class B regional meet on Saturday. This would allow for more workers at both meets, better meet management and additional leeway to reschedule due to weather.

A compromise

At this point there are no restrictions on when meets can occur during the regular season. At our summer advisory meeting at the NDHSCA convention, coaches that were in attendance felt like a compromise could be in order. We all agreed on the following suggestion; If regional meets were allowed to be scheduled on the Friday (after 3pm) before the state track meet, the following restriction would be put into place. No meets could be scheduled during school time before the Class A state indoor meet, which takes place on the last Friday in March. This would force regional indoor meets and other invitational indoor meets to either occur later in the afternoon or on the weekend.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

North Dakota track and field coaches