

NEW ENGLAND PREPARATORY SCHOOL TRACK ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the NEPSTA SPRING ANNUAL MEETING

4 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, 2020
Via Zoom

NOTE TO ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

These minutes are sent to you so that you can be informed about issues regarding NEPSTA. Please forward to all cross country and track coaches at your school.

Contact Information

NEPSTA Executive Board

President: Mark de Kanter (mdekanter@westminster-school.org)

Vice President: George Briggs (george_briggs@stgeorges.edu)

Treasurer: Kate Seyboth (kseyboth@westoverschool.org)

Secretary: Becky Purdy (becky_purdy@loomis.org) **Please add my e-mail address to your contacts list to ensure you receive all my e-mails.**

Upcoming Meetings

- Fall Board Meeting: Sunday, September 13, likely via Zoom, time to be decided.
- Annual Spring Meeting: March 2021. Date, time, and location TBA

Attendance

Those present:

Beth Larson, Avon Old Farms; Charlie O'Rourke, BB&N; Adam Harder, Belmont Hill; Dory Driscoll, Berkshire School, Ted Barker-Hook, Brimmer and May; Joanna McDonough, Brooks School, Paul Rupprecht, Charles River School, liaison to NEPSAC; Kevin Grimes, Chase Collegiate; Ned Gallagher, Choate Rosemary Hall; James Davidson, Choate Rosemary Hall; Jon Waldron, Concord Academy; Gregory Domestico, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Taylor Dempsey, Covenant Christian Academy; Stirling Ince, Cushing Academy; Brian Cook, Dana Hall School; Mike Schloat, Deerfield Academy; Evan Kendall, Dublin School, Hilary Coder Hall, Exeter; Brandon Newbould, Exeter; Glen Colello, Greens Farms Academy; Jane Finch, Greenwich Academy; Morgen Fisher, Gunnery; Leslie Guenther, Hebron Academy; Nathan Seidenberg, Hotchkiss; Anna Klimmek, Hotchkiss; Pierre Yoo, Hotchkiss; Ken Grant, Hyde School; Andrew Baird, Kent School; RJ Jenkins, Kents Hill School; Elizabeth Edwards, Kimball Union Academy; Mark Lingle, King School; Fritz Goodman, Kingswood Oxford School; Christina Scanlon, Landmark High School; Becky Purdy, Loomis Chaffee; Scott Purdy, Loomis Chaffee; Wes Howard, Marianapolis Prep; Daid DiCicco, Marianapolis Prep; PJ Andrews, Marianapolis Prep; Sara Kate May, Middlesex School; Emily Teevens, Middlesex School; Kathy Havard, Millbrook School; Julie Boynton, Montrose School; Grant Gonzalez, Northfield Mount

Hermon; Kara Walker, Northfield Mount Hermon; Bob Kern, Noble & Greenough; Kate Blake, Noble & Greenough; Jullian Forgue, Pomfret School; David Ring, Pomfret School; Dan McDonough, Portsmouth Abbey School; Paul Karasch, Rivers School; Stephen Paluseo, Rivers School; Erin Dromgoole, Roxbury Latin; Nick Poles, Roxbury Latin; Suzanne Myette, Sacred Heart Greenwich; Steve Klots, South Kent School; George Briggs, St. George's School; Corliss Spencer, St. Luke's School; Karen Bryant, St. Mark's School; Kevin Brooks, St. Paul's School; Kate Daniels, St. Paul's School; Harrison Soebroto, St. Paul's School; Scott Gray, Stoneleigh-Burnham School; Beth Krasemann, Suffield Academy; Chris Adams, Tabor Academy; Stephen McCabe, Taft School; Jeff Browne, Thayer Academy; Joe Pelletier, Thayer Academy; Mike Jones, Thayer Academy; Darren Redman, Tilton School; Jim McDougal, Trinity-Pawling School; Mark de Kanter, Westminster School; Daniel Batten, Westminster School; Arianna Vailas, Westminster School; Kate Seyboth, Westover School; Gregory Bowerman, Williams School; Greg Tuleja, Williston Northampton School; Moriah Musto, Winsor; Tony Johnson, Worcester Academy

Schools not present this year:

(Please note that some school representatives may not have heard the instructions for online signing in at the opening of the meeting. If your school appears on the list below but you were in attendance, please let Becky Purdy know at becky_purdy@loomis.org, and she will update the records.)

Andover, Brancroft School, BCDS, Berwick Academy, Boston Trinity, Bradford Christian Academy, Brewster Academy, Brunswick School, BU Academy, Cambridge School Weston, Canterbury School, Chapel Hill Chauncey Hall, Cheshire Academy, Commonwealth School, Concord Academy, Dana Hall, Darrow School, Dexter-Southfield, Eagle Hill, Ethel Walker, Faith Christian Academy, Forman, Gould, Governor's Academy, Groton School, Hamden Hall, Harvey, High Mowing, Holderness, Holy Child, Hopkins School, Lawrence Academy, Lexington Christian, MacDuffie, Marvelwood, Masters School, Milton Academy, Miss Hall's, Miss Porter's, New Hampton, Newman School, Newton Country Day, NYMA, Oakwood Friends, Pingree, Proctor, Providence Country Day, Rocky Hill, Rye Country Day, Salisbury, St. Andrew's, St. Sebastian's, St. Thomas More, Storm King, Vermont Academy, Waring, Watkinson School, White Mountain, Wilbraham and Monson, Winchendon, Woodhall, Wooster

The meeting began at 4 p.m.

President Mark de Kanter informed the membership that NEPSAC to date has not officially canceled championships this spring, but as many schools already have canceled their seasons because of the COVID-19 pandemic and as the health crisis continues to escalate, the expectation is that NEPSAC will cancel championships. For that reason, discussion of preparation for this spring's track & field championships has been removed from today's agenda.

Treasurer's Report

Kate Seyboth reported that income and expenses are very similar to last year. Most years, though, NEPSA income exceeds expenses in cross country and expenses exceed income during track & field season. This year, the balance went down during cross country, which is good because we are trying to reduce our surplus. Kate added that the report is a snapshot of things to date, not the full fiscal year yet. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

Dues and athlete rosters

NEPSTA annual dues of \$40 must be paid by **October 15**. By NEPSAC rules, a player must be on a tournament-bound team by the classification deadline (fall October 15, winter January 15, spring April 15) in order to participate in NEPSAC tournaments. Payments can be made through the [NEPSAC website \(www.nepsac.org/page/3301\)](http://www.nepsac.org/page/3301) or by mailing a check to the NEPSTA treasurer. However, the treasurer is changing this year as Kate Seyboth is stepping down. When a new treasurer is elected and the account is set up, the membership will be informed of the address and procedure for sending checks.

Federation Rule Changes for Track & Field

- Running backwards on jumps and javelin
George Briggs (St. George's, NEPSTA vice president) explained that the athletes will no longer be allowed to run in the opposite direction from the pit/sector during warmups for the horizontal jumps, pole vault, or javelin. The rule is primarily for safety but also will help to speed up meets. This change will take some getting used to since some athletes get or check their approach steps by running backwards from the board or fault line. Coaches were advised to have their athletes measure their approach distances in practices before meet day so that they can set their marks at the meets and then do run-throughs in the correct direction. A suggestion was made that tape measures be provided before the competitions at each of these events for this purpose. There was discussion about whether the rule applies to all meets or only championship meets. There was consensus that encouraging compliance to the rule during all meets would help athletes prepare for championship conditions.
- Change in exchange zone for 4 x 100 and 4 x 200 relays (changed from 20m to 30m)
George explained that the fly zone is now part of the exchange zone for these two relays.

Review of 2019 XC Championships, Saturday, November 9, 2019

Div. I: Northfield Mount Hermon, Grant Gonzalez

Grant noted that the weather was much better than the last time NMH hosted this meet 10 years ago. He said the XC Coaches Handbook was very helpful and Granite State Timing was great, arriving early to help with set-up. NMH decided to go without chip timing, and that worked well. There was some backup in the chute in the boys JV race, but that was worked out with help from the meet volunteers. Beth Larson (Avon) commented that Granite State was somewhat problematic last year when Avon hosted the Div. I meet, and she was much happier with Fast Track Timing, which handled the timing for the Founders League Championship this fall at Avon. Mark de Kanter agreed that Granite State has some idiosyncrasies, but the company has the advantage of being able to commit to timing four championship meets simultaneously at four different sites every year. Mark said it is worth investigating whether Fast Track Timing has the capacity to make a four-site commitment.

Div. II: Nobles with co-host Roxbury Latin

Bob Kern (Nobles) reported that the meet went smoothly. He thanked Roxbury Latin coaches for running the chute very well. There were two cameras at the finish line, which was very helpful. One camera, from Granite State, recorded the finishes from the side, and a second camera, from Roxbury Latin, filmed the finish from the front. One runner was disqualified for conduct at the

finish. Bob noted that designating a person in advance to handle the awards ceremony and not having that person officiating at the finish helped the meet run smoothly because he or she could get started setting up the awards ceremony ahead of time.

Div. III: Gunnery, at White Memorial Conservation Center, with co-host Millbrook Morgen Fisher (Gunnery) reported that the meet went smoothly even though it was tight to fit in the races in the limited daylight hours. Because the meet was at an off-site location, the organizers were concerned about the temperature and parking, but the weather cooperated. They had arranged for a local high school as a backup in case indoor space was needed, but it was not needed. Teams were understanding that the course was in a public park and thus the trails could not be as groomed or the parking as regulated as on a school campus. The course was leaf-blown the day before the meet. Morgen said it was helpful that a Junior Olympics cross country meet was being held on the course the next day, so those meet organizers also had done some course preparation work. Kathy Havard (Millbrook) said chip timing was essential, especially because the course was fast. She said she heard some small criticisms that the course was slightly short, which teams didn't know ahead of time, and that cars were not as carefully controlled because it was a public park. Fritz Goodman (Kingswood Oxford) mentioned that he was nervous about the amount of leaf coverage on rocks on the trails, but there were no major ankle turns. He suggested leaf-blowing the course early on the morning of the meet in addition to the day before.

Div. IV: Hebron, Leslie Guenther

Leslie reported that all went well. Hebron did receive permission from NEPSTA to start the first race at 1 p.m. because of the shorter window of daylight in Maine and on Hebron's wooded course, and they informed participating schools of the altered start time well in advance. The meet used chip timing, and it worked well. They used two cameras for backup, and they had race bibs with tear-off tabs to serve as backup to the chip results. A pop-up tent past the finish line for medical assistance made the area easy to find.

Leslie also noted that she had been skeptical about using Fine Designs T-shirts for the meet shirts, but the arrangement worked well. Meet hosts from the other divisions agreed that they were grateful to have Fine Designs handle the shirts and that it worked well. Mark de Kanter said based on these reports and the positive reports from the track & field championships last spring, NEPSTA, via NEPSAC, will continue to work with Fine Designs for future championships.

Review of 2019 XC All Star Meet at St. Mark's School, Saturday, November 16, 2019

Meet director Charlie ORourke (BB&N) said the meet went well and St. Mark's is a great place to host with the help of St. Mark's coaches Karen Bryant and David Lyons. The spreadsheet entry system initiated last year is a big improvement from the previous method.

Track & Field Division Realignment Proposal for Spring 2021

The board's proposal for realignment of the track divisions was distributed to the membership on March 9. The proposal was based on data and analysis by George Briggs (St. George's, NEPSTA vice president) and review by both the board and the Executive Committee. NEPSAC also was kept abreast of the process. If approved by at least two-thirds of the members present at today's meeting, the realignment would be ratified and would take effect in spring 2021. The usual petition process for reclassification of individual schools to different divisions would still be

available, with a January 30, 2021, deadline for such petitions for the spring 2021 T&F season. The realignment proposal, data summary, and George's preliminary report are attached as addenda to these minutes.

Mark de Kanter acknowledged the time and skill that George put into the gathering and analysis of the data, and he invited George to explain his process.

George explained that he looked at school size and the average finish of teams in their T&F division championships for the last five years. Then he took a closer look at schools that had a standard deviation greater than 1 from the norm in either of these two categories. For these schools, he then recommended moving them up or down or keeping them in their current divisions. The board, in an initial meeting, and the Executive Committee, in a subsequent meeting with the board, discussed the data and recommendations.

Mark noted that the proposal recommended moving two schools, Trinity-Pawling and Cushing, down from their current divisions. As a courtesy, the board reached out to both schools to give them the option of staying in their current, higher divisions. The board felt it was OK to offer this option because one of the goals of the realignment is to shrink the size of Division III, which has by far more schools than either of the other divisions. Trinity-Pawling asked to remain in Division I, and Cushing was comfortable moving from Division II to Division III. The board then finalized the proposal for presentation to the membership. Mark said the proposal also was shared with NEPSAC classification coordinator Mark Conroy, who reiterated NEPSAC's emphasis on school size first and success of program as a secondary consideration.

After the introductions from George and Mark, the proposal was opened up to the membership for discussion. A robust discussion ensued, with contributions summarized below:

- Adam Harder (Belmont Hill) thanked George for his thoughtful quantitative analysis. Belmont Hill does not take issue with the proposal to move from Division II to Division I, especially because of Belmont Hill's size. Adam was concerned, however, about making schools such as Thayer and Kingswood Oxford move up a division because of their programs' success when their school size indicates they belong where they are (Thayer in Division II, K-O in Division III).
- Hilary Coder Hall (Exeter) asked if a school's programs could be split, with the boys program in one division and the girls program in another. Mark responded that the board did not want to force splits by gender, but schools can petition to do so. He cited the example of Thayer, which in anticipation of the realignment to Division I for 2021, petitioned to go ahead and move its girls program to Division I for 2020. And Thayer plans to petition for 2021 to keep its boys in Division II.
- Moriah Musto (Winsor) said that when Winsor was moved to Division I in cross country, the school petitioned to move back to Division II because its school size was closer in alignment with the Division II schools and was told that school size was not a factor.
- Erin Dromgoole (Roxbury Latin), who was NEPSTA president when the referenced cross country realignment took place, said the same criteria were used and school size was a major consideration.
- Greg Domestico (Convent of the Sacred Heart) said he can see how school size indicates Convent should move up, but his program is very new, and the school does not have a track

facility. George Briggs responded that these are valid arguments and could be made in a petition.

- Mark Conroy (NEPSAC) commented that the single most important factor is enrollment when NEPSAC sets divisions in other sports. Other factors can be considered, but enrollment in primary. Generally, enrollment per gender of greater than 270 is Division I, between 200 and 270 is Division II, and less than 200 is Division III. Then there are some outliers, especially schools that want to move up to a higher division even though they have a smaller enrollment. But forcing a school to move up when their enrollment does not fall in line with these guidelines is “unprecedented,” he said. He has been on the NEPSAC board for 18 years and has been the classification director for five years, since the position was created, and he has never seen a school required to move up unless its enrollment size indicated it belonged in a higher division. He emphasized that he saw the process that NEPSTA has followed has been very good, but he wanted to raise this concern.
- Erin Dromgoole said “unprecedented” is not an accurate description because NEPSTA followed the same process with cross country realignment.
- Jeff Browne (Thayer) said Thayer is on board with moving to Division I for the girls and will petition to move the boys back to Division II before the 2021 season.

After discussion concluded, a virtual vote was taken anonymously through the miracle of technology. Each school that was present had one vote. The result: 45 yes, 2 no. The proposal passed with the required two-thirds majority.

Changes to [2020 XC Handbook](#), based on feedback from championship meet hosts:

- Importance of video recording runners face-on in addition to Granite State Racing Service’s side-view camera
- Award ceremony
- Chute monitors should have notecards for bib #'s since tear tags generally are not used any longer

New Keeper of XC Handbook?

Mark de Kanter has been the keeper of the handbook, but he will no longer be coaching because he has taken on a new role at Westminster. He asked for volunteers to take over this role. Glen Colello (Greens Farms) offered to take on this role.

Preview XC Championships 2020. Date is Saturday, November 14, 2020

Div. I: Deerfield

Div. II: Host Tabor with meet director BB&N

Div. III: tentative: Canterbury with meet director Kingwood-Oxford

Div. IV: **Host site needed**

Reminder to any teams that wish to petition to change divisions for the 2020 cross country season, the deadline for filing a petition with the NEPSTA board is April 15. The petition should come from the school’s athletic director or head of school on the school’s electronic letterhead.

Nominations: NEPSTA Treasurer and Secretary

Mark de Kanter explained that these positions come up for election/re-election every two years. Kate Seyboth is stepping down from her role as treasurer, and the board and membership

thanked her for her great service and expertise. Becky Purdy is willing to continue as secretary, but nominations are open if others are interested. Kate offered to train the new treasurer over the summer.

As no one immediately volunteered, nominations were kept open until the end of the meeting. Near the conclusion of the meeting, Beth Larson (Avon Old Farms) offered to take on the role of treasurer, and the membership informally and gratefully approved Beth's election as treasurer as well as Becky Purdy's continuation as secretary.

Division Meetings

The meeting was divided into "breakout rooms" via Zoom for cross country sub-meetings by division. With the current track season suspended, track sub-meetings were not held.

At the conclusion of the sub-meetings, the divisions reported back with the following names of their representatives to the Executive Committee for the period March 2020–March 2021:

Division I:

Jeff Browne, Thayer
Moriah Musto, Winsor
Mike Schloat, Deerfield

Division II:

Dory Driscoll, Berkshire
Chris Adams, Tabor
Erin Dromgoole, Roxbury Latin

Division III:

Fritz Goodman, Kingswood Oxford
Paul Karasch, Rivers
Kathy Havard, Millbrook

Division IV:

Ted Barker-Hook, Brimmer & May
Corliss Spencer, St. Luke's
One additional rep needed

In other sub-meeting business, Divisions I and II reviewed their championship hosts and co-hosts for the 2020 XC season, and Divisions III and IV discussed the need for championship sites for 2020 XC. No definitive sites were confirmed for these two divisions although some possibilities were discussed.

Retirements, Recognition

The board acknowledged and the membership congratulated Bill Dolittle of Oakwood Friends and Ken Grant of Hyde upon their retirements after decades of coaching (Bill 36 years, Ken 40

years). Their dedication to the sports of cross country and track and field and their wise counsel over the years are very much appreciated and lauded.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.

A recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Purdy
NEPSTA Secretary

Addenda:

Treasurer's Report

2021 Track & Field Realignment, as approved by the membership

Realignment data

Realignment analysis report