

NCAA Division II Cross Country General Session
Wednesday, December 14th, 2022
Denver, Colorado

Meeting called to order by Torrey Olson: 2:35pm

Proposal: Vice President Nomination

TORREY OLSON: Executive Committee was tasked with nominating a VP; Chris Reed will become the President on Friday morning. Jamey Harris was approved by the Executive Committee to be nominated to be the Vice President. The VP will be voted upon on Friday.

2. At-Large Selection Process – Part 2

TORREY OLSON: This morning, Executive Committee voted 19-0 unanimous to approve. Because of that, I'm going to recuse myself as President. Chris Reed, VP, will serve as acting-President.

Questions from the regional breakouts:

What about regional awards?

Answer: All-Region, and All-Academic Awards are presented by the USTFCCCA. The USTFCCCA's intention is to maintain the number of awards. Should this proposal pass, the USTFCCCA D2 XC Executive Committee would appoint a working group to re-write those regionally based awards.

Regarding Varsity and Non-Varsity Competition – could a team run one really good inter-region race as a varsity team, and then declare a non-varsity squad until conference?

Answer: Yes, that would be a coaching decision. However, keep in mind that it would be a very risky strategy. This at large process very much favors having contests.

Torrey Olson presented Part 2 of the At-Large Selection Process

JEFF BOLENDER, Cedarville: I didn't see Walsh's logo on there? If I missed it? Or if they were eliminated.

TORREY OLSON: They are not here from the beginning because they did not face an opponent outside of their conference, within their region. They do eventually make it.

JEFF BOLENDER, Cedarville: How many other teams were like that in this region?

TORREY OLSON: No others. Some regions had more of that, some had very little.

RICH MARCELLO, Southern New Hampshire: What exactly is a mock meet? Is it based on scoring? Based on time?

TORREY OLSON: Mock meet is based on XCRI – RPI system that tracks each individual athlete. Over the course of the season, each meet that happens, that field is mapped on to a normal distribution with the average finisher being 1000 points, each standard deviation +/- 100 points. Over the season, strength of the field is compared. Over the course of the season, each athlete gets a value assigned to them. That is used to generate a mock meet.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry-Riddle: It is based on the time gaps of athletes in those races, the more competitions you have. Rather than a raw time, it is based on how much better you are than the athletes in that race.

JONATHAN BREITBARTH, Concordia St. Paul: Does the mock meet, does the check of varsity/non-varsity come into question?

TORREY OLSON: In the back testing, no. In what's being proposed yes.

RICH MARCELLO, Southern New Hampshire: Should the women run a 6k instead of a 5k? Does every conference get an autoqualifier?

TORREY OLSON: Every conference gets an auto-qualifier. Race distance: in what we are proposing, we are not specifying a minimum race distance. Our view was the rulebook should address what is allowed/not allowed. In that, your conference should be able to choose your race distance within the allowable rules.

RICH MARCELLO, Southern New Hampshire: But it does affect the standard deviation.

GREG SCHMIDT, Bridgeport: if you have a region where conference is contesting 6k and other a 5k, weighted on regional competition, does that throw a wrench in it? If there is a mismatch, does that change anything.

TORREY OLSON: We haven't seen that it does. Conference is really heavily weighted. Conference order is respected any time only teams from one conference are under consideration. They ran the same race on the same day, the same distance. There's another check in the process where conference finish order is applied. Because of the way standard deviation works as opposed to raw/relative times, that's not what we observed in all of our back testing. The bigger problem is when there were pools of competition that didn't overlap at all or barely overlapped.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry Riddle: The 5k/6k part is mostly just head-to-head. Doesn't matter whether you run a 5k or 6k one conference to another. Looking primarily at who did you beat. Conference meets only come in as tie breakers at the very end. 2 conferences run 6k, one runs 5k, it is looking at head-to-head as the primary during the season. Standard deviation solve exactly what you're asking. It helps make it more equal rather than raw time difference.

TORREY OLSON: At the end of the day, this proposal says nothing about required race distance. It's not an issue that isn't relevant. It is just not an issue with this proposal. We'd like to keep it separate. The conversation happening right now with race distance and what that should be in the rulebook, what should be allowable. That may produce a change. We take no stance on this. We defer to the rulebook in what we are proposing. But we didn't see that it prevented the system from working well.

AUSTIN SELBY, Trevecca: Spot another team not part of the team that should've been. I don't see Kentucky Wesleyan. They were 7th-ish at GMAC.

CHRIS REED: Point of Clarification from Austin Selby. Kentucky Wesleyan – they did not face a team outside of their conference, within their region.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry-Riddle: South Central, where we see 9 blue teams, that's the scenario where 3, 4, 5, 6 qualified through the national at-large but displaced because they weren't eligible

TORREY OLSON Adams, Western Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colorado Mines did not meet the criteria for regional selection. That's the only region that has two conferences. They are not considered for the regional phase. They are then selected through the national phase. But then compared against CSU Pueblo where those teams beat CSU Pueblo at the Conference Championships and that's where they are reflected in a more appropriate order.

JEFF BOLENDER, Cedarville: Colorado Christian did not qualify for this system using this system because one of the criteria was missing.

TORREY OLSON: Colorado Christian do qualify, the women do not qualify. They ran a B-Team at Conference. But this system does not acknowledge A-team and B-team in the same way it does right now. So they are not distinguished. As long as Colorado Christian would do that differently if there was a process to declare a non-varsity team. That impacted the region as well, not just them.

RICH MARCELLO, Southern New Hampshire: AIC is not on the East list. We lost to them at every meet this year.

TORREY OLSON: AIC didn't meet the criteria.

GREG SCHMIDT, Bridgeport: They did compete outside their conference though a number of times, the 5k short course at Adelphi.

TOM LEWIS: 5k doesn't count because a 5k doesn't count now on the guys' side. It wouldn't be part of the qualifying. It wouldn't be part of calculation.

TORREY OLSON: Not likely to be an issue essentially since this proposal would replace the current active selection criteria which places limits.

SHAWN JAKUBOWSKI, Fort Lewis: Fort Lewis men get in, women did not. We went to the same races, faced the same competition.

TORREY OLSON: I can speak a bit more on memory to the women's side. Women had close losses to a lot of pretty good teams, but didn't have close wins against very good teams. Comes down to the wins and losses. My suggestion to you if you want to come talk to me afterwards. You went out to Riverside, the only relevant match up there was Azusa where you lost to Azusa Pacific there. Nothing put you over the top, there was something at some point that did on the men's side but don't remember what it was.

ADAM MENGEL, East Stroudsburg: Question on level of importance of the factors that went into play. Question was why the conference finish was third on level of importance behind season schedule.

TORREY OLSON: The 4 criteria applied – head-to head competition, common opponents, conference finish order, derived ratings. It's not that your conference meet isn't factoring in on each of those levels, it's just to say there is an additional step when only teams from a single conference remain in a selection pool, conference finish order is primary or a mock meet challenge – conference meet is a primary. It's an additional layer. If you look at head-to-head, you can be eliminated head-to-head by someone else in your conference in the selection poll. If you have a loss to them, no win to them, you're eliminated, no need to prioritize it. If you have no wins, you have no wins at the conference championships. You're eliminated. It's clear cut. Same thing with opponents in common. There is a challenge within that. If you eliminate an opponent in common, it does go in and look if you have another head-to-head win or another opponent in common win, if that's the case then you should not be eliminated. You're saved by that until that team falls out. Until you get to that, really isn't a need to spell that. Before that step, everything is clear cut because you have clear losing schedule against the pool.

JAMEY HARRIS, Cal Poly Humboldt: Conference finish order can't help compare you against teams outside of your conference. It's not that useful earlier in the process.

JACKIE SGAMBATI, Hawai'i Pacific: My concern about this is more specific to us – not living on the mainland, but travel. You said conference is third on the list, not as important. I would love conference to be the most important. It's concerning for smaller schools when our competition for us is Chaminade. The only other men's team in Hawai'i is Chaminade. So we get no competition unless I go to big meets on the mainland. We're the only school in Hawai'i that can do that. I don't know if the conference championships is looked at as much as the head-to-head or you really have to start focusing on where you're going at the beginning of the season so you get all of this head-to-head competition.

TORREY OLSON: You have a unique situation. Hawaii schools, Alaska schools certainly have a challenge in a number of different ways. You came to our meet, not sure if you came to any others. Just to use that in your case, that gives you plenty of competition. But you're right if you never left Hawai'i and no teams from the mainland ever came to Hawai'i, you wouldn't meet the criteria to be considered. If I'm giving someone in your situation advice, yes going to one meet where you are going to face a lot of what competition you feel is advantageous to you. Do you have a better chance at qualifying the national pathway or better chance of showing you're a top 8 in your region or if you want to pursue both because they can both be done in one meet. It is important for you to select if your goal is to qualify for you to select the right meet. Dual meet

is fine if you beat one team that is really, really good and not get eliminated. But if you do a dual meet and that team is eliminated, you're going to be eliminated. It can be one meet with lots of competition, and if you do well there, that gives you a better chance of being selected.

JACKIE SGAMBATI, Hawai'i Pacific: We went to your meet and to Pre-Nats. Follow up – is this the same for individual. I may not have a good team but I have two good individuals that I need to get to big meets so they are looked at at-large.

TORREY OLSON: The only pathway for an individual to qualify without running outside their conference is to win the conference championship. There is that pathway. You came out to our meet, we had 12 D2 teams. Right now, that meet exists in a system that doesn't reward you at all for your competition against teams in your region. Regional competition for a lot of coaches is going to become a lot more important. If you're not currently running a Chaminade dual or entire season, I think

CHRIS REED: Jackie also asked a question why conference is not the most important criteria.

TORREY OLSON: In my view, Conference is the most important meet. It's part of opponents in common and head-to-head. Considered in both of those pathways. Can't be the only thing. At some point there has to be a comparison between the GNAC and PACWEST. Conference can help clear the conference pathway. But it's not sufficient to be the only thing. There's more that's needed.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry-Riddle: Number 1: it's the most important meet, if you win conference, you're in. That puts priority on it. It's not the #1 priority when you're comparing teams that aren't in the same conference. So it is very important and it becomes the tiebreaker. If you're only comparing conference schools, it's the tiebreaker. It's not important when comparing two region schools because they did not race against each other at the conference meet. You raced each other somewhere else. That takes priority. It is the most important in the sense that it is the first step in qualifying, it is the tiebreaker against conference schools, it is just third on that list when comparing region schools and national schools as tiebreaking when we get past the outside competition.

TORREY OLSON: Also used in a final step when comparing the national at-large selection to the region selection. It is very important.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry-Riddle: When you look at the whole structure, it is the most important. Win conference, you're in. Becomes the most important thing when comparing conference schools. For tie breakers when conference schools, it is the most important thing. Not the most important thing when comparing region schools. For conference schools, if you beat me, I beat you, the conference meet is the tie-breaker. For regional and national schools, it

CHRIS BRADFORD, Cal Poly Pomona: XCRI – is that something that we can look up? Something we can have access to throughout the year?

TORREY OLSON: That is something Tom has been working on for 7 years. I believe there is and has been a page dedicated to a lengthy explanation of XCRI.

CHRIS BRADFORD, Cal Poly Pomona: You can look up athletes to that?

TORREY OLSON: You're asking if there is a real-time database where you can look up your athletes to the XCRI score. What we have discussed in that line of thinking, this vote if passed establish a working group to monitor this process. Part of what they're interested in determining is we have our rankings that come from region raters; interest in producing a computerized rating based off of the XCRI or based off of the mock selection as it gets used. Also ranking based off of the entirety of the process. Desire to have transparency throughout the season. XCRI doesn't work after the first weekend of competition, but by the time you're heading into the conference championships it works better. Two weeks in it is not so good. That is the goal is to show transparency. Best way to do that might not be to just show the raw XCRI data for every individual in the country. It is the last part of the process. Used in a very useful but subtle way. Whereas if the selection process was one giant meet, that would be much more important. There is going to be some form of transparency.

TOM LEWIS: A lot of it has been figuring out the best means to do so, make it to where it is not raw numbers without any explanation as to how it has come about. The raw data is what makes it works. We're probably up to 98% complete, but we don't want to put out something that is going to change 3 more times. We want more confidence in it going forward before a system like it is being implemented. The charge would be in a year or two to finalize the formula and then make it ready for 2025. If this goes through, used in 2026.

CHRIS BRADFORD, Cal Poly Pomona: The XCRI, is that going to be used for the seeding?

MIKE MEAD, Clayton: We have our 80 teams selected in this, how do we get to the semi-final break-up of two races.

TORREY OLSON: That was presented in last year's part. Once the 80 teams selected, broken into two evenly seeded races by the XCRI process. Serpentine seeding. 80 teams ranked.

MIKE ROSALINO, Embry-Riddle: Are they ranked by XCRI totally or by the system we see>

TORREY OLSON: Ranked by the XCRI. The selection process does a better job of selecting. XCRI does a better job of ranking.

ERIC PHILLIPS, Saginaw Valley: Do we all feel confident that we are informed and understanding well enough to vote tomorrow.

ERIC PHILLIPS, Saginaw Valley: Motion to adjourn

JACOB SUSSMAN, Ashland: Second

Meeting Adjourn: 3:49pm