

**MINUTES for
OISRA Nordic Covid-19 Planning Meeting
September 26, 2020
Zoom Meeting**

Present for Covid-19 Planning Meeting:

Eric Martin, Nordic Director, Mt. View HS Head Coach
JD Downing, Summit HS Head Coach
Gene Hyde, Nordic Division Commissioner
Kelly Crowther, Northern League Representative
Sarah Swaney, Southern League Representative
David Burke, Mt. Hood League Representative
David Smullin, Head Coach for Redmond teams
Ken Roadman, Coach for Redmond teams
Dave Munson, OISRA Executive Director
Jinny Martin, Nordic Division Secretary

Absent:

Pete Reinhardt, Nordic Assistant Director

Meeting started at 7:02 p.m.

1. Reporting Board Decisions from September 24th meeting

1.1. Board decisions not related to Covid-19

- OISRA added the OSAA Air Quality Guidelines to the OISRA Policies.
- Each division will decide whether to have state meet pins and will purchase them if they want them.
 - NOTE: Nordic coaches prefer that each team decides independently whether to purchase state meet pins for their team.
- OISRA participation fees (which cover administrative costs, including Directors and Officers and cyber insurance) are \$24/skier (for both Alpine and Nordic skiers)
- Additionally, Nordic skiers pay \$18/skier for Nordic liability insurance.
- OISRA has already paid the insurance premiums that cover OISRA and Nordic for the 2020-21 season. This payment came out of the OISRA funds.
 - Nordic skiers pay into the OISRA funds during registration each season.
 - Purchasing insurance now is a risk – because the season may not happen. But the Board is proceeding as if the season will happen, rather than waiting and rushing around at the last minute to take necessary administrative actions.
 - There is a possibility for a small insurance refund if the season is cancelled after registration.
 - Insurance companies take the position that they will not pay for Covid-19 claims. They advise having good Covid-19 guidelines and Covid-19 waivers.
 - Covid-19 waivers have been written by OISRA attorneys.
- Total Nordic skier on-line registration fees will include division fees as well as the \$42 OISRA fees. OISRA treasurer sends division fees to the Nordic division treasurer.
 - NOTE: OISRA Nordic registration fees could remain at last year's amount of \$60 (meaning the Nordic Division fees are \$18) or the Nordic Steering Committee could decide on a different amount for the division fees component of those registration fees. The Nordic Steering committee decided to wait until the October meeting to decide on the amount for the Nordic Division fees, if any.

- Dave Munson will attend the OSAA Delegate Assembly Zoom meeting on October 12th and make short presentation – main goal is to explain how accepting skiing as an OSAA emerging activity is not a financial burden for schools.

1.2. Board decisions related to Covid-19

- OISRA Board will meet again on November 7th - to continue Covid-19 discussions.
- Each division will independently decide whether to have a ski season, and student registration will take place **after** the division makes the decision to have the season.
- OHA, OSSA, schools, and venues dictate restrictions.
- MAJOR DECISION POINT THAT IS OUT OF THE HANDS OF OISRA: If OSAA does not support a winter sports season, then OISRA will not have a ski season. **NOTE! Get Board's opinion if Nordic could have a "practice-only" season if OSAA does not support a winter sports season.**
- If a few schools decide not to have winter sports, but OSAA is still supporting a winter sports season, then those schools that do not have winter sports will not have skiing programs, but OISRA will still have a ski season.
- Divisions can make changes to scheduling and state meet plans because of Covid-19 – allow divisions flexibility.

2. JD Downing presented ideas about how to run competitions. See Appendix A, "How the Season Can Happen."

2.1. Highlights of general consensus from those present at the meeting.

- Focused on Scenario B, mostly because of limitations from Mt. Bachelor for 100 participants for an event – but also decided this Scenario was most practical for dealing with other guidelines for dealing with Covid-19.
- For discussion purposes, assumed 100 participant limitation for all venues.
- Racing goal is to provide 4 competition opportunities for all skiers.
 - 4 proposed race dates do not conflict with Club racers' schedule
 - Will need to modify the way the XC Invitational and the State Meet are conceptualized so that they each become several small events versus singular large events.
- Concentrate on planning for a series of dual and tri meets with a few guests.
- Concept of linking autonomous races in a small format.
 - Each team's cluster is timed as a separate race, and results from team clusters that take place within a reasonable time period (approx. 2 hrs) can be combined.
 - teams will be assigned "block windows" for boys and girls on same team and teams will time themselves at each event. (Coaches might do timing.)
 - Teams will arrive and depart based on their "block widow" and have little or no interactions with other teams
- No food provided – each person provides own beverages and food
- No on-site awards ceremonies.
- No venues will want clusters of spectators, so spectators will be strongly discouraged.
- Have only skate competitions – but promise to return to competitions in both disciplines after pandemic. Can still train in classic technique.
- Assign bib numbers for the season – with some blank paper bibs on hand at races for anyone who forgets their bib.
- Minimize gear – venues will not be willing to transport gear (Mt. Bachelor and Teacup, for example)

2.2 Challenges identified when discussing ideas presented by JD.

2.1.1 Mt. Bachelor is most reliable snow. Make accommodations to Mt. Bachelor's requirements, while keeping in mind that events will not be tied to Mt. Bachelor if there is snow below 6,000 feet.

- Weekday events only
- Challenges of working within Bachelor's parking reservation system
- Challenges of working within Bachelor's ticketing system for all uses – can't buy a ticket on site?
- Challenges of training volunteers and making volunteer assignments prior to event days - not having volunteer training at the event
- Mt. Bachelor might not allow any high school events
- How long can we use trails in the late afternoon- after area closes?
- Making connections and advance plans (Forest Service permits, coordination with snowcat operators and other key people, etc.) at other venues. Possibility of Saturday events at other venues.
 - Willamette - Southern League stopped using because of cost – close to Eugene
 - Wanoga Sno Park – need to work out how to get grooming done
 - Crescent Lake – has been used by Jim Hill for a citizen's race – close to Eugene – need to work out availability of groomer
 - Diamond Lake – have been using for Southern League events – close to Ashland
 - Meissner – Forest Service may not impose limitations on event size, but Meissner board probably would
 - Walt Haring Sno Park – stopped using because of lack of grooming
 - Hoodoo – close to Corvallis and Eugene
- How small events affect staging, stadium/logistics
 - Can reduce timing crews, but still need course monitors for safety
 - Can reduce amount of set up (and take down)
 - don't put up sponsors' banners
 - no fencing for spectators
 - no food area
 - no check-in area
 - Any team tents need to be spread out – with pre-allocated spaces
- Keep energy going so don't lose too much of the sport because of complications of Covid-19 considerations
 - Have a training season if are not able to have competition season
 - Especially important for students who try skiing for the first time in high school

2.3 Topics related to JD's ideas that will need further discussion and clarification

- How to group participants for an event
 - Local area? How defined? Who would be guests from outside the local area?
 - Varsity race versus JV race
 - Travel to Central Oregon is too much distance for teams in Mt. Hood area
 - If venues at Mt. Hood do not allow them to train and race on weekends, Hood River Valley may have a team and St. Mary's would not. St. Marys is too far from the mountain to travel mid-week.
 - Two separate events in one day? Morning event timing kept completely separate from afternoon event timing. Change volunteers during the day? Stress on volunteers?
 - Using multiple venues for XC Oregon Invitational small events?

- How to work with pods
 - implications for transportation
 - race start options
- Assigning responsibilities/hosts for each race
- Having JV events on days when club skiers are on weekend trips?
- Value of racing and training at different venues to keep up enthusiasm
- Could “unload” Mt. View and La Pine from a Central Oregon local race and add another race opportunity somewhere like Diamond Lake

3. **ACTION!** JD Downing will draft a document for Mt. Bachelor and deliver it to Sue Foster

- The draft will explain how high school ski teams have changed their operation plans for 2020-21 race events to abide by Covid-19 safety considerations, and JD will ask Mt. Bachelor to reserve dates for high school racing events.
- Will send a copy of his draft to everyone at this meeting.
- Will give email feedback as soon as he gets it.

Meeting ended at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Jinny Martin
OISRA Nordic Secretary

Appendix A

OISRA Nordic 2020/2021 — “How The Season Can Happen”

JD Draft: September 22

Scenario A

—> Maintain Southern, Northern, and Mt Hood League structures for 20/21 and schedules league events as venue access, event logistics, and team transportation logistics allow. Most likely Northern and Mt Hood Leagues split schedules to keep racing “local” as much as possible.

—> XC Oregon Invite and State Meet remain “all comers” events. Mt Bachelor may require both events to take place on weekdays and with one day for State Meet. KEY ISSUE: Mt Bachelor may not permit 200+ total skier + adult events to take place for Invite and State (*this is currently doubtful as of 9/22 per General Manager*).

—> Assumes state, county, school district authorities will not restrict travel out-of-county for athletic events.

—> Assumes enough venues are available for several separate SL, NL, and MH league races throughout January/February. Also assumes that

Scenario B

—> All OISRA Nordic racing is developed around “local” plans with generally smaller events involving fewer teams per race. League structures would be suspended in favor of minimizing all travel and reducing size/complexity of all events.

—> Bend-Lapine school district and Redmond teams develop an entirely Central Oregon-based schedule. #s of skiers may require splitting fields at some venues.

—> Hood River Valley and St Mary’s develop an entirely Mt Hood-based schedule.

—> Teams outside these core areas (i.e. Corvallis, Ashland, etc.) are the biggest question mark and should be the highest priority to find a viable season solution.

—> Invite divided into 2-3 events held the same week at separate local venues.

—> State Meet replaced by 2-3 localized Oregon “Sectional” Championships for 2021.

Scenario C

—> Combination of “A” and “B” with mostly local racing without leagues...but still combine all possible teams/athletes for 1-2 larger events — Invite and/or State.

General Event COVID Strategies

See also US Ski and Snowboarding, PNSA and other Divisional club event guidance for best COVID practices. See also JD OISRA Contingency notes.

1.0 Race Format, Start Process, Timing

a. Start lists on-line only (no paper copies provided at races). Any pass lists for Mt Bachelor or other resort venues will need to be arranged in advance such that on- mountain check in tent is a minimal contact situation.

b. All 20/21 events to be interval start with 20-30 seconds between skiers at larger events and 30-60 seconds between skiers at smaller events.

c. Teams will be assigned start block windows for each event based on number of team entries. Team blocks can be randomly assigned or be based on logistics of travel distance to venue. All athletes for a given team (see also discussion item “d” below about team gender blocks) start within the assigned team block. Team start blocks separated by time gaps in order to minimize “overlap” with multiple teams on-site at venue (5-15 minutes for each gap, length of gaps could vary). It might prove best to alternate large and small team groups to also avoid mixing of larger numbers.

d. DISCUSSION ITEM

Ideally (assuming timing issues in doing this system can be resolved) girls and boys from the same team would start in back-to-back team clusters so that all members of any given team are at the venue within the same time frame. Example of how this would work: Blue HS has 5 boys and 5 girls. Blue team’s five boys would start in intervals — then a small break for timing adjustment — followed by Blue team’s five girls start in intervals. Finally, there would be a 5-15 minute time gap until the first starter in the start block for the next team. Although this process is more complicated for timing, starting both boys and girls from any team in a single block greatly simplifies team logistics and vastly reduces total time at venue for any team.

e. Teams will structure all arrival, warm-up, cool down, and departure around their team’s start window. No team should be present at any venue any longer than absolutely necessary on race days. If “d” above is not logistically viable, for large events one gender from each team will need to finish racing, cool down, and either leave venue completely or leave on-snow areas and wait in cars until the other gender from that team is finished racing (if girls and boys travel in cars together).

f. DISCUSSION ITEM(s)

Large events (i.e. 200+ athletes, Invite and/or State) will require a very large time footprint for COVID safety protocols. For example, 2020 Invite allocated roughly 90 minutes total just for all girls and boys interval starts. A 2021 Invite will need the same

90 minutes plus 45-150 minutes of gap time between team start blocks (assuming 5-15 minute gaps between teams). In total, we would need 3-4 hours to complete an Invite or State start sequence. Of course, there will be additional time needed for the final team(s) to have all athletes complete the course. Note that the slowest skier in the final team will be the final sweep marker, so it's possible to need up to 30-45 minutes after the final skier from the final team starts to see final skier finishing. Set-up and clean-up time will then have to be added to determine total "time footprint" in proposals to Mt Bachelor.

g. **DISCUSSION ITEM(s)**

We will need to determine if it is possible to hold Invite and State meet on weekdays and still have all OISRA Nordic teams take part. It is very unlikely we will be able to get permission from Mt Bachelor to hold events taking 5+ hours (teams on-site) on Saturdays in 2021. Even if the events themselves were allowed, the restricted 20/21 Mt Bachelor parking reservation process may make Saturday large races impractical. Due to safety limits on carpooling, we will likely need more cars not only to transport athletes but also coaches, officials and volunteers. *This item may very well impact which season scenario is fairest and best for 2021.*

h. **DISCUSSION ITEM(s)**

All timing crews will need to develop COVID protocol to maximize physical spacing and mitigations for longer total time periods for races. This may be a challenge and thus will need to be carefully thought out. Some timing crew volunteers may not be able to stay at a venue for extended periods. Inclement weather could also limit timing crew tolerances for longer time frames. Indoor spaces (timing huts) would need strict protocols such as only 1 person inside at a time, ventilation, etc.. We may need to greatly expand the numbers of trained timing volunteers.

i. All results to only be published on-line, live if possible otherwise as soon as possible. It will not be practical to have safe at-venue protest periods.

j. All award ceremonies (including State or "Sectional" end of season events) will be entirely virtual.

2.0 Stadium/Course Logistics

a. Stadiums and courses should be "bare bones" for 20/21 to reduce volunteer on- mountain time and #s of volunteers needed for set-up and clean-up. Less fencing, only necessary markers, limited sponsor decorations, etc..

b. Whenever practical, volunteer assignments should be delegated ahead of event days so volunteers go directly to assignments with minimal to no on-site crew meetings.

c. Any on-site first aid will need to follow COVID protocols of each venue and be “bare bones” in terms of what is provided, equipment used, etc..

d. All teams will need to have pre-allocated spaces at every venue. These team areas will need to be significantly spread out and strategically placed so that teams can come- and-go throughout the event day with minimal interaction.

e. All teams must minimize or eliminate gear hauled to stadium as much as possible. This to reduce contact between adults, touches on gear, impact on non-race skiers, and total time footprint of events. Also note that since teams will arrive and leave at different times, hauling would in theory have to take place over up to 5 hours which is not practical. If NL does not do a large event at Teacup (i.e. only Mt Hood League teams), that automatically solves hauling issue at Teacup. It is possible Mt Bachelor may not allow any hauling. At best, Mt Bachelor will likely require absolute minimal gear allowed for each team for the two large events. *Note: If teams are efficient with at-venue time windows to get skate starts, it is possible to avoid any team tents, tables, etc. Classic wax gear adds to issues below.*

f. No group food or beverages should be provided at any race by teams or event organizers. All skiers would be responsible for bringing their own individual refreshments and skiers should eat only in private cars or leave venue.

g. **DISCUSSION ITEM**

Classic races will be a distinct challenge to make COVID safe due to the waxing process. Small teams may be able to have 1-2 adults touching wax and directly waxing all skis which would be low risk with enough spacing. But larger teams either require multiple adults and/or dozens of skiers repeatedly touching wax and working in close proximity (much less than 6 feet) for extended periods — thus a higher risk. Inclement weather will increase risk as all skiers and coaches would be forced into smaller areas (tents or next to cars). Classic wax gear also adds to set-up/clean-up time footprint for each team, gear hauling issues, and physical space taken up for each team.

h. Grouping of spectators must be discouraged in all proposals to Mt Bachelor — probably also for proposals for other venues. If all teams pledge to limit spectators to only adult drivers and coaches that will be on skis or snowshoes spread around race courses, that should reduce stadium spectating to a minimum which will help the success of our proposals. Racers that are warming up and cooling down would also be part of total “spectator” counts. *Note: Teams actually will need to follow through with internally enforcing only “necessary” spectators and/or highly-spaced spectating or else public reaction is likely to be problematic over the season. Complaints in January could ultimately restrict opportunities to conduct February races. Just how feasible it is for coaches to get this messaging out to families and skiers is a good question.*

Demo Season Schedule Under Scenario “A” for Northern/Mt Hood Leagues

Saturday, January 9

(assumes venues available on a Saturday, techniques TBD)

Northern League Race @ Meissner
Mt Hood League Race @ Teacup

Wednesday, January 20 or Friday, January 22

XC Oregon Invite @ Mt Bachelor
(technique TBD)

(assumes Mt Bachelor will allow a 200+ event, all teams can participate in a mid-week race, and all other large event issues can be resolved)

Saturday, February 6

(assumes venues available on a Saturday, techniques TBD)

Northern League Race @ Meissner or Hoodoo
Mt Hood League Race @ Meadows or Teacup

Friday, February 19

OISRA Nordic State Meet @ Mt Bachelor
(technique TBD)

(assumes Mt Bachelor will allow a 200+ event, all teams can participate in a mid-week race, and all other large event issues can be resolved)

Notes:

—> *It is assumed that any Hoodoo Night Race cannot be held due to the critical nature of a lodge being available for any night event. Hoodoo, however, could in theory host a NL daytime event.*

—> *It is possible for schools to add 1-2 smaller midweek races with smaller fields (example: dual meets).*

Demo Season Schedule Under Scenario "B"

(plan TBD for schools such as Ashland, Corvallis, etc. outside "local" areas)

Saturday, January 9

(assumes venues available on a Saturday, techniques TBD)

Central Oregon "Locals" Race @ Meissner *(Bend, Lapine, Mtn View, Redmonds, Summit)*

+

Mt Hood "Locals" Race @ Meadows or Teacup *(HRV, SMA)*

Week of Jan 18-23

Central Oregon "Locals" XC Oregon Invite @ Mt Bachelor

(may have to split field over 2 afternoons due to # of skiers in Central Oregon)

+

Mt Hood "Locals" XC Oregon Invite @ Meadows or Teacup

Saturday, February 6

(assumes venues available on a Saturday, techniques TBD)

Central Oregon "Locals" Race @ Meissner or Hoodoo

+

Mt Hood "Locals" Race @ Meadows or Teacup

Week of February 15-20

Central Oregon "Sectional Championship" @ Mt Bachelor

—> Very likely will need to split field into two separate event days to remain under cap of 100 total people at venue.

+

Mt Hood "Sectional Championship" @ Meadows or Teacup

Notes:

—> *It may be possible to have State Meet in this Scenario B if teams accepted splitting fields into two days or using both Mt Bachelor and Meissner in order to keep under cap of 100 total people on-site at venues.*

—> *It is possible for schools to add 1-2 smaller midweek races with smaller fields (example: dual meets).*