

## Fair Treatment Proposal – Status as of May 2002

Clearly, as the coaches have learned from the 9-year struggle to move the season forward by one week, the needed provision of trained and certified officials to every school competition is going to take a long time to achieve and we must be persistent in staying the course. This means that we must pursue a three-pronged strategy. First, to directly address each of the principals' reservations as we present a revised plan through the appropriate channels. This involves informing every coach in the state, informing every athletic director, every district representative, and assuring that the coaches, not we officials, are the presenters to these audiences. Second, we must begin the "proof of concept" process by providing the training and adopting at least one school in every district in the State. Third, we need to raise the awareness of the risk management side as to the significant exposure risk of not acting and thereby appearing to be negligent in the face of having a plan that could have been adopted for a few hundred dollars per school and is available to athletes competing in every other sport except swimming - sports that are much easier to control from a perspective of number of competitors, diversity of competitions within the larger competition, and involving only one sex per larger competition.

I still believe that we must find a way for our very modest proposal to truly "be heard" by folks who will adjust their thinking to not be determined to be against it without taking the time to consider the actual proposal as opposed to their perception of what is being proposed. We need to bullet point the following:

- The proposal only calls for 3-6 paid officials per meet depending on the number of expected competitors – total cost is \$90-180 per home meet
- The officiating/competition management cost per school per hosted competition is essentially the same as it is for hosting soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, and less than the cost of hosting a football game
- The proposal will be implemented in stages with clear measurable objectives and annual evaluation of progress - outcomes will include assurance to every team a meet manager who will work with the coach starting in September through June; as well as at every competition at least a certified track referee and certified field referee
- Training will begin immediately within selected districts in all parts of the state and will focus on training those who are already working the meets and thus know the school, league and district's unique characteristics and requirements
- As a result of the provision of a structured program of training, supervision and support, there will be greater accountability and assurance of safety in competitions, the objective and accurate application of the Federation's/WIAA's/District/League rules, reduced administrative and meet management burdens on the coaches, and assurance of liability coverage for those officials who join the Washington Officials Association (a requirement for serving in a paid capacity and the recognized officials group for high schools).

This will require determined clear commitment to assure that every child participating in track and field is treated fairly, competes safely within the rules, and has the same level of support that athletes competing in all other WIAA sports currently enjoy.