

Irish Universities Athletics Association

Cross Country Guidelines



November 2004

Compiled by the Executive Committee of the Association

www.iuaa.org

Guidelines for Organising the Irish University Athletics Association Cross Country Championships.

With a notable increase in both membership and athlete numbers within the Irish Universities Athletics Association (IUAA), the hosting of our various championships has become a considerable undertaking. It is hoped that these guidelines will provide the host college with an understanding of what is involved in hosting a national cross country championships and most importantly the minimal requirements necessary to ensure the successful staging of the event.

The IUAA constitution, rules and byelaws relating to the cross country championships:

'Host colleges should familiarise themselves with sections 7 and 10 of the IUAA constitution and with rule 5.2.1. These sections detail the IUAA Constitution, Rules and Byelaws relating to the Cross Country. A copy of the constitution can be found on the IUAA website www.iuaa.org. The IUAA encourages host colleges to look at these relevant sections at an early stage of the organisation process.'

CUSAI Guidelines for Hosting an Intersarsity Event:

'These are solely meant as a guide to hosts. They are very broad based and in some cases not very relevant to either Cross Country or the IUAA, but they do provide a starting point and lay a foundation for people who have very limited experience at organising intersarsity sporting events. These guidelines can be found on the CUSAI website www.cusai.ie. The IUAA encourages host colleges to look at these guidelines at an early stage of the organisation process.'

IUAA Guidelines for Hosting an Intersarsity Event:

'The following section is specific to the hosting of the IUAA cross country championships. Host colleges should read these guidelines at an early stage and refer to them throughout their preparations so as to ensure that all IUAA requirements are met and that nothing has been overlooked. Any queries that you may have regarding these guidelines should be made directly to the IUAA'

Information and Event Website:

1. **Invitations:** The posting of invitations to Member colleges is a reserved function of the IUAA and is not the responsibility of the host college. The invitation that the IUAA will post out will include the event date and venue, along with the closing date for entries and meal tickets, the cost of the meal tickets, and the URL for the host colleges event website.
2. **Information:** All information pertaining to the championships should be posted on the host colleges event website, the contents of which must be approved by the IUAA prior to the site going live. This website should go live six/seven (6/7) weeks prior to the championships. This information should include:
 - Welcoming letter / page.
 - Event date.
 - An itinerary of the day's events (start times for the races, location and time of the Captains meeting, location and time of dinner, etc.).
 - Closing dates and times for entries and meal tickets.
 - Details, cost and payment for the intersarsity meal and details of any dress code.
 - A detailed list of local accommodation.
 - A map and directions to the location of the course and all auxiliary venues.
 - A map and directions to the location of the hotel.
 - Important Event Rules (No late entries, close of check-in etc.).
 - Link to IUAA online entries (best viewed in a new window)
 - Any additional and appropriate information.

3. **Style & Layout:** The style and layout of the website is at the discretion of the host, however the IUAA requests that the following be adhered to:
 - The website must be standalone (i.e. The website must not be part of the hosts members own athletics club website).
 - The website should contain no advertisement banners or pop up advertisements. If the host is acquiring server space especially for the event they must pay any additional fees necessary to have the banners and pop ups removed. The inclusion of sponsors names and logos is allowed.
 - The main header on the website must be *'Irish Universities Athletics Association'*. The sub heading should be *'Track & Field and Combined Event Championships'*.
The IUAA can provide free server space if required.
4. **URL:** The IUAA will provide the host college with their own personalised iuaa.org subdomain name (URL). The IUAA requires that this iuaa.org subdomain name be used for the host college's event website URL. The format of the subname name is www.AnythingYouWant.iuaa.org. The host college can personalise the *AnythingYouWant* bit to something they feel is appropriate for the championships.
5. **Email:** The IUAA will provide the host college with a web based email account for exclusive use with hosting the championships. The IUAA requests that this email account be used. This account allows the host to coordinate the championships through one central contact point. The IUAA will contact the host regarding this account well in advance of the championships.

Entries:

1. **Rules:** Host colleges should be aware of the following in relation to entries:
 - **All entries must be made online through the IUAA's online entry software.**
 - **All entries must be made by the deadline.** No late entries will be accepted.
 - No faxed, emailed or telephoned entries will be accepted. Any entries received in this manor should be returned immediately and the colleges in question informed that entries can only be accepted online.
 - No new entries are to be accepted on the day.
 - All entries must be accompanied by student identification numbers (Student ID card number).
2. **Online entries:** Full details on how to use and set up the online entries and a detailed list of what it can do for you, as host, will be provided to you by the IUAA well in advance of the championships. An administrator password will be provided, by the IUAA, to allow the host to access the cross country administration section of the entries software.
3. **Closing date:** The closing date for receipt of entries is at the discretion of the host, however the closing date can be no greater than 3 days prior to the event.
 - For the cross country the IUAA recommends a closing time and date of 10pm on the Wednesday three days prior to the championships.
 - Once decided on, this closing date is final. If exceptions are to be made for late entries, this is at the discretion of the IUAA Executive and not the race organisers. If colleges contact you requesting permission to be allowed to enter athletes after the closing date, you should refer them to the IUAA.
4. **Guesting:** Any guesting applications received by the host college should be immediately referred to the IUAA for consideration, as the decision on whether to accept guesting applications can only be made by the IUAA executive.

The race:

1. **First Aid:** Ensure that there is a medical presence at the championships to provide first aid should it be required.
 - An ambulance with two personnel is the minimum requirement.
 - This should be arranged with the local *'Order of Malta'*, *'St. John's Ambulance'* or *'Civil Defence'* three months in advance and confirmed again one month in advance and again in the days leading up to the championships.
 - Remember these services are voluntary but they do require payment. A price should be arranged in advance and included in your event budget.

- Have first aid kits to hand as a back up incase the prearranged medical personnel and ambulance are late arriving or fail to turn up.
 - Availability of *ice* is strongly advised. This can be made up prior to the event and stored in freezer boxes for the duration of the championships.
2. **Garda:** Advise the Garda that you will be holding an event. This is important as they may wish to put officers on point duty at an important junction, or they may be concerned about opportunistic crime.
 3. **Directions to venue:** Erect some temporary road signs on lampposts to direct people to the event. This is important as people can easily get lost or they may miss an important turning in a busy town centre. Make sure to remove the signs after the event.
 4. **Registration / Check-in:** Designate an office/room and several reliable and responsible personnel to check in athletes and to distribute race numbers and pins to the athletes and colleges as they arrive.
 - This area should be clearly marked and sign posted. Multiple signage is advisable as sometimes people may be obscuring the sign.
 - Place each college's race numbers and pins in an envelope along with a list of all the athletes names and numbers for that college (A sheet containing this information can be printed from the *All Entered* sheet in the IUAA's downloaded Microsoft excel results software). For bigger colleges it is advisable to put male and female race numbers in separate envelopes.
 - Keep separate check-in sheets on which to mark any withdrawals and substitutions. Remember that these sheets are provided by the IUAA's Microsoft excel results software that the host college can download after the close of entries.
 - Provide maps of the course at this point.
 - Take note of who the numbers were provided to (i.e. captains, athlete, etc.). Get them to sign for them. This will avoid confusion and confrontation from athletes, coaches and officials alike. A sign out sheet is included in the IUAA's Microsoft excel results software. Ensure that whoever signs for them understands that they are responsible for them. If they are not prepared to take responsibility then do not let them take the envelope.
 - It may be an idea to provide event programmes etc at this point.
 - Make sure to have enough pins (four per athlete) and to have surplus pins.
 5. **Course Maps:** Erect maps of the course at various points around the grounds (e.g. Registration/check-in area, changing rooms, on the start line, and where ever else it is deemed necessary).
 6. **The start time of the event:** The start time of the race: The IUAA recommends the following start times so as to allow colleges adequate time to travel to the race on the morning of the event.
 - Women: 2.00 pm
 - Men: 2.35 pm
 7. **Race starts / start line:** The race start:
 - Designate, at least one month in advance, a steward at the start line to call the athletes to the line, to line them up on the start line and assist the starter. It is advisable to assign two people to this job, as there may be over one hundred athletes. Additionally if one of them is unable to attend there is still one person assigned.
 - Arrange, at least one month in advance, for a starter with a gun to be present. As backup, arrange alternative starting equipment such as a whistle or hooter, incase the gun fails.
 - Make sure to generate a random start lane draw. This facility is available in the IUAA results software that is provided for the championships.
 8. **Communication equipment:** If the start is not astride the finish, radio communications should be provided to allow stewards at both points to communicate - especially when activating the timing equipment.
 9. **Provide stewards at points along the course:**
 - Where athletes may need direction.
 - Where shortcuts may be possible.

- Where crowd control is required.
- Where safety may become an issue.

10. Provide stewards at the finish line:

- To do lap counting. (i.e. to tell the athletes how many laps they have left to do). A minimum of two stewards is recommended.
- To ensure that athletes enter the finishing chute in the order that they finish. A minimum of two stewards is recommended.
- To keep athletes moving along the finishing chute. A minimum of two stewards is recommended.
- To record race numbers as athletes come down the finishing chute. Two teams of two stewards should be used so as to record duplicate results. A steward should record the number of athletes finishing, as they are called out to them by an assistant. (Prepared results sheets are provided by the IUAA in the results software). A minimum of four stewards is recommended.
- Provide a timer and recording crew to take finishing places and times. Make sure that any hand operated timing equipment (e.g. stopwatches) can record enough split times. Most hosts prefer to use electronic timing. This is also recommended by the IUAA.

11. Video Footage: Video tape the athletes as they walk down the finishing chute. Get shots of their numbers if possible. This acts as a safeguard that can be used in the unlikely event of any discrepancies in the results.

12. Clock: Provide a clock at the finish.

13. Hydration: If possible arrange for water to be available at the finish. Provide bins for people to dispose of cups/bottles.

14. Captains Meeting: Arrange a venue for the captains meeting as near to the course as possible. The venue should be well signposted and have adequate seating and tables in which to hold a meeting. The time and venue for the meeting should be publicised in advance of the championships. The meeting should start approximately 15 minutes after the completion of the men's race. A typical start time would be 3.40pm. The host should ensure that they have representation at the meeting.

The course and venue:

1. Selection of the venue: When selecting a course one needs to ensure the following:

- That the area of the land available and the terrain is suited to hosting a cross country race.
 - Keep in mind the length of course required. The necessary width for the number of people. Suitable starting and finishing areas. Terrain including concreted and tarmac areas.
 - Make sure that there is access for an ambulance.
- That those attending the race will be able to find their way to the course. Erect signposts directing those attending the races on approach roads to the course. Make sure to remove the signs after the event. If the course cannot be reached by public transport the host should seriously consider providing transport.
- That there are sufficient amenities available immediately adjacent to the course for the numbers expected to attend on the day.
 - Sufficient male and female toilet facilities. Portable toilets should be hired to complement existing toilet facilities if necessary.
 - Male and female changing rooms with showers and an adequate supply of hot water. To complement existing facilities the hosts may wish to erect tents or other appropriate facilities. Transport to additional showers near by should also be provided if necessary.
 - Registration/check in room and a room for the captains meeting.
 - Car parking. (No parking fees are to be specifically imposed for the duration of the event).

2. **Insurance:** The event must be covered by full public liability insurance. Make sure to consult with the relevant departments within your college to ensure that this event is within the remit of your colleges insurance policies. If the event is being held off campus there may be some additional insurance implications that need to be addressed prior to the event. Make sure to approach the relevant departments at least six several months in advance so as to allow adequate time to check everything out.
3. **Course Accuracy:** Ensure that the course is measured accurately using a trundle wheel or similar device.
4. **Health and safety:** Ensure that the course is safe and that all sharp objects have been removed. Remember to think *Health and Safety* at all times.
5. **Time and resources:** Ensure that you have sufficient materials, resources and time to construct the course. Remember that taping off 2km of course can take a lot more time and materials than expected. Make sure to have a team of people to help with both the setting up and the dismantling of the course.
6. **Starting Bays:** Incorporate starting bays and a separate finishing straight and tunnel into the course design. Remember there should ideally be a separate starting bay for each college, even if they only have one entrant. Also keep in mind that the finishing chute can never be too long, but it can very easily be too short.

Processing results:

1. The results are required to be processed in time for the evening banquet, so that the results of the race can be announced and the necessary presentations made.
2. One computer and printer must be available to process the results. Having these on location at the course is preferred. If this isn't possible bear in mind access to these facilities on the race day if intending to use hardware which is housed in a college building. A minimum of two people should do this, one person inputting and the other checking for mistakes.
3. A high level of accuracy is required when compiling the results. Make sure to check carefully for mistakes before declaring the final results.
4. The IUAA provides results software for the purpose of compiling results.
 - The IUAA requires that this software be used.
 - Operating the software is easy and only requires verifying, from the check-in sheets, any substitutions that have been made and then inputting the race numbers and times in the order in which they finished. The team scores are calculated automatically.
5. Ideally full copies of the results should be available at the banquet for interested parties to examine.
6. A full electronic copy of the final results should be given to the IUAA on the day of the championships so as the results can be placed on the Internet. This can be done either on a disk (floppy/CD) or by emailing a copy to the IUAA on the evening of the event.

The intervarsity dinner:

1. Make sure to book the hotel well in advance. A suggested time frame would be 6-8 months in advance.
2. Ensure that the venue is big enough to hold the number of people attending. For the cross country this would typically be in the range of 130-170 people.
3. Traditionally the format of the evening is to have an informal dinner followed by a short prize giving ceremony and DJ or band.

- Make sure to reserve a head table for the IUAA executive, special guests and the organising committee.
 - Hotels usually have their own DJs, but check this. Sometimes if you bring in your own DJ the hotel mightn't make its equipment available for use.
 - The prize giving usually involves a short introductory speech from the host, after which the microphone is handed to the IUAA President. Typically the IUAA President will give a short speech and then make the following presentations:
 - Individual medals.
 - Women's Cross Country trophy.
 - Men's Cross Country trophy.
 - Overall Cross Country trophy.
4. Ensure that the hotel has a working PA (public address) system in the room to be used for the prize giving. Ask the hotel to give you a demonstration so as to ensure that it works. Also make sure that any background music that the hotel has playing can be easily turned off in the room, so as it doesn't interfere with the prize giving. It is also advisable to ensure that the PA system is turned off until it is needed so as to prevent any opportunistic speakers from making uninvited/unwanted addresses.
 5. A bar extension and the dress code is at the discretion of the host. Typical dress codes include casual, neat, semi formal and fancy dress. In certain circumstances the IUAA may request a semi formal dress code if for example there are to be some important presentations made or if a special anniversary is being celebrated. Such a request would be made several months in advance of the event.
 6. The host should also bear in mind the ease to which those attending the event can travel to and from the venue. If the venue is out of the way the host should consider putting on transport. This can be done by providing buses back to the town centre or certain hostels, or by arranging for a sufficient numbers of taxis to be present at the end of the evening.
 7. Hosts are actively encouraged to subsidise the cost of the meal through grants, sponsorship, and/or fundraising.
 8. **It is IUAA policy that the cost of the meal tickets should be no greater than necessary to cover the cost of the meal, DJ, bar extension, security and guest tickets. Any profiteering on meal tickets could result in the withdrawal of the IUAA support grant and other disciplinary action.**

Additional points:

1. **Medals:** These are provided by the IUAA.
2. **Race Numbers:** These are provided by the IUAA. If the host wishes to have a sponsor's logo printed on to the numbers, the IUAA should be contacted at least 6 weeks in advance so as to arrange for new numbers to be printed. The hosts will be required to pay the additional costs associated with the printing of a sponsor's logo.
3. **T-Shirts:** These are at the discretion of the host. The host should keep the following in mind regarding T-shirts:
 - The number of T-shirts sold is inversely proportional to the price at which they are sold.
 - The letters 'IUAA' and/or the words 'Irish Universities Athletics Association' should be clearly displayed on the front of the T-shirt.
4. **Programmes:** The provision of a programme on the race day is optional and at the discretion of the race organisers, although the IUAA encourages hosts to produce a programme. Host should keep the following in mind regarding programmes:
 - The number of programmes sold is inversely proportional to the price at which they are sold. The IUAA strongly advises hosts to provide programmes free of charge.
 - The letters 'IUAA' and/or the words 'Irish Universities Athletics Association' should be clearly displayed on the front of the programme.

- The programme can prove to be a good source of revenue, if advertisement space is sold to local businesses.
 - The programme can provide a useful medium for providing publicity for sponsors.
5. **Sponsorship & Fundraising:** The IUAA strongly encourages host colleges to seek as much financial support as possible in an effort to keep the cost passed on to the athletes, in the form of the fee for the intervarsity dinner, as low as possible, thus encouraging greater participation at the event.
 6. **Equipment:** Host colleges should endeavour to provide the following to ensure the smooth running of the event:
 - IAAF handbook.
 - Stopwatches.
 - **Electronic timing and photo finish. Exact Specifics should be discussed with the IUAA.**
 - Cones.
 - Flags.
 - Pens, pencils, sticky tape.
 - Clipboards.
 - Umbrellas.
 7. **Organising Committee:** It is advisable to set this up early. The exact structure of the committee is at the hosts colleges discretion, however the IUAA would request that someone on the committee takes responsibility for keeping the IUAA President and Competitions Secretary informed at regular intervals.
 8. **Publicity:** Host colleges should endeavour to contact the local freelance journalists with access to the major national broadsheets and arrange to get a copy of the top three results for each event to them immediately after the championships.