Indicate the category of the proposed recommendation
State Tournament Recommendations regarding Format and Non-NFHS Rules or NFHS Experiments

Authors of the Proposal
MN Track & Field Coaches Association Activity Advisory: (Meghan Orgeman - President, Eric Klein - Vice President, Aaron Berndt - Past President, David Boone, Jummy Barlass, Nathan Johnson, Tyler Warren).

Activity/Activities (Check all that apply)
Track and Field, Boys, Track and Field Girls

Current Rule/Policy
State the rule/policy as it appears in the current MSHSL Handbook or Activity/Sport Specific Rules and Policies.

ENTRIES AND ADVANCEMENT
C. Class A, Class AA & Class AAA State: Each Section may advance two contestants in each individual event and two teams in each relay event to the state meet. In case of a tie, the individual contestant or relay team entitled to advance must be determined. In addition, a contestant or relay team will qualify by standard to the State Meet when their performance in the section finals surpasses or equals the established standard. If a malfunction occurs with the fully automatic timing system, hand-held times will be converted for entries advancing by place or by standard.

STANDARDS FOR TRACK AND FIELD
• Qualifying standards are TBD at this time.
• A contestant or relay team may qualify by standard to the State Meet when their performance in the section finals equals or surpasses the established standards. The standards will be posted on the League's Web site, in the Track & Field Section at www.mshsl.org. Wind-aided times do not meet the requirements for qualifying by standard (wind-aided means a wind reading greater than +4.0 m/s - see rule modifications, letter D).

Previous language prior to moving to three classes:

STANDARDS FOR TRACK AND FIELD:
Qualifying standards are determined by averaging the 5th place performance of the finals at the State Meet over 5 years. A contestant or relay team may qualify by standard to the State Meet when their performance in the section finals equals or surpasses the established standards. The standards will be posted on the League's Web site, in the Track & Field Section at www.mshsl.org. Wind-aided times do not meet the requirements for qualifying by standard (wind-aided means a wind reading greater than +4.0 m/s - see rule modifications, letter G).

2023 STATE MEET QUALIFYING STANDARDS:

Proposed Recommendation
Submit your proposed change to the above-stated rule/policy.
Currently, Minnesota Track and Field State Qualifying standards are determined by taking the five-year average of the 5th place finisher in both individual and relay events during the finals at the MSHSL State
Championship Meet.

We are proposing to have Minnesota Track and Field Standards established by taking the previous three-year average of the 9th place finisher from prelims (in events that have prelims and finals on the track) and from finals in all other events at the MSHSL State Meet. The standard may not deviate more than 1% up or down in any given year.

Ninth place is being proposed because that is what is necessary to place and earn points for a team at the State Championship meet. This follows the precedent set by Swimming and Diving, which uses the place through which team points are awarded (16th place) in prelims.

A three-year average is being proposed because it represents a cohort of comparable athletes and follows the same precedent used for creating State Meet Standards in Boys and Girls Swimming and Diving.

For reference, the Swimming and Diving standard language is stated: “The qualifying standards for each swimming event is established by taking the three (3) year average of the 16th fastest time of the state meet preliminaries at the U of M Aquatic Center. The standard may not deviate more than 1% up or down in any given year. This is indicated with an asterisk (**).”

Include any other policies that are impacted by this proposal.
No other rules/policies within the MSHSL Track & Field Handbook will be impacted by this proposal.

Rationale

What is the history of the proposal?
Up until 1973, the league recognized the top five individual or relay event placers, by allowing them to medal and earn points for their team. We believe that Minnesota State Qualifying Standards were established under the premise that if athletes earned performance marks at a section final meet that were good enough to place and earn points for their team at the State Championship meet, they were good enough to qualify for and participate in the State Championship Meet that season. At the time, these standards were created on what placed and earned points for a team, which was fifth place.

Between 1974 and 1992, the State Championship meet moved to recognize the top six individuals and relays, and then in 1993, the league arrived at recognizing the top nine finishers, which is what it remains today.

As Minnesota track and field evolved to recognize the top nine individual and relay finishers, our standards did not evolve with these changes. Standards remain based on an average of fifth place, which is a state recognition that hasn’t existed since 1973.

To our knowledge, there has not been a formal proposal submitted to revise how state qualifying standards have been determined.

How does your proposal benefit education-based opportunities and MSHSL Mission and Beliefs for all Minnesota students?
MSHSL has founded its principles on promoting extra-curricular participation while establishing consistent and fair eligibility guidelines for interscholastic contests. This proposal will bring consistency and equity to how two sports with similar state meet formats, track and field and swimming and diving, establish state qualifying standards. It will also ensure education-based opportunities at state championship contests for Minnesota’s strongest track and field athletes.

What other policies are significant in this proposal?
Track and Field is proposing to follow the precedent set by Boys and Girls Swimming and Diving, a sport most closely resembling the structure of track and field.

The language used by the league to determine Swimming and Diving Qualifying standards are:

“The qualifying standards for each swimming event is established by taking the three (3) year average of the 16th fastest time of the state meet preliminaries at the U of M Aquatic Center. The standard may not deviate more than 1% up or down in any given year. This is indicated with an asterisk (**).”

In Swimming and Diving, the league recognizes the top sixteen athletes and relays by allowing them to earn points for the team. Qualifying standards are established accordingly by taking the three-year average of the sixteenth-fastest time from the State Meet Preliminaries.

In Track and Field, the ability to earn points for the team is given to the top nine athletes, yet qualifying standards are established by taking the average of the fifth fastest times from the State Meet. This proposal advocates for track and field to follow the precedent set by swimming and average the ninth-best performance mark over three years.

Provide evidence of support for the proposal from other groups

In October of 2022, the Minnesota State Track and Field Coaches Association was surveyed on their views surrounding our current state qualifying standards. Overall, 34.4% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the current state qualifying standards. Association members felt that the standards were too rigorous and that many of our state’s top athletes were not given the opportunity to compete at the State Championship Meet because of an overly competitive section alignment. This was especially true for Class AA.

Coaches and Activities Directors provided examples of athletes placing third or fourth in their section, unable to hit the current rigorous state qualifying standards, who would have medaled and earned points at the state meet given the opportunity to compete.

Impact

How does your proposal affect this activity, including its impact on all classes, areas of the state, and variety of schools

This proposal will afford opportunities for our top athletes to participate in the state meet regardless of the competitiveness of their section. We define “top athletes” as having the ability to finish in the top nine in the state and earn points for their team. Currently, to qualify for the state meet, the top two finishers in individual events and relays advance from each section. Athletes can also advance to state if they meet or exceed the standard at the section final meet. The intent of this is to ensure our top athletes participate in the state meet even if they do not qualify by section placement; however, the reality is that our current method for creating standards (using the five-year average of 5th place) is not affording our top athletes the ability to compete for the chance to earn points for their team and earn a medal.

This proposal will also bring consistency to how standards are created across sports in Minnesota. We are looking to follow the precedent set by Swimming and Diving to create our standards.

Administration

How does your proposal impact section and state tournaments?

This proposal will not impact the structure, finances, or administration of section tournaments; however, it will impact the excitement and intensity of section meets as athletes reach for rigorous, but reasonable, qualifying standards.
It also will not impact the structure, finances, or administration of the State Meet. This policy change will only affect a very small number of our state’s top athletes who will likely already be participating in the state meet in another event.

This proposal will support the mission of MSHSL by promoting extra-curricular participation while establishing consistent and fair eligibility guidelines for interscholastic contests. This proposal will bring consistency and equity to how two sports with similar state meet formats, track and field and swimming and diving, establish state qualifying standards. It will also provide education-based opportunities at state championship contests for Minnesota’s top track and field athletes.

Length of Tournament
How does your proposal impact the needed competition time for section and state tournaments?
This proposal will not impact the needed competition time for the section meet. Regarding the state meet, given the spacing of the current State Meet schedule, with extra time embedded between events, this will impact the needed competition time for the state meet.

To be certain of our projections, we used results from the old Class A Boys and Girls Section and State Meets. We chose this class because the teams represented in the old Class A are most representative of the new Class A and would produce the most valid projections. Proposed 2022 standards for Class A were created by using our proposed methodology for creating standards (averaging the 9th place finish from prelims from the 2018, 2019, and 2021 State Championship Meets).

With the proposed 2022 standards, we went into the 2022 Section results and recorded how many total athletes/relays would have qualified based on the proposed standard. Finally, we recorded how many additional heats/flight the total number of added athletes/relays would add to the State Championship Meet. After comparing this data to the number of athletes who qualified in 2022 based on the actual 2022 standards, we found that the proposed standards would only add one additional heat (in the boys 4x200m) to the state meet. Given that one heat of a boy’s 4x200m race is less than two minutes, the impact on the overall time schedule is not significant.

For detailed data, see Appendix B: https://shorturl.at/oUX23

Participants
How does your proposal impact the number of participants/teams?
2022 standards were created by using the previous five years of state meet finals performance marks in the following ways:

Class A: average from the old Class A 7th place marks.
Class AA: average from the old Class AA 9th place marks.
Class AAA: average from the old Class AA 7th place marks.

In 2022, the rigorous standards resulted in very few athletes qualifying based on standard, especially for Class AA (Boys AA only had one athlete qualify on standard and Girls AA only had six total athletes qualify on standard in two events).

See Appendix A for a record of the 2022 standards and the total number of athletes who qualified for the State Meet by hitting a qualifying standard (the number is listed in parentheses next to the standard for each event).

Appendix A: https://shorturl.at/fwBJ4
To anticipate how using the protocols established by swimming and diving would affect track and field, we re-created the 2022 standards using the average of 9th place over 3 years (2018, 2020, 2021) for Class A. We then used the re-created 2022 standards to determine the expected impact on participation.

From our research, the proposed 2022 standards did not increase the number of teams participating in the meet. It also did not lead to a significant increase in the total number of participants. Looking at Appendix B, you will see that the proposed standards did lead to a small increase in the total number of athletes included in some events (Boys and Girls Class A increased the number of athletes in six events), but it did not increase the total number of athletes in the meet (there was a total of five new male and six new female participants in the meet). The overall number of events that added qualifiers where there were no qualifiers from the actual 2022 standards was minimal (two events for boys Class A and five events for girls Class A).

Appendix B: [https://shorturl.at/oUX23](https://shorturl.at/oUX23)

How does your proposal impact the percentage of participants/teams that would qualify for the state tournament?
Given how few athletes qualify based on standard alone, this proposal would not have a statistically significant impact on the number of teams or participants in the state tournament. As far as the number of total qualifiers based on standards, using the 2022 results, the proposed 2022 standards would increase the number of Class A boy qualifiers by 52.2% (from 22 qualifiers to 46 qualifiers) and Class A girl qualifiers by 47.6% (from 10 qualifiers to 21 qualifiers), but there would not be a statistically significant increase in the total number of participants in the state meet (all but five boy and six girl qualifiers were already in a relay or additional individual event).

Facilities
How does your proposal impact the facilities needed to accommodate your recommendation at both the section and state level?
This proposal will not impact the facilities needed to accommodate our recommendation at both the section and state meets.

Awards
How does your proposal impact the number of awards at both section and state?
This will not have an impact on the number of awards at both the section and state meets.

Other
Provide any other pertinent information not included in this proposal
It is important to note that the 5th-place performances were not used to create 2022 standards. Empirical evidence shows that there was not any statistically significant increase in individual participation at any class level from the format used to create standards in 2022.

Furthermore, 2023 standards were created by a method that is even more rigorous. For 2022, standards were created by weighing the 2022 standards with the 5th place finals finishes from the 2022 State Meet. When you look at the 2023 standards they are even more rigorous than the 2022 standard in most events. When we look at how few athletes qualified on standard in 2022, we are anticipating even fewer qualifying in 2023.

Our proposal to use the 9th-place average from prelims (which is a more rigorous mark than the 9th-place finish from finals) is not much different than what was already used in 2022. Creating standards based on
what it would require to place and earn points at the State Championship Meet would not have a significant impact on the league and it would follow the precedent of Swimming and Diving. It would, however, have a significant impact on our top high school track and field athletes in Minnesota and on the excitement experienced at each section meet.

For the 2024 Standards, we are proposing that we take the 2023 standards and average those marks with the 9th place finishes from the 2022 and 2023 preliminaries. Starting in 2025 we will have three years of data to follow the precedent set by Swimming and Diving.

Proposed Standards progression:

2024 = [(2023 standard+2022 9th place prelims+2023 9th place prelims)/3].
2025 = [(2022 9th place prelims+2023 9th place prelims+2024 9th place prelims)/3]

Primary Author and Contact for Proposal

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