

Middlesex League Division Plan

Ralph Lord Division - Belmont, Lexington, Wakefield, Reading, Woburn

Robert McIntyre Division - Watertown, Burlington, Melrose, Stoneham, Winchester

Plan - Six dual meets - 4 in division & 2 cross-over meets
plus a final League Championship Meet.

Rationale for Change

- **The nine meet schedule has always been a coaching challenge in regard to a balance between competition and preparation.**
- **The dramatic increase in team size requires more preparation time than in previous years.**
- **The increase in restrictions from academic considerations, exam week, has reduce the available dates in which to schedule meets.**
- **Since the addition of RLTC as a venue there has been a marked increase in state level competitions that benefit Middlesex League competitors. This increase has risen from two twenty years ago to seven at present. These competitions will benefit varsity athletes preparing for state championship meet as long as we can prepare the athletes properly and fit them into our competitive schedule.**

Rationale for Change - Continued

- **Other consistently competitive teams from around the state, generally come from leagues that race 6 or few times in league competition.**
- **An athlete needs an easy day before and after any competition and the reduction from 9 to 6 or seven dates frees 6 to 8 dates for addition training.**
- **Accomplished athletes, on weaker teams, rarely get to race the top athletes from the strong teams as the strong team generally rests or shifts events for these athletes. The championship meet concluding the season will enhance the possibility that this athletes will compete against each other.**
- **The current schedule does not adequately plan for bad weather with alternate dates available in case of snow or lost scheduled dates. We were very fortunate that the 2006-07 winter season did not have a rescheduling problem but the fact is that we did not have reasonable alternate dates built into the schedule.**

Elements of the Division Schedule

- **Option A** - The current Middlesex League will be divided into two divisions of five team each. In subsequent years the Lord Division and the McIntyre Division will be organized in tandem with the information used by the MIAA to assign schools to a specific division. This will dynamically adjust the divisions based on school enrollment. If there is a significant difference between male and female enrollment within a school it is possible to address this difference between the genders. Traditional rivals will initially meet in the last meet of the season but as enrollments change these divisions the rivalries will still occur but not necessarily in the last meet.
- Division teams will face each other once in a season in a dual meet format and once in a league meet format.
- Cross division teams will face two from the other divisions in dual meet competition and all the teams in the championship meet.

Elements of the Division Schedule

- **Option B** - The current Middlesex League will be divided into two divisions of five team each. In subsequent years the Lord Division and the McIntyre Division will be organized by switching the last place team in the Lord division with the first place team in the McIntyre Division. Traditional rivals will initially meet in the last meet of the season but as enrollments change these divisions the rivalries will still occur but not necessarily in the last meet.
- Division teams will face each other once in a season in a dual meet format and once in a league meet format.
- Cross division teams will face two from the other divisions in dual meet competition and all the teams in the championship meet.

Option A & B - Elements of Schedule continued

- Each division will cross over twice during the dual meet portion of the schedule and will face every team in the other division in the championship meet. In year one the cross over is the meeting of the traditional rivals.
- This provides for six dual meets and one championship meet.
- Initial Lord Division: Belmont, Lexington, Reading, Wakefield, Woburn
- Initial McIntyre Division: Watertown, Burlington, Stoneham, Melrose, Winchester
- Block with a background in this color are cross over meetings of divisions.

Option A & B - Sample Schedule for year one (Traditional Rivals in red italics)

Year		Belmont	Burlington	Lexington	Melrose	Reading
1						
B	1	Wakefield	Melrose	Stoneham	Burlington	Woburn
L	2	Woburn	Winchester	Wakefield	Reading	Melrose
O	3	Reading	Watertown	Woburn	Stoneham	Belmont
C	4	Lexington	Stoneham	Belmont	Winchester	Wakefield
K	5	Burlington	Belmont	Reading	Watertown	Lexington
S	6	<i>Watertown</i>	<i>Lexington</i>	<i>Burlington</i>	<i>Wakefield</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>
		Stoneham	Wakefield	Watertown	Winchester	Woburn
B	1	Lexington	Belmont	Winchester	Watertown	Reading
L	2	Watertown	Lexington	Stoneham	Burlington	Belmont
O	3	Melrose	Winchester	Burlington	Wakefield	Lexington
C	4	Burlington	Reading	Woburn	Melrose	Watertown
K	5	Winchester	Woburn	Melrose	Stoneham	Wakefield
S	6	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Melrose</i>	<i>Belmont</i>	<i>Woburn</i>	<i>Winchester</i>

Option A & B- Sample Schedule for a year with Belmont and Stoneham switching divisions (Traditional Rivals in red italics)

		Belmont	Burlington	Lexington	Melrose	Reading
1		Lexington	Melrose	Belmont	Burlington	Woburn
2		<i>Watertown</i>	Winchester	Wakefield	Reading	Melrose
3		Melrose	Watertown	Woburn	Belmont	<i>Stoneham</i>
4		Burlington	Belmont	Stoneham	Winchester	Wakefield
5		Winchester	Stoneham	Reading	Watertown	Lexington
6		Reading	<i>Lexington</i>	<i>Burlington</i>	<i>Wakefield</i>	Belmont

		Stoneham	Wakefield	Watertown	Winchester	Woburn
1		Wakefield	Stoneham	Winchester	Watertown	Reading
2		Woburn	Lexington	<i>Belmont</i>	Burlington	Stoneham
3		<i>Reading</i>	Winchester	Burlington	Wakefield	Lexington
4		Lexington	Reading	Woburn	Melrose	Watertown
5		Burlington	Woburn	Melrose	Belmont	Wakefield
6		Watertown	<i>Melrose</i>	Stoneham	<i>Woburn</i>	<i>Winchester</i>

Option A & B - Keeping Traditional Rivals

- The second slide reflects a team from the Lord Division and a team from the McIntyre Division switching divisions.
- Option A - This type of switch will occur when school enrollments shift the composition of the two divisions.
- Option B - This type of switch will occur annually when two teams switch shifting the composition of the two divisions.
- The traditional rivals will meet each other annually but not necessarily in the last block of meets.

Option A & B – Crowning a Champion

- There will be two levels of Middlesex League Champion. First the team that has the best record against their Division opponents will be the best in that Division.
- Teams with 6-0 or identical records after six meets will race each other within the Championship Meet to determine the overall league champion. This can be done by insuring that these teams are paired together in heats of the championship meet as well as allowing these teams to have at least 3 entrants per event.
- The overall Championship Meet will also be scored like any other multi team meet with a meet champion declared at the end of the meet.

Option A & B - How would the Championship Meet be structured to accomplish this?

- If there is a clear winner after six meets then that team is the league champion and the championship meet is a ten meet draw.
- If teams have identical records but met each other during the season then the winner of head to head meeting will be the Middlesex League Champion and again the championship meet is a ten team draw.
- Teams with identical records will face each other in the Championship Meet. They will race each other in heats containing only these teams. The remainder of the league will race in heats seed by performance not team. Depending on time and space considerations the other teams in the league will enter at least 2 performers per event with additional entrants from that team entered based on league performance standards. It is suggested that this standard be the Class D State qualifying standard modified to include a lesser standard from another class should that be the case.
- My hope is that this meet will be conducted at the RLTC but scheduling restrictions at the RLTC may alter this objective.

Option C - Elements of Schedule for dynamic block 6 pairing

- Each division will cross over twice during the dual meet portion of the schedule and will face every team in the other division in the championship meet. Each year the last meet will be a cross over meet according to won-loss record in the previous five meets. Teams that have already faced each other will NOT be paired. The team with the next best record will be paired.
- This provides for six dual meets and one championship meet.
- Traditional rivals will NOT necessarily meet during a given season.
- Initial Lord Division: Belmont, Lexington, Reading, Wakefield, Woburn
- Initial McIntyre Division: Watertown, Burlington, Stoneham, Melrose, Winchester
- Block with a background in this color are cross over meetings of divisions.

Option C - Sample Schedule for year one

Yr 1	Belmont	Burlington	Lexington	Melrose	Reading
1	Wakefield	Melrose	Stoneham	Burlington	Woburn
2	Woburn	Winchester	Wakefield	Reading	Melrose
3	Reading	Watertown	Woburn	Stoneham	Belmont
4	Lexington	Stoneham	Belmont	Winchester	Wakefield
5	Burlington	Belmont	Reading	Watertown	Lexington
6	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup
	Stoneham	Wakefield	Watertown	Winchester	Woburn
1	Lexington	Belmont	Winchester	Watertown	Reading
2	Watertown	Lexington	Stoneham	Burlington	Belmont
3	Melrose	Winchester	Burlington	Wakefield	Lexington
4	Burlington	Reading	Woburn	Melrose	Watertown
5	Winchester	Woburn	Melrose	Stoneham	Wakefield
6	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup

Option C - Schedule for a subsequent year with Belmont and Stoneham switching divisions

Block	Belmont	Burlington	Lexington	Melrose	Reading
1	Lexington	Melrose	Belmont	Burlington	Woburn
2	Watertown	Winchester	Wakefield	Reading	Melrose
3	Melrose	Watertown	Woburn	Belmont	Stoneham
4	Burlington	Belmont	Stoneham	Winchester	Wakefield
5	Winchester	Stoneham	Reading	Watertown	Lexington
6	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup
Block	Stoneham	Wakefield	Watertown	Winchester	Woburn
1	Wakefield	Stoneham	Winchester	Watertown	Reading
2	Woburn	Lexington	Belmont	Burlington	Stoneham
3	Reading	Winchester	Burlington	Wakefield	Lexington
4	Lexington	Reading	Woburn	Melrose	Watertown
5	Burlington	Woburn	Melrose	Belmont	Wakefield
6	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup	TBA-Matchup

Option C – Dynamic block 6 pairing due to won – loss record after 5 meets.

- The second slide reflects a team in the Lord Division and a team in the McIntyre Division switching divisions. This switch could occur for either of two reasons, enrollment or competitive considerations.
- In subsequent year first switch the teams, if that is part of the process, then rotate the order of blocks.

Option C – Crowning a Champion

- There will be two levels of Middlesex League Champion. First the team that has the best record against Division opponents will be the best in that Division.
- The team with the best record after six meets will be the Middlesex League Champion.
- The Championship Meet will also be scored like any other multi team meet with a meet champion declared at the end of the meet.

How would the Championship Meet be structured to accomplish this?

- Depending on time and space considerations each team in the league will enter 2 performers per event with additional entrants from that team entered based on league performance standards. It is suggested that this standard be the Class D State qualifying standard modified to include a lesser standard from another class should that be the case.
- The championship meet will be held at RLTC even if it is not the last meet of the season.

Current 2006-07 Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	27 START	28	29	30	Dec 1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Block 1
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Block 2
17	18	19	20 JV Meet	21	22	23 Block 3
24	25 Christmas	26 Usually No Practice	27 JV Meet	28	29	30 Block 4
31	NewYears	2 Block 5	3	4 Block 5	5	6 Auerbach
7 Auerbach	8	9 Block 6	10 Block 6	11	12	13 Relays III
14 Relays I	15 MLK Day	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	20 Relays II
21 Relays IV	22	23 JV Meet	24 Block 7	25	26	27
28 McIntyre	29	30 Block 8	31 Block 8	1-Feb	2	3 MSTCA Coaches
4 MSTCA Elite	5	6 Block 9	7 Block 9	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Class I	17 Class II&III
18 Class IV	19	20	21	22	23 States	24
Easy days + Holidays	Vacation/Sunday	Training days	(Exam Days)	Race Days League	Race Days State	
22+3	14	31	4	16	12	

Characteristics of Current Schedule

- Four blocks of meets before Jan 1, six blocks before January 11.
- A meet in the winter vacation week.
- The last league meet February 6 without any realistic league snow dates during the last month of the season.

2006-07 Schedule Using Divisions

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	27 START	28	29	30	Dec 1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Block 1
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Block 2
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Block 3
24	25 Christmas	26	20 Relay Meet League	28	29	30
31	NewYears	2 Block 4	3	4 Block 4	5	6 Auerbach
7 Auerbach	8	9 Block 5	10 Block 5	11	12	13 Relays III
14 Relays I	15 MLK Day	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	20 Relays II
21 Relays IV	22	23	24 Block 6	25	26	27
28 McIntyre	29	30	31	Feb 1	2	3 MSTCA Coaches
4 MSTCA Elite	5	6 Block 7 Boys Championship	7 Block 7 Girls Championship	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Class I	17 Class II&III
18 Class IV	19	20	21	22	23 States	24
Easy days + Holidays	Vacation/Sunday	Training days	(Exam Days)	Race Days League	Race Days State	
17+3	16	39	4	11	12	

Characteristics of 2 Division Schedule

- Three blocks of meets before Jan 1, five blocks before January 11.
- No league dual meets in the winter vacation week.
- The last league meet January 24 with snow dates January 30 and/or 31.
- The addition of the league championship meet February 6 & 7.
- My preference would be have the Championship Meet at RLTC but I am realistic to understand that might not always be possible give the difficulty in getting dates we prefer at RLTC.

Comparison of Two Division Schedule to Current Schedule

- Few racing dates in league competition created 7+ more training days over the season.
- Eliminates the crush of meets around the holidays.
- Provides snow dates late in the season.
- Focuses league competition towards a meaning championship meet as we get ready for the State Championship meets in mid February.

Added Value from the Division System.

- Creates new more attainable competitive goal for the lower enrollment schools by moving their teams to their own division within the league.
- Retains the crowning of a Middlesex League Championship team.
- Adds a meaningful championship meet that enhances preparation for the state competitions while at the same time reducing racing frequency.
- Improves the prospects of better athletes on weaker teams racing against the best in the league by including a Championship Meet.

Unintended Consequences of the division plan and a solution.

- Teams that do not have indoor track to practice on are denied two dates where these teams get to run, throw and jump on an indoor surface.
- If the schools with track facilities share their facility once per season per team without such a facility then the value to the track poor teams would be as good or better than retaining the current schedule.
- These hosting dates can be coordinated team to team to insure minimum impact on the host schools. This is a small inconvenience for the track rich schools to share a few practice days during the season to better serve the athletes of the track poor teams.

Cost analysis

- This season there was 18 varsity blocks and three JV dates totaling 21.
- The division schedule calls for 12 varsity blocks, 1 Championship Meet date, 2 Relay carnival date and 2 JV racing dates totaling 17.
- This means that each team needs four fewer buses.
- This means that the league has reduced costs for officials and facilities.

Comments & Contact Information

- I have prepared this schedule and this presentation in an effort to create a mature plan and presentation addressing this topic.
- I want to acknowledge the work and ideas of Matt Carr and David Mastro that have helped shape my thinking in the preparation of this plan. We met Monday afternoon, made some modifications and have agreed that this should be presented to you for your consideration.
- We also agreed that this needs to be a “consensus” decision. By “consensus” we mean that some might have some level of objection but in the interest of addressing issues that bother a majority of us, we try this for a year with a return to the current scheduling program in 2008-09.
- Permanently changing to this system would be contingent on a subsequent vote by a majority of coaches support the continuation of this type of division scheduling plan.

Comments & Contact Information continued

- I also want to acknowledge the conversations that I have had with Kevin Norton, Hal Croft, Bill O'Connor and Bobby Powers that also gave me pause to consider how this plan should be crafted. I am sure there were others conversations that helped me along the way so thanks you all.
- I will post this presentation in both power point format and pdf format on www.mlxctrack.com/schedule/divisionplan.htm
- Coach Phillip Crosby, Lexington
- Email: phillipcrosby@yahoo.com phone:978-772-9424