**VAA Track & Field Weather Policy-UPDATED 2016**

The Commissioners’ goals in creating a weather policy are to:

1) Ensure the safety of the participants, volunteers, and spectators.

2) Ensure everyone’s time is valued and respected by communicating weather-related scheduling issues thoroughly and in a timely manner and avoiding late decisions if at all possible.

3) Ensure we are operating within the regulations of the broader track governance (i.e. not holding field events on saturated/muddy turf, complying with required lightning cancellations).

3) Ensure people have an understanding of why, when and how weather decisions are made.

Weather considerations:

* All POSSIBLE weather decisions will be made no less than 2 hours prior to the start time of each meet.
* All weather decisions will be communicated via 1) coach email list; 2) coach text message list; 3) VAA Track web site; 4) VAA REGISTRATION E-MAIL LIST. IT IS ULTIMATELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACHES TO ENSURE THE FAMILIES RECEIVE THE COMMUNICATIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER.  WE ENCOURAGE COACHES TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN TEAM-SPECIFIC PHONE TREES/TEXT LISTS.
* We will use available weather radar and multiple forecast sources to make the weather decisions.  Sources will likely include weather.com; Fox 9 Weatherbug (mobile app); KARE11 and KSTP weather online.  These are chosen for their relative reliability and their offering of an hour-by-hour forecast.
* **If the temperature at meet start time is forecast to be less than 40 degrees, the meet will automatically be canceled.**
* **If the temperature at meet start time is forecast to be less than 50 and raining, the meet will automatically be canceled**
* **If the wind chill at meet start time is forecast to be less than 35 degrees, the meet will automatically be canceled.**
* All other conditions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
* The exception to the 3-hours-prior policy pertains to lightning and/or very rapidly worsening weather.   Lightning strikes in the area will automatically stop a meet in progress (Commissioners on-site will make the determination on “distant” thunder in conjunction with the coaches).  Lightning in the hour prior to the meet may also cause a late-notice cancellation.  We will make every possible effort to effectively communicate and manage late cancellations – AS ABOVE, WE WILL NEED THE COACHES TO ENSURE PARENTS ARE MONITORING THE VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS, and the team-specific communication channels we recommend being established.

\*\* Please note as it pertains to weather:

* Aside from the above “automatic cancel” situations, decisions will be made with a preference on going ahead with the meets (not canceling).   We have a short window for the season and we want to ensure families get value for their commitment.  At times, kids will likely be running in moderate rain, wind and/or cold.  As long as the track and field conditions are suitable for a safe event and kids are appropriately prepared (coaches ensuring kids/parents are aware of the weather and know how to dress), we will have a successful meet.
* FOR FIRST-TIME TRACK FAMILIES, coaches should communicate that the AVHS Track is situated in a location that is colder and windier than the surrounding community.  This is not to be underestimated.  This should be factored into kids’ clothing for meets.
* Because the commissioners cannot always track the times and locations of all practices being held, practice cancellations are at the discretion of the individual coaches.  We recommend following the overall weather guidelines and being effective in communicating with families.  The commissioners will, however, cancel practices when we are required to do so (i.e. lightning, ice of any kind on the track, etc.)
* We also encourage coaches to see if any of their teams’ parents have access to a portable “tent” shelter to bring to the meets to serve as a meeting place for the team and a source of shade/dry place to put warm-ups, rain gear, etc. and for the kids to shelter between heats/events.
* Neither of the Commissioners are trained meteorologists.  We will do the best we can and will provide rationale for the decisions we make.  We may get it wrong and we would ask for patience.  We would also appreciate feedback on ways to make this policy more effective.