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Track group weighs apology over holiday conflict

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By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

The executive director of the Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association said today that he and the group's board members will hold a meeting today to decide whether or not they will issue an official statement apologizing for scheduling an invitational cross country meet on Rosh Hashana.

He added that he will uphold the promise he made in a Globe story published Tuesday that no future meets will be scheduled on Rosh Hashana.

The coaches association scheduled Saturday's McIntyre Invitational meet at Franklin Park in Boston on the Jewish New Year, prompting the Newton North girls cross country team to decide against competing as a team because eight members will be observing the holiday.

The team is not boycotting the event, but their coach decided not to enter the runners when he learned nearly one-third of his squad would not be able to attend.

Association officials said they were aware the Jewish holy day fell on the same day as the meet when they scheduled the event in January. But, said Mooney, there were no other dates available to book the venue, and he "had no real idea how serious that day was."

"I feel badly. We did not intend to offend the Jewish community. It will not be on Rosh Hashana again," Mooney said in a telephone interview Monday.

"There was no other time and place to put it, and now it's too late to change the date," Mooney said.

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