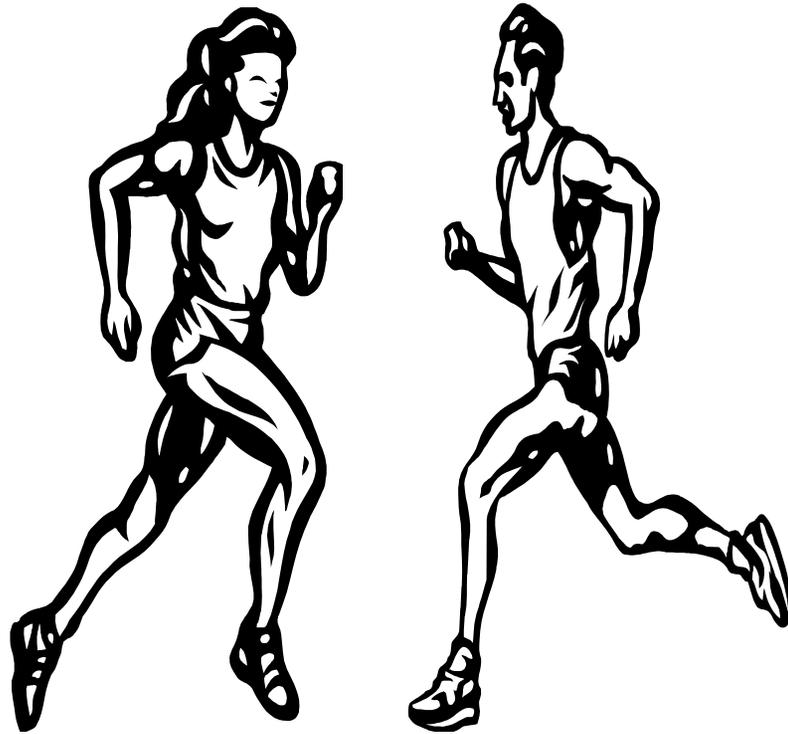


FREEPORT
YELLOWJACKET
CROSS-COUNTRY



PARENT'S MANUAL



PART ONE

YOUR PART BEFORE THE START

As your child is entering their first weeks of training there are a number of areas that may be of concern to you as a parent. How can you assist them? What should you expect?

How should a student athlete prepare and deal with training and competition in terms of eating habits, sleep, and mental attitude?

As a rule, don't change any aspect of the normal daily routine. Everything should remain the same in terms of home responsibilities, appropriate eating, sleeping, and social habits.

Parents should be aware that a common result of initial training may be muscle soreness. Any athlete in intensive training could be subject to injury. All concerns should be directed to the coach and/or trainer and/or physician.

A well-balanced diet is an asset for any individual and especially an athlete. Any nutritional changes should occur gradually. On meet day, have the athlete avoid high fat and fried food, eggs, and carbonated or acidic beverages. Easily digested foods in low quantities and lots of water should be consumed on race day. The last intake of food should be 2-3 hours before the start of the race. Recognize that each individual has different nutritional needs. Go into a race on the hungry side with the stomach mostly empty.

PART TWO

HOW TO GREET YOUR FIRST MEET

PRE-RACE

Get acquainted with the race course and strategic spectator points. Identify your team's uniforms.

Be aware that more than one race may be run during course of the meet. A XC meet may last anywhere from two hours to a full day. Races may be organized by the number of schools entered, the age of the runners, or school size. Find out the time and race in which your child is running.

DO NOT expect or seek the attention of your child once they have joined their team for pre-race preparation. They need time to mentally and physically prepare for the race with the coach and the rest of the team.

DURING THE RACE

XC is not a sport observed from a stationary point. There are many ways for a spectator to enjoy watching the race. One exciting aspect is to watch the start. After the start, you may wish to move to another point along the course to cheer on and watch the runners as they pass. As the race develops, you may want to move to the finish area to watch the runners complete the race.

While cheering and encouragement are allowed and encouraged, coaching by parents may result in confusion for the athlete. The coach may employ the help of parents to give splits or positions to the athletes at certain points on the course.

POST-RACE

After the runner comes through the finish chute, it is their responsibility to report directly to the coach or a designated area to turn in their card or stick, if they are used. Also, the coach may want to meet with each runner to discuss the race or check

for injuries or other problems. You, as a parent, will, hopefully, be excited about your child's performance but it may be inappropriate to interfere at this point.

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Please be aware that runners have certain responsibilities after they finish a race. Coaches require the runners to cool down after the race as well as actively support teammates who are still running or have yet to race.

Please, if at all possible, do not rush a runner to leave after a race.

After a race, a runner will probably be more physically spent than you would anticipate. Symptoms may include rubbery knees, general weakness, lightheadedness, glassy eyes, nausea, and salivating. The symptoms will pass quickly. Coaches have been trained to be aware of these physical reactions and decide if they are temporary or need treatment.

Runners are emotionally spent after a race. They may need time to themselves. This is not the time for criticism.

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PART THREE

SETTING SIGHTS AND REACHING HEIGHTS

The setting and assessment of goals is very much an individual decision in cross-country. Some goals may include:

- PR – Personal record over a timed course
- Race Pace – Speed of the race in intervals of the race (usually per mile)
- Place – Place of finish relative to the entire field
- Team Position – Place of finish relative to one's teammates
- Beating a specific opposing runner

HIGHS

Finishing a course successfully and/or improving upon any of one's goals can be considered a "high" for a runner.

LOWS

Expect the possibility of disappointment after a race by the athlete. Although one goal set by the individual may have been achieved, a runner may have fallen short of others and may not be satisfied with the overall result. Athletes need some emotional space after the race by both the coach and parent.

PART FOUR

POINTING TO VICTORY-SCORING A MEET

Scoring in XC can be compared to golf-LOW SCORE WINS!

Each individual finishing a race is given a place. The places of the first 5 runners on each team are added to compute the team scores. The lowest possible score is 15 and the highest is 50. If a team scores 27 or less points, they will win the dual meet. If a teams first 3 runners finish 1-2-3, the will win the meet, provided at least 2 other runners finish.

A XC team consists of 7 runners. The 6th and 7th runners do not give points for their places but they can displace the 4th and/or 5th place runners on the other team, thus raising the opponent's score.

EXAMPLE:

	TEAM A	TEAM B	
1.	2	1	
2.	3	4	
3.	5	6	
4.	7	8	
5.	12	9	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	29	28	
6.	13	10	Team B's 6 th and 7 th
7.	14	11	runners displaced

team A's 5th runner so Team B wins.

In the next example, both teams tie in points with their first 5 runners. At this point, the 6th runner will determine the winner.

	TEAM A	TEAM B	
1.	2	1	
2.	3	4	
3.	5	6	
4.	7	8	
5.	11	9	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	28	28	
6.	12	10	Team B wins
7.	14	13	with the higher placing 6 th runner.

INVITATIONAL MEETS

An invitational can have 10-30 or more teams. Scoring is done by adding the places of the first 5 runners of each team. It is important the all 7 runners get the best place that they can to keep the score low. The 6th and 7th runners can help by displacing runners from other teams. In the event of a tie, the higher placing 6th runner breaks the tie.

RESULTS

Race results take time to compile (even with computer chips). The results will be made available as soon as possible.

AWARDS

Generally, at dual meets there are no awards given. At invitationals, awards are usually given for individuals and team performances. These awards are a 'high' for the XC runner. Awards can be given after each race or at the end of the meet.

PART FIVE
ROUTES TO THE CHUTES

Although interscholastic sports are generally for high school students, often there are opportunities for younger runners to be involved. Information is usually given to students during the school day as to how to get involved.

Some PE programs promote XC in their curriculum and this is a great way for students to be introduced to the sport. Some elementary and middle schools offer club and out of school running experiences for students. Some invitationals offer special 12 and under races.

As a student progresses through HS, there may be a desire to participate in interscholastic sports on an individual level. XC provides an opportunity for students to become involved and experience personal success in interscholastic sports. As a result of the success in spring track programs, runners often wish to continue distance running, and should be encouraged to do so. XC differs from the sport of track and field in that running is done on a variety of terrains, rather than on a measured oval track.

Many coaches strongly encourage their runners to be on a self training program out of season, especially in the summer. XC camps are available during the summer and many teams attend as a group. If camps are not available to you, encourage your child to run on a regular basis during the summer.

As a result of being a participant on an interscholastic team, a student becomes more qualified in terms of college acceptance. Athletes often have the opportunity to come in contact with college coaches and become familiar with college academic and athletic programs. Some colleges offer financial assistance to students who are both above average runners and good students.

PART SIX
BE A PACK BACKER

An organized parent group can be a great asset to any cross country program. In addition to being spectators, active involvement with the team can increase a feeling of unity and support among parents.

The goals of a parent group in cross-country are the moral and supplemental financial support of the team. The group can also assist in the publicity and promotion of the sport. It is important that this organization work in conjunction with the coaching staff, the athletic director, and the school administration.

Specific guidance can come from the coach. If fund raising is desirable, suggestions of what funds can be used for and how to raise them are discussed in the Fund Raising section of this booklet.

PART SEVEN

MAKING ENDS MEET

Although the school provides basic needs for their athletes, there are many reasons why fund raising can add a great deal in terms of program development.

Listed below are ways that additional funds can be used:

1. Provide the team with equipment which is not mandatory but can enhance the total program (running apparel, timing devices, heart monitors, banners, etc.).
2. Provide Training Equipment (med balls, weights, etc.).
3. Provide comfort equipment for meets (tents, blankets, food, water, etc.).
4. Provide financial assistance to the runners to attend camps, clinics, etc.).
5. Assist students with financial needs (running shoes, etc.).
6. End of the season banquet or picnic where individual runners or groups can be recognized by the parents and coaches.

Method of fund raising may include:

1. Raffles-parents can solicit donations of merchandise to be raffled.
2. Refreshment Stands-can be run at home meets and other school activities.
3. Dinners.
4. Car Washes.
5. Selling Promotional Items-Shirts, hats, stickers, etc.
6. Hosting A Road Race.

CROSS-COUNTRY TERMS TO KNOW

CROSS-COUNTRY-Team sport involving running over varied terrain.

DUAL MEET-A meet between 2 teams.

DOUBLE DUAL MEET-A meet between 3 or more teams that is scored as if each pair of teams were in a dual meet.

INVITATIONAL-A meet between a large number of team. Scoring is by first team to last (not double-dual).

FALSE START-When a runner leaves the starting line early. The race is recalled and restarted.

UNFAIR START-When the start is not fair for 1 or more runners, such as if a runner gets knocked down. The race is recalled and restarted.

“CHIP”-A computer chip placed on 1 or both shoes of a runner to record his place at the finish and at various spots on the course.

FARTLEK-A training method that uses jogging with intermitant sprints.

FINISH CHUTE-The roped off area at the finish, through which The runners are directed in the order that they finished. Used in large races where chips are not used.

PACE-Rate of speed maintained over a prolonged distance, usually per mile.

PACK-A group of runners running in close proximity.

PERSONAL RECORD-Best performance time on a specific course. Referred to as a PR.

RACE COURSE-The route that the runners follow during the race.

RUN-OUTS-Part of the race warm up where the runner sprints out 50-100m from the starting line.

RACING FLATS-A lightweight shoe designed for racing. Not meant to be used for training.

TRAINING SHOES-Shoes constructed for daily practice and intense training. These have more padding than flats.

SPLIT-Time at a certain point on the course, usually at the mile marks.

STARTING BOX-A team’s designated area on the starting line.

WARM UP-Exercises used to prepare the body for a race or practice.

COOL DOWN-Exercises used to return the body to its pre-race condition. Reduces cramping and soreness after exercise.