

A Guide To Cross Country

What is Cross Country?

- *The Sport of Cross Country* is a competitive team sport offered in the fall for students in grades 6-7-8.
- Races are 1.5 miles for 6-7 and 2 miles for 8th grade.
- The courses are mostly run across grassy fields, wooded paths, and have a mixture of hills and flat ground.
- A great thing about cross country (*abbreviated XC or CC*) is that **everyone competes!** Everyone runs the same course, and although the first 7 runners to finish are considered the scoring team, at every meet **ALL** athletes get to participate.

Everyone is Important / Striving for Excellence / Have Fun

How Cross Country is scored

- The top five finishers from each team are scored and their finishing places are added up for the team score. The lowest score wins, as in golf. For example, a team that scores 24 points places ahead of a team that scores 29 points. A team's 6th and 7th place finishers can also figure in the scoring if they place ahead of the other teams' top 5 finishers. When that is the case, they become "pushers" by pushing up their opponents' scores.

DEDICATION / COMMITMENT / COMMUNICATION

How to Buy Running Shoes

If possible, go to a store that deals primarily with running footwear. These stores have experienced runners as sales persons who can help you choose the right shoe with the right fit for your athlete. If you need a list of stores that deal with this type of footwear, please contact one of the coaches. The best way to prolong the life and function of a new pair of running shoes is to wear them for running only, not as school shoes or for PE class. It is not necessary to purchase special running apparel. Loose fitting T-shirts and shorts are adequate for daily practice, and your athlete will be issued a school uniform for races.

Cross Country Vocabulary

- INVITATIONAL MEET - a multi-team meet
- TOP 5 - the scoring members of a Cross Country Team
- COURSE - the marked and measured route of the race
- STARTING BOX - designated area to which a team is assigned on the starting line
- FALSE START - leaving the starting line before the gun sounds
- FINISH CHUTE - a rope bordered funnel past the finish line that moves runners into their single file order of finish.
- PACE - running speed over a particular distance
- SURGE - a tactical increase in pace during the race
- KICK - a burst of speed at the finish of the race
- PACK - a group of runners in close proximity
- PERSONAL RECORD (PR) - best ever performance on a given course.
- WARM-UP - a running and stretching routine that gradually warms up the body for intense running.
- COOL-DOWN - a jogging/walking routine that allows the muscles to purge themselves of lactates and the body to gradually lower its temperature to normal.

Preparing to watch your first cross country meet

Before you arrive at the meet, ask your runner to see a map of the course (Friday News Flash). Locate the start and finish, then try to scout central points where you can see as much of the race with as little moving around as possible.

At the finish of the race, the runners file through the finish chute.

Some runners are more spent than others after a race. Typical symptoms of their effort and fatigue are breathlessness, general weakness, rubbery legs, glassy eyes, salivating, and sometimes nausea. To aid recovery, water is the best thing to drink immediately after a race.

Expect the possibility of some disappointment by your athlete after the race if his or her team did not win, and/or if he or she failed to achieve all goals. Athletes may need some emotional space afterward from both you and their coaches. Later on, they will need verbal support rather than criticism.

Once an away meet is over, if your son or daughter came on our bus, please do not take him or her home with you without signing out with the coach first.