



Boys' Cross Country

Athlete & Parent Handbook

Coaching Philosophy

A few things that you should know about my coaching philosophy:

- Give every athlete the chance to succeed
- Success comes from hard work, dedication, & team work! **You get out what you put in!**
- Success is measured in each individual's improvement over the course of the season
- Athletes must remember they are a STUDENT first. Hence the term student-athlete!
- Be willing to be a team player
- Be coachable
- Development takes time.

Program Divisions

The cross country program is divided into two or three main divisions, depending upon each meet. Most meets have a varsity and junior varsity division. Some of the larger meets also have a freshman/sophomore division in addition to the other two previously mentioned. Junior varsity and varsity teams consist of athletes from any level. These teams will be based on performance/skill, with the goal of allowing each athlete to compete with other runners of similar talent. A varsity squad will not be designated and varsity entries may be alternated throughout the season based on performances in practice and meets.

Varsity/Junior Varsity Lettering

Athletes may earn a varsity letter by meeting one or more of the criteria below:

- Compete in five of our meets as a varsity level athlete or finish in the top seven for meets with one race if there is only one race (no separate jv/varsity races).
- During the season, run the "standard of excellence" time on an accurately measured course.
This is currently 18:30
- Compete at the state qualifying meet and/or state meet.
- Be a four-year participant in cross country at Washington.

To earn a junior varsity letter, one must compete in five meets during the course of the season.

You must finish the season in good standing in order to earn a varsity/junior varsity letter or other team awards.

Any questions about this policy should be directed to Head Coach Hopp.

Transportation

We will take buses and/or vans to all non-metro track meets. All participating athletes must travel with the team to these meets. Under no circumstance may an athlete drive themselves to a meet that is outside of the metro area. This is a Cedar Rapids School District rule and there are no exceptions. However, your athlete will be required to find their own transportation to meets within the Cedar Rapids metro area. Athletes need to be at the team camp at least one hour before the beginning of the meet. For meets out of the metro area, all athletes must return

with the team, unless they are not returning to Washington. In this case, athletes may only ride home with their parent(s), in which prior communication **MUST** have taken place to do so! All athletes are required to stay until the completion of each meet and support their teammates. If circumstances dictate otherwise, this must be communicated with Coach Hopp at least 48 hours **PRIOR** to the meet.

Expectations

-Practice

Practice will occur Monday through Saturday, unless scheduled otherwise (holidays, etc). Practice is typically scheduled after school at 3:20 PM unless otherwise communicated through e-mail by the coaches. All athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices and be prepared to start at the time communicated by the coaches. Other school, family and church activities, as well as being ill are excused absences as long as they are communicated with Head Coach Hopp before practice begins. A practice calendar is available on the Garmin Clipboard app or can be provided if needed. Changes may be sent out via Group Me or email should the location and/or time of practice change, as well as other important information pertaining to practice.

-Competitions

Competitions are a time to display & reward the hard work that athletes have put into practice. Our expectation is for all athletes to travel with the team to & from the meet (in which transportation is provided), unless communicated in advance with Coach Hopp (preferably a minimum of 24 hours except in emergency). Also, as a good teammate, everyone should be cheering on their teammates during the course of the meet unless they are competing or warming up. If you expect others to cheer for your athlete, then you need to encourage your athlete to cheer for others. I realize that school comes before cross country, but homework is not to be done during a meet. They may work on it before the meet begins, but must put it away at the start of the first race. It is important to realize that your athlete is not only representing themselves but their family, school, and community.

Each athlete shall arrive at the meet (in town) or be on the van/bus (out of town) at the time communicated by the coaches. Your athlete is not finished with the meet until the team is finished. Any meets held within the CR Metro area (Seminole, etc) require students to transport themselves to the meet, as transportation will not be provided.

-Behavior

This section should be self-explanatory by its title. Your athlete is expected to promote and conduct themselves in a respectful manner to all coaches, athletes, officials, parents, administrators, teachers, students, and opponents at all times. They are also expected to obey all Washington rules as listed in the school handbook.

-Clothing

Practice/Meets:

Come prepared to practice. Take special consideration to the weather. If the weather is cold, your athlete should be prepared to run in the cold (hats, gloves, long sleeves, pants, etc). If it is raining, they should be prepared to

run in the rain. Warmup clothes (tops and bottoms) should be taken to practice when the temperature drops below 65 F. In addition, please ensure that your athlete has new running shoes for practice, as they will help assist in allowing your athlete to train without the risk of injury. Cross country spikes are also something to look into. In terms of whether or not your athlete should have spikes, we strongly encourage them for varsity athletes and optional for those running in junior varsity. Spikes are lighter and provide better grip on the grass when competing. Coach Hopp has a limited number of gently used spikes for those interested in trying them prior to purchasing a pair if your athlete is interested.

Meet Day:

We compete as a team, so we need to dress as a team. We expect your athlete to represent “Washington Cross Country” with pride.

Warmup clothes are REQUIRED at meets. Your athlete should not be warming up in their uniform. If possible, this should be Washington-related clothing. In addition, remember the weather. Fall entails many weather conditions, so your athlete should be prepared for the weather of each day. On days that are cold, please send additional sweatshirts along, as you cannot warm up with a winter jacket on. If it looks like rain, please send a change of clothes along for your athlete to change into once the meet has been completed. Be prepared for all weather conditions, as Iowa weather is highly unpredictable. Coaches will have a bin at the start line of each race for your athlete to put their warmup clothing in and will be transported by coaches back to the team camp.

-Academics

As a coach, I place a large emphasis on academics and performance within the classroom. Those who fail to perform in the classroom will fail to perform elsewhere. If your athlete needs to miss or come late to practice because they need additional help from a teacher that is excused. However, please communicate with the coach to alert him that your athlete will be missing practice to get academic help. **Since practice starts at 3:20 PM typically, this should allow the athletes plenty of time to go ask a teacher for help and still be able to practice on time.**

- Athletes that are required to attend Study Table will do so & report to practice when able to do so. If you are requested for study table, you WILL need to attend, or there will be consequences (sit out meets and practices, etc). This is a Washington High School Athletics Department rule and there are no exceptions.

Injuries

Injuries are the most difficult thing about being a coach. When an athlete cannot perform, it takes away from the team potential. Therefore, it is crucial for your athlete to do whatever they can to prevent injuries before they occur. Encourage proper stretching, warm-ups and cool-downs at practice and meets. In addition, proper eating and sleeping habits will help maintain a healthy body.

Nevertheless, if an injury does occur, please do not hesitate to contact me. An athlete should never practice on an injury. Also, we strongly encourage athletes to contact Misti, our athletic trainer, if they feel any symptoms, soreness, etc that is not normal or remains persistent over a longer period of time.

Communication

As for parents, communication is important at any level. If a conflict arises, please contact us as soon as possible. If you know your athlete will be missing practice, please let us know before practice begins. You can use whatever method is easiest to contact us. If you would like to meet with one of us personally, we can schedule a time after practice.

Also, please remember we will use our Instagram account (_____) to communicate any last second changes (Coach Hopp is in charge of this). It also will be used to post team news, practice/meet info & pictures, and anything to promote our team & our athletes.

We also have asked the athletes and parents to subscribe to our GroupMe account if they haven't done so already.

Parent Support

Parents can play a part in the success and development of any competing team or group. As a parent, there are several things that you can do to assist in the development of your athlete:

- Encouragement. Be a valued fan to your athlete and tell them how proud you are for their accomplishments. Please take the time to cheer your athlete on at as many meets as possible. They will be glad that you did!
- Team Meals/Meet Snacks. Each year we ask for help with the hosting of team dinners or providing snacks for the athletes after meets. It is not required that parents participate, but I'm certainly positive that your athlete will tell you they look forward to these things each week. You may sign up as many times as you wish and are encouraged to sign up with another family or others to make things easier. The team mom will help organize the team meals. Please contact Coach Hopp with any questions regarding these. We will likely have a meet snacks signup at the parent meeting.
- Meet Preparation. Make sure your athlete is adequately prepared for each meet. This preparation can be broken down into two categories. The first is being prepared with the proper clothing. Make sure your athlete's uniform, warm-ups, and proper shoes (spikes if needed) are clean and with them on the day of a meet and not left at home or at school. Second, make sure they are prepared with food/snacks and something to drink. Athletes will expend and burn a lot of calories during cross country meets. Make sure your athlete has a water bottle or some other type of sports drink along, regardless of the weather. Hydration is a vital part of the recovery process.

Nutrition

48 hours prior to competing – Avoid unfamiliar foods as the body may react in an undesirable way.

Hydration – Urine should be light yellow in color as an indication of proper hydration levels. The darker the urine the more dehydrated the body is and the more difficult it is going to be to bring the body up to the proper level. Proper hydration should be thought of as a continuous goal. Drinking water is important throughout the day and during the evening.

Breakfast – The body needs to be replenished as nothing has been eaten or drunk for the past eight or more hours; you're "breaking your fast." Also, the next chance to eat a solid meal will be during lunch, which is not until noon-ish. The brain uses carbohydrates for its energy source; the heart uses both fat and carbohydrates. Get them both off to a good start every morning. If breakfast isn't something easy, prepare it the night before.

- Examples for Breakfast: Cereal, Trail Mix, Fruit Juice, Peanut Butter Toast, Nuts, Eggs, Dried Meats, Bagels, Oatmeal, Crackers.

~3 hours before race/practice – Eat a full, satisfying meal as this is the last chance before racing/practice to do so. Avoid foods that are hard to digest, cause gas, etc.

2 hours or less before race/practice –During these last couple of hours at most a light, quick digesting snack/liquid should be consumed. Nothing but water is recommended with less than one hour remaining. However this is not the time to start trying to rehydrate by drinking large amounts of water. You don't want to compete with the feeling of having to go to the bathroom.

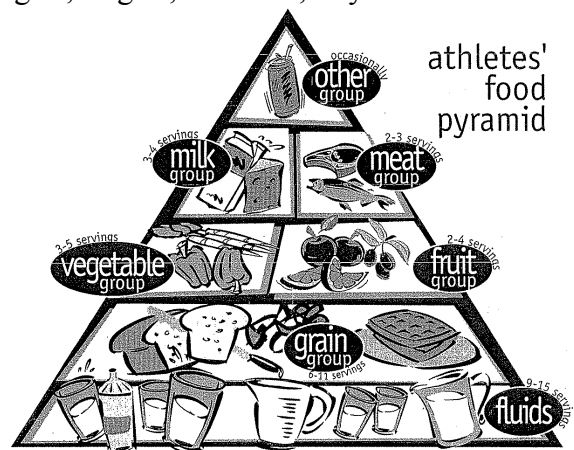
Right after race/practice (30 minutes max) – When you exercise the body depletes itself of stored sugar (used for energy) and electrolytes. Electrolytes are simply minerals which help maintain fluid levels in the body. The main ones are sodium, potassium, and chloride. These can be replaced with appropriate fluids such as most sports drinks. Also contained in sports drinks are quick digesting sugars which will also help to replace what has been lost.

In weight training, muscles are torn (not big tears, small ones). Protein after working out with weights will help repair broken down muscle and aid in muscle growth. Muscles take in carbohydrates and proteins easily after practice.

- Examples of Snacks: Sports Drink, Trail Mix, Fruit, Yogurt, Bagels, Crackers, Dry Cereal.

Within 2 hours after racing/practice – Start thinking about tomorrow when today is over, meaning after a workout/competition prepare the body to be able to perform again tomorrow and the next day.

- Examples of Carbohydrates: Whole Grain Cereals, Popcorn, Oatmeal, English Muffins, Bagels, Pasta.
- Examples of Protein: Beef, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Whole Grains, Nuts, Green Leaf Vegetables.



athletes' food pyramid

Program Scope/Sequence

Pre-Season (June through Early August)

Emphasis on building summer mileage base

- Goal of running 4-6 times per week depending upon individual
- (1 Long run, 2-4 Aerobic Runs, Lactic Threshold run (some might not be ready for LT run))
- Depending upon individual, maintain 20-50 mpw (start at lower end, work up)

Strength Training/Agility Circuits

- 2-3 times per week in weight room (some variation between days)
- Agilities- Wicket Circuit, Med Ball, Ladder Drills (one agility per session)

Goals- Regular attendance (non-mandatory), make strength improvements, see improvement in agilities (turnover/quickness/form)

Early Season (August/September)

Continue Building/ Expand Upon Summer Mileage Base

- To begin season- more endurance based speed work (fartlek intervals, tempo running, hills, etc)
- Begin to incorporate interval training around week 2/3 (both shorter & longer) at or slightly below race pace
- Add time/distance to daily runs, when pertainable
- Continue Strength Training (twice a week in weight room & core work 3 times a week)

Goals- Avoid injuries from lack of mileage in preseason, build team cohesion, start to develop/maintain training groups. Identify which athletes show varsity potential & which need more work/development to improve.

Late Season/Championship Time

Begin to Lessen Mileage (but not by much- 10% or less per week)

- More emphasis on full recovery/ fine-tuning. Intervals will be at or above race pace
- Bodyweight strength exercise work & core 2-3 times a week
- Longest run distance (6-7 miles). Average distance 3-5 miles.

Goals- Get/remains healthy (no injuries, etc). Sharpen foot speed/turnover; establish which boys will run at State Qualifying & State Meet. Also, establish alternates.

Post Season (November-May)

Be involved with another sport(s). All sports will help further develop cross-country skills and vice versa

Stay in shape (run, lift, do other activities). Nothing is NOT an option

2024 Schedule

Day	Date	Time (first race)	Meet Host/Location	Load bus	Return (Estimate)
Tuesday	9/3	4:50 PM	Hillcrest Academy	2:20 PM	7:30 PM
Saturday	9/7	9:00 AM	Linn Mar (Oak Ridge Middle School)	No bus. Arrive by 7:30 AM	
Thursday	9/12	4:20 PM	Cedar Rapids Invite (Seminole)	No bus. Arrive by 3:10 PM	
Thursday	9/19	TBA	Rich Engel Classic (Cedar Falls)	1:30 PM	9:00 PM
Thursday	9/26	4:30 PM	Eastern Iowa Classic (Seminole)	No bus. Arrive by 3:15 PM	
Tuesday	10/1	5:20 PM	Iowa City West (Ashton XC Course)	1:50 PM	8:00 PM
Saturday	10/5	10:00 AM	Wartburg (Max XC Course)	TBD	TBD
Thursday	10/10	3:30 PM	MVC Super Meet (Seminole)	No bus. Arrival TBD	
Thursday	10/17	3:30 PM	MVC Divisional (Dubuque Soccer Complex)*	12:30 PM	9:00 PM
Wednesday	10/23	TBD	State Qualifying (TBD)	TBD	TBD
Friday	11/1	2:45 PM	State Meet (Ft. Dodge, Kennedy Park)	TBD	TBD

*JV team's last meet