

HSHS CROSS COUNTRY Team Handbook

An Information Resource for Parents & Athletes



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Philosophy and Objectives:

Our philosophy is born from a desire to engage as many dedicated athletes as possible at all skill levels, so that each student-athlete has the opportunity to participate and be involved in the pursuit of self-improvement as individuals, athletes and a team.

We emphasize teamwork, work ethic, goal setting, sportsmanship, academics, commitment, dedication, integrity and honesty, while teaching form and technique, overall conditioning, pacing, tactics and strategy. We provide a consistent layout in training and variety of location coupled with hard work. We also believe it is important to incorporate fun activities on a regular basis for enjoyment, team building, unity, camaraderie and to provide successful experiences for each athlete.

Through participation and involvement in a sport program that is both team and individually oriented, student-athletes will gain lessons to carry with them throughout their lives. Ultimately the goal is to instill the desire and motivation for hard work, goal setting, commitment and the ability to see a goal to its completion, the ability to push and challenge yourself, the value of teamwork and involvement. In a sedentary world, we also hope to promote the desire for a lifelong active lifestyle.

“The sport of cross-country is the ultimate of physiological difficulty, aesthetic simplicity, and aesthetic ingenuity. There are few rules. No ball. No fancy equipment. No basket, net, or goal. There can be no bad bounces. No lucky breaks. No time-outs. No instant replay. Just you and your teammates against the course. The clock. The competition. Strength to endure comes from the camaraderie of the struggle. These things make cross-country special.”

!!!!!!!!!! ~ Author unknown

COACH'S STATEMENT

The sport of cross country is a unique avenue for teaching our students many important life lessons and values. Among these are hard work, tradition, good sportsmanship, teamwork, self-confidence, self-sacrifice, discipline, and commitment to a goal. We cannot overlook the importance of these values. A student who learns these ideals through athletics has a distinct advantage in life over someone who does not. More than that, these values and lessons learned through the sport of running are the key ingredients to my personal coaching philosophy. I coach to teach, because I believe in the importance of educating our children, and because I believe in the sport of running. More than anything, I want my athletes to learn these virtues, and the sport of cross country running can help teach them.

Mission Statement

The Holly Springs High School Cross Country team is conducted in the understanding that high school athletics primarily serves to prepare young people for the next level of life. It is the goal of the coaches and staff to have participation in cross country act as a unique and positive force in the lives of our young people and their community.

To accomplish this, the focus will be on promoting the ideals of school spirit, teamwork, hard work, discipline, personal sacrifice, leadership and sportsmanship. Decisions will be made in this context, and will not be overridden by the wishes of an individual team member or made with a “win at all costs” mentality.

With this mission in mind, certain ground rules must be applied to all individuals on the cross country team. These rules are designed with the intent of creating an environment where the ideals of Holly Springs High School Cross Country are reflected in each participant’s day-to-day activities.

Information For Athletes

Team Membership and Eligibility

In order to be a member of the HSHSXC team, there are several requirements you must meet.

Academics

In order to be eligible to participate in any sports sponsored by the high school, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and Wake County Public Schools mandates that a student must be enrolled in at least four courses per semester. They also must have passed 3 high school classes during the last semester, plus be on track to graduate. (This does not apply to upcoming 9th graders).

Physicals & Insurance

In order to participate in cross county each athlete must have a valid Wake County Physical Form Packet completed within the last year. The documents include the Athletic Participating Form, Insurance Information, Participation Physical Evaluation and Concussion Form. The will be kept on file at the school within the Athletic Department. All athletes must have health insurance coverage. If you do not have a health insurance policy one can be purchased through the school.

Characteristics of Championship Team:

The following list of characteristics was identified by one of our local competitors as “Characteristics of a Championship Team” and is an excellent model to follow to build our new team. These characteristics also apply equally to the individual team members.

1. Dedication to the program
2. Sacrifice for success
3. Faith in delayed rewards
4. Rest from consistent sleep
5. Sobriety from a drug-free life
6. Energy from a balanced diet
7. Loyalty to each other
8. Honesty with self, coaches, team
9. Consistency in every training aspect
10. Confidence in all of the above

“Remember, athletes represent Holly Springs High School and all school rules will apply at all times. Respect for fellow team members, coaches, officials, opponents, school facilities and equipment will be demanded. Sportsmanlike conduct is required at all times! HSHSXC makes a commitment to you, so you need to make the same commitment to the team.”

Season Overview For Athletes

We use a time trial system to determine your status with the team. You must understand that even though no cuts are made, the time trial process will determine you're whether you are capable or in shape enough to meet the demands of the season. The first few years we have had too many injuries due to runners not doing anything in the off-season and expecting to meet the demands of the regular season. These times are based on a 3 mile time that will be done throughout the summer and on the first practice of the season on the Womble Park course. A second attempt will be offered on the next day following a recovery day. Should the first day of practice be on a Saturday, the following Monday will be the 2nd qualifying time trial.

Girls:

9th grade- 27:58
10th grade- 26:01
11th grade- 25:04
12th grade- 24:37

Boys:

9th grade- 24:07
10th grade- 22:10
11th grade- 21:14
12th grade- 20:43

The cross country program is actually comprised of these distinct seasons:

- Off Season and Summer Training & Conditioning
- Competition Season

Summer Training and Conditioning

"Autumn holds no secrets about how summer was spent." – Unknown

Great Cross Country Teams are built in the summer!

All summer workouts are completely voluntary, however, attendance is strongly encouraged because:

- It's a great way to bond with teammates and improve as a runner
- Running with groups makes it easier and more fun!
- Cool morning runs are healthier!
- Success will result in the fall!

Summer practice begins in June from 7:00 AM every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. With long group runs on Saturday mornings at 8:00 AM.

Summer Camp

Team Camp information will be provided by the coaches in the early spring. We will provide options for dates, cost and locations. While the choice to attend a camp is yours, we highly recommend that you try to attend at least one camp during the summer.

NO OFFICIAL PRACTICE THE WEEK OF JULY 4TH (The dead week as declared by the NC State Legislature). If you are gone for a week, that's okay. Continue to stay on your running schedule and be sure to log your miles.

Advice for a Successful Summer Training:

- Follow the mileage prescribed for you.
- Map My Run or Garmin Connect
- Stay on schedule with your running. Great runners always find a way to follow through, even when it's difficult to do so.
- We will train hard roughly every other day. Build endurance with long and easy mileage in between harder practices.
- Do one long run for each week which should consist of approximately 20-30% of your total weekly mileage.
- Athletes should never run in the woods alone.
- Recruit others, encourage your teammates to improve and invite teammate to run with you.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and immediately after you finish training.
- Get between 8-10 hours of sleep each night. A determined and scheduled bed-time each night is imperative to the well trained athlete's success.
- Speak with a Coach immediately about training schedule, mileage log or possible muscle or injury concerns.

Competition Season

Practices

1. Practice will typically be held Monday-Friday and will be posted on the website weekly.
2. Practice times will vary based on the location.
3. Anyone missing a practice needs to let one of the coaches know either in person or by email at least 24 hours in advance. If you are late or absent for classwork, a signed note from a teacher is required.
4. If a runner has an unexcused absence from practice they will not be allowed to participate in the next meet. If a runner has 3 absences (excused or unexcused) they can/will be removed from the team or removed from varsity competition. The first official practice is the first week in August and attendance counts from that point forward.
5. Injured athletes are still expected to come to attend roll call at practice and will be given alternative workout activities or sent home with workout suggestions. If an athlete needs to ride a bike at practice while injured they will be supplied with a stationary spinner to do their workouts on.
7. Challenge yourself during practice and run the workouts as required. Slowing down to run with friends does not help you improve.

Ranking

Ranking for races will be determined by previous race results, time trials and performance during practice. Our team will be divided into 3 squads. The Gold Team will consist of runners 1-10. The Purple Team will consist of runners 11-20 and the Black Team will be all runners 21 and above.

Cross Country Meets

Meets are normally scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Meets may last a few hours or all day, depending on the organization and number of entries. All athletes are encouraged to watch and cheer on their teammates who run in other races before or after their race. Directions to the races may be found on the team's website. Most meets will have two or more races, usually 30 minutes apart. The races are varsity boys and girls, JV boys and girls and possibly an open race of combined boys and girls. The head coach will select which athletes will run each week in which races mostly based on their performance from the last race(s). Athletes selected to run in the varsity races at the Region and State meets are those athletes who have typically shown the most consistency throughout the season.

Lettering and Incentives

Letter Requirements:

Varsity letters are earned by those runners who race in the Varsity Race at the Conference Championship Meet.

Time Incentive T-Shirts

Time incentive T-shirts will be given to athletes based on their best competitive time during the season. For boys, the T-shirts will be given for 18:00, 17:00, 16:00 and 15:00 minute club. For girls, the T-Shirts will be given for 21:00, 20:00, 19:00 and 18:00 minute club.

Website

The HSHS Cross Country website address is: <http://hollyspringsxc.weebly.com/> You will find lots of information, including race results, direction to races, upcoming event info, as well as order forms on this website. Please access this website frequently throughout the season for up-to date information.

Team Rules

1. Any team member who is caught using drugs or alcohol has no respect for their body, and the punishment for being caught will be:
 - a. Suspension at the discretion of the coaches (minimum of 3 meets up to loss of varsity eligibility) OR removal from the team if deemed necessary by coaches and administrators.
 - b. Participation in the schools districts drug and alcohol awareness program if required
 - c. Separation from the team for 1 week, followed by mandatory practices for the remainder of suspension.
 - d. Not allowed to travel with team during suspension.
2. To participate in practice or in any activity, each student must be in attendance 1/2 of the school day of the practice or event.
3. Skipping classes will result in missing the next scheduled meet.
4. Team members must check in with a coach before leaving for the day. This is for courtesy and safety. We run many trails, and the coaches need to make sure that everyone is accounted for before practice is over.
5. Team members must be passing all classes to be eligible.
6. Each team member is expected to remember that they represent their team not just at practices and meets, but at school and in the community as well.
7. Team activities, dinners and other functions are often hosted by families of team members. It is expected that athletes will be courteous, clean up after themselves, thank the hosts, and respect the hosts' property. Disregarding this rule may lead to expulsion from these activities or the team depending on severity.
8. You are required to follow all rules while running on trails. Run on the right side of the trails unless you are passing someone and then tell someone that you are passing them.
9. Poor attitudes will result in an athlete being asked to go home for an assigned number of days. This time should be used to adjust their attitude and be ready to come back as a contributing member of the team.
10. You are required to have proper running shoes, running attire, a watch and a water bottle at each practice (if you need assistance with any of these items see one of the coaches). Failure to do so will result in:
 - a. First Offense: !! Warning
 - b. Second Offense: ! Extra Core
 - c. Third Offense: ! Sent home until you can acquire the proper gear
11. No music devices (ie iPods) or telephones are allowed during practice.

Uniforms

Each runner will be purchase a uniform after they complete a time trial and have established a spot on the team. The uniform is custom made and takes about 3 weeks to arrive. We will also have other items for sale.

Hoodies
Drifit Race Shirts
Uniform
Car Magnet

Shoes - Your feet are important! Make sure you have proper running shoes and socks. A general rule of thumb for running shoes is they last about 400 miles or one cross country season. For proper fitting, go to a running store and ask for assistance. Racing flats/spikes are recommended for experienced runners to use in competition only. Shoes are so complex today that they are almost a prescription item. Many salesmen do not know enough to help your child choose properly. If you go to buy new running shoes carry your old shoes along with you so the salesperson can evaluate the wear pattern for possible problems. There are several stores in the area to buy quality running shoes. Local stores that we have found very helpful are Omega Sporting Goods, Capital Run/Walk, Raleigh Running Outfitters.

· **Watch (Required)** - Runners will often need to keep track of both their times on distance runs and in specific workouts. It is very important for each runner to have a running watch and to wear it to practice each day. There are many inexpensive running watches that have everything you need on them to time your runs.

· **Spikes** - Spiked shoes can also be purchased to wear when competing. Since most races are held on grass and dirt, spiked shoes can help with traction and speed. A spiked shoe has five to seven metal spikes inserted into small holes on the forward part of the shoe. When buying spiked shoes, make sure to purchase a distance running or cross country pair. This shoe should have a medium to thick-cushioned heel.

Avenues to Success

Cross Country teams are made in the off-season and summer; consequently we encourage each athlete to practice all summer when other kids are lounging. High mileage is necessary to excel. It also is critical to set yourself goals to stride toward during the season.

Setting and Reaching Goals

The setting and assessment of goals as a team and as an individual are imperative in Cross Country. Some particular goals may include:

- **PR** – PERSONAL RECORD – your fastest time on a certified course.
- **PLACE** – place of finish relative to the entire field, your team, your grade.
- **CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER** - Boys 22 minutes or below. Girls 26 minutes or below.
- **VARSITY CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER**- Top 15 Boys and Top 15 Girls
- **ALL CONFERENCE** – essentially top twenty in conference.
- **ALL REGION** – top 25 in region.
- **STATE QUALIFYING** – Top 5 in Region (team) Top 7 at Region (individually).

Success

Athletes should not measure their success or failure against a single criterion. Having multiple goals insures some degree of success. Goals must be specific, measurable and realistic. If a goal does not meet these requirements then the athlete is destined for less than optimal results.

Failure or Disappointment

Expect the possibility of disappointment after a race. One goal may not have been met yet another may have! Everyone has a bad race!

Doing Your Part

As an Athlete on the Holly Springs Cross Country Team, there are areas you can work on in addition to training.

These are:

- **Rest** – Get plenty of rest. A runner needs more sleep than the average person. The body must repair itself.
- **Diet** – runners need a balanced diet. Most teenagers do not receive adequate nourishment and therefore cross country runners should consider taking a multi-vitamin mineral supplement including iron. A proper diet is critical to the success of each runner. It is important that you provide your body with the proper type of fuel it will need. Some good foods are fruits (bananas!), bagels, red meat (to avoid anemia), pasta, and vegetables. Water and sports drinks are great! Try to avoid soft drinks, candy, junk food, and fried foods. Detailed nutritional requirements for athletes can be obtained from the coaches related to specific areas (such as pre-race meals), but generally common sense prevails. A good balanced diet will help an athlete run better and avoid injury.

Sample Daily Diet

1. **Breakfast:** Eat whole grain cereal, fruit, and 1% or skim milk, and maybe toast, a bagel or an English muffin. Do not skip breakfast!
2. **Snacks:** Bagel, crackers, or non-fat yogurt.
3. **Lunch:** Vegetables, baked chicken or fish, peanut butter and jelly or a tuna fish sandwich (avoid fatty lunch meats). Cheese pizza is also a good choice.
4. **Afternoon snacks:** Eat a piece of fruit 1 hour before practice. Yellow fruits and vegetables contain potassium which helps prevent muscle cramps. Examples of sweet snacks that are nutritious include: ginger snaps, vanilla wafers, fig newtons, oatmeal-raisin cookies, graham crackers, or animal crackers.
5. **Fluids:** Drink plenty of fluids (fruit juice, water, Gatorade or PowerAde) after your workout but don't bloat yourself so that you lose your appetite. Provide your child with electrolyte replacement drinks (diluted O.J. with a pinch of salt or chocolate milk is just as effective) in place of soft drinks. Dehydration is the number one reason for poor running performance but one of the easiest to prevent.

6. **Dinner:** Pasta, baked chicken or fish with rice, a green salad, a cooked vegetable, and bread. Avoid the toppings that are heavy in butter, cream, etc.

Other Items

- **Mental preparation:** One can psych themselves up or out. Obviously we prefer the up!
- **Mental training:** A runner should have goals for his/her running. These goals if committed to, provide the motivation necessary to stick to a challenging task. Place a subtle reminder on the mirror or the refrigerator so that your child remains mentally on task but don't push the issue.
- **Equipment:** There are two primary pieces of equipment for a runner! One is shoes and the other is a watch with a stopwatch function.
- **Inclement weather:** Athletes run in all types of weather and should come dressed or be prepared accordingly for practices and meets. Practices are typically only cancelled when it is lightning or when after-school activities are cancelled by the Wake County School System. During hot training days the coaching staff uses a "wet bulb" thermometer and measures at the practice location, and is very diligent about following the county guidelines. Athletes should listen to HSHS's afternoon announcements regarding any possible cancellations before heading to practice. Meet cancellation notices will be emailed to parents on the team's distribution group list or communicated on the team's website.

Injury Prevention & Treatment

Injury care -Athletes must take care of the little nagging problems before they escalate.

Reporting Injuries - Athletes should discuss any aches or pains with a member of the coaching staff so that adjustments can possibly be made to the training schedule to prevent injuries or stop injuries before they become disabling. When an injured athlete informs the coaching staff about a problem, the staff will first send you to see the school trainer for evaluation and a note is required to return to practice. Do not go to the trainer without first discussing the injury with a coach.

Top reasons Runners get injured:

1. Running in worn out shoes or improper shoes.
2. Lack of off-season conditioning.
3. Over training/Improper training techniques
4. Lack of strength and flexibility
5. Running on hard surfaces (pavement, concrete, asphalt)
6. Jumping into intense training without building up a mileage base

Treating Injuries:

The acronym to remember for treating an injury is R.I.C.E.

- **"R"** stands for rest. A day off or more can help prevent a major injury.
- **"I"** stands for ice. You can never ice too much. Icing at home a couple of times and at lunch the next day can help prevent injuries. Ice should never be left on for more than 15-20 minutes with 45 minutes off. This can be repeated as often as you would like.
- **"C"** stands for compression. An ace bandage can help reduce swelling around an injury.
- **"E"** stands for elevation. Raising the legs above the heart helps reduce swelling and makes them feel refreshed.

If you have the opportunity to give your athletes ice baths after a hard practice, it really can make a difference. Kid's swimming pools, old whirl pool baths, watering troughs, and garbage cans work well.

Common Injuries

Shin Splints: Pain in the shin or lower leg.

Basic treatment of icing, heel walks, toe raises and calf stretches.

IT Band: Pain in the hip on down to the outside of the knee. Basic treatment: Specific IT band stretches (Beauty Queen) and rolling with an IT Band Roller.

Achilles tendonitis: Pain or inflammation in the Achilles. Basic Treatment: Toe Raises, heel raise, gentle calf stretches.

Knee pain: There can be several types of knee pain. Generally the cause of the pain is rooted elsewhere. Treatment includes ice, stretching the calves, strengthening the hamstrings and quadriceps.

If you are out with an injury, expect to do some other form of conditioning that will allow you to stay in shape!!

How To Approach Your First Meet Of The Season

Coaches will distribute Race Information two to three days prior to an upcoming meet. This sheet will provide details for the athlete and parents concerning items such as:

- Date of the meet
- Departure time and location
- Race schedule
- Transportation
- Course information
- Entries
- Competition to expect
- Return time (approximate)
- Travel directions and destination
- Emergency contact information if applicable

What to Bring

Pack your bag the night before a meet! Be sure to pack your uniform, sweats or hoodie, running shoes, an extra pair of shoes for after the race, extra socks, watch, dry clothes, a drink, money for food on the way home, etc.

Pre-Race Meal Recommendation

Eat approximately 3-4 hours before the “Big Meet”.

Sample Breakfast Meal:

1. Bowl of oatmeal with a small amount of skim milk. (other similar cereal may be substituted)
2. Glass of orange juice (no pulp). Other juices may lead to gastric problems!
3. Dry toast and jelly – 2 slices. (no butter!)
4. Regular tea. Not decaf
5. Cool water (even if you are not thirsty)
6. Avoid **Fats** or **Sweets** for twelve or more hours prior to the meet.
7. If you eat closer to race time then reduce the volume.
8. Take your last fluids no closer than 20 minutes prior to race start and limit the volume to 8 ounces or less.

Transportation to/from meets

Wake County School System will provide bus transportation to and from the meets. Runners are not permitted to drive themselves to the meets.

Parents attending a meet may “sign out” their athlete, in person, with one of the coaches after the meet is over instead of having them travelling by team transportation. **Carpooling of athletes by other is not permitted.**

Post Race

Runners will stretch and do a “cool down” run with their teammates shortly after finishing the race and turning in their finish cards. They can change into dry clothes at this time if necessary.

Race Strategy checklist for Cross Country

(or winning techniques on the race course)

The start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To avoid being jostled, boxed-in, or forced to use a very short stride (all of which are energy wasters), get away from the line quickly and assume a natural running stride as soon as possible. · When starting, use a semi-upright type of stance, weight on the front foot, body coiled with the center of gravity well forward and low. Drive from the front foot and move the rear foot out quickly.
Pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · By the time you run your first race, you will have some knowledge (through drills and practices) of what pace you can run. In the race, avoid beating yourself by expending too much energy early and having nothing left for the finish or going too slowly and having too much left at the end. · Give your all! Distribute all of your energy equally over the entire course so that 10 yards past the finish line you feel as if you cannot run another step (because you shouldn't be able to).
Check out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If you feel yourself tiring, "check out" (lift your knees more and increase your stride) and you will feel less tired due to the change in pace and you will not slow your pace, which loses races.
Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Races can be lost by runners going to sleep mentally. · Stay alert at all times and keep thinking of the race and change tactics according to conditions when necessary and only when necessary.
After the race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Thinking continues after the race is over. · Review your tactics while they are still fresh in your mind so you can profit from any mistakes you might have made, or any tactics that worked particularly well.
Know your opponent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · By knowing your opponent's strengths and weaknesses, you will be better able to run a race designed to beat them. Study all possible reports about opposing teams and use information to your advantage.
Know the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The better you know a course, the better race you will run. · If practical, always practice on the course you will run the race on. · If this is impractical, walk or warm up on the course if possible. During a walk through, you should not be using this as social time with your friends!
Single file areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Know where the single file areas are—just before them is a good place to pass your opponent. Never let your opponent pass you before going into one of these areas
Avoid getting "boxed in"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Know situations where getting boxed in is possible. · If one comes up, simply run on the outside shoulder of the runner in front of you.
Passing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Whenever you pass, do it quickly and smoothly giving the impression of being fresh. · Do not settle back in stride too quickly, you may be passed again.
Passing on hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · One of the best places to pass an opponent is when going uphill. · Many times you have them "beat" right there. Remember, however; don't expend too much energy. · Only pass when you are sure you have "enough."
Blind turns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Just after you have made a blind turn is a good time to increase your speed. · It is disheartening for your opponent to come around the turn and find you have increased your lead. · By the same token, as soon as your opponent takes a blind turn, increase your speed so you can hold your ground or pick up on them.
Pack running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In pack running, two or more runners of about the same ability stay together during the majority of the race. · If the slower runner can keep "glued" to the faster runner (and they usually will) your team will finish better.
The Finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · At the finish, you are no longer a distance runner - you become a sprinter. · Make the necessary changes in your form and run through the finish line. · If you run as if the finish line is 10 yards past the actual line, you will never get caught at the wire.

Helpful Hints

Helpful information for runners:

Safety

1. Run facing traffic when on the roads.
2. Run with a partner if you can do so at your own pace
3. Inform the coach if a runner is hurt and unable to continue on their own so that he can provide assistance
4. Do not use headphones (IPOD) when at practice
5. Terminate your run if severe weather threatens. Seek temporary shelter.
6. Discuss injuries with a coach before they become serious
7. Shoes must be properly selected and replaced. Check with a coach for shoe recommendations.
8. Always run the prescribed route

Practices

1. Run with people of your ability level or better. Don't wait on a slower runner!
2. Be prepared for inclement weather (have a pair of sweats with you)
3. Respect private property when sent out on the roads (avoid trampling lawns)
4. Follow your rehab routine after injury
5. Injuries do not excuse from practice. An alternate workout will be provided.
6. Be on time! We will not wait on you!
7. Cross Country meets are run in rainy weather therefore we practice in the rain
8. **Stretches and strides should always be done before and after workouts**

Competition

1. Warm up and cool down **with your teammates**
2. Double tie your shoes
3. Break in a new pair of shoes **before** you use them in a race
4. Always bring a second pair of shoes and socks to race in
5. Always eat at least 3 hours before you race
6. Get adequate sleep (8 hours) for at least two nights preceding competition
7. Never be out **past 10 p.m.** the night before a meet.
8. Drink plenty of fluids the night before a race.
9. If you are given specific race directions, follow them!
10. Be courteous to other competitors and officials
11. Always check out with a coach before leaving a meet
12. Be aware that alcohol and drugs will not be tolerated. Violators of this rule will be dismissed from the team.

Running Terms

Training Related Terms	
Stride	Gradual acceleration to a sprint then a deceleration
Easy run	Athlete can run at a conversational pace
Tempo Run	Run at tempo pace (approximately 20-30 seconds slower than 5k race pace) steadily; jog easy for 5-10 minutes before and after the workout
Hill Repeats	Find a good hill, approximately 100-200m in length; run hard up the hill; jog easy or walk down the hill, repeat; jog easy for 5-10 minutes before and after the workout
Speed Work	A series of vigorous exercise bouts followed by rest intervals so that heart rate returns to normal.
PACK RUNNING	Any group running in close proximity
WARM/COOL DOWN	Exercises that are designed to facilitate quick recovery from a competition or practice.
Racing related Terms:	
5K	3.1 miles (typical distance for high school races)
PR	Personal record – your fastest race time for a specific distance. A runner’s best time for a certified distance or on a particular course.
Splits	The accumulated time at various intervals during a race (usually each mile) showing an athlete’s progress. Coaches will provide athletes with information about their splits after the race to help make sure they are pacing themselves properly.
DUAL MEET	A competition between two opposing teams
FALSE START	Runner leaving the start line early. The runner will be disqualified. Race restarted!
FINISH CHUTE	The roped off area at the finish, through which runners are directed in order to establish place in a race.
Invitational Meet	Larger meets that are often held on Saturdays. These are open to teams by invitation or request, and not regularly scheduled as part of a league schedule. A meet between a larger number of teams. (usually 5 or more)
Varsity Team	By rule a varsity team is a minimum of seven and a maximum of 15 runners.
Junior Varsity	Any runner who is not on the varsity. Junior Varsity races often have teams of unlimited size, although the same rules for scoring (first 5 runners) and displacement (runners 6 & 7) still apply. Refers to 9th and 10th grade runners. May also refer to all runners except the top seven
LSD Runs	LSD Long run that is done at a slow, easy pace (long, slow distance) PACE Rate of speed maintained over a prolonged course
RACING FLATS	A lightweight shoe designed primarily for racing; not training.
Spikes	A shoe that will have five to seven spikes inserted into small holes on the forward part of the shoe, which helps with traction and speed. Used to run in races.

Parents Guide to Cross Country

Welcome

Welcome Golden Hawk Parents!! Your child has just become a member of an athletic team at Holly Springs High School. Cross Country is a unique sport, which provides the opportunity for everyone to succeed. Success comes in many forms, mental as well as physical. This handbook is intended to make our Cross Country parents' lives a little easier. We have made every attempt to include useful information and provide you with a handy reference guide when questions arise. Most of this information has been or will be supplied to your athlete by his/her coaches on an as needed basis. This book will serve as an additional means of information so parents are aware of the things that have been discussed with their athletes. Also, upcoming events, qualification standards, and a directory to facilitate communications and team building have been included. Our coaches' hope is that we will provide a nurturing environment that you and your child will find rewarding. We also need the help of our parent's by being involved in supporting the coaches at your home and at the meets. In this way your child will be more likely to reach his/her potential. We are proud of our athletes, our coaches and look forward to another great Cross Country season!

General information

Race and practice schedules

During the season, We will provide each athlete with a summer practice schedule. Detailed information about upcoming meets, including specifics about what races your athlete will be participating in, is also given to each athlete at practice as well as outlined on the website!

Coaching staff

Coach Scott Myers Coach Kimberly Henry
Email: hshsxc@outlook.com

Spirit Wear

Spirit Wear is optional, but fun for the athletes. This is separate **from the uniform.**

Booster Club

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 the feeling of unity felt by all. The roles of the various booster club members are numerous. Volunteers are needed at all meets and functions. We will organize the HSHSXC Booster club at the first fall parent meeting.

Parents Guide to Meets

Pre- Race

- Parents may also want to bring a comfortable chair to sit in while waiting for the races to begin. Look for the HSHS team tent or flag to identify the team's staging area.
- Come dressed in HSHS apparel to identify you as a HSHS supporter and show your school spirit!
- Bring your camera. Photos of all athletes are compiled in a slide show for the banquet, and volunteer photographers are always needed to assist.
- Get acquainted with the course and strategic spectator points; i.e., the start and finish lines as well as lesserfrequented areas where you may actually be heard over the cheering crowd.
- Know the HSHS uniform so that you can encourage all of the team members.
- Athletes should not transport other athletes (this is a liability concern) unless specific parent to parent contact is made to arrange this.
- Races may be organized in a variety of ways depending on the number of teams, the divisions (var., jv, boys, girls, etc.). Find the division for the race that your child is to participate in. Be aware that numerous races will be run during the course of the meet. A cross-country meet may last anywhere from two hours to a full day or more.
- DO NOT expect the attention of your child once they have joined the team at the race site. They need time to mentally and physically prepare for the race with the coach and team..
- Parents should not actively "coach" their child. Anyone seen as coaching, outside of the official staff, may cause the team to be disqualified.

During The Race

- Cross Country is not a sport observed from a stationary point.
- There are many ways for the spectator to enjoy watching a race. Certainly the start and finish are exciting aspects that you don't want to miss out on but every child gives his/her all at these points!
- There are other vantage points along the course where the athletes lose concentration and need encouragement. You can be beneficial by helping with split times or just voicing words of encouragement.
- The coaches may also solicit your help with splits or videotaping.
- Spectators are encouraged to help cheer on **all** athletes.

Post Race

- It is important to expect that immediately after a race, a runner will be very fatigued with symptoms such as rubbery knees, glassy eyes, the appearance of fainting, nausea, and salivating. These symptoms usually subside quickly. Coaches are trained to treat these and other symptoms. There are generally medical personnel at the bigger meets.
- After a runner comes through the finish chute and receives a place card, it is his/her responsibility to report directly to the coaches to turn in the card and to be given feedback concerning the race.
- Athletes are also expected to do a team cool down before socializing. This does not mean that parents should refrain from contacting their child. A quick pat on the shoulder or congratulatory remark is certainly appropriate.
- All athletes are also expected to cheer on their teammates who are in the same race or in later races.
- Athletes should not leave until the Coach dismisses them.

Transportation

Wake County School System will provide bus transportation to and from the meets. Runners are not permitted to drive themselves to the meets.

Parents attending a meet may "sign out" their athlete, in person, with one of the coaches after the meet is over instead of having them travelling by team transportation. **Carpooling of athletes is not permitted. There may be some exceptions to this rule at various races.**

Overnight Travel

Parents will provide associated hotel cost for their athlete and meal money if needed.

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

What is Cross Country?

- Long distance running; a team sport.
- Not held on a fixed track like athletics, AKA track and field.
- Athletes usually race across open terrain; golf courses, steeplechase courses; most often through a combination of woods, fields and always a hill or two, or three, etc.
- Course distances and terrains differ for each race.
- There are no national or world or Olympic records for this sport.

What Distances are normally run?

- The National Federation of High School Associations has set a minimum distance of 3K and a maximum of 5K for cross country races, not to be confused with training distances that can be much greater.
- Most of our races will be 5Ks, or 3.1 miles.

Should parents call the coaches with questions or concerns?

- Absolutely! However, many questions can be answered by reading the website.

What about Shoes?

- There are many different shoes for Cross Country. Good quality, well fitted shoes are very important.
- Some runners use spikes but not everyone should use them. Check with Coach.

TRAINING

How do the kids train?

- Practice sessions are scheduled at school or Sugg Farm/Bass Lake after dismissal from classes. Check the schedule provided for specific details.
- Practice runs are comprised of conditioning drills and runs.
- Training is always supervised by the Cross Country Coaching Staff, assisted by upper classmen.
- If an athlete has not been training on a regular basis, he will probably experience muscle soreness and various aches and pains. Feel free to discuss these cases with the coach.

How often and when will practices be held?

- Mandatory practices begin on **Monday, July 31st** at Womble Park
- Practices can be held in the morning before school starts or after school.

Where do we run?

- We use various locations throughout the year. Our home course is located at Sugg Farm Park in Holly Springs. Check the website calendar for training and race locations.

Do boys and girls have the same training?

- Yes, but everyone's training is individualized based upon their present level of conditioning or experience.

NUTRITION

What about Nutrition?

- There are two main things to remember, WATER, lots of it, and foods, which are EASY to digest, primarily carbohydrates. Experienced athletes often speak of carbo-loading prior to a race, with foods such as pasta, rice, pancakes, etc.

What should my child drink?

- Electrolyte drinks such as Gatorade are great for rehydration. They should not be used between events. Some athletes do not tolerate anything except water shortly before or during competitions. Gatorade and water are provided at all meets through parent donations.

INJURIES

Are injuries common in distance runners?

- Yes, in fact female cross country runners have more injuries than any other group of athletes in any high school sport. Many of these injuries can be avoided if athletes adequately prepare for the season by gradually building up their mileage, eat a proper diet that includes adequate calcium, iron and vitamin C and wear proper shoes.

COMPETITION (MEETS)

When are the meets?

- Cross country meets are normally scheduled after school and on Saturday mornings. Meets may last a few hours or all day, depending on the organization and number of entries. Please check the schedule that will be provided for specific meet locations and times.
- Races are often divided by age group or divisions:
 - V Boys – Varsity Boys – Top 7
 - V Girls – Varsity Girls – Top 7
 - JV Boys – Junior Varsity Boys – Unlimited
 - JV Girls – Junior Varsity Girls – Unlimited
- Depending on the meet, transportation will be provided by Wake County School System or by the athlete's parents.

Spend a few minutes prior to the start of the race to pick your “spot.”

How long does a meet last?

· Meets usually consist of four races including a varsity and JV division for boys and girls. Each race is scheduled approximately 30 minutes apart. All athletes are expected to cheer on their teammates!

How is cross country scored?

- The boy’s race is separate from the girl’s race.
- Varsity races are separate from JV races.
- Varsity events are run with a maximum of seven athletes per team.
- Some JV events are open and allow more runners.
- As each athlete finishes the race, he/she is given a place card while in the chutes.
- Each athlete should give this card to his/her coach as soon as possible after the race; the coach then turns the team’s cards into the meet scorer.

How does the Team win? (Scoring)

- Cross country scoring is different from most sports, that is, the lowest score wins.
- A cross country team usually consists of seven athletes. As each athlete finished the race, he/she is given a place card while in the chutes. This card is given to the coaches as soon as possible after the race, to be turned in to the judges.
- The places of the first five athletes for each team are added together to determine the team score. In the event of a tie, the team with a higher-finishing 6th place runner is the winner.
- It is important for the team to run as close together as possible. For example, a finish of 1, 3, 4, 6 and 83, a score of 97 will lose to a team finishing 16, 17, 19, 21, and 23, with a score of 96.

Are older athletes allowed to drive to meets?

- This is not allowed at any time.

Can parents take their kids from meets?

- Yes, once the meet is over you may sign out your athlete with the coaching staff. EXCEPT ON SOME DESIGNATED RACES

How do parents know when and where their child competes?

- Meet information will be posted on the website several days in advance of the meet.