Everest Robinson

Mrs. Guerard

AP Language and Composition

Period 2

September 23, 2012

Compare/Contrast Essay

Track v. Cross Country

Most people tend to lump track and field, and cross country into the same sports category: running. Although both sports involve principally running, they are vastly different other than the common thread of running. The major difference between the two sports is that cross country is a team sport while track and field is an individual sport.

Track and cross country are both primarily running sports. In both track and cross country the objective is to cross the finish line before your competitors. Everyone is timed and there are clear defined boundaries on a cross country course and a track. Endurance is tested. There are no time-outs, balls, quarters, halves or anything typically present in a high school sport. In practice you run on similar surfaces to the ones you will compete on (In cross country you run on dirt and out on the roads, in track you run on the track). The same muscles are used and developed. Beyond these things however the sports are extremely different.

Cross country is a team sport, track is an individual sport. In cross country you run one race with all of your peers, in track you run multiple events and your peers are spread throughout all the events. Before a race in cross country we all warm up together, in track people warm up on their own because everyone has different start times. In cross country practice the team runs,

together, stretches, together, gets water together and talks to one another. In track, everyone is split up into their event group and sometimes considers the sprinters or jumpers strangers. In cross country the team score is determined by adding up the top five runners places with the team with the lowest score winning. This means that the team has to run together in order to win. In track on the other hand the winner of the race is given more points than the rest of the places combined. In order to win as a team, individuals must dominate a variety of events. Yet these individuals care not for what other events do, because they do not know the people in the other events. Instead they strive only to win their event. In cross country whoever isn't racing cheers for whoever is. For example if the Varsity girls are racing the JV boys, JV girls and Varsity boys are all cheering for them. In track there are multiple events going on at once and people warming up at random times so there is no uniformity in cheering. We lose as a team in cross country, we lose as individuals in track and field. We pick each other up in cross country, we pick ourselves up in track and field. We make bonds in cross country, we make acquaintances in track. From first to last, freshmen to senior, everyone loves one another on the cross country team.

Whatever we do in cross country it is as a team. From practice to races, to social gatherings. We are a close-knit group that does everything as one. In track we compete for individual achievements and accolades. I will remember track for the pride and confidence it gave me in myself. I will remember cross country because it made me feel like I was part of something much bigger.