MILL CREEK
CROSS COUNTRY



NEW PARENT/RUNNER HANDBOOK 2022

MILL CREEK CROSS COUNTRY 2022
NEW PARENT/ATHLETE HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2022 Mill Creek Cross Country team. This year promises to be an exciting one for you and your child. This handbook is designed to help you with any questions or concerns you may have about Cross Country: Hopefully everything will be answered for you in this handbook, and it will be a useful resource for you before and during the fall.

If you don't know already, you will soon see that our sport is unlike any other. It requires an intense level of dedication and desire. It is not a sport for those that like "instant gratification". Instead, it rewards hard work, patience, and the ability to know that you are working towards something that will make the effort worthwhile later. The great thing about our sport is that the qualities that it takes to succeed at it also will help you succeed at life. You will hopefully learn valuable life lessons as a result of being a part of the Mill Creek Cross Country Program.

This sport can be intimidating at first, but the best advice is to give it time. There are countless stories of runners who showed up to their first practice and quickly decided they did not like it, only to do a 180 and decide that they loved it after the first race. There is something about knowing that if you do the work, you are almost guaranteed to improve. Other sports are not always like that, but with running perseverance is rewarded. You are called upon to do more than you thought possible, and in the process you learn more about yourself than you maybe ever knew before.

For you parents of a team member, we ask for your support both at the meets and at home. You can be the supervisor of the diet, sleeping habits, and attitude towards running. You can also be the number one fan when a big accomplishment has been achieved. While the idea of running may seem "boring" to watch or cheer on at first, you will be surprised how exciting it is when you go to a race, and how many moms and dads you will see yelling at their top of their lungs on Saturdays out on the race course. Hopefully this will provide something for you to be excited about as well!

Please feel free to contact me anytime about anything at all. I am always willing to help in any way I can. I look forward to you being a part of the team!

- Andy Christie, Head Girls and Boys Cross Country Coach/Assistant Girls and Boys Track Coach-coachchristiexc@gmail.com
- Stephanie Kleider, Assistant Coach
- Matthew Bennett, Assistant Coach

The Basics

The Sport

Cross Country is a big sport across the U.S., and even the World. In most states the athletes run a 5k race (3.1 miles). We have one race that is not a 5k-the Stage Races, which is a 2 mile race. The courses vary, but in most cases dirt, gravel, grass, or rough terrain are incorporated into easy to follow routes, which the runners compete on. Whether or not a course is "fast" is determined by the amount of turns, hills, and the type of footing (sand, long grass, etc).

A varsity team consists of 7 athletes with girls and boys competing separately for team and individual awards. 5 athletes score for each side, with two more serving as "displacers", knocking back the opponents scoring athletes, but not contributing to the team total. A runner is given the same number of points as the finish position, so the team with the lowest total points is declared the winner. So a team that scored

1,2,3,4,5,6,7 would score a perfect score of 15 (1+2+3+4+5=15) with 6 and 7 knocking back the opponents, who would then score an 8,9,10,11,12 for a score of 50. More teams equal more points and higher scores but the fewest points still wins. Invitationals may have 20-50 teams in one race, and a score of 100+ may be a clear winner in a field of 300+ runners. JV athletes have their own separate races, and JV races usually can have unlimited entries, so it may include everyone after the top 7.

The goal of every runner is to run a "p.r." or personal record. While not every race lends itself to this (tough course, tough week in practice, sickness, etc), runners usually strive for a certain p.r. by the end of the year. While this is a good motivating tool, it is also important to realize that effort is what really matters. A runner may give a better effort in a race that is 30 seconds slower than their p.r. This point is driven home especially when a runner is able to help out the team on a day when they did not run a p.r. but gave an incredible effort anyway and still finished strong.

The Team

We are very proud of what Mill Creek has accomplished since the school opened in 2004. Here are the team accomplishments

Mill Creek Cross Country Boys

State Champions: 2012, 2021
State Runner-Up: 2011
State 3rd Place: 2014
State 5th Place: 2016
State 6th Place: 2015
State 7th Place: 2013, 2010, 2005

Top 10 at State: 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2020, 2021
Region Champions: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015,2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
Region Runner-Up: 2004, 2005, 2010
Area Runner-Up: 2016, 2017
Gwinnett County Champions: 2012, 2017, 2021

Mill Creek Cross Country Girls

State Champions: 2015
State 5th Place: 2012

Top 10 State: 2012, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
Region Champions: 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020
Region Runner-Up: 2012, 2014, 2020, 2021
Area 2018
Gwinnett County Champions: 2014, 2015

To motivate the runners to add to the new tradition, we also keep Top Ten All Time lists in the Commons Area. It is a source of pride for runners to make the All Time Board! Runners can also access the All Time Lists in the team Google Classroom (code: zoo6t6o)

We hope to continue to grow and add to the tradition here.

The Commitment

The Cross Country season goes from August to the beginning of November. However, to be among the best teams and runners, the training must extend beyond those months. The most crucial time for a runner is the summer. Summer mileage is the key for a successful season in the fall. The teams that succeed in October and November at Region and State are the teams that had numerous runners grinding out the miles in June-August.

Distance running is a sport and skill that builds cumulatively throughout the school year. Ideally, an athlete would compete in Cross Country in the fall and Track in the spring. However, we also welcome any other athletes who want to get into shape for another sport that starts after Cross Country (Wrestling, Swimming, Basketball, Baseball, Soccer, etc). We have many athletes who run in the fall and play other sports throughout the year.

Each workout is important to the overall schedule for the season. Whether it's an easier day of normal mileage or a hard workout, each day serves a purpose. Athletes who are not able to complete the workout schedule or are unable to make the commitment to train effectively do not have a fair opportunity to succeed as much as those that do. **We ask athletes to schedule every possible appointment around workouts when possible.** Those athletes missing a practice for an unexcused reason are subject to missing the next meet; if it happens more than once they may be subject to dismissal. Athletes are also expected to attend special events, such as the Runathon. They are also expected to attend the banquet at the end of the season. We hope you parents agree that the immense benefits of Cross Country more than outweigh the time commitment involved. This sport definitely rewards the committed athlete and parent, but our athletes have time for top-notch academics, church, extracurricular activities, and even work if they desire to budget their time. So many parents have been pleasantly surprised to see grades go up while their child participated in Cross Country.

Uniforms and Equipment

It is a requirement to buy your uniform. This has proven to be the easiest way to manage uniforms for how many athletes we have on the team. If there is a hardship case, then the family may speak with the coach and an arrangement will be worked out. Uniforms are included in your Booster Club payment: see the Booster Club section for more info.

Other equipment that is necessary is a watch with a stopwatch on it, and good running shoes (Runner's Fit in Braselton is an excellent place to purchase running shoes, as it is a running specialty store). If you mention that you run for Mill Creek at Runner's Fit then you receive 15% off your purchase! Shop for bargains! Shoes don't have to cost $100 to be good, but you do want to make sure they are the right show for your child. Also, running/athletic shorts and a t-shirt (preferably a breathable material) are proper running attire.

We are also offering an optional warm up this year. More info will be emailed out about this.

Booster Club

We have a Booster Club for Cross Country. The money raised goes to the various expenses we have during the year, such as: paying assistant coaches, race entry fees, banquet awards and fees, bus driver and coaches hotel rooms on away trips, runner of the week t-shirts, etc.

Since we are getting new uniforms this year, Booster Club membership will have 1 level this year, which is $310.

This fee is substantially less than what other sports charge. With membership you will receive a team t-shirt, team shorts, and a car decal. Membership really helps us to do all the things we want to do during the season. The Booster Club will meet once during the season and you will be notified in advance of any meeting

so that you may attend. If your family has a hardship, parents should speak to the Booster Club President about this.

Booster Dues will go up in August, then again in September. See emails for updates about the increases (or pay early to avoid them!)

Please send all Booster Club checks to our treasurer, Donna Gakstatter, at:

2646 High Creek Run
Dacula, Ga 30019

Parent Volunteers

We need as much parent involvement as we can get. Parent involvement has been outstanding and we are hoping that continues this year. We need help in the following areas from parents:

- Chaperones for the team camp (transport, supervise, help with meals, etc).
- Transporting the tent to/from meets
- Taking pictures
- The Coach Wood Invitational, which will be on October 15th. We will need help with moving runners through the finish chute, handing out place cards, monitoring the course, and many other things.
- Organizing and setting up the banquet.
- Organizing the Spaghetti dinner to be held the night before Region. This is a great way for the team to bond outside of practice and races and we always have a great time eating and spending time together.

If you are interested in helping with any of these things, please contact a Booster Club officer and we will get you signed up.

The Banquet

After the season, we will have a banquet to recognize the Boys and Girls and the terrific season they had. **The banquet is usually in November.** You will receive more details later, but this event will be catered. At the banquet, we recognize those who earned a participation certificate, varsity letter, or special awards. This year we will again use a ranking system based on the average time from all races. The runners that finish with a ranking in the top 20 of the team will receive an extra award at the banquet. **ALL** runners will receive a t-shirt at the banquet. This is always a very special evening and everyone hopefully can attend.

Fundraisers

For our away meets, Club dues cover their portion of the hotel room. We always put 4 runners in a room with 2 double beds. When we qualify for state, the runners do not have to pay for their hotel rooms (the school pays for it). However, we do need money for the items listed previously, so we have two fundraisers. The first one is our "Runathon", which is always held in August. This involves the team always having at least one boy and one girl running on the track in a set time period (usually 5pm-9pm). **Each athlete is expected to get pledges that total at least $100**. **Runners will not be allowed to participate in races until they have turned in their runathon money**. The top money raiser for the boys and girl's teams will receive a gift certificate. . This is an easy, "pain free" way for our team to raise some funds. If each athlete raises their share, we should be well on our way to being set for the season. The more money we raise, the more special things we can do during the season (prizes for certain achievements, Gatorades after practice, etc). Please make every effort to raise your share! Minimal effort only hurts the team.

We also host the Coach Wood Invitational in October. This meet is named for Coach Rick Wood, who was Coach Christie's Cross Country coach in high school and a major influence on his life. Coach Wood no longer teaches and coaches but he does usually attend the meet. The meet started with 4 teams and has grown to nearly 70! It has become a favorite of runners. There are plenty of tasks to go around for this meet!

We also seek out Corporate Sponsorship. If you work at or own a business that can contribute, or you know someone who does, then please fill out the paperwork on the website and turn it in to a Booster Club Officer-see the handout for details.

If any other fundraisers come up, they will be communicated through email. Just contact the coaches to let them know how you can help!

Scholarships

Not everyone who competes will be at the level where a scholarship is possible, but we certainly encourage those runners who have that as a goal. You do not necessarily have to be one of the "top dogs" in the state to earn a scholarship: small schools are willing to offer them to the solid group of runners who are in the next tier behind the leaders. It just depends on the school. However, the main thing that is important is of course maintaining good grades. We encourage the runners to pay attention to their GPA, as well as taking the SAT for the first time before their senior year (hopefully on a date that doesn't conflict with XC).

We have a working relationship with several of the top programs in Georgia, so it is easy for us to contact these coaches if we have a runner who is interested in that school. Of course the first thing these coaches ask for is a transcript, or grades, so again we really stress taking the correct courses and maintaining good grades.

Anytime you have a question about a particular school and their program, just contact us and we'll help you out as much as we can. It is important to consider many things when choosing a college running program, such as: academics (majors offered, reputation), cost, the coach (personality, training philosophy), the team (camaraderie, success), and environment (location of the school, places to run).

We've had several athletes accept or be offered scholarships. We hope to continue to add to the list.

The Competition

The Races

During the Cross Country season, our athletes race against teams from our county, our region, and all over the state. We also occasionally race against teams from neighboring states. The simplest race is the traditional "dual", "tri", or "quad" meet, which is against one, two, or three other teams. These meets are held after a school day, usually do not have team or individual awards, and are low key races designed just to give the teams a chance to compete. Invitational races are held on Saturdays, usually in the morning while the weather is still reasonable. These are the "monster races", with as many as 20-60 teams participating. In these races, there is usually a championship or varsity race (most of the time top 7, sometimes top 10), a JV race (next 7), and an open race (the remainder of the team). There also may be a 9th grade race. **Again, the great thing about Cross Country is that EVERYONE gets to participate throughout the season.** Individual and team awards are available at these meets. These meets are where we get a chance to see how we stand in the county, region, and state. In addition, colleges often get the names of the runners they want to recruit from these meets.

The three most important races of the year are County, Region, and State. At County, the top ten individuals automatically make the All County team, and will be recognized at a banquet after the season. The team race is important because it is a preview of the Region Meet. **At Region, the top 4 varsity teams qualify for the State Meet.** At State, the top ten individuals earn medals, and the top 4 teams earn trophies. If you finish in the top ten individually you also will likely be selected to the Atlanta Track Club All-Metro team. While all the awards and accolades are nice rewards, just earning a trip to state is in itself quite an accomplishment.

Only our top 7 compete at State if we qualify. However, we always bring alternates with us along for the trip. The alternates will consist of the #8-12 ranked runners for both genders. They would run in the event that

one of the top 7 could not. Coaches will notify athletes before Region who the alternates will be in the event we qualify for state.

Travel

We will meet at Little Mulberry Park (Fence Rd side) most days for practice. The park provides us with trails to run on, which is better than running on asphalt all the time. There will be some days when we stay at the school to run-check the schedule page of millcreekcrosscountry.com for each week's practice location/schedule.

On meet days, we ask that runners find their own rides to the meets. The only exception is our out of state meet, and the everyone overnight meet-we will have buses for those. For certain meets, runners may be excused from one or two classes in order to avoid traffic and get to the race location in time to preview it for the next day's race. Athletes are always reminded that make up work is their responsibility and they should talk to their teachers about it beforehand. On trips where we stay in a hotel the athletes are always heavily supervised and expected to be on their best behavior or parents will be called and they will not race the next day. Before these trips athletes are given extensive instructions and details about the trip: if you aren't sure about something after talking with your child you can check the team website (www.millcreekcrosscountry.com) or contact the coach.

The Body

Injuries

Cross Country rarely sees any major or long term injuries, but nagging pains and/or discomfort happens from time to time. This should always be reported to the coach immediately (over time the runner will recognize the difference between soreness and a possible injury). Most injuries can be healed at home by following these simple guidelines: soreness needs stretching, massaging, and heat (heatpad or a warm bath), and tendonitis or inflammation needs icing (10 minutes on, 10 minutes off for an hour) and ibuprofen/Aleve, if you are ok with your child taking it. Also, athletes can avoid almost all injuries by following the guidelines below:

1. **Follow the training program given to you by your coach!** Athletes who alter or vary the training schedule are putting themselves at risk for injury. Each workout is designed to build upon the one before….altering them hurts recovery time and can prevent continued improvement.
2. **Wear proper footwear and monitor it closely!** First, make sure you have running shoes and not cross trainers, soccer shoes, etc. Old worn down shoes are the easiest way to get an injury. Generally, you can get 300-400 miles out of a pair of shoes, but some runners wear down shoes faster than others. It is important to monitor the state of your shoes. Also, new shoes can sometimes cause nagging pains as you break them in. Be patient as your body becomes used to your new shoes. A good way to make sure you have the proper shoes is to visit a running specialty store: Runners Fit on Spout Springs Rd is an excellent store to purchase from, since they will watch you run and make a recommendation based on the way your foot hits the ground.
3. **Report any injury to the coach!** Usually, low-grade pain is not a problem unless it continues past a few days. Any clicking, popping, or snapping noise should be evaluated by a trained professional. Alert the coach and then follow through immediately with medical treatment.

4. **Seek medical help promptly!** Athletes are never held responsible for training injuries, but they are responsible for getting medical help for it as soon as possible. If you as a parent or the coach believe that the injury is severe enough to see a Doctor, please schedule an appointment for as soon as possible. The quicker the athlete can get on a treatment plan, the better.
5. **Athletes should make smart decisions outside of practice!** Athletes should think twice about participating in any sports or activities during the season that might put them at risk of getting injured. It is always a sad story when a runner misses a big meet because of a neighborhood football game injury, or a skateboarding accident. Common sense can prevent these types of injuries.
6. **Create your own ice bath!** Soaking in an ice bath for 5-6 minutes after a run can reduce inflammation and prevent injuries from occurring. Just make sure you do not have it too cold: an ideal temperature is 50-60 degrees. Doing them on your own 1-3 times a week is a good idea.

Medical Help

We have trainers available before or after school to give treatment to runners. They can help give a preliminary diagnosis of an injury. Of course, if you feel more comfortable going with someone that you know, or if you need to go to someone else for insurance reasons, that is fine. Just try not to see a General Practitioner-if you see someone with athletic experience, you will probably be back to running sooner. Runners are expected to participate in all parts of practice unless they have a doctor's note or a note from a trainer. **See Coach Christie for doctors that other runners/parents have recommended.**

Training

Official Practice starts the first day of school. A typical week of practice goes like this: typically 2 days a week are hard workouts, 2-3 are easier mileage days., 1 day is a race, and 1 day is a long run, to build up endurance. We try to schedule an off day for Sundays every 2-3 weeks, but it is normally for runners on the top teams in the state to train on their own on Sundays. Also, in order to stay healthy and reap the benefits of training, athletes must make sure they are eating right, staying hydrated, and getting enough rest.

We strongly require each athlete to attend practice on a daily basis in order to continue progress and reduce the risk of injury. The program available to the athletes is not "haphazard" but is designed to provide the most development with the least amount of training time. Workouts are usually brief and allow athletes tremendous time to accomplish other aspects of their lives with proper time management (usually poor time management is the problem, not cross country taking too much time). Our athletes will spend less time training than virtually *every* other sport and extracurricular activity, but they will be very competitive against the best in the county, region, and state at running. **Please help us by scheduling other appointments around workouts when possible**.

Weights

Running alone does an excellent job of preparing an athlete to race, but the superior athlete incorporates strength training in order to supplement the aerobic stamina he or she gets from running. We are big on push-ups, sit ups, and core exercises several times a week, in season and out of season. These basic exercises will help with posture, arm drive, and overall strength. Pull-ups are also a good exercise for distance runners.

Both teams will do drills to help with flexibility and strength. Please do not add in any extra weight training without first talking to Coach Christie about it.

Rest and Recovery

Mill Creek Cross Country uses the "hard-easy" system where one hard workout is followed by an easy one. This allows the athlete to recover and be ready for the next workout. Workouts apply stress to the body, which forces the body to adapt. This training effect is what helps the athlete become faster. Parents, the coaches need your help in making sure your child is getting the rest and recovery that they need. After the stresses of a workout are applied, the athlete hopefully goes home, eats a balanced meal, hydrates well, does homework, and then gets adequate rest (hopefully 7-8 hours per night). This program, supervised by parents, is the most critical

aspect of a high school distance runner's physical program. Please encourage your son or daughter to follow parental and team guidelines about rest and recovery.

Academics

Eligibility

Runners must have a current physical on file with the school. Physicals are good for one year. Also, students must pass 5 out of 6 classes to be eligible to participate in sports. Distance runners typically are very good students, since the same qualities needed to succeed in school help you succeed in running. However, if an athlete falls below what a parent deems acceptable, then they may contact the coach and set up a weekly progress report check. This can be done to motivate the athlete. Guidelines can be set in place for the athlete to follow (example: any zeroes on assignments=not racing in the next meet).

We fully support parental decisions about grades and hope that the student can still participate while also maintaining their grades. Scholarship opportunities rest on academic performance as well as athletic, so parents and athletes should keep that in mind throughout the high school experience. We strongly encourage athletes and parents to set academics as a priority over running.

Summer Preparation

Training/Mileage

The summer determines almost exclusively how well the athlete progresses throughout the season. Strength gained during this time frame allows the runner to progress that much more once practice starts. The runners who have made up our varsity are usually the ones who did big miles in the summer. To motivate you, we have summer mileage clubs for those people who run at least 200 miles over the summer. Then for every hundred after that there will be a club as well (300, 400, 500, etc). CHECK THE INFO PACKET FOR THE START/END DATES FOR SUMMER MILEAGE. THERE ARE 11 WEEKS OF TRAINING FOR THE MILEAGE CLUBS.

To be eligible for these clubs, you have to document the miles you run over the summer and show up to at least 14 of the summer practices. There are approx. 21 summer practices so you need to show up to at least 15. Again, these practices are not mandatory to be on the team, but you have to show up to at least 14 to be eligible for the summer mileage clubs. To be eligible for the mileage clubs, submit your mileage to your coach every Sunday once Summer Mileage starts. **To get credit for Summer Mileage you must submit the mileage weekly to** www.strava.com. Once on Strava, search for Mill Creek XC and Distance and request to join the team. Once your mileage has been verified, you will receive a cool mileage club t-shirt saying which club you belong to. The top 3 runners from each team with the highest total will receive an extra prize.

Of course, first year runners should not come close to approaching the totals that last year's top 5 ran: you should build up your mileage slowly and always with advisement from your coach. Even if you can't run much during the summer, running consistently will make a big difference in the fall. The important thing in the summer is consistency. Also, if for some reason you do not run that much in the summer, don't worry: we welcome everyone in the fall.

Summer Workouts

Starting in June (check the info packet for specific dates), the team will have summer practices. The schedule is Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday at 7:30am at Little Mulberry Park, the Fence Road entrance (Boys and Girls).

These meetings are not mandatory, but will be helpful to those who are working towards a mileage club, and do not want to always run by themselves. It is much easier to run with others, so even if you can't come to the meetings, try to run with someone whenever possible. If one of the coaches is unable to attend a meeting, another coach will be there, or at least one upperclassman will be present for anyone who shows up to run, as well as possibly a parent. **The weeks of Memorial Day and July 4th are always GHSA Dead Weeks; teams**

are not allowed to hold any type of practice with coaches, but runners can gather themselves. There may be runners that meet at the park on other days to run: talk to your teammates to organize this. Practice will typically last until 9:30, depending on how much you are running. When we meet in the summer, it is a very low key event. It is not mandatory for participation in the fall; we are just trying to provide an opportunity for the runners to put in the miles together, and to visit during the summer. You do need to attend at least 14 summer practices if you want to be a part of a mileage club.

Suggested Summer Mileage

As a beginning runner, your goal should be to just get in the habit of running, possibly by starting out running a mile or two every other day. Then, as you build up your mileage, increase the number of days you run per week. For experienced runners, no more than one off day per week is suggested. Your weekly training schedule should be the same: normal distance days for most days, with one day consisting of a long run. A long run is a run that is 2-4 miles more than your normal distance run. You should not attempt a long run until after you have run consistently for at least a month or two.

No one should jump immediately into high mileage-take your time building up to it. Experienced runners will have an easier time with more mileage, so if you are a beginner don't worry about starting off small and increasing slowly-it takes time and patience to get used to running a lot. Even the great runners had to build up when they first started too. Don't raise your weekly mileage by any more than 2-3 miles a week. And if you can't run a lot this summer, at least try to run most every day. Consistency is a big part of improving in running, so don't think that just because you can't run a lot you won't be successful. The more consistent you are with your running in the summer, the easier it will be to adjust to practice in the fall, no matter how many miles you ran in the summer. Later on you find it easier to run distances that were at first hard.

Team Camp

In July we hold a team camp for any boys and girls that qualify based on our June timetrial. Check the info packet for more specifics, including due dates for deposits and the remaining balance. Camp is an excellent way for the team to bond right before official practice starts. We stay in dorms and eat in the campus dining hall. The week is filled with running on challenging trails, volleyball, dodgeball, swimming, and just relaxing and hanging out with each other. If you are not going this year hopefully you can join us next year!

Vacation/Church Camps/Jobs

We encourage our athletes to continue to run during vacations and church camps as well as around their work schedule if they have a job. Running is something that can be accomplished anywhere: it just takes planning ahead. We have learned that in virtually every occasion, an athlete who informs a boss, vacation, or church leader in advance of running will be granted that opportunity. In almost every case the end result seems to be a factor of athlete dedication, parental support, or a lack of prior knowledge to the event leaders. If an athlete wants to attain their goals in the fall they'll make it work somehow in the summer!

In the fall, runners that continue to work need to make arrangements to be at the entire practice. It is too difficult for coaches to make adjustments for athletes wanting to leave early-we aren't sure if you received important information, you aren't able to do the full workout, etc. Please plan well in advance for this.

First day of official practice

The first day of official practice for Boys and Girls will be the first day of school (drink plenty of water: it will be hot!). Boys and Girls should meet at Little Mulberry, on the Fence Rd side. We will practice every

day from then on. Practice during the school year is from 2:40 (at the school; 3pm at Mulberry) to approximately 4:15-4:30, but that varies depending on the workout for that day. **RUNNERS NEED TO HAVE A RIDE PICK THEM UP NO LATER THAN 4:30**! If you cannot get a ride by then, you need to arrange a carpool or you may not be allowed to stay on the team, since coaches have to wait until all runners have been picked up before they can leave.

Related Information

Track and Field

While Cross Country is in the fall, Track and Field is in the spring. The difference is that all races take place on the track, there are shorter races (sprints), and there are field events such as long jump, triple jump, high jump, pole vault, shot put, and discus. Cross Country athletes typically participate in the 800, 1600, and 3200 meter events, but they are certainly able to be in any event they are interested in. For the track distance athletes, we use a training emphasis designed around speed which carries over to the next cross country season. Workouts are similar to cross country in time demand. **99% of the top cross country runners in the state also run track; it's the best way to progress to another level as a runner.** However, as mentioned before, there are athletes who only join us in the fall and that is certainly ok: we're happy to get them at all!

Lettering Standards:

Lettering standards are published in the info packet, which can be found on millcreekcrosscountry.com
All lettering decisions are solely based on the head coach's judgment. **You must finish the season in good standing in order to get a letter!**

Letter jacket orders will be at the end of October. Athletes should see their coach about a form.

Team Rules:

See the info packet for all team behavior rules and attendance policies. All runners/parents will be required to sign a behavior/expectations contract to be on the team.

Coaches

Every parent should be concerned with who will be working with their son or daughter, particularly in a program that carries so much meaning beyond the simple act of running. We want you to feel like you know the staff even before you actually meet us.

Girls and Boys Head Coach: Andy Christie

- English Major/Education Minor at Berry College in Rome, Ga.
- Language Arts teacher and coach at Dacula 2000-2008, at Mill Creek 2008-present
- Masters in Education from Walden University; Specialist from Lincoln Memorial
- Ran Cross Country and Track at South Gwinnett High School.
- Ran Cross Country and Track at Berry College in Rome, Ga.
- Has run 10 marathons
- 24th year of coaching (1 year as assistant coach at South Gwinnett, 8 years at Dacula, 15th year at Mill Creek).

Assistant Coach: Stephanie Kleider

- B.S. Biology degree from California, Irvine
- Masters of Secondary Education, Instruction from Central Michigan University
- Science teacher at Mill Creek since 2013
- 3rd year of coaching at Mill Creek
- Has run 4 marathons and 4 half-marathons, and a 50k race

Assistant Coach: Matthew Bennett

- B.S. Mechanical Engineering and Aerospace Emphasis degree from Utah State University
- EPIC Program Engineering teacher at Mill Creek since 2020
- 1st year of coaching at Mill Creek
- Ran Cross Country and Track at Brookwood High School

Any other info not covered in this packet can be found in the info packet or by reaching out to Coach Christie or a Booster Club Officer. We are excited to have you as a part of MCXC this year!