

Cross Country Team Handbook

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES run 5K/5000m/3.1 miles

Courses are varied in surfaces and terrains: gravel, grass, dirt, some rugged trail, forest, golf courses or fields.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETES run 1.5-2 miles

Courses are varied in surfaces and terrains: gravel, grass, dirt, some rugged trail, forest, golf courses or fields.

SCORING Seven individuals race for a place. The top five placing runners on each team have their finishing places added together to make a team score. Runners 6 and 7 offset ties. The lowest scoring team wins. All rostered runners compete and can strategically help their team to better scores by their finishing place.

Team Philosophy

We work hard together to improve.

Team Rules and Expectations

PRACTICES:

- **Practice is 3:35-5:30.** Be on time, ready for a team meeting and workout. We will meet in the HS commons. We will work together as a team, usually for the entire duration, ending with strength or core training, and recovery work.
- **All practices are MANDATORY.** Avoid missing practices!
 - *Excused-* **Do not make a habit of scheduling appointments during practice time.** The only excused absence should be absences from school. If chronic absence becomes an issue, you will be asked to turn in your uniform.
 - *Unexcused-* One unexcused absence will result in missing a meet, two will result in two meets, and three will result in you being asked to turn in your uniform
 - *Illness-* We all get sick from time to time. If you are too sick to be at school the day of a meet, then you are too sick to compete in the meet. Get better. Please use extra caution for the health of your teammates with Covid this year.
 - *Work Schedule/Vacations--* Be aware of practice times and strive to schedule work around practice. Alternate practices will need to be coordinated with a coach's availability
 - **If you know you will not be at a practice, it must be excused AHEAD OF TIME!**
 - **If you have an unexcused absence the week of a meet, you will not**

participate in that particular meet.

- **Practice attire:** Lightweight running shorts and tops are best. You will feel most comfortable and do your best running work in real running clothes. Shirts are required at all times. Be ready to add layers for rain or cold.

WORKOUTS:

- **Running:**
 - For best results, we will include several types of running training: conversational long runs, tempo/fartleks, interval and hill repeats, speed endurance on the track, recovery, and even some fun games or themed runs.
 - Paces are designed for groups and individual runners to maximize improvement. To the best of their efforts, athletes are expected to work to meet these times.
 - Some workouts will be at the track or on campus, but many workouts will be on city streets or roads outside town. Running routes are designed for the type and pace of workout. **Athletes are expected to run the route designed by their coach. DO NOT enter any business without a coach. DO NOT make up your own route or cut a route short without permission.** Running in groups of similar paces is encouraged!
 - **Street Running Etiquette:**
 - **Be aware of traffic! Do NOT hold up traffic or cause drivers to be startled or nervous with your actions!**
 - **Run on the left side of the road, single file when there is traffic. Adjust for the circumstances and be aware of your surroundings!**
 - **Be courteous, friendly and safe--you are role models for the community!**
- **Strength Training:**
 - Weight Room: Athletes are expected to follow the lifting routine assigned by the coach.
 - Body weight exercises, mobility exercises, yoga and daily stretching will be done as a team. We will finish up most days with a core strength routine.
- **Bring your best attitude and effort everyday!** Hard work is the only way to improve speed and mental toughness. Teams with speed and mental toughness is what makes champions--push each other and support each other to make that happen everyday!

INJURIES:

Overuse injuries happen in Cross Country. Although running is hardly ever a pain-free activity, if you develop knee pain, heel pain, foot pain, shin splints, hip pain that seems to prevent you from doing your best, **TELL YOUR COACH!** Often, a few days of rest or strengthening exercises will help to remedy the situation and running can continue. Continuing to run hard on an injury may lead to a worse situation, more lost practice and the inability to compete.

You can take actions to prevent injuries by:

- Run in quality, fairly new running shoes.
- Stretch daily. Pay attention to areas that need extra stretching.
- Use a foam roller to roll out muscles after every run. Rolling out helps to realign muscle fibers after hard work, thus promoting healing and recovery.
- **Get plenty of sleep. Eat a balanced, nutritious diet. Drink plenty of water.**

MEETS:

Races are opportunities to gain experience in trying harder than you think you can. You will see your times improve--in some cases *vastly*. Every individual's goal is a PR or PB: personal record or personal best--and it is SUPER exciting when it happens!

However in order to perform your best for yourself and your team, you must PLAN to do your best.

- **Double check equipment the night before:** uniform, shoes, socks, spikes, water, pre/post food.
- **Follow the team routine:** 1. Set up camp together. 2. Walk the whole course together. 3. Warm up together. 4. Get ready to race together. Make sure everyone is ready to bring their best effort as a team. NEVER LEAVE THE CAMP WITHOUT PERMISSION--your team needs to know where you are!
- If you are not racing or getting ready to race, you are supporting those racing including MS runners. Show that Saints are champions through LOUD enthusiasm.
- Represent SCF proudly and with the highest sportsmanship and integrity.
DON'T MAKE US LOOK BAD!! (more about this under Sportsmanship)
- Be polite and courteous on the bus. Thank the bus driver. Follow the rules. Take your trash with you.

SPORTSMANSHIP:

Sportsmanship must be shown; it relies on our actions. As a school district, we place a high value on excellent sportsmanship. As SCF Saints, our actions will speak of the respect we have for others and for the sport of cross country. Athletes exemplify an attitude of focused, positive sportsmanship throughout the duration of a cross country meet by:

- Supporting teammates and opponents with friendliness, encouragement and congratulations. Be positive and friendly to the athletes of other teams.
- Staying together as a team during course preview, warm up and cool down.
- Respecting coaches, officials and opponents with politeness and kind actions.
- Being on time and following meet rules.
- Competing to the best of your ability. Encourage others to push for their best effort.
- Work together to keep the camp neat and orderly. Help set up and take down the tent. Make sure your trash is taken care of. Leave the area better than when we arrived.
- Having fun but never making fun of anyone or anything. Never say something or do something that would make others feel uncomfortable or distracts from the purpose of the competition.

Athletic Code:

- 1) **Athletes are expected to uphold the SCF athletic code.** Any athlete violating a code will follow mandatory disciplinary actions.
- 2) **Academics** are most important. You are a student first and an athlete second.
 - A student must have grades in good standing to remain eligible for the current sport/activity. A coach has access and will check a student's grades at any time. If a coach finds that a student is not passing, they reserve the right to deem the student ineligible until the student is **passing all of their classes**.
 - If a student receives 1 failing grade, EITHER quarter grade or semester, the high school student is ineligible for 10% of the maximum number of season contests.
 - If a student receives 2 or more failing grades, the high school student is ineligible for participation in co-curricular contests, competitions, activities, or performances for a minimum of 15 consecutive school days if he/she has received one or more failing grades in his/her latest reporting period. For quarter classes the quarter grade will be used, for semester classes a failing grade on EITHER quarter grade or semester grade will be considered failing. The 15 days will begin upon AD receiving the grade report. After the minimum 15-day suspension, a student becomes eligible as soon as he/she is passing all of his/her classes. If grades have been raised to passing, eligibility will be restored by the Athletic Director as appropriate.

TEAM CAPTAINS:

The team will vote on Team Captains for the boys and girls high school teams.

The chosen athletes will either be seniors or juniors on the team and should be nominated based on these qualities:

- 1) **Dedication-** 100% attendance & 100% effort both in school and at practice.
- 2) **Discipline-** on time, attentive, and focused.
- 3) **Selflessness-** Is willing to do anything for the team when asked.
- 4) **Coachability-** Is able to adjust/perform when coached to.
- 5) **Desire-** want to be a leader.
- 6) **Supportive-** encourage teammates, especially our middle school athletes.

Team Captains show the following through their actions:

- 1) Lead by example.
- 2) Get to know teammates—Every last one of them!
- 3) Assist with/lead practices. Work with coaches to create fun, morale boosting activities.
- 4) Make sure teammates walk/jog the course before a race **together as a group**.
- 5) Positive attitude during workouts and meets. Cheer on all runners.

- 6) Make sure teammates clean up the camp area at meets.
- 7) Communicate with coaches and teammates appropriately.
- 8) Make sure St. Croix Falls School District is represented in the best possible light.

****A Team Captain who fails to uphold their duties during the season, may have their title taken away at any time. Discussions will take place to allow the captain to make changes in his/her behavior if necessary.*

LETTERING:

In order to earn a SCF Varsity Letter at the end of the cross country season, a high school athlete must achieve the following:

- Be one of the top seven runners for our team at 7 of the 11 meets that will be held during the season or 66% of the scheduled races at varsity level. (a canceled meet that is not rescheduled will drop this down to 6 of 10 meets).

All Varsity cross country teams are made up of the top 7 runners for that school regardless of the team's overall size/number of participating athletes. The top 7 athletes for our team may change from meet to meet, especially if runners 6 and 7 are close in time with runners 1 and 2 of the JV team. It is up to YOU to secure your place in that top 7 for the allotted number of meets if you wish to earn a Varsity letter.

HOWEVER, coaches have the discretion to review each athlete's individual performance at the end of the season. Considerations may or may not include attendance to practice and meets, injuries, athlete's attitude, athlete's individual performance/effort, leadership role, etc.

SUMMER RUNNING LETTER: 150 miles of logged running during summer months.

AWARDS:

Athletes are eligible to earn end of the season awards for their efforts.

HS & MS Athletes

MVP (runner with the most 1st place finishes for the team during the season)

Most Improved (based on previous season's performances to current season)

Coach's Award (based on athlete's attitude, participation, and attendance)

Perfect Attendance

HS ONLY

All-Conference, Team Captains, Team Manager

Varsity Letter/Gold Bar

Summer Weight Lifting Letter