



Mountain Ridge 2026 Cross Country



Coaches

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Welcome! We are so excited to start the MRMS 2026 Cross-Country Season! For those who are new to cross country, **we will train five days a week** for two-mile meets against other schools in the district. Our practices will include over-distance runs of up to four miles, speed, hill workouts, and core and conditioning. Above are contact addresses for each coach--please contact all coaches for all communications. We are looking forward to having a great running season!

Who are we? The Mountain Ridge Middle School XC Team is just one small piece of a much larger puzzle. Cross Country is about running as a team, yes. However, it is also about community, connections, and commitment to success on a personal level. Mountain Ridge provides the feeder program for Mountain Vista (Vista Nation XC), a stellar team that is consistently competitive on the State, Regional, and National levels. How do WE do it? It starts here with our program. In Cross Country, each member of the team is valued as an individual and contributing teammate. While some athletes may have incredible talent, uncanny dedication, or years of experience, the runners who are out for the first time or who are just developing their taste for long distance have just as much worth. Every runner is important!

Philosophy:

You will see very quickly that we live and breathe an active lifestyle, and we are always looking for more opportunities to get kids involved. With that in mind, we believe the following: the purpose of the athletic program is to promote and develop all athletes in a comprehensive and meaningful educational experience. We strive to teach wholesome attitudes in regards to sportsmanship, responsibility, teamwork and loyalty. Therefore, positive sportsmanship is **REQUIRED** at all times. Athletes and parents represent MRMS, and good sportsmanship is the best reward. Most of all, we want to have fun, form lasting friendships, and help every athlete reach his or her potential!

Parent Meeting: Tuesday, August 18 @4:30 in the MRMS commons following practice. Please enter through the front doors. *This is a lightning-fast meeting to meet coaches and learn about the season.* We will also do last-minute registrations for optional events, gather volunteers, explain the optional gear order, and general Q&A.

Practice/Meets: *See calendar below.* Practices are Monday through Friday from 2:45-4:25. Athletes need to provide their own way home at 4:25 and must not linger. Consistent participation in daily practice or daily workouts is essential to the development of all athletes on the team. Runners will be expected to attend all practices unless prior arrangements have been made with the coaches (i.e. other sports/activities). To participate in any meet, athletes must attend practice before that meet, unless the coaches have prior notification. ***For safety purposes and clear communication, the coaching staff will not consider a student email as an excused absence. Email communication must come from parent/guardian prior to the missed practice. Please email ALL Coaches each time you communicate***

with the team. One of us will respond as quickly as possible, but this keeps all of us in the loop!

Athletes will participate in four meets throughout the season, two at home, and two away. Athletes must provide their own transportation to and from all competitions. Carpools are encouraged, and parents are asked to enter the parking lot for pickup at 3:00 to avoid after school traffic congestion.

Meet format: Meets will begin at 4:00 with the girls division race. Sixth-8th graders of the same gender will race together. After one race finishes, the second race will begin as soon as all runners have completed the course and the athletes, timers, and coaches are ready for the next event. Spectators are welcome and are encouraged to spread out on the course to offer encouragement throughout the entire race. We cheer for all runners--just a LOT more loudly for MOUNTAIN RIDGE!

The District Championship is **Saturday, September 12 at Cresthill Middle School**. If you have another athletic commitment that day, hopefully you can make both work. For this meet, we are able to take our top fourteen runners for each division (a total of 28 runners who will be split into an Open and Elite division). These teams will be determined the week of September 7 and will be based on times, finishes, and coaches' discretion. *Our open runners (everyone else) will have the opportunity to compete at the Slavens School Invitational at Harvard Gulch Park in Denver on Friday, September 11th.*

NOTE: all athletes are responsible for finding transportation to and from all away meets. We highly encourage a neighborhood carpool!

- ➔ **For AWAY meets:** All students must provide transportation to the meet and home. Carpools are at family discretion.
- ➔ **For AWAY meets,** a parent must sign-out for all students they will be transporting. There will be binders in camp for sign-outs.
- ➔ **When athletes complete their races, they must report their time to their coach before heading out to cheer for the rest of the team.**
- ➔ **Please stay until the end of every meet if you can! We love to gather after the event and celebrate the team!**

Volunteers:

We will need parents to help with course marshaling, help and timing at away meets, and taking pictures at meets.

Dressing Out/Storage of Belongings:

Athletes will need to carry their gear with them each day. Most pods have a classroom or location for athletes to drop a bag. Just ask. We will dress out quickly in the locker rooms and then store our bags in the Music Room. *At meets, athletes should leave personal belongings in their parents' cars.* MRMS is not responsible for any personal items.

Uniforms:

Each student will be issued a jersey to use for the season. Jerseys will be issued at practice. If this jersey is lost, a fine will be assessed. Students will need to provide their own dress code appropriate dark blue or black shorts and any warm-up clothing.

Eligibility:

Eligibility is based on the athlete's behavior/work habits grade. An athlete will be ineligible for the first competition of the week if they receive a U in ANY of their classes for the week. Athletes will also not be allowed to participate if good sportsmanship is not shown during practice or meet. A coach will inform students and parents of eligibility issues as they arise.

Health, Wellness and Safety:

In order to get our athletes in the best shape possible for the cross-country season, we believe it is important to run a range of courses and vary the terrain. The greatest way to accomplish this involves periodically taking our kids off campus. We will ask students to always run with at least one buddy, and remind them of procedures such as crossing streets safely, staying away from wildlife, and avoiding strangers. Additionally, there will always be three coaches with the athletes; however, if an athlete has a medical concern, he or she must carry any necessary supplies (inhalers, epi pens, etc.).

We do not allow athletes to carry phones or listen to music at practice as they need to be aware at all times. Coaches do carry phones. If at any time there is **an emergency** and you need to contact us while we are off campus, you may call or text (303) 909-7724, Klinkerman; (303) 437-0422, Estell; (303) 941-4390, Windholz; MRMS Main Office (303) 387-1800.

Bring your inhaler if required. Bring a good pair of running shoes (see any of the coaches if you have questions). **We highly recommend you wear a watch while we run as we run for minutes, not miles. A simple digital watch will suffice (\$10-\$40 at Walmart, Amazon, etc.).** Runners who are looking to step up to a Garmin GPS -type device may want to set a mileage goal or put it on a wish list for a major holiday. Ex: “Hey Mom or Dad, if I can run 100 miles, will you pay for half of a GPS watch for me?” Next, DRINK! Hydration is essential for performance and general health. Eat a well-balanced breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bring a protein-based snack to eat right after races and practices. Bring sunscreen--we will be out battling the elements. Staying healthy is key for a productive season.

Inclement Weather:

In the case of lightning or severe weather, we will return to MRMS for an indoor practice. Unless you receive a communication from the school about a cancellation, please assume we are meeting! We are very creative about using our indoor spaces!

Parents, please educate yourselves on the signs and symptoms of concussions/brain injuries. If you have any reason to suspect that your child may have sustained even the mildest head injury, please let us know! These do not usually occur in cross country, but stranger things have happened!

If athletes are absent from school for more than a half-day of learning, they may not participate in practice or meets scheduled for that day.

Super-Cool Opportunities:

Throughout the season, please keep your ears open for communication about these awesome options! We will also send frequent email communications, typically through the noreply-ic email feature.

- ➔ MRMS XC T-Shirts and GEAR! Information coming soon! Show your RAM pride! Great for athletes and families. Look for an email—the window for orders will be small, but we will announce it!
- ➔ Extra Running Opportunities TBD:
 - ◆ Friday, September 10, OPTIONAL Slavens Invitational. More info in September. Coaches will enter athletes.
- ➔ **Running Club and Colorado Middle School State Championships**
 - ◆ **When the regular season ends, we will start again as MRMS Running Club and train for various invitationals leading to the Colorado Middle School State Championships on Saturday, October 24th.**

Whew! That’s a lot of information. Thanks for helping us get this season started—it’s going to be a fun one. If you need us, we’ll be running!

2025 XC Calendar: August - September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9	10	11	12	13 Practice 2:45-4:25 Meet in the Commons before dressing out	14 Practice	15
16	17 Practice	18 Practice Parent meeting 4:30	19 Practice	20 Home Meet (Tri-Meet vs. Castle Rock & Mesa)	21 Practice	22 Optional: Spectate @ the Vista Nation Two Mile
23	24 Practice	25 Practice & Pictures	26 Practice	27 AWAY Meet at Cimarron (Tri meet vs Sierra & Cimarron)	28 Practice	29
30	31 AWAY Meet @ Rocky Heights vs. Rocky Heights and Sagewood	Sept 1 Practice	2 Practice	3 Practice	4 Practice	5
6	7 Labor Day No School- No practice	8 HOME Meet vs. Cresthill	9 Practice	10 Slavens Race (note: this is optional)	11 Practice and Pizza Party!! Return jerseys	12 District @ Cresthill