

Cross Country Is...

- 1 Cross Country is not simply about the race. Cross Country is all about what you do to prepare for the race.**
- 2 Cross Country is your alarm clock rudely reminding you on a humid July morning that your competition is not sleeping in.**
- 3 Cross Country is a team sport that requires incredible individual efforts.**
- 4 Cross Country is scored backward but everything else about the sport revolves around moving forward as quickly as possible.**
- 5 Cross Country is a tightly-knit family of runners who are bound by sweat, tears and cheers.**
- 6 Cross Country is not the most popular sport in school. It is simply the best sport in school.**
- 7 Cross Country is that bugger of a hill on your route that you would love to skip but don't because you know how much you will need it come November.**
- 8 Cross Country is kids who are thought to be some of the smartest students in class — until you sit next to them on a three-hour bus ride.**
- 9 Cross Country is track without all the hoopla. All you need is shoes, shorts and heart.**
- 10 Cross Country is what allows you to eventually lose your public inhibitions at an age when many kids are frozen by theirs.**
- 11 Cross Country is the entire varsity team going bonkers as the slowest kid on the JV team stumbles through the finish line to record a new PR.**
- 12 Cross Country is a beautiful sport where you get to experience nature close up, smell the unfiltered outdoors and feel your body adapt — oh, does it ever feel!**
- 13 Cross Country is lying awake in bed the night before a big race because your mind refuses to obey your legs' pleas for sleep.**
- 14 Cross Country is a fresh start with each dawn, knowing that daybreak brings the chance for you to be better, faster and less weird.**
- 15 Cross Country is a herd of teammates attaining perfect stride cadence as they sprint toward coach's pick-up truck as another practice comes to a satisfying close.**

- 16 Cross Country is a starting line of chaotic colorful singlets stretching from the giant oak tree to the scattered shards of the sunrise.**
- 17 Cross Country is a group pasta dinner at one of your teammate's homes the night before you hope to keep your legs from turning into spaghetti.**
- 18 Cross Country is learning that hills can be your friend, albeit the kind of friend you would like to see move to North Dakota.**
- 19 Cross Country is a tiny starting box that appears not nearly large enough to hold seven runners but proves to be more than enough space once chins point up and the gun is raised.**
- 20 Cross Country is that crushing and disappointing race that comes out of nowhere, just when you thought everything was finally falling into place.**
- 21 Cross Country is your parents, grandparents and family seated in folding chairs in the middle of a pasture just to watch you run by once or twice in your underwear.**
- 22 Cross Country is hard work, the kind of hard work that builds strong muscles, stronger minds – and hilarious characters.**
- 23 Cross Country is the incredible satisfaction one gets from doing the work necessary to improve.**
- 24 Cross Country is that summer trip to a faraway place to train and bond with your team and coaches where the only pressure is your squad's limited cooking skills.**
- 25 Cross Country is that painful pang of regret of that missed or shortened workout gnawing at your confidence as you nervously wait in the starting box with your teammates.**
- 26 Cross Country is running side-by-side with an opponent and hoping they are just as exhausted as you, but never allowing them to know you have no idea if you can hold this pace.**
- 27 Cross Country is odd in that there is no scoreboard updating the race as it unfolds. There is just hope and panic and lots of whispering as the results are tallied.**
- 28 Cross Country is growing up one stride at a time.**
- 29 Cross Country is about losing – a lot, and coming back the next race determined to lose by less.**
- 30 Cross Country is coming in as a freshman intimidated by the strange terms, tights and times and leaving as a senior in love with it all.**
- 31 Cross Country is not for all, rather it is for all who are unafraid to try.**