

Student Athlete and Parent Guide to Alpharetta XC

1. Program Philosophy

- a. The mission of the Alpharetta Cross Country Program is to develop the physical and mental skills of each student-athlete on our team; so, they perform to the best of their ability. We strive to build a community where each student-athlete feels valued, confident, and strong. We are committed to becoming one of the top programs in GA. Every year, our performance goal is to win the Region Championship and be a contender for the podium at the State Championship.

2. Equipment

- a. Cross country involves minimal specialized equipment. Races are run in a uniform consisting of shorts and a singlet (part of the uniform purchased by Booster Club fees). In cold weather, solid black long-sleeved shirts and black running tights can be worn underneath the uniform.
- b. Training Running Shoes
 - i. We suggest going to Big Peach Running Co. on Windward Parkway. They offer AHS XC runners a 10% discount—just make sure to tell them, you're joining the team! Plus, you'll get to buy them from 2 of our XC Senior Girl's this year!
 - ii. After around 500 miles or when your leg joints (knees especially) begin to bother you out of the blue, you should look to replace old running shoes with new ones. Always break in shoes before racing or a long run. If you're not sure, look at the tread or ask a Coach.
- c. Spikes
 - i. These types of shoes are recommended for runners to wear to race in. Typically, runners will need 1/4th spikes in their spikes. You can also be fitted for these at Big Peach Running Co., and runners should practice in spikes before the morning of a race.

3. Highly Recommended Equipment

- a. Water Bottle with name on it
- b. Running Watch
 - i. This running watch must have a stopwatch and time on it (the basics), it will work. GPS watches are also allowed and highly recommended.
- c. Running Socks
 - i. Runner socks are socks that allow their feet to breathe while running at practices and meets. Big Peach also sells great socks for running.
- d. Stick Roller & Foam Roller
- e. Epson Salt & Ice
 - i. Epson Salt and ice baths are some of the most common at-home practices that runners can do to relax and stretch their muscles out.

4. Summer Training

- a. The key to a better cross country season is a summer of running.

- b. Voluntary team practices begin in early June, and running with the team throughout the summer is highly recommended.
- c. Summer training's primary purpose is to build a base of miles/time on your legs and strength to build upon during the official cross country season.
- d. During Summer training, weightlifting is also included into the days we are AHS.
 - i. Our weightlifting sessions aren't about lifting the heaviest you can and maxing out. We focus on technique, form, and strengthening the body to handle the miles, workouts, and sustaining the race paces to meet and exceed their race time goals.

5. Fall Training

- a. The official day of cross country mandatory practice is usually the Monday before school begins.
- b. We do a combination of morning and afternoon workouts. This is to get runners acclimated to the heat and to avoid multiple cancellations of afternoon practice due to August rainstorms that tend to happen.
- c. Runners will also participate in weightlifting.

6. Races

- a. Most meets will fall on Saturday mornings where runners will race in different races. The category of races and runners per team per race depend on the meet. Unless it is specified beforehand of a "Varsity only" or "JV only meet", then each runner is expected to race at each meet of the season.
- b. All runners are expected to ride the bus to XC meets. If runners need to leave early from a meet and they are **not** riding home with their parent(s), they must have the FCS Transportation Release Form signed and turned into their head coach **BEFORE** the day-of the meet. This form can also be signed and sent via email. This form can be found on our website under the "Frequent Forms and Documents" tab.
- c. Runners should check out with the designated coach before they leave the meet if they have been excused to leave early. Please understand that this is for the safety of the runners.
- d. Overall team scores are determined by the first 5 runners of a team in that race. The place a runner comes in, such as 8th, means that the runner got us 8 points. Teams want to have a lower score than other teams.
 - i. For example, let's say our first 5 runners come in 20th, 40th, 41st, 80th, and 81st. Our overall score would be 262.
- e. All runner times and meet information can be found on ga.milesplit.com.

7. Student First, Athlete Second

- a. The Alpharetta XC program supports academics tremendously. Our runners are students first, and the coaches have check-ins frequently to make sure runners are on the right track. The program encourages students to attend teacher help sessions, have coaches that can help with literature, mathematics, and creating balanced schedules, etc.
- b. In the 2022 XC season, we had 15/15 scholar athletes! At Alpharetta to be a Scholar Athlete, student athletes are 10th-12th graders that receive a Varsity letter and have a

90% cumulative GPA or higher.

8. Earning a Varsity Letter

- a. Girl's
 - i. Races a time under 21:30 for a 5K
 - ii. Runs on the Varsity squad at Region or State
 - iii. Varsity Team for at least 50% meets
- b. Boy's
 - i. Races a time under 18:30 for a 5K
 - ii. Runs on the Varsity squad at Region or State
 - iii. Varsity Team for at least 50% meets
- c. Any senior who finishes in good standing for at least three seasons can qualify for a Varsity letter.

9. Running Goals

- a. All runners can have more than one individual goal—whether it is to race in a varsity race, break a certain time, finish in a certain place in a race, etc. Goals should be obtainable.
- b. Runners should not measure their success or failure against a single metric. Goals should be specific, measurable, and realistic.
- c. Runners will also set goals that are non-performance based, such as “I will have better self-talk when the tough moments hit during a race or workout”.
- d. Coaches help runners assess their abilities and create these goals for themselves.
- e. As a team, we strive to be one of the best in Region and be one of the top 4 teams to advance to the GHSA State Championships.

10. Vocabulary

- a. CD—Cool Down.
 - i. Easy paced run/jog after a race or workout.
- b. Dynamics
 - i. Drills that include body movements to actively stretch muscles and warm them up simultaneously before a workout, run, or race.
- c. Fartlek
 - i. “speed play”. This type of run/workout involves bursts of speed randomly throughout a run. There are many different types of fartleks.
- d. Invitational
 - i. A meet between a large number of teams.
- e. JV—Junior Varsity
- f. Pack Running
 - i. A group of runners running in close proximity. Useful cross country racing strategy.
- g. PR—Personal Record
 - i. A runner's best time ever
- h. SB—Season Best
 - i. A runner's best time during the season but not necessarily their PR.

- i. Surge
 - i. A racing tactic involving an increase in pace that is meant to pass opponents
- j. SWDTT—Strong Women Do Tough Things
- k. Tempo Run
 - i. A continuous run done at 80-85% of maximum effort that is designed to boost oxygen carrying capacity.
- l. WU—Warm-up
 - i. Running/exercise drills which prepare the body for the intensity of a run, race, or workout.