

## **Group A**

### **Summary**

Group A exists to provide competitive opportunities for girls interested and able to pursue their potential as an athlete, but to also allow girls the chance to have a full Cross Country experience. Group A girls will generally practice 6 days a week and typically compete in 4-6 races. If a Group A girl is a regular attender at practice and completes her race commitment of no less than 4 meets (note that's no less than 4 meets, but that a season can typically involve more than 4 meets), then she is eligible to earn a Varsity letter. If she does not earn a Varsity letter (we'll discuss the Varsity letter in a separate email), then she gets a JV certificate.

As a member of Group A, girls are also eligible for selection on one of our out-of-town trips. E.g., the team competes at a meet in Chicago in late September, and we regularly take between 45 and 48 girls on that trip. The selection criteria is competitive (i.e. based on performance). We reserve 5-7 spots for Group A freshmen, but all Group A girls are at least eligible for inclusion on this trip. Group A girls are also eligible for selection to compete in our other out-of-town meets. E.g., we will take about 14-20 girls to a meet in Atlanta, GA, and a similar number of girls to the Great American Cross Country Meet in Cary, North Carolina.

Group A girls may switch over to Group B at any point of the season, but before doing so, should speak with her coaches about that switch. Note that poor attendance or other issues can lead to the coaching staff reassigning a girl from Group A to Group B as well.

### **Group A coaches**

Head coach Barry Haworth oversees Group A practices, and is assisted by assistant coach Niki Dallaire. Coach Joe Walker may assist from time to time as well, although his central focus will be with the Group B girls.

### **Practice Schedule**

Beginning on the first Monday after school starts, the basic Group A practice schedule is:

- Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday at Seneca Park @ 3:30 pm  
(the team does occasionally practice at Joe Creason Park as well)
- Saturdays at various locations @ 9:30 am  
(locations include Iroquois Park and Joe Creason Park until our first Sat meet)
- Sundays at EP Tom Sawyer Park @ 5:00 pm
- On early dismissal days (e.g. 12:30 Tuesdays), we meet at 2:00 pm
- Group A girls do practice on holiday weekends (details are announced in advance) and on "no-school days"

**Regarding practice:**

- Group A girls may not miss practice for work. If work prevents a girl from attending 6 days per week, then the coaching staff will consider moving her to Group B (assuming she is still able to attend 4 days per week).
- School-related activities or events may occasionally conflict with practice. Depending on the nature of any conflict, the activity may or may not be excused. E.g., we do not excuse absences for club meetings or detention, but we do excuse absences (or late arrivals) for AP courses like AP Chemistry (which may meet weekly during practice hours) or for girls to attend testing pool (i.e. for girls who cannot take a missed exam before school or at a different time other than during practice).
- We ask that the parents of Group A girls strive to keep practice-related conflicts with appointments at a minimum, but we realize that this is not always possible. Group A girls should always communicate these conflicts with a coach as well.
- Although it is *\*extremely\** atypical for Group A girls to struggle with juggling schoolwork and practice, we understand that occasional situations like this can and do arise. Our first recourse is to always discuss each girl's situation with her so that we can ascertain the underlying reason for the conflict and whether this will be a recurring conflict or not. The path we take from that point forward will depend on the nature of a girl's conflict.

**Group A girls Meets/Races**

Group A girls are eligible to compete in every race on our schedule and will be placed in races that the coaches consider appropriate for each girl's ability level. These girls will not run in more than 1 race per week and these girls do not compete in every race on the schedule. Except for our top 15-20 Varsity girls who will continue into late October, and the Elite Group girls who will continue into late November/early December, the Group A season ends in early-mid October. E.g., for seniors not in our top 15-20 Varsity group, we allow those girls to conclude their season with our Senior Night celebration – assuming they have the minimum number of meets at that point in time.

**Participation in team events**

Group A girls have several team events that are voluntary, such as participating in Friday Night Spaghetti Dinners and helping with the conducting of our weekday meets, but there are several mandatory events as well. E.g., the team hosts a pair of Chapel Meetings, where all Group A girls are required to attend. These are important team meetings where we gather together to hear from our seniors and the coaching staff at the beginning and end of each season. The Parent Meeting in early August is also a mandatory meeting for both girls and parents as well.