

## **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 inclusion on one of our out-of-town trips. E.g., the team competes at a meet in Chicago in late September and takes between 45 and 48 girls on that trip. The selection criteria is competitive (i.e. based on performance), but we reserve 5-7 spots for Group A freshmen. Not all Group A girls will necessarily be invited on this trip, but all Group A girls are at least eligible for an invitation. The team also makes an annual trip to Cary, North Carolina, along with other trips (e.g. in 2016 we attended a meet in Atlanta, GA, and will attend a meet in New York in 2017). Although these trips involve fewer girls, every Group A girl is at least eligible for an invitation to participate in these trips.

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**

Program head coach Barry Haworth oversees Group A practices. 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

### **Some additional practice-related guidelines for Group A girls.**

- On early dismissal days, the Group A girls will meet at 2:00 pm
- Group A girls do practice on holiday weekends (details are announced in advance) and on "no-school days"
- We encourage the girls to set up (permanent) carpools for rides to after-school practice, but this is something that must be coordinated through the girls on the team. The coaching staff can facilitate carpool requests, but we cannot organize the carpools.

### **Group A practice guidelines:**

- Group A girls may not miss practice for work. Our general policy is to drop a girl from Group A to Group B if she misses on more than one occasion for work. Continued work-related absences would unfortunately lead to that girl being dropped from the team.
- 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, and retreat.
- Girls with testing pool should strive to take their make-up exam before school or in Study whenever possible, but if it's necessary to take the make-up exam after school, then they will need to coordinate a ride to practice after they are finished.
- Although it may be difficult to do so, we ask parents of Group A girls to keep practice-related conflicts with appointments at a minimum and to consider scheduling these appointments on days when the team is less likely to be running workouts (e.g. Wednesdays) or not practicing (e.g. Fridays).
- As a general rule, we do not want the girls to miss practice in order to complete their schoolwork, but we understand that some legitimate conflicts can and do arise even though it is *\*extremely\** atypical for Group A girls to struggle with juggling schoolwork and practice. When these conflicts do occur, our first recourse is to discuss that girl's situation with her in order to ascertain the underlying reason for the conflict and determine whether this will be a recurring problem or not. The path we take from that point forward will depend on the nature of the 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 included within our top 20 Varsity group, we allow those girls to conclude their season with our Senior Night celebration in early October – assuming they have participated in 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.