

## Cross Country Practice - Summary

1. What to bring to practice
2. Fall season practice summary (Group A schedule, Group B schedule)
3. Basic rules at practice
4. Attendance guidelines during the Fall season
5. Miscellaneous: bad weather, giving blood, competing in outside races, injuries, nutrition, etc.

### We recommend that each girl bring the following to each practice.

- running shoes – used only to run and designed for HS Cross Country training
- water bottle – please write your name on your water bottle
- watch (with stopwatch function) – very important on distance runs
- running attire – moisture-wicking shirt/tank whenever possible
- post-run snack for after practice (optional, but strongly encouraged)

### Fall Season practice Summary

- Fall Season practice begins on Monday, August 10, during the first full week of school. August 10 is also the start of required practice (i.e. unlike Summer, girls cannot just miss).
- We will do our best to arrange rides to practices at Seneca Park, but do have the bus available on any day where we don't have enough rides..
- **Group A girls:** Fall Season practice is Monday through Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, and will typically last about 90 minutes for most Group A girls. Note that our finishing time is always a function of our starting time, and that there may be occasions where we are not able to start right away.
  - Group A girls start weekday practice after school, typically at 3:30. Saturday and Sunday practice times are announced in advance, and may change over time.
  - Although there will be exceptions, many weekday practices are done at 5:00.
- **Group B girls:** Fall Season practice is Monday through Thursday, and will typically last about 60, but may take as long as 75 minutes. Group B girls don't meet on holidays (i.e. non-school days).
  - Group B girls start practice at 3:30 when we practice at the Legion/Highland Hall, and, depending on our transportation situation, that could be closer to 3:50-4:00 when we practice at Seneca Park.

### Basic Rules at Practice

1. Every girl on the team should “check in” when she arrives and “check out” when she departs.
2. Warmup does not begin until the coaches announce what the warmup is, and that warmup may begin. **No one is ever allowed to start early.** We always start together.
3. The coaches will have a practice routine for each girl on the team. Everyone is required to do what the routine states. If she doesn't follow her routine, then that girl must explain to a coach what happened. This also includes the direction girls go on their distance runs.

4. We expect each girl to do her best at practice, and that this involves building fitness to the point where she does not need to unnecessarily walk during distance runs. When situations arise where it is necessary for a girl to walk, then we do expect that girl to explain this to a coach.
5. During any given practice, stopping at homes, businesses, etc., without permission is not allowed.
6. On all distance runs, we want the girls running in groups. If you have no one to run with, then the coaches may have to restrict your running route more than the other girls.
7. Girls may only run at practice with teammates, approved adults, and coaches. Girls on our team are not allowed to run with relatives, friends or acquaintances who are not members of our team.
8. Girls should always perform every run with full attention to their own safety, and should always embody our team behavioral guidelines at every practice.
9. We do not allow the girls to carry their phones with them on runs or workouts without explicit permission from the coach. If we discover anyone “sneaking” their phone out onto a run, and choose to impose consequences for that choice, then those consequences will fall on the running group teammates of the girl who breaks this rule.
10. Please keep the coaches informed of anything that occurs during practice which might be considered “out of the ordinary” (e.g. creepers, rule violations, injuries, etc.). There is typically little that we can do about most occurrences after the fact, but it’s helpful to at least be aware.
11. At the conclusion of a run, there may be a warmdown routine. Each girl on the team is expected to complete whatever warmdown routine has been given to her by her coach. In some cases, we may ask the girls to do a warmdown routine at home.

### **Fall Season Practice Attendance Guidelines**

- If you are at school through regular dismissal and cannot attend practice that day, then you must tell a coach. If you leave school early or miss school completely, then there is no need to tell a coach that you’ll miss practice (although it’s always appreciated).
  - Missing practice and saying nothing one time will get you in trouble
  - Missing practice and saying nothing a second time will get you in MAJOR trouble
- Do not leave early from practice without telling a coach.
  - Leaving early and saying nothing one time will get you in trouble
  - Leaving early and saying nothing a second time will get you in MAJOR trouble
- **Missing practice for work:** work is not an acceptable excuse for missing practice. We allow one work-related absence per season for very special emergencies. “I forgot to tell my boss” is not a special emergency. We will work with girls in special situations, but you should never assume that your situation is special and act as though that’s the case before discussing it with Coach Barry.
- **Missing practice for the Fall play:** girls who plan to participate in the **Fall play** must understand that this participation will likely conflict with Cross Country practice. Those girls will need to choose between these two activities. We will apply our “missing practice for work” policy with any girl who misses Cross Country practice to participate in the Fall play.

- **Missing practice for club, other extracurricular group functions or Assumption teams:** in order to continue participating with us, our girls are expected to properly manage their other activities in a way that allows them to attend practice.
- **Appointments:** we ask parents to schedule appointments at times that would allow girls to attend practice (e.g. Fridays or before practice for Group B girls). We realize that this may not always be possible, and so appointments are an excusable absence. If a girl has frequent appointment-related conflicts, then this is something that needs to be discussed with the coaching staff so that we can work out an appropriate solution.
- **Missing practice for schoolwork:** except in **very rare** situations, schoolwork (i.e. studying for tests, completing homework or projects, etc.) is not an appropriate excuse for missing practice. If this issue arises, where a girl believes that she must miss practice to finish schoolwork, then we will speak with that girl about her ability to successfully juggle academics and athletics. We don't take punitive action for something like this, but we also must recognize the possibility that a girl may not be a good fit for our program if she must miss practice to complete schoolwork on more than one occasion per season.
- **Academic problems:** Assumption Cross Country team is one of the highest performing academic teams in the State and our expectation is that Assumption Cross Country girls will contribute toward maintaining our academic standards. Although rare, we also realize that it's possible for individual girls to struggle occasionally with one or more of their classes. We strongly encourage these girls to speak with us. If there is something we can do to help, then we will certainly consider those options. In extreme cases, it may also be necessary to release a girl from participating with the team so that she can focus on her academics.
- **Academic suspension:** when girls are placed on academic suspension by the Athletic Department, then they are allowed to attend practice but cannot participate in meets. If a girl remains on academic suspension for what we consider to be too long, then we will consider making a change in her status on the team so that she can focus on her academics.
- **Excessive absences and early departures:** we will address all situations where a girl has what we consider to be an excessive number of absences or early departures. Each situation is different, and so how we address these situations will depend on the circumstances.

### Miscellaneous items

1. **Bad Weather and Practice.** Unless weather conditions are considered hazardous and expected to remain unchanged for a significant amount of time, we will meet for practice. Parents with concerns about their daughter practicing in certain types of weather may withhold their daughter from practice on those days but must first discuss this with the coaches. Note that we do not cancel practice simply because there is rain, as practice can always be relocated to the Legion/Highland Hall.

2. **Giving Blood:** please **do not give blood** during the season as this can have a significant impact on your ability to train and race. Girls who give blood will be held out of practice and races until the coaches believe it is appropriate to allow those girls to return. I.e. ***these girls will still attend practice, but what they do and when they return to full participation will be at the discretion of their coach.*** If you would like information on this topic, then feel free to ask.

3. **Outside Road Races:** do not participate in outside road races during the Cross Country season. Doing so can lead to injury and other physical issues, and in some cases, maybe even a conflict with a race. If a girl misses a race in order to compete in an outside road race, then this type of behavior is not consistent with what we expect from the girls, and it would be appropriate to discuss her membership on our team.

4. **Injuries and Practice:** although we do our best to prevent injuries, running-related injuries are often inevitable in Cross Country. When a girl experiences pain or anything out of the ordinary, she should speak with a coach. We will discuss basic treatment options and can help arrange for injured girls to visit the school's trainer for evaluation. ***Injured girls will still attend practice***, they cannot skip practice just because they've been injured, but injured girls will not run. We have a variety of roles that an injured girl can perform at practice that do not involve running.

5. **Caloric deficit and nutrition:** our team strives to actively educate the girls about the importance of fueling properly and eating right. We have several articles for new parents on these topics at our team website (<http://crosscountry.ahsdistance.org>) which explain how improper fueling can lead to an irregular menstrual cycle, and make her more susceptible to injury (e.g. stress fractures).

6. **Meets:** we will provide our basic expectations regarding arrival, departure and behavior at meets in a separate handout. Note that each girl is responsible for arranging her own transportation to meets – with the obvious exception being when we attend out-of-town trips.

7. **Team Events:** we have an in-season Chapel Meeting on Friday, August 21. We do require the Group A girls to attend this meeting, but it is optional for the Group B girls. Participation in all other team events (e.g. Wacky Wednesdays, Spaghetti Dinners, etc.) is optional for everyone, but very strongly encouraged.

8. **Leaving the team:** girls who quit or are kicked off the team are subject to certain rules when it comes to rejoining the team at a later date. More specifically, we impose the following rules:

- **Being kicked off the team:** girls who are dropped from the roster due to any violation of team rules must receive specific permission from Head Coach Barry Haworth in order to ever rejoin the team at a future date (i.e. do need permission to rejoin). Note that quitting the team at any point after the Fall season begins is not behavior we consider consistent with what we want in our girls. However, although it is unlikely we'll ever grant that permission to a girl who's quit after the season begins, we do treat each situation on an individual basis.
- **Being released from the team** (e.g., for academic reasons): girls who are released from participation with the team are not kicked off the team. These girls remain on the roster and are not subject to the rules that apply to girls who were kicked off the team. I.e., girls released from the team for academic reasons are free to rejoin the team in a future season without specific permission from the Head Coach.
  - If a girl is released from the team for academic reasons and she has earned a JV certificate or Varsity letter prior to her release date, then she will receive that award at our team's Awards Night Celebration. Seniors released from the team for academic reasons may still participate in our Senior Night activities if they are able to attend.