

Cross Country Practice - Summary

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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 12, during the first full week of school. August 12 is also the start of required practice (i.e. unlike Summer, girls cannot just miss).
- Group A girls are responsible for arranging her own transportation to practice, but we are expected to have the bus available to take Group B girls to practices at Seneca Park.
- **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.
 - Group A girls start weekday practice at 3:20-3:30, at either the Legion/Highland Hall or Seneca Park. Any change from these locations will be announced in advance.
 - Group A girls start Saturday practice at 9:00am, practicing at various locations (announced in advance). On meet days, we don't gather for Saturday practice.
 - Group A girls start Sunday practice at 5:00pm (locations are TBA).
- **Group B girls:** Fall Season practice is Monday through Thursday, and will typically last between 60 and 75 minutes. Group B girls don't meet on holidays (i.e. non-school days).
 - Group B girls start practice at 3:45 when we practice at the Legion/Highland Hall, and closer to 3:50-4:00 when we start 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. On certain days, Group B girls may also be asked to record their run for the day as they check out. Note that “I’m a senior” is not an appropriate excuse for failing to check in or out.
2. Warmup does not begin until the coaches announce that warmup may begin. **No one is ever allowed to start early.** We always start together. Warmup should also include the warmup routine given to you by your coach.

3. The coaches will always have a set practice routine for each girl on the team. We do not allow the girls to go out and do whatever they want during practice.
4. Girls should not just disappear and go on a run without first coordinating that run with a coach. During any given practice, stopping at homes, businesses, etc., without permission is not allowed.
5. When running outside the park (e.g. when running trails), each girl should always run in a group. If you have no one to run with, then you should stay at the Park.
6. 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.
7. Girls should always perform every run with full attention to their own safety, and should always embody our team behavioral guidelines at every practice.
8. 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.
9. At the conclusion of a run, there is typically a warmdown routine. Each girl on the team is expected to do whatever warmdown routine has been given to her by her coach.

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 saying anything.
 - 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. *After missing a first practice for work, Group B girls must make up that missed practice by attending a Sunday practice. After missing a second practice for work, our general rule is to shift Group A girls to Group B, and drop Group B girls from the team. Any Group A girl switched to Group B would then be dropped from the team if she missed for work on a third occasion.*
- **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 or other extracurricular group functions:** we expect that our girls will properly manage their club and extracurricular group responsibilities in a way that

allows them to attend practice. If not, then we will need to discuss with that girl whether she can continue participating on the Cross Country team.

- **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:** girls who have what we consider to be an excessive number of absences or early departures may ultimately be dropped from the team. Group A girls will first be dropped to Group B, but then dropped from the team if their attendance continues to be a problem. This may ultimately also include girls who go on Academic Suspension if we believe those girls cannot successfully juggle academics and athletics during the season.

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 communicate that with the coaches directly. Please do not simply withhold your daughter from any practice without letting us know, as your daughter risks getting in trouble for missing practice and saying nothing (see above for how we deal with that). Note that we do not

cancel practice when there is rain and that practice can always be relocated to the American 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:** it is not appropriate to compete in outside races during a competitive Cross Country season. Doing so can lead to injury and other physical issues, so please refrain from entering these races until the season ends, and let us know if you are considering a race.

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 that is mandatory for Group A girls and optional-but strongly encouraged 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). Although it is unlikely such permission will be given, 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.

- (a) 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.
- (b) Seniors who are released from the team for academic reasons are welcome to participate in our Senior Night activities if they are able to attend.
- **Quitting the team after August 12:** girls who quit the team after August 12 must receive specific permission from Head Coach Barry Haworth in order to ever rejoin the team in a future year (i.e. these girls must have permission to rejoin the team). Although it is unlikely such permission will ever be given, we do treat each situation on an individual basis.