

2018 Assumption Cross Country

Beginning July 15, the basic weekly Summer Cross Country practice schedule is Monday through Thursday (6pm), Saturday (9:30am) and Sunday (5pm) at various locations.

Assumption Cross Country is a no-cut sport where every girl will ultimately be assigned to one of our two practice groups, Group A or Group B. Group A functions as a Varsity level group, and Group B functions as a JV level group. Both groups provide training that is appropriate for each girl's interest, ability and running history, as well as opportunities to compete.

How girls join the Cross Country team:

Girls join the Cross Country team by first attending practice and then having their name placed on the roster. Those girls are then expected to regularly attend practice (4-6 days/week). On Sunday, August 5, the roster will close and we will no longer accept new girls onto the team.

Informal Summer runs: late May - mid June

In late May, early June, our team hosts a series of optional, informal runs designed to provide our newer girls with an opportunity to meet and run with new teammates, and for our older girls, to practice with teammates (as it's often much easier to run with a group than run alone). These runs are a low pressure opportunity to get in shape and have fun. A schedule of these runs is provided with this handout.

Summer practice schedule: July 15 - August 16

Our official Summer practice schedule begins July 15. Girls who cannot attend this first practice may still join the team (we accept girls through August 5), but we strongly recommend that girls start practicing with us as close to July 15 as possible. We practice Monday through Thursday at 6pm, Saturdays at 9:30am, and Sundays at 5pm. A Summer practice schedule is provided with this handout, and that schedule provides the various locations where practices are held.

We recommend that every girl attend practice 6 days per week, but realize that this is not always possible. Girls interested in ultimately joining our Group A should attend every practice, but girls who know that they will join Group B are only required to attend 4 practices per week (and during the Summer, they may fit those 4 practices to their Summer schedule). If a girl is not certain about the group she prefers, then we suggest she speak with a coach, but recommend at least starting out with 6 days of practice per week. What each girl ultimately does at practice will depend on her fitness, experience and class level.

Girls who have conflicts with Summer practice should speak directly with Head Coach Barry Haworth. We work with girls who go on vacation during Summer practice, have Summer job conflicts, etc, but these things should always be discussed first, and then regularly thereafter with situations like job conflicts.

Other important items:

Uniform ordering

New girls must order a uniform singlet, racing shorts, and podium shirt. Girls needing to replace an older uniform or podium shirt, or buy additional shorts can also place an order. These are required items for every girl on the team. We ask the girls to wear their uniform during a race, but to arrive with their podium shirt over the uniform top. When the meet ends, we ask the girls to put on their podium shirt, so that if we win awards at the meet, the girls can receive those awards in their podium shirt.

Uniform orders are placed online. When the sale begins, we will provide everyone with a link to the online sale website, along with an access password.

- Uniform sales begin: Wednesday, July 25
- Uniform sales end: Thursday, August 2

Note: *girls who do not order a uniform during the uniform sale (e.g. girls joining after the uniform sale, and girls who simply miss the uniform sale deadline) will have an opportunity to purchase a uniform and podium shirt, but very likely at a marked up price.*

Team shirt ordering

Our team shirt will be a mandatory purchase for every girl on the team. *This is a new item in 2018.* The team shirts will be used in team pictures (August 16), and on team trips (Palatine, Great American, New York, etc). Ordering begins on July 15, and ends in late July/early August.

Female Athlete Symposium (August 6)

This symposium is hosted every Summer by Baptist Health and focuses on providing information relevant to female athletes, with an emphasis on topics relevant to teenage female athletes. Each year, the symposium requires that attendees reserve a seat – as seating is limited and they do reach capacity. We will send out information as soon as it becomes available (<http://crosscountry.ahsdistance.org>).

Team Camp (August 8)

On Wednesday, August 8, the Group A girls will meet at Bernheim Forest for a team day camp. This event will be planned at least in part by the older Group A girls, and will include a run on one of the Bernheim fire trail roads, along with lunch and a series of team-based activities. The plan will be to leave Assumption that morning at 8:00am (transportation plans are TBA), and return to Assumption at 3-4:00pm. The team will still host our regularly scheduled 6:00pm practice that day for Group B and any Group A girls who miss the team camp.

Parent Meeting (August 12)

This meeting is required for both parents and girls on the team. We use this opportunity to discuss how the team works, request parent volunteers at our upcoming events, etc. The Parent Meeting is where parents will pay the Athletics Fee, turn in various forms, and have an opportunity to meet one of our Athletic Department administrators.

Cross Country Mandatory Items Checklist

Here are two items that are mandatory for every girl who joins the Cross Country team.

- Athletics Fee:** there is a one-time \$150 Athletics fee that covers each girl's participation in sports for the entire school year. This fee is paid at the Parent Meeting (8/12).
- Physical:** in order to practice with the team, each girl must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Dept (all physicals are good for one calendar year).

Additional tests we recommend as part of the current physical:

- Serum Ferritin test:** Group A girls should have this test of iron stores done in June or early July to help us determine if a girl is at risk of becoming iron deficient.
- 25-hydroxy Vitamin D blood test:** Group A girls should have their Vitamin D levels tested, as this helps us determine if a girl is at risk for stress fractures.

Cross Country Recommended Items Checklist

Here are some items we recommend that every girl on the team bring to practice.

- Moisture-wicking shirt/tank:** we suggest getting moisture-wicking shirts/tanks for practice. Moisture-wicking shirts can be found at a variety of locations.
- New pair of running shoes:** we strongly recommend starting each season with new shoes and replacing those shoes every 400-500 miles (when older shoes can transform into walking-around shoes). Although we don't recommend one specific store, we strongly suggest buying shoes at a running specialty store like Swag's, Ken Combs, Blue Mile, Footworks, Fleet Feet, etc. Please mention that you run for Assumption when you visit.
- Watch:** a wristwatch with stopwatch feature is used at every practice, our runs are all performed on the basis of minutes, not miles. A GPS watch is helpful, but not required.
- Water bottle:** every girl on the team should bring a water bottle to each practice
- Post-workout snack:** we recommend that Group A girls bring a snack with a 3:1 carb-protein ratio to eat at the end of practice on harder days, but more generally after any practice. This is important for both recovery and proper caloric input reasons.

Team Website. We maintain a team website at <http://crosscountry.ahsdistance.org> that has a variety of handouts, including a discussion of our Group A and Group B, Fall Meet schedule, team guidelines, and information for new Cross Country parents regarding nutrition, health and other important running-related topics.

Contact info: Head Coach Barry Haworth can be reached by email (bmhaworth@louisville.edu). We also have a team twitter account (@AHS_Distance) and will maintain an email distribution list once official practice begins (please contact Coach Haworth to be included on that list).



Summer Running prior to official practice starting on July 15

Guidelines: *When running this summer, here are some important guidelines to bear in mind*

- Prior to July 15, we follow a “just run” approach which involves simply getting out the door and *running at a pace that’s based on how you feel*. There is no prescribed pace for any run prior to July 15. If you feel good, then don’t be afraid to go with the flow and run a little faster. On the days you feel like poop, it’s ok to run like someone who feels like poop.
- We’ve posted suggested training plans at our team website. There is a plan for girls who are total beginners, a plan for returning JV-level girls, and Varsity level plans for girls in each grade level. Note that it is very important you follow the appropriate training plan.
- You can arrange most running to fit your schedule, but understand that there is no such thing as a “make-up run”. E.g., if you miss 2 days in a row, then don’t combine those days with other days when you start back (e.g. if you miss a 30 min run, don’t add that 30 min onto another 30 min running day and do 60 min), as this can lead to injury.
- Run as much as possible on grass or dirt (i.e. stay off cement whenever possible).
- Running is much more enjoyable when shared. E.g., consider running with someone else (note that both parents and friends qualify for this role). Running with others also helps keep you safe, which is important too.
- Consistency matters. Whatever you do, do it on as regular a basis as possible. It’s easy to get busy during the summer, so make running part of your routine. Running with someone else is also a great way to be held accountable to get in your running.
- Injury. It is not uncommon for newer girls to get hurt when they start running over the summer. Injury prevention (e.g. doing a strength routine) can help, but if you get to a point where you get hurt, then check with a coach and consider doing some alternative exercise. E.g., using the elliptical, cycling and swimming also provides aerobic benefit.
- Stronger is better. Summer running should be accompanied by some form of strength training, where you are strengthening your foundation and helping yourself avoid injury later on. Several of our strength training routines are available at our team website.

More specific Summer (pre-July 15) running guidelines are provided for each grade and ability/experience level at our team website in the Handouts section.

Summer Cross Country Camp for incoming freshmen and 5-8th grade girls

We strongly encourage incoming freshmen to enroll in our Cross Country Camp. We keep the cost of the camp low in order to make the camp more accessible and affordable for parents.

Details on our Cross Country camp are provided at the school website (<http://www.ahsrockets.org>). The Camp runs July 10-13 (5:30-7:30pm) at E.P. Tom Sawyer Park (the cost of the camp is \$40), and camp participants receive a Camp shirt.

Group A vs Group B

The team ultimately divides into two groups, Group A and Group B. Group A is viewed as a Varsity level training/racing group and Group B is a JV level training/racing group. Girls in Group A practice up to 6 days per week and are at least eligible to receive benefits like a Varsity letter if they achieve our team's Varsity standards, and possible inclusion on one of our out-of-town trips. Girls in Group B practice 4 days per week and will receive a JV certificate if they achieve our team's JV standards. Our team website (crosscountry.ahsdistance.org) has a much more detailed discussion of each group.

Here's a description of the process we will use in assigning girls to their respective group:

- Between July 15 and August 5, the coaching staff will assess every girl on the team in terms of her potential and whether we believe she is a better fit for Group A or Group B. The criteria we use is provided in the next section.
 - Note that the team will continue to practice as one group until August 16.
 - Note that in assigning girls to a group, we are not cutting anyone. Cross Country is a no-cut sport, and so every interested girl will be assigned to a group.
- Girls who prefer to be assigned to Group B can join Group B. We will not place anyone in Group A who prefers to participate in Group B.
- Girls assigned to Group B will be given the choice of participating with our competitive Group B girls or our developmental Group B girls.
 1. **Competitive Group B**: includes girls who would like to ultimately be considered for inclusion in Group A. This group will do structured training and (if they express an interest) will be considered for entry in local meets like Tiger Run, Rumble in the Jungle, etc. These girls will follow the Group B practice schedule, but will be encouraged to attend weekend practices with the Group A girls.
 2. **Developmental Group B**: these girls will participate in our traditional Group B environment with 4-days per week of practice, and a training schedule that typically includes either a weekly 2 mile tempo run or race.
- ***Moving up - Group B to Group A***: once Group A is initially determined, we will meet with the girls in our competitive Group B and explain how they can be considered for moving up to Group A. We will work out a training path for these girls and clarify our expectations regarding what they will need to do in order to be considered for Group A.
- ***Moving down - Group A to Group B***: during the season, it is also possible that we may move Group A girls to Group B. This may occur with girls who develop certain injuries between late August and early September, but could also affect Group A girls who struggle with attendance at practice or maintaining appropriate academic standards (note that it is rare for our girls to struggle in this manner, but if it happens, then we may need to consider an alternative path that allows these girls to juggle both athletics and academics).

Criteria for choosing Group A

Below, we provide the main criteria used in determining each girl's running potential and whether she is at least initially a better fit in Group A or Group B.

- **Attendance at practice**
 - Prospective Group A girls should attend practice 6 days per week beginning on July 15. Girls trying out for other sports who do not make those teams can still join the Cross Country team and be considered for Group A, but they should begin with us as soon as possible so that we have sufficient time to evaluate their potential.
 - For prospective Group A girls with conflicts (e.g. Summer job, vacation, etc), you should regularly communicate these things with a coach and then let us know what you are running when not at practice.
- **Performance at practice**
 - Girls interested in Group A should begin summer practice on July 15 with an appropriate level of fitness. Note that a good start toward that end comes with participating in our Informal Summer Runs. We encourage every prospective Group A girl to contact Coach Haworth so that we can match their interest, running history, and ability to an appropriate Summer training schedule.
 - There are some basic practice standards we expect all girls in Group A to achieve. Girls who cannot achieve these standards are more likely to be considered developmental runners at least initially more appropriate for Group B.
 - Group A girls should be capable of running 2-3 non-stop miles at what we would consider to be an appropriate pace.
 - Group A girls should be capable of training with their teammates.
 - Group A girls should be more diligent than the average girl in trying to avoid injury. Non-Varsity girls with certain injury concerns may at least initially be assigned to Group B so that we can more easily monitor their training.
- **Performance history**
 - Although there are no specific performance standards for Group A, we will evaluate each girl in terms of her most recent performances in Cross Country and Track. We look first for girls who demonstrate greater levels of commitment to and seriousness with their training over time.
 - Some girls interested in Group A may not be necessarily capable of achieving the performance standards of Group A. For these girls, we will consider their loyalty to and support of our program (both Track and Cross Country) over time. This criteria may allow certain seniors to be accepted into Group A over non-seniors.
- **Team support (non-freshmen)**
 - Group A girls are specifically asked to embrace our team concept, and so we consider non-freshman girls as potential Group A members in terms of their support of team activities during the previous year (e.g. helping at meets) and during the Summer (e.g. Summer Cross Country Camp, Informal Summer Runs, etc.).