

2019 Assumption Cross Country

All prospective Cross Country girls must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Department before participating with the team on July 15. After one calendar year, physicals expire. Girls may not participate if they have an expired physical.

Assumption Cross Country is a no-cut sport. All interested girls may join the Cross Country team, but we divided our girls into 2 groups, Group A and Group B. These groups ultimately determine the practice schedule of each girl. Group A is a more Varsity level group, and Group B is a JV-level group. More information on these groups is provided later in this handout.

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 Wednesday, August 7, the roster closes and we will no longer accept new girls onto the team.

Informal Summer runs: June 2 - June 24

Our team hosts a series of optional, informal runs that provide our girls with an opportunity to meet and run with teammates. These runs are highly encouraged for incoming freshmen, as they provide a low pressure opportunity to get in shape, meet new teammates and hopefully have fun. A schedule of these runs is provided with this handout.

Summer practice schedule: July 15 - August 10

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 7), but we strongly recommend that girls start practicing with us as close to July 15 as possible. A Summer practice schedule is provided with this handout, and includes practice times/locations. Attendance is strongly recommended, but not mandatory, although we will speak with girls who miss too much Summer practice.

We recommend that every girl attend practice as often as possible. Girls interested in Group A should attend 6 days per week, while girls interested in Group B should attend 4 days per week. Girls attending less than 6 days can choose which practices to attend. If a girl is not certain about which group she prefers, then we suggest she speak with a coach. What each girl ultimately does at practice will depend on her fitness, experience and class level. Girls with Summer practice conflicts (e.g. Summer jobs, vacation, GSP, etc) should speak directly with Head Coach Barry Haworth and communicate those conflicts, rather than simply disappear.

Fall practice schedule: August 12 - end of season

On August 12, Group A girls will meet at 6:00 on Monday-Thursday, at 9:30am on Saturdays and 5:00 on Sundays (at various locations). Group B girls will practice Monday-Thursday at 6:00 (Seneca Park). Group A practices tend to run 60-90 minutes, depending on the day, whereas Group B practices run about 60-70 minutes. Starting August 12, attendance is mandatory and girls can be disciplined for unexcused absences from practice. Starting August 19, weekday practice for Group A girls will move to 3:30, but remain at 6:00 for Group B girls.

Uniform/Team Shirt Purchase:

(A) Uniform (singlet + shorts) and Podium shirt order (mandatory)

New girls must order all 3 of the uniform-related items below:

- (1) **uniform singlet** – white singlet with a large Assumption A on the front
- (2) **racing shorts** – solid black spandex shorts (Group A or Group B) or black Nike tempo shorts with a white stripe on the side (Group B only) – note that Group B girls may purchase either short, or that Group A girls may purchase the Nike tempo short as a practice short
- (3) **podium shirt** – black short sleeve shirt that the girls wear over their uniform singlet when they arrive at meets/races

Returning girls who need to replace an older uniform or podium shirt, or buy additional shorts can also place an order. Every girl on the team must have all 3 of these items. Uniform items are all ordered **online** at the same time. When the sale begins, we'll provide a link to the uniform sales website, along with an access password.

- Uniform sales begin: Wednesday, July 24
- Uniform sales end: Wednesday, July 31

(B) Team shirt order (mandatory)

New girls must also order a team shirt (this is different from the podium shirt above). We use the same team shirt for 2 consecutive years, before changing the design. In 2019, we will use the same shirt from 2018, so unless a returning girl needs to replace her 2018 team shirt, she would not need to buy a team shirt in 2019. The team shirts is used in team pictures and by Group A girls on team trips. Team shirt orders are made through the **Campus Store**.

- Team shirt sale begins: Wednesday, July 24
- Team shirt sale ends: Wednesday, August 7

Other important information

Team Camp

Group A girls will meet for a team camp in early August (actual date is TBA). Group B girls will have a similar experience held at one of our early evening practices during the first week of school. The goal with our team camp is to run, discuss team goals, allow teammates to get to know one another, etc.

Parent Meeting (August 11)

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 awesome Athletic Department administrators.

Fall jobs & the Fall School play

Beginning on August 12, we do not allow girls to miss practice for work or to participate in the Fall School play. This kind of conflict should be discussed asap with a coach so that we can determine whether a girl will be able to participate in Cross Country.

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*. Unless we’ve spoken to you about pace, there is no prescribed pace for anyone prior to July 15. On good days, then it’s ok to run a little faster. On bad days, it’s ok to run a little slower.
- We can provide training plans for any girl who asks. We have training plans for girls who are total beginners, plans for returning JV-level girls, and Varsity level plans for girls in each grade level. Everyone follows a training plan whether it’s an explicit plan or an implicit one, so why not get a training plan that’s appropriate for you, and which can help you remain injury-free.
- 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 definitely encourage our incoming freshmen to enroll in our Cross Country Camp. We keep the cost of the camp low (\$40/girl) in order to make the camp more accessible and affordable for parents. Camp participants are also provided with a camp shirt.

Details on all Assumption camps are provided at the school website: www.ahsrockets.org

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 more detailed discussion of each group, but we do limit Group A to a maximum of about 50 girls.

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

- Between July 15 and August 1, 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 19.
 - 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 participate somewhere on our team.
- Girls who prefer to be assigned to Group B can join Group B. We will not place any girl in Group A, if she 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.
- **Provisional Group A:** any girl not assigned to Group A will either be placed in a provisional Group A group or Group B. Provisional Group A girls will have an opportunity to progress to Group A (non-provisional) if the team is not at its limit in terms of the number of official Group A girls (e.g. if Group A only includes 45-48 girls). Provisional Group A girls could also be invited on the Palatine trip on the basis of there being available space (if there is no available space, however, then provisional girls would not be able to attend the Palatine trip).
- **Dropping from Group A to Group B:** girls are always free to drop from Group A to Group B, but during the season, we may also reassign Group A girls to Group B if those girls develop certain injuries, develop attendance issues, or cannot maintain appropriate academic standards. These instances are rare, and would only be considered if we believe this type of change is necessary for the welfare of any individual girl.

Criteria for assigning a girl to Group A

Below, we provide the main criteria used in determining whether a girl should be assigned to Group A. Note that this is based on her potential as an athlete, and ultimately whether she is a good fit for Group A.

- **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 girls who follow our basic team training guidelines (e.g. always giving an honest effort at practice).
- **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.
 - Some girls interested in Group A may not be necessarily capable of achieving the performance standards of Group A. For these girls, we will also 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.).