

2021 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, and so returning girls must get a new physical as well.

Please note that all information below assumes we will be allowed to start our season without any COVID-related restrictions. As of the creation of this handout, we have received no specific information about having to deal with any restriction or protocols (e.g. masks).

Assumption Cross Country is a no-cut sport. All interested girls may join the Cross Country team. During the Summer, we have only one practice group, but once Fall practices begin, the coaches will divide the team into two training groups: Group A and Group B.

Informal Summer runs: June 6 - June 24

Our team hosts a series of optional, informal runs that provide the 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.

How girls join the Cross Country team:

Girls join the Cross Country team by attending Summer practice and having their name added to the roster. As they join, the girls are expected to regularly attend practice 4-6 days/week. On Sunday, **August 8, the roster closes** and we will **no longer accept new girls onto the team.**

Summer practice schedule: July 15 - August 8

Our official Summer practice schedule begins July 15 (a schedule is provided at the end of this handout). Girls who cannot attend this first practice may still join the team by attending practice at some point up until August 8, but we strongly recommend that girls start practicing with us as close to July 15 as possible. E.g., if a girl tries out for another sport and is cut, then she may still join our team as long as she does so before the roster is closed.

Please note the following regarding Summer practice:

(1) We recommend that every girl attend practice as often as possible, but suggest the following guidelines.

- Girls interested in Group A should attend practice 6 days per week
- Girls interested in Group B should attend practice 4 days per week
- If you are interested in Group A, but unsure whether you can run 6 days/week, then speak with Head Coach Barry Haworth and we will provide you with an attendance plan.
- Girls who start late and/or do miss a lot of practice will likely be placed in Group B and be restricted to participating within our Seneca Park group once Fall practices begin.

(2) What each girl ultimately does at practice will depend on her fitness, experience and class level. We do provide training plans for interested girls. If you are interested in receiving one of our training plans, then please contact Head Coach Barry Haworth.

(3) 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. We will work with you, but we need to understand what's going on with you.

Fall practice schedule: August 16 - end of season

A common question is what our Fall practice schedule looks like, and so this paragraph addresses that question. As we pass through the weekend of August 15-16, we will begin officially dividing the team into Group A and Group B. Each girls practice schedule depends on our Group A/Group B assignment.

Fall practice: Group A

Assuming we are back to school on a full-time basis, the basic Group A schedule is 3:30pm on Monday-Thursday, 9:00am on Saturdays and 5:00pm on Sundays (at various locations). The girls get to practice by getting a ride from parents or by carpooling from school to practice with one of the older girls. In the first week after school starts (August 15-21), the Group A girls will meet at 6:00pm on Monday-Thursday, mainly so that we can still set up any remaining carpool arrangements for the younger girls. After August 21, we plan to begin our Monday-Thursday at 3:30pm schedule during the week (and continue with 9:00am on Saturdays and 5:00pm on Sundays). Practices are typically at Seneca Park on weekdays, but Head Coach Barry Haworth sends out a weekly training plan and practice schedule each week that provides the locations and time of every practice (along with what everyone will be running).

Fall practice: Group B

Group B girls practice Monday-Thursday at 6:00pm at Seneca Park. Group B practices consist of doing a warmup routine, some type of distance run, and a warmdown routine, and will generally last until about 7:15pm. The girls get to practice by getting a ride from parents, or through whatever ridesharing arrangements that parents or the girls set up.

Basic Fall practice attendance rules:

(1) Although every girl must start during the Summer, Summer practices are not mandatory (note that your attendance could affect your "group placement" during the Fall and what we allow you to do), but Fall practice is mandatory.

(2) Any and all absences from practice must be communicated in advance with a coach.

(3) If you do not have a ride on any given day, then it's your responsibility to resolve that problem in advance. There are obvious exceptions, but in general, missing due to not having a ride is an unacceptable excuse.

(4) No girl may leave early from practice without specific permission from a coach.

(5) No girl may miss practice due to work, outside club practices and most other extracurricular events. When certain school functions occur (e.g. Parent-Teacher Night), we will consider adapting practice if doing so seems necessary and it's possible to do so.

Uniform/Team Shirt/Spiritwear Purchase:

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

New girls (and new girls from 2020) 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. These uniform items are all ordered **online** (not through the Campus Store). When the sale begins, we'll provide a link to the uniform sales website, along with an access password.

(B) Team shirt order (mandatory)

We also require each girl to have our Team Shirt. In 2021, we will use the same team shirt from 2020, and expect to continue using that shirt through 2022. If you do not have the current team shirt, then you'll be required to purchase this shirt as well. We use the team shirt for team pictures and the Group A girls will wear the team shirt on team trips. Team shirt orders will be made through the **Campus Store**. Please note that the team shirt order will be placed separately from our team Spiritwear order (i.e. these are different orders).

Our current expectation is that the team shirt and uniform sale window will be as follows:

- Team shirt and Uniform sale begins: Monday, July 26
- Team shirt and Uniform sale ends: Thursday, August 6

(C) Spiritwear order (optional)

During the Summer, we will conduct a spiritwear sale. Spiritwear is team-ware that girls and parents may purchase. This is not mandatory, but we certainly encourage it, and do our best to offer items that girls and parents will want to buy. A typical spiritwear purchase will include 1-2 different shirts, sweatshirt and sweatpants, and other miscellaneous items (e.g. hat). We are also considering a team warmup that will be included in the spiritwear purchase as well.

The ordering window for spiritwear is usually a 2-round process. Unless we have an item where there are specific minimums on purchasing (i.e. we're required to have a minimum number of orders so that we can secure better pricing), we typically offer all items in both our round one and round two order. The round one order begins at the start of Summer practice, and ends about mid-way through our Summer schedule, and the round two order begins when the round one order wraps up, ending on the evening of the Parent Meeting.

Other important information

Email Distribution list

Our team utilizes a team email distribution list for both parents and girls on the team. This list is how we distribute all important information, from important paperwork to announcing team events or providing meet information for our various Cross Country meets.

(1) **New Girls:** once everyone has a functional school email address, that email address will automatically be added to our team email distribution list. We will announce when that happens, but it is typically around the start of school. Prior to that point, if you have a non-AHS email address that you use, let us know and we will send email to that address. Unless you ask for that email address to remain on our distribution list, we will drop it when the AHS email addresses are added.

(2) **Returning Girls:** we will send email to your AHS email address

(3) **New Parents:** if you are interested in being included in our team email distribution list, then please contact Head Coach Barry Haworth, and you'll be added. We also will distribute paperwork during the Summer where you can provide your email address as well.

(4) **Returning Parents:** if you've been a part of our list in the past, then we will add you to our current season list. If you do not receive email and believe you may not have been added, then always feel free to contact Head Coach Barry Haworth and mention it.

Weather

Summer weather is always a potential concern. Here's how we approach that concern:

(1) On days when the heat index at the location of practice (something we determine at each practice) is 104 or higher, we are not allowed to practice. We will typically do our best to anticipate this situation and try to make a decision beforehand (decisions will be emailed out to everyone asap and posted at our team Twitter account (@AHS_Distance)).

(2) Storms are another weather-related concern with Summer practice.

- If storms occur before the start of practice and it's clear that we are unlikely to get in a practice that day, then we will announce that practice is cancelled. This will occur via email and our team Twitter account (@AHS_Distance).
- If storms occur before the start of practice and we believe that we may be able to safely get in a practice that day (e.g. even if that means waiting a bit), then we will attempt to hold practice.
- If storms occur during practice, then we will adjust practice as necessary.
- If only rain is expected at practice, then we will meet for practice unless the rain is Biblical in intensity and something that clearly makes running unsafe.
- We also encourage parents to exercise their own discretion when it comes to deciding whether to take their daughter to any given practice on a day when the weather is at least questionable. If a parent believes that practicing on any given day is unsafe for their child, then we respect that decision. We simply ask that parents inform us of their decision as early as possible (e.g. rather than simply no-show that day).

Parent Meeting

This meeting is mandatory for both parents and girls on the team and it is where we discuss how the team works, request parent volunteers at our upcoming events, etc. As we get closer to when we'll host our Parent Meeting, we will provide information about how the meeting will be conducted.

Fall jobs & the Fall School play

Beginning on **August 16**, we do not allow girls to miss practice for work or to participate in the Fall School play and will drop them from the roster if they do so. If this is a potential conflict, then it should be discussed with a coach asap so that we can determine whether a girl will be able to participate in Cross Country. Girls who quit the team after August 16 or who are kicked off are not allowed to rejoin the team without specific permission from the Head Coach (allowing someone like this to rejoin in a future season is determined on a case by case basis).

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 Athletics fee that covers each girl's participation in sports for the entire school year. We'll be sharing the amount of that fee as we get closer to the start of school.
- 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, but feel free to contact head coach Haworth for a copy of a strength routine, along with a warmup and warmdown routine as well.



Group A vs Group B

After school begins, the coaches will divide the team into two training groups, Group A and Group B. Group A is viewed as a Varsity level training/racing group that practices up to 6 days per week, and Group B is a JV level training/racing group that practices 4 days per week. 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:

- During the Summer, 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.
 - Girls interested in Group A should speak with Head Coach Barry Haworth, but we will also speak directly with girls that we believe have the potential to join Group A – whether they speak with us initially or not.
 - Cross Country is a no-cut sport and so this process does not involve us cutting anyone from the team. We are simply doing the equivalent of placing girls on a Varsity team or a JV 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 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 prefer more structured training while following the Group B practice schedule. If they express an interest, then girls in this group will be considered for entry in local meets like Tiger Run, Rumble in the Jungle, etc.
 2. **Developmental Group B:** these girls participate in our traditional Group B environment which involves less structured training, while still conforming to the overall training guidelines of Group B.
- **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 (in any given year) 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**
 - In order to appropriately place girls in what we consider to be the proper training group, we need at least several weeks of observation time. E.g., girls who join the team later in the Summer are much less likely to be placed in Group A.
 - 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 no less than 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) and demonstrate an attitude that's consistent with what we expect from Group A girls.
- **Performance history**
 - We often have girls who are placed in Group A without any previous Cross Country or Track experience, and so previous participation in either of these sports does not necessarily affect a girl's placement in Group A. When a girl does have a performance history, however, we will certainly consider that history when deciding where to place her.
 - 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.