

General Cross Country Terms and Information

Cross Country Terms:

- § **PR—Personal Record.** Running your fastest time on a distance, course, or at an age (for those of us older runners). “Wade Parkes ran a PR at Region.”
- § **Loop course**—a course that basically follows a large circle. Some courses are 2 or 3 loop courses.
- § **Strides**—gradual acceleration to a sprint then a deceleration. These should be 75-100 meters in length and should be completed after a long run. They help with form and with speed.
- § **Hydration**—ensuring your body has enough water so that you can perform at your best.
- § **Drills**—Form drills that help athletes with proper form. Other drills are for injury prevention.

How to score a Cross Country Meet:

Cross Country is a unique sport in that you can have individual winners and team winners. Individual winners are obvious. Team scoring is a bit more complicated. In a typical meet seven runners will race and the top five runners score. To get the team score, you will add up the finish places for the top five runners. For example, a perfect score is a 15 (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5). The team with the lowest score wins. If there is a tie then you go to the 6th place finisher. Also the 7th runner is important in bumping other teams back a spot in the scoring. It is important to remember that each runner is important and that your spot could be the one to determine how the team finishes.

Equipment: Shoes and Socks and a Watch:

Cross Country is a sport that requires very little in the way of equipment. Other than apparel there are 3 essential pieces of equipment each runner MUST have.

- **Shoes**—Make sure you have RUNNING shoes. You must take care of your feet. Cross-trainers or other non-running shoes will lead to injuries. A general rule of thumb for running shoes is they last about 5-6 months and about 400 miles (whichever comes first).
 - **Spikes**—some runners prefer to have racing spikes for their races. These offer lighter shoes as well as better traction in a race. They are not to be used for training.
- **Socks**—Socks are also important especially to prevent blisters. Use socks that have proper cushioning and help with moisture control. Socks come in shoe cut, ankle cut, and then normal length. We recommend ankle cut socks as we have seen numerous painful blisters arise with the shoe cut style.
- **Watch**—Our workouts require each athlete to have a watch with a chronometer (stopwatch).

Injury Treatment:

Stretching is the most common form of injury protection. It is important to stretch both before and after running. Listed below are the most common injuries and how to treat them.

- § **Sore muscles** are the most common injury runners face. Ice and Ibuprofen are the best remedies.
- § **Blisters** are another common injury. Drain the blister (but don't peel away the skin) then use a gel type skin to treat the blister. Ideally you want them to become a callous.
- § **Shin Splints** are one of many overuse injuries. Shin splints are the inflammation of the muscles around the shin. Exercise by pointing your toes on the affected leg and draw the alphabet. Ice also helps reduce the pain.
- § **Stress Fractures** are typically the result of “too much too fast”. Be patient with your body and pay attention to your sore spots. Proper training in the off-season is the best way to avoid stress fractures.

§ **Dehydration or heat exhaustion** can be avoided by proper hydration. Pay attention to the warning signs such as dizziness, cold sweats, and nausea.

§ **Overhydration/Hyponatremia** can occur by drinking simply water. Your body needs electrolytes to provide energy so we recommend that you mix or alternate water with a sports drink. Look at the label for sodium/salt content. Pedialyte, Accelerade, Gatorade, Powerade all provide electrolytes.

§ **Anemia** is a common problem for cross country athletes. The symptoms are general fatigue and listlessness. Typically females are susceptible to anemia but males can experience it also. It is caused by a lack of iron in the diet.

§ **Plantar Fasciitis** is general foot soreness that is related to either overuse or improper shoes. Make sure your shoes support your feet properly. A general rule is 300-500 miles or 5-6 months.

§ **Sore Knees** typically occur when you have new shoes. Please make sure you get shoes that properly fit your feet and that match your running style.

§ **TALK TO YOUR COACHES ABOUT INJURIES:** Keep us informed about what is hurting you so we can adjust your workouts accordingly.

Cross Country on the WEB:

<https://dunwoodycrosscountry.weebly.com/> Dunwoody High School's XC team homepage. Plenty of information and helpful resources are found here.

<http://ga.milesplit.com/> Georgia Track and Field and Cross Country Website.

<http://www.dyestat.com/> The Internet home of high school track and cross country

www.flotrack.org Great website with information, videos, and tips.

<http://letsrun.com/> Information about the world running scene