

2021 Fort Cross Country Survival Guide



WELCOME TO FORT ATKINSON CROSS COUNTRY

BLACKHAWK CROSS COUNTRY PHILOSOPHY

There are so many things that are important in a team setting. I feel that teams are much like families. As such, I have identified four core qualities I desire all Fort Atkinson cross country runners to exemplify. Coach Reed and I will strive to model these traits and instill them in our team.

C O M M U N I T Y - Are you willing to put aside differences and work toward a common goal? Are you willing to help others reach their goals?

C O U R A G E - Are you willing to do things you have not yet attempted? Are you willing to face failure and move ahead?

H U M I L I T Y - Are you willing to be quiet about your accomplishments and let your feet do the talking?

I N T E G R I T Y - Are you willing to be the same person in public as you are in private? Are you willing to make good on your promises even if you are inconvenienced?

WHAT IS CROSS COUNTRY?

As a competitive sport, cross-country running began in the early 19th century in England with a game called "hare and hounds" or "the paper chase". In this game, a runner or group of runners laid a trail by dropping pieces of paper or other markers while following a random course, and a second set of runners then set out in pursuit, trying to follow the paper trail.

Modern day cross country runners race over hill and dale, through woods and forests, but most commonly on golf courses and school grounds. In Wisconsin, boys race for 5000 meters (~3.1 miles) and girls will race the same distance this year. This generally takes between 16 and 30 minutes

WHAT IS A CROSS COUNTRY MEET?

There are basically two types of cross country meets - large ones and small ones! The larger meets are generally called invitationals where teams pay a fee to enter. Awards are given to top finishers. Anywhere from 5 to 30 teams may be present at an invitational. The main advantage to running with so many people is varied competition. The small meets are usually against one or two schools and take less time to score. These are called dual meets if only 2 teams are competing and triple dual if three teams are running. We will be doing only dual meets to limit exposure.

Regardless of which type of meet it is, the goings-on are essentially the same. The JV and Varsity teams of boys and girls all run against people of equal ability level. This might be accomplished in two races (JV and Varsity girls then JV and Varsity boys or four races JV boys, girls, and Varsity boys, girls). This depends on the number of runners and the coaches' discretion.

WHO WINS A CROSS COUNTRY MEET?

The winning team of a cross country meet, as in golf, is the team that scores the least number of points. As runners cross the finish line they are assigned a number (that is their order of finish). Taking the scores (numbers) of the top FIVE members of a team and adding them together will give you that team's score. A typical dual meet score would be 21 to 30 whereas in a large invitational we might 100 or 200 points or more. There are other intricacies to scoring but you must remember that this is only a survival guide.

Sometimes meets are scored on the total time of each team's fastest five runners.

HOW MANY RUNNERS MAKE UP A TEAM?

In cross country everyone participates - freshmen through seniors - there is no bench. So in that respect a team can have as few as one and as many as, oh, fifty runners. A varsity team consists of no less than five and no more than seven runners. However, in some of the meets, particularly our conference, we can run eight in a varsity race. A junior varsity team can have as many runners as you want but only the first five of each team across the finish line figure in the scoring. The varsity roster can change from week to week. Factors such as previous performance, injury management, and discipline all affect who will run varsity in any given meet.

HOW DOES A RUNNER EARN A LETTER?

A varsity letter is earned by a point system. We do not have our 2020 Letter Scoring System completely in place yet. However, some of the factors we will be considering are:

Attendance
Meet Participation
Meet Placing
Time Standards
Percent Time Improvement

We will have an update on this as the season progresses

WHAT HAPPENS IF A RUNNER GETS IN TROUBLE?

“Trouble” here means disciplinary trouble. Cases will be discussed with the offender and coaches, parents, team representatives, and or school administration depending on the severity of the infraction. Appropriate action will be taken with regards to the Code of Conduct and the hope of keeping the runner eligible and in good standing with the team.

WHAT ABOUT PRACTICES?

Practice is every school day from 3:30-5:30/6:00. Some of the Friday practices (during school) will be at 6:10 am. There may also be morning workouts for Varsity runners. Missing practice is not without penalty. First, the athlete cheats him or herself out of the work needed to become a better runner. Second, he or she cheats the team by not sharing in the workout and not contributing. Therefore, missing practice will incur loss of varsity

points, sitting out a meet (or meets), or perhaps removal from the team in extreme situations.

MORE ABOUT PRACTICES

Mandatory equipment for practices includes: A **WRISTWATCH**, a 16-32 ounce **WATER BOTTLE**, dry running shoes and a small (200 calorie) snack for after. Athletes should drink about one to two quarts of water during the day before practice begins. NO personal listening devices will be allowed during practice. We workout as a TEAM!!

WHAT DO RUNNERS WEAR?

For practice, a light pair of shorts, proper undergarments, running shoes, synthetic socks (not cotton), and a tee shirt. Both the girls and boys will be asked to keep their shirts on during practice.

Sports bras can be any color. I would prefer that if anyone wears compression shorts under their shorts that they be black.

WHAT DO RUNNERS BRING TO MEETS?

For meets, we have team issued tops, shorts and warm jackets and pants. So, at meets, everyone is required to wear team issue clothes. Additional clothes should be Fort Atkinson wear, not Brewer, Packers, etc. Here is a simple list for kids to use to pack their duffle bag before the meet. We will have more detail before the first meet.

- Uniform
 - Singlet
 - Black Racing Shorts
 - Socks
 - racing shoes
 - warm up top
 - black warm up bottom
- Extra socks
- athletic shorts (prefer black or red)
- extra tee shirt
- sweat shirt
- knit hat

- snack food for before/after the race
- personal music for getting psyched up

No matter what the weather looks like at departure time, a runner should always pack a warm change of clothes, an extra pair of shoes and socks, uniform, and racing shoes. Food items like a sandwich, Fig Newtons, fresh fruit, and some Gatorade would be a great idea for away meets. Other than these items, it depends on how much travel time is involved and how long the meet will last.

WHAT SHOULD A RUNNER NOT BRING TO A MEET?

Junk food, and bad attitudes can stay at home. Portable speakers can also stay home.

WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION GOING TO LOOK LIKE?

If we have an away contest, busses will be provided. We will follow the district's policies on have students on busses - masks, separate seats and so forth. If you want your son or daughter to participate in an away meet, but are uncomfortable with them riding the bus, you can fill out a transportation waiver and transport them in your personal vehicle.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT ACHES AND PAINS?

Aches and pains are a normal part of any athletic endeavor. The best cure for day to day aches and pains is to drink copious amounts of water and lightly massage the afflicted area for fifteen to twenty minutes. Ice also feels good on these areas. However, if those aches and pains are confined to specific areas, or are asymmetrical (on one side and not the other) especially the knee joints, and are persistent, tell a coach! We want to take care of these things right away or they may develop into something bad enough to end a season if left unchecked.

WHAT ABOUT SHOES?

I'm glad you asked. Good quality running shoes are extremely important for anyone involved in daily running. Running shoes properly cradle and support the feet. If ones' feet are properly supported then ones' legs will be held in proper position. Good shoes are even more important for high school runners, who are still growing. Their bones, tendons, and ligaments are very susceptible to injury.

Running shoes are made to run in, not to play football, or basketball, or tennis, or knock around in. They will wear out before the season is over because of the side-to-side motion these sports have. If worn exclusively for cross country practices, a quality pair of shoes could last two seasons.

Also, if the shoes have been run in over the summer, a new pair for the season might be necessary.

DO CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS NEED SPECIAL DIETS?

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that they need to watch what they eat and when they eat it. No in the sense that they don't have to eat tofu burgers and spirulina. Athletes do have a higher need for anti oxidants like

vitamins C and E as well as iron. A multi-vitamin plus iron will help meet this need. The things to remember about diet are:

- foods high in fat or sugar should be eaten sparingly (like quarter pounders, french fries, Oreo Double Stuff)
- carbohydrates are OK. (beans, pastas, cereals, breads, etc.)
- eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- do not eat within 2-3 hours before a run (and make sure that is an easily digestible meal low in fat.)
- drink liquids constantly 32 ounces per 50 pounds body weight per day PLUS what is sweated out during practices.
- eat 200 or more calories within 30 minutes of the end of a workout. This will help replenish energy stores lost during a workout.
- Protein should equal about 0.8 - 1.2 grams per pound of body weight. That's about 4 - 6 ounces of LEAN meat. This is a loose number. If you are a vegetarian, it is a bit more complicated.

WILL A CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER SLEEP MORE THAN JOE AVERAGE?

Maybe, maybe not. It depends on the person. One thing is for sure, athletes need good rest. Rest allows the body to repair and build itself up to higher levels. A good nights' sleep can work wonders. Kids tend to think they can stay up late, watch David Letterman, get up for school the next day, and repeat this all week. This schedule is very hard on one's system. Something will have to give - short temper, poor school work, apathy, lethargy, poor running, something.

IF THE RACES ARE ONLY 5000 METERS WHY DO RUNNERS NEED TO RUN LONGER THAN THAT IN PRACTICE?

The demands of racing are greater than merely running 5000 meters. Because of this, runners need to prepare their bodies for this stress. There are different factors that affect how well one will run: endurance, stamina, speed, and power. To train and improve these factors takes time. Olympic milers typically run 100 miles a week and that is for a race that is less than four minutes long!! We will be averaging 15-25 miles per week in the beginning and 30-45 miles per week at the peak.

A sample week from the middle of the season might look like this

Monday - Long run of 60 to 90 minutes
- striders
Tuesday - easy run of 30 to 50 minutes
- core work
Wednesday - Quality day
- 20 minute run
- 4 x 800 meters at race pace
- 4 x 400 meters all out
Thursday - 20 to 45 minute run
- core work
Friday - easy 20-35 minutes
Saturday - RACE (5000M boys)
Sunday - REST TOTAL - approx. 23 to 30 miles

COMMUNICATION HOME

During the season I will have regular communications home to you via email. These will have highlights from the previous week, links to photos, upcoming times and dates, and so on. Please check your email!

AS A PARENT....

The most important thing you can do as a parent is support your runner. Ask questions. Buy special "runner" gifts for no reason. Go to the meets. Even though they may tell you it's no big deal, it is. Leave the coaching to the coaches. It is counterproductive if runners get conflicting messages. Do not be critical of your runner's performance. Also, check the team website often www.fortcrosscountry.org and Facebook page. You will find driving directions, schedules, and upcoming events there and last minute details.

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