

Glacier Peak Cross Country 2026 Handbook



GPHS Grizzly Cross Country

The legacy continues...

Boys

Wesco Podium (Championships in bold)

2008 (2nd), 2009 (2nd), 2010 (2nd), **2011**, 2012 (2nd), 2013 (2nd), **2014**, 2015 (2nd), **2016**, **2017**, 2023 (2nd), **2025**

District Podium (Championships in bold)

2008, 2009 (3rd), 2010 (2nd), 2011 (2nd), 2012 (2nd), 2013 (3rd), 2014 (2nd), 2015 (2nd) **2016**, **2017**, 2018 (2nd), 2025 (3rd)

State Podiums Finishes

State Champions

Girls

Wesco Podium (Championships in bold)

2008 (2nd) **2009**, **2010**, **2011**, **2012**, **2013**, **2014**, 2015 (3rd), **2016**, 2017 (3rd), **2018**, **2019**, 2025 (3rd)

District Podium (Championships in bold)

2008, **2009**, **2010**, **2011**, **2012**, **2013**, **2014**, **2015**, **2016**, 2017 (3rd), **2018**, **2019**,

State Podium Finishes

2009 (2nd), 2014 (3rd), 2016 (3rd),

State Champions

2010, **2012**, **2013**, **2015**, **2018**

GPXC Hall of Fame

Top 5 at District, Top 25 at State

BOYS:

Jeff Bastion
Ryan Weed
Chase Byrd
Sean White
Keagan Smith
Riley McDowell
Chris Bianchini
Nick Stringer
Nicholas Mullineux Perrault
Elijah Lopez
Tyler Tanta
Blake Roberts

GIRLS:

Brenna Condon
Sarah Whybark
Madison Sheppley
Amy-Eloise Neale (State Champion 2009, 2010, 2012)
Katie Bianchini
Marren Haneberg
Megan Davis
Marlee Rothschild
Mikayla Ingram
Heidi Smith
Katherine Dittmann
Natalie Church
Brooke Wallace
Alexis Palmer
Lindsey Ardry
Aviry Stratton
Samantha Boyle
Alexis Palmer
Jaya Holt

GPXC Hall of Fame

Top 25 5K Times - Girls

1	Amy-Eloise Neale	12	16:52.0	2012
2	Katie Bianchini	11	17:37.0	2011
3	Aviry Stratton	11	18:21.9	2018
4	Samantha Boyle	12	18:25.2	2018
5	Brooke Wallace	12	18:33.6	2018
6	Alexis Palmer	11	18:33.7	2018
7	Lindsay Ardry	11	18:35.0	2018
8	Heidi Smith	10	18:37.7	2014
9	Natalie Church	12	18:47.2	2016
10	Jaya Holt	9	18:48.2	2025
11	Sarah Whybark	10	18:50.8	2008
12	Clara Diepenbrock	12	18:52.5	2023
13	Brenna Condon	10	18:57.0	2008
14	Marren Haneberg	11	18:59.1	2010
15	Megan Davis	12	19:01.2	2013
16	Mikayla Ingram	11	19:03.1	2012
17	Adisen Stratton	12	19:07.0	2021
18	Stephanie Jones	12	19:09.4	2009
19	Katherine Dittmann	12	19:09.7	2014
	Erin Boyle	12	19:09.7	2016
21	Marlee Rothschild	11	19:12.0	2011
22	Elena Willems	12	19:25.2	2017
23	Samantha Northrop	11	19:28.0	2012
24	Cameron Erdmann	11	19:37.1	2025
25	Brooke Armstrong	10	19:45.8	2025

GPXC Hall of Fame

Top 25 5K Times - Boys

1	Blake Roberts	11	15:24.0	2025
2	Jeff Bastian	12	15:24.7	2010
3	Riley McDowell	11	15:29.7	2017
4	Elijah Lopez	12	15:49.6	2019
5	Tyler Tanta	12	15:52.0	2018
6	Sean White	12	15:56.0	2010
7	Mason Strasser	11	15:56.5	2024
8	Nathan Tastad	11	15:59.5	2018
9	Nicholas Mullineux Perrault	12	16:00.8	2017
10	Nick Stringer	12	16:04.2	2016
11	Luke Thompson	10	16:07.5	2025
12	Thomas Morrison	12	16:09.4	2025
13	Chase Byrd	10	16:09.5	2008
14	Sawyer Carter	12	16:11.4	2015
15	Garren Arnold	11	16:17.0	2014
16	Levi Nichols	12	16:19.5	2022
17	Keagan Smith	11	16:21.0	2012
18	Chris Bianchini	12	16:21.5	2016
19	Ryan Weed	11	16:26.4	2008
20	Nicholas LeBar	12	16:27.9	2021
21	Carter Schmitt	12	16:34.0	2018
22	Isaac Ripley	12	16:36.4	2014
23	Levi Hinson	11	16:40.0	2008
	Tim Mandzyuk	11	16:40.0	2016
25	Joachim Jakuc	12	16:42.4	2023

Message from Coach David

Welcome to GPXC. We are looking forward to a great season ahead.

This is a long handbook, but we wanted to provide as much information as possible. Inside you will find a look back at the GPXC program (“Legacy Continues” and “Hall of Fame” pages) as well as useful information for those new to cross country (“A parents guide to cross country”).

As complete as we would like to think this handbook is, we realize that there is much more to communicate as the season continues. Our main form of communicating to athletes and parents during the season (and in the off season) is via our team newsletter. Please let me know if you would like to be included on the newsletter distribution list. I enroll every email that is provided via the Final Forms registration process. If there is an additional email you would like to have the newsletter sent to, please let me know.

Glacier Peak Cross Country has a rich history of running excellence. But it is much more than winning races, we pride ourselves as an all-inclusive family atmosphere of the team. We are a co-ed, no-cut sport and value each and every athlete that wants to better themselves through the training cross country provides. It doesn’t matter what your grade, gender, or running experience is; everyone is a welcome and important part of the team!

We could not be successful without the support of so many people. First and foremost is the support of the parents that make sacrifices so their athletes can succeed. From one parent to another; thank you!!!

We also have an amazing support group in our Booster Club. They are the glue that keeps our team together and allows us to do amazing things during the season. Please, please, please get involved with our Booster Club!

Finally, we are supported by our school and athletic director. GPHS has a tradition of fielding excellent teams across all sports. This speaks volumes to how amazing our athletic office is and all the work they accomplish behind the scenes.

We are glad that you are joining us for what will be a grand adventure. Please reach out if you have any questions or need additional information regarding our team.

Coach David Weed
david@gprunners.com
425-308-0716

Grizzly Cross Country

XC COACHING MISSION STATEMENT

Creating a safe, competitive, and welcoming environment where athletes can achieve their greatest potential, as they develop a lifelong love of running and healthy lifestyles.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- Relationships (Belonging, part of a team)
 - Includes coach-athlete, coach-parent, athlete-athlete, team-school, etc.
- Culture of Excellence (Raise the bar and achieve)
- Athlete Development
 - Physically (strong competitors)
 - Mentally (emotionally balanced)
 - Economy of running (form, VO2max, velocity at VO2max)
- Trust
- Respect
- Hard work = improvement
- Don't limit what an athlete is capable of
- Different levels of ability, equal amount of effort to improve

COACHING EXPECTATIONS

- Show up every day
- Give it your all (hard work = improvement)
- Treat everyone with respect

COACHING MANTRAS

- Cross country = life (What you learn in XC will apply in life.)
- Running is hard (so make it fun!)
- Measure and Improve (Measure everything)
- Success occurs iteratively (step by step)
- It's not how you start, but how you finish

"The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination." - Tommy Lasorda

"We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort." - Jesse Owens

2026 GPXC Meet Schedule

Wed, Sept 9 - GP, Everett, Marysville Getchell @ Edmonds Woodway

Sat, Sept 12 - Sehome Invite, Bellingham

Wed, Sept 16 - GP, Edmonds Woodway, Shorewood @ Mountlake Terrace

Sat, Sept 19 - South Whidbey Invite

Fri/Sat, Sept 25-26 - Bob Firman Invite, Spokane (Varsity)

Sat, Sept 26 - Bellevue Invite (Sub varsity and JV)

Wed, Sept 30 - Shorewood, Mariner, Everett @ GP

Sat, Oct 3 - Twilight Invite, Everett

Sat, Oct 10 - Hole in the Wall Invite, Lakewood HS (Arlington)

Sat, Oct 24 - League Championship, Granite Falls HS

Sat, Oct 31 - District Championship, Lakewood HS (Arlington)

Fri/Sat, Nov 6-7 - State Championship, Pasco

Key Dates

Mon, June 22 - Start of summer practices

July 20-25 - GPXC Orcas Running Camp

Mon, Aug 24 - Midnight Madness

Mon, Aug 24 - First Day of Practice

Summer conditioning (June 22 - August 20)

Monday-Thursday 7:00am-9:00am at GPHS

Saturdays - Team activity/run

Coach Info

Co-Head Coach	David Weed	david@gprunners.com 425-308-0716
Co-Head Coach	Susan Weed	<u>sdweed@yahoo.com</u> 425-308-0217
Assistant Coach	Isaac Staat	<u>isaacstaat15@gmail.com</u>
Assistant Coach	Haley Staat	
Assistant Coach	Dan Parker	
Assistant Coach	Ken Hoerath	
Team Captains	Blake Roberts, Luke Thompson, Azure Labrensz Maddy Figler, Cameron Erdmann, Brooke Armstrong	
Booster President	Brian Figler	
GP Athletic Director	Jordan Frost	jordan.frost@sno.wednet.edu 360-563-7611
GP Athletic Admin	Char Gobel	charmaine.gobel@sno.wednet.edu
Team Website	<u>https://gprunners.com/</u>	
GPHS Athletics website	https://gphs.sno.wednet.edu/departments/athletics	
GPXC on athletic.net	https://www.athletic.net/team/22531/cross-country/2026	

Quick Info Regarding 2026

Uniforms:

Uniforms can either be purchased or checked out from the school. We recommend the purchase option, as the uniforms can be used for multiple years and will not need to be returned at the end of each season. If you would like to have a uniform issued from the school, please contact Coach David.

Uniforms are purchased from the following Online Stores:

Exemplar Gear and Apparel - <https://exemplargear.com>

Uniform pieces needed from Exemplar Gear

- Boy's Singlet - 'Men's Uniform Singlet' (Also used during Track) \$25
- Girls Singlet - 'Women's Uniform Singlet' (Also used during track) \$25

Boy's shorts are purchased from Soark online store. \$25

Soark Running Store - https://www.soark.com/shorts_microfiber.shtml

Make the following choices in the pull down menus:

STYLE: Men's Split (Or non-split if you prefer)

COLOR: Navy and White Striped

SIZE: Whatever size you need

Girl's black shorts. Most girls have solid black shorts already. If needed, they are available from Exemplar Gear and Apparel.

Spirit Wear:

We have a lot of team spirit wear options. We offer the 'GPXC' logo and other designs from Exemplar Gear and Apparel. <https://exemplargear.com>

Shoes:

Our main piece of equipment other than our competition uniform are the shoes we wear. Having a good pair of trainers (the shoes worn during practices) is essential. In addition, athletes should consider purchasing racing spikes (or flats) for the races. Later in this handbook is an article that covers shoes in detail. (Trainers are allowed in races if an athlete prefers not to purchase racing spikes/flats.)

Weather Accommodations

Cross country is an all weather sport. We only delay or cancel in the occurrence of thunder/lighting or unsafe air quality (wildland smoke). All other conditions (rain, snow, sleet, sun, flying monkeys) we continue with practice and meets. In the event there is truly un-accommodating weather (excessive heat, smoke, torrential wind/rains, typhoons, etc) we will alter practices to keep athletes safe. This typically results in training indoors and focusing on conditioning for that day.

Communications:

We primarily communicate via the team newsletter (sent out twice a week during the season) and via the team website (www.gprunners.com). We will also send out alerts via Final Forms if needed for urgent updates.

In addition, the team captains communicate directly with the athletes via a group chat. Athletes can see a captain to be added.

Injury Policy

Athletes who become injured and are deemed unable to run by a doctor or athletic trainer must follow these procedures:

1. Must be cleared by GPHS trainer in regard to a return to play protocol.
2. Once an athlete is recovered, he/she must obtain a written authorization from a medical professional clearing the athlete to participate fully. **This must be submitted to GPHS trainer.** Only the GPHS trainer and Athletic Director may clear an athlete for return to play.
3. If an athlete is cleared for conditioning, but not competition, they must attend the 1st hour of each practice to participate in core and injury prevention exercise (if physically able).
4. Work with the head coach regarding an alternate training plan (biking, swimming, weights, etc.)

Practice and Competition Expectations

We are a no-cut sport. Everyone who turns out and puts in effort during practices is part of the team. However, the expectation is athletes will participate in directed practices and will race at assigned meets. **Athletes who refuse to participate at practices or races will be dismissed from the team. Also, athletes who acquire more than 5 unexcused absence may be dismissed from the team.**

All runners will be allowed to compete in weekday league meets, regardless of current finishing times. However, due to the size and competitive nature of weekend Invite meets, there may be time restrictions. As a general rule, to compete in a weekend invite, runners must be able to complete a 5k at a league meet in under 28 minutes for boys and 32 minutes for girls. (NOTE: Many league meets are less than 5k distance, so projected 5k times may be used to determine eligibility for invite attendance.)

Lettering Criteria

The lettering criteria is established to reflect the importance this program places on: Effort - Improvement - Loyalty - Performance - Academics - Citizenship - Teamwork

There are a few ways to earn a varsity letter at GPXC. Varsity Letters go to those athletes that compete regularly as part of the varsity squad for cross country. This is typically reserved for the top 10-12 athletes on the team. However, at the coaches discretion, athletes may achieve a varsity letter under the “special considerations” below.

Automatic Qualifiers:

- Run at the District or State Meet.
- Compete at an invitational or league meet as a top 7 varsity finisher.
- Being a team captain.
- Girls break 19:30 in a 5k race.
- Boys break 17:30 minutes in a 5k race.

Special Considerations

The following considerations may be taken into account when being considered for a varsity letter with GPXC. These are not “automatic qualifiers” for a letter. Coaches reserve the right to grant a varsity letter based on these criteria:

- GPA: 5 over 3.5.
- Boys 5k PR: under or near 18:30.
- Girls 5k PR: under or near 20:30.
- 5k improvement: 2 or more minutes during the season.

- Interval mile improvement time: 20 seconds or more during the season.
- Attendance: 95% or more attendance during the season
- Recruiting: Inviting a new athlete that finishes the season

Coaches reserve the right to grant varsity letters to athletes who become injured or ill and are unable to complete the season. Coaches reserve the right to award a Varsity letter to athletes that are helpful to the team in ways that aren't listed here.

Coaches also reserve the right to withhold a letter for any athlete who:

- Is absent without a reasonable excuse for 2 or more practices.
- Violates any training rule
- Violates any school or team rule at a team/school function.

The following pages contain helpful information for those new to cross country.

Health and Wellness: Keeping healthy and tuned up during the season and during the off season.

Glacier Peak Distance - Rules of the Road: This is what we expect from athletes any time they are running off campus.

Guide to Purchasing Running Shoes: This is adapted from an article that explains what to look for when considering running shoes for high school athletes.

A Parents Guide to Cross Country: This is an explanation of all things cross country. Our sport is so much more than individuals running a race. There is a very dynamic team effort that occurs within the race. This explains how cross country works and gives advice on attending meets.

Performance Fueling Tips: This is a quick reference guide on proper fueling and liquid intake for the high school athlete.

Athletes Plate for Hard Training: A sample of good nutrition for the student endurance athlete.

Health and Wellness

Staying healthy and injury free is a very important part of distance running. Doing so, takes a significant amount of time and effort. There is much that can be done to greatly improve an athletes chances of staying injury free and healthy during the season.

Conditioning

Conditioning typically means easy runs during the off season to stay in shape, and weight room (or plyometrics) workouts. Distance running requires about 2-3 months of a gradual build up of runs to be ready for the start of the season. Athletes who start a season without any pre-season workouts typically struggle the most with shin splints, hip, ankle, and foot issues. We recommend running 2-5 miles 3-4 times a week at a steady pace as the season approaches (starting at the lower range and gradually working up).

Summer Practices

Summer practices allow us to work on the conditioning requirements as a team. We start our practices in June after the last day of school. We meet in the mornings and do a combination of weight room workouts and runs. We hold a running camp at Orcas Island the last week of July for our varsity and 'emerging stars' to give us a boost in our summer conditioning.

Diet and Nutrition

Distance runners require a very nutritious diet and also have more caloric needs than the average person. We stress eating healthy foods and staying away from junk food and sugary drinks and snacks. At the end of this handbook is an example of an athletes plate. You will notice that a big emphasis is on plenty of carbs. Carbohydrates are the main energy source for an endurance athlete such as distance runners. Plenty of carbs are needed to keep the body fueled.

Hydration

Water is essential to good running. Mild dehydration can zap energy and result in poor performance. Being in school all day can make staying hydrated difficult. A concerted effort on staying properly hydrated is essential to top performance.

Low iron levels in the distance athlete

A big struggle with distance runners is the development of anemia or low iron. Eating iron rich foods as part of the nutritional intake will certainly help. Occasionally athletes will need iron supplements. These should only be taken under the direction of a doctor! Although low iron can greatly affect performance, so can high iron levels.

The only way to know for certain an athlete's iron level is to be tested at a lab.

Varsity runners are encouraged to get a baseline iron level at the start of summer conditioning and again in mid September.

Injury Care

There is much that can go wrong with a runner. Keeping open communication with the coaches is critical to catch an injury early and before it becomes serious. We have plenty of alternative workout options while recovering from injuries (bike, swimming, weights, etc)

Physical Therapy

Occasionally, we need to refer a runner to a physical therapist for treatment. Our go to PT person is Susie Fagerholm at RunPT, LLC (<https://runptllc.com>). She specializes in runners of all ages, but particularly with high school runners. She is a high school cross country coach in addition to her PT practice.

Strength Training

Proper strength training to augment our running is important. We spend time in the weight room each day to strengthen muscles so they can endure the rigors of distance running. Off season conditioning and strength training is a great way to promote an injury free season. Having a strength coach may help keep athletes motivated during the off season.

The 'Year Around' Mentality

Distance running is essentially a year around sport. With Cross Country in the summer and fall, and track in the spring, it takes a year long mindset to understand the cycle needed of training and rest. A general rule for this cycle is:

- Summer (end of June through August) - Conditioning and preparing for XC season
- End of August through Mid November - XC Season and racing
- Mid November through December - Rest! Let your body fully recover.
- January through February - Steady runs and conditioning
- March through May - Track season and racing
- End of May through Mid June - Rest! Let your body recover.
- Mid June - Steady runs to prepare for summer.

Glacier Peak Distance “Rules of the Road”

Name: _____

**Your coaches are responsible for you,
and you are responsible to your coaches.**

1. Run the course the coach designated for your group to run.
2. During the workouts on the road, always try to stick with the group. If you lose the group, always run with at least one other athlete.
3. Always run when on the road (where no sidewalks exist); never walk unless injured. After all, you are a runner.
4. **Do not** take shortcuts during designated runs.
5. **Do not** accept rides in private vehicles.
6. Run single file at all times on major roads.
7. At all major intersections, cross in groups and only with permission of the light.
8. We do not own the sidewalks or roads. Be courteous, make room for others.
9. Warn your fellow runners of any people, traffic or obstructions on the road or sidewalk.
10. If while running, a car is pulling out from a side street or driveway, attempt to make eye contact with the driver to alert them to your presence. **If you fail to make eye contact, stop and wait until the vehicle pulls out.** Drivers are usually looking for other vehicles, not runners.
11. When crossing a street, always check to see if the road is clear of traffic **yourself**. Don't assume the runner ahead of you has checked for traffic, thus establishing safety in crossing.
12. If in doubt, automobiles **always** have the right-of-way. It's your body versus steel and glass. No matter how you score it, your body always loses. (And it hurts a lot!)
13. If any confrontation or incident occurs during the run, after returning to the school immediately report to one of the coaches.
14. When on the road (or anywhere for that matter) you are a representative of Glacier Peak High School and the Grizzly Cross Country/Track Team. Act accordingly, with courtesy and pride. Be a Grizzly ambassador on the road.

GPHS Grizzly Distance Runner: _____

Guide to purchasing running shoes

Adapted from article by Jonathan Beverly

(Note from Coach David - Shoes are our most important piece of equipment. In fact, it's actually the only piece of equipment. Please realize that shoes only last about 300 miles and must be replaced. We run 30-40 miles per week, so a running shoe will last 10 weeks and need to be replaced. That means athletes will need 2 pairs of shoes during XC season (summer and fall season) and 2 pairs during track season. Running in a shoe longer will result in foot and leg problems. 98% of GPXC athletes that complain of foot, ankle, knee or hip problems are a result of running in inadequate shoes that need to be replaced.

Also - DO NOT purchase from Road Runner Sports. They have caused more injuries by recommending incorrect shoes for high school athletes than any other factor on our team. When an athlete begins to complain of lower leg or foot problems, my first two questions are "How old are your shoes?" and "Where did you purchase them from?". When I hear "over 3 months old" and/or "Road Runner", the solution is always 'get new shoes' which miraculously fixes the problem every time.

We recommend Super Jock N Jill in Greenlake for shoe purchases. Most of their employees are high school coaches or physical therapists that truly understand the needs and running style of high school runners. Plus you will get a team discount for mentioning you run high school cross country. They provide the discount for all high school teams.

Full Disclosure - The GP Coaches do not get any kick-back, nor are affiliated in any way with Super Jock N Jill. Nor do we have any particular grudge against Road Runner sports. We simply have 20 years of experience with these two companies and have seen the ongoing negative impacts from Road Runner purchases on our athletes and the ongoing positive impacts from Super Jock N Jill.)

As cross-country season begins, it's time for a fresh pair of running shoes. But we know it can be easy to get overwhelmed by the selection—and the price tags—at the local running store. Before you start shopping, here are seven tips you should know to help you choose the shoes that will sweeten the miles this fall.

1. Go light.

Many running shoes on the market today are designed with older, heavier people in mind, so the shoes have a lot of cushioning and support. Extra material between you and the ground makes it more difficult for the shoe to flex and for you to feel the ground underfoot and can alter your stride. You (or your kid) are still light and athletic, so you don't need that level of support.

Steve Magness, a coach for runners from high school athletes to elites, says that young cross-country athletes can run in a lightweight trainer with less cushioning without much risk of injury, and learning to run in such shoes will set them up for running better throughout life.

Read shoe reviews and ask at stores for models categorized as “lightweight trainers” or “marathon racing shoes.” You can also consider a light, low trail racing shoe.

2. Ask an expert.

Ideally, get an expert to help you choose a pair that fits your size, stride, and training. Greg Weich, who has over 20 years of experience coaching in Colorado high schools and working at specialty running stores, says he won’t make general shoe recommendations for young athletes. He urges parents and athletes to go to a reputable specialty store, where a knowledgeable fitter will help them make good choices on footwear. *(Note, GPXC highly recommends ‘Super Jock ’n Jill’ in Green Lake. We DO NOT recommend Road Runner Sports as they have a history of pushing expensive and incompatible shoes on young athletes, causing a number of injuries to our team.)*

The specialist should ask you about your injury history, how much running you’ve been doing, what your training program is like, and your past experience with certain products and brands. The fitter might watch you run and do simple exercises like a squat, so he or she can analyze your gait.

3. Ignore looks; go by feel.

We get it—you want to look cool (who doesn’t?). It’s easy to convince yourself that a popular or attractive shoe—or even the one your best friend wears—is good for you, even if it fits poorly or causes pain. If you’re thinking, “I’ll break them in,” or you think they feel good when you slip them on while sitting down, reconsider.

Comfort is important, but you have to assess how comfortable they are when running—not just at step-in. So get up and take them for a run down the street or on a treadmill in the store. Get going at a decent speed. Don’t settle for “OK”—try on several pairs and find which feels best.

4. Leave some room.

You need more room in a running shoe than a street shoe because your feet swell while running. Make sure there’s space between your toes and the end of the shoe—at least a thumb-width. Check that the shoe isn’t too narrow, either. You want room to spread at the ball of the foot. When in doubt, go up a half size so they’ll still fit at the end of the season—you’re still growing, and you’ll be bummed if your favorite shoes no longer fit mid-season.

5. Ask for a discount.

Local stores will often give 10 to 15 percent off a pair of shoes if you tell the clerk that you're running for an area high school. Another wallet-saving move is to buy last year's model. Running shoes do change over the years, but if a closeout model fits, and you like it, you aren't losing out on anything. (And you'll make mom and dad really happy.)

6. Be smart about spikes.

When you're first starting your running career, it's fine to run races in the same pair of shoes you train in during the first year or two. As you get older and more competitive, you might change into spikes for cross-country races. While not everyone needs competition shoes, these spikes are lighter than training shoes and provide a tighter fit and more traction, especially on muddy, grassy courses.

Spikes do, however, put more strain on your feet, Achilles tendons, and calves. They also aren't ideal for courses that cross over pavement and some meets may not allow them so be sure to be clear on the rules before you buy. Racing in a lightweight training shoe is safer until you've developed strength in your feet and lower legs over several years of running. No need to rush into spikes right away.

7. Don't expect a miracle.

Perhaps the most important thing we've learned about shoes in the past decade is that they aren't as important as we once thought when it comes to injury. Injuries come from weaknesses in the body and poor training, and no shoe can correct or prevent that.

"Shoes do play a role [in injury], but the body plays an even bigger role," says Jay Dicharry, physical therapist and director of the REP Biomechanics Lab in Oregon. If you're a young runner struggling with injuries, Dicharry recommends you seek out solutions with a health care provider experienced with running and with growing teen bodies; not at the shoe store. "[Your] bodies are growing at such a fast rate—but the rate is different for bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments," he says. "The stresses running places on the body can affect one type of tissue more than another."

A Parents Guide To Cross Country

Welcome! Your son or daughter has joined the GPHS Grizzly Cross Country team.

What is Cross Country?

Cross country is a competitive team sport offered in the fall for students in grades 9 through 12 at GPHS. Training and group runs start in the early summer. The more running an athlete does throughout the summer to get into shape and acclimate to the heat, the more he or she will be prepared to have a successful fall season of cross country. There is also a weeklong running camp at the end of July that we encourage our varsity and emerging athletes to attend.

A cross country team consists of five or more runners who all race together at the same time with other teams. The varsity division may have a maximum of 7 runners, but on junior varsity, there are usually an unlimited number of runners allowed. The great thing about cross country (abbreviated XC or CC) is that everyone competes! Everyone runs the same course, and although the first 7 runners to finish are considered to be the official scoring team at every meet, ALL athletes get to participate either on varsity or JV. There are no cuts, and no bench to sit on and watch while others play!

The top five finishers from each team have their place scored, and their finishing places are added up for the team score. The lowest score wins. High school races are normally 3.1 miles long (5 kilometers). However, sometimes at the beginning of the season a race might be shorter distance- typically 2 miles, in order to get athletes used to racing. The cross country race courses are mostly run across grassy fields, wooded paths, and have a mixture of hills and flats. Usually the terrain is ever changing and the footing is not always consistent, which can make cross country running more challenging than running on a firm and stable surface like a track or road. You also never know how firm or soft the surface may be and if it has rained lately, then there might be mud or puddles to run through or navigate around. If it's raining or snowing, races usually go on, unless there is thunder and lightening or the conditions have been deemed to be too severe or unsafe for the runners. When running cross country, athletes have to be prepared for all conditions: hot, cold, rainy, snowy, windy, wet, dry, humid, or whatever else mother nature throws at the runners!

Philosophy

Our philosophy of cross country is as follows:

- Everyone is important, unique, and contributes to the team.
- There are no cuts, and everyone who comes out will be a part of the team as long as they are present and putting in an effort every day.
- Runners are expected to train hard every day and be prepared for practice with the proper clothes and shoes.
- We can have fun, train hard, and race well all at the same time.
- Everyone can reach for his or her personal best and will try and improve each race.

- Races are meant to be competitive-they are RACES and athletes will be trying to beat their teammates and competitors from other schools.
- Every athlete will be a good team member and help his or her teammates to succeed so that we can be a better team.
- We want to inspire a love of running.

Everyone is Important

Every athlete is vital to the success of the program. Regardless of whether you are at the front or somewhere else in the pack, you play an important role on the team. Each person brings his or her own set of skills and abilities to the sport. Our goal is to assist each runner to achieve the most he or she can. Training programs set up by the coaches are specific to helping runners achieve success during cross country season, and feedback from athletes is valued. The coaches work with each athlete both as an individual and as part of the team to help maximize their potential.

We may run in different places each day. This includes parks and trail systems around our community. Some days we may stay on campus and run around the school or on the track. Also, we might have days where we go and run on our home cross country course (at Valley View Middle School) in order to be more specific in our training to be ready for our upcoming races that will be on the same surface.

We hope that we inspire a love of running in our athletes. Running is something that can be done by everyone for the rest of their life. All of the coaches have been or still are active runners. We seek to inspire people to run not just for competition, but also for good health, stress relief, and making new friends!

Team and Individual Successes

Our goal every year is do well both as a team and individually. We want each individual to run faster and faster as the season goes on. Ultimately, we expect each individual to push for spots on the varsity team. This should be the goal of every runner.

The ultimate goal is to have our teams and individuals qualify for the state championship meet held in early November. To qualify we first run at WESCO League championship and then our District meet where the top 6 teams and the top 42 individuals qualify for state. Many of the individuals in the top 42 will be on those top 6 teams, but individuals not on those qualifying teams will qualify to run by themselves without their full team. The state meet is held in early November in Pasco.

If someone is a JV runner, then his or her most important meet of the season will be the WESCO League Sub Varsity Championship meet that happens before the district meet in late October.

How Cross Country is Scored

The goal in cross country meets is to have the LOWEST team score. Cross country meets are scored by each team adding up the places of its top 5 finishers, and places are determined in order of scores from low to high. For example, a team that scores 27 points places ahead of a team that scores 28 points, as follows:

Team A Runners: 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 10th, 13th, 14th = 28 points

Team B Runners: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 12th = 27 points

In this example Team B wins the meet. This example is a dual meet with two teams and meets with 6 or less teams are considered to be small meets. Big invitational meets can have 50, 75, 100 teams or more teams entered!

A team's 6th and 7th place runners can also figure in the scoring if they place ahead of the other teams' top 5 finishers. When that is the case, they become "pushers" by pushing up their opponents' scores. Therefore, a team's 6th and 7th place runners are important even if they aren't scoring for the team. They also have to be ready to step up in the top 5 if a top 5 runner goes down with injury or illness or just has a bad race. Only a team's 6th and 7th finishers can be "pushers", regardless of how many of its runners may finish ahead of an opposing team's top 5 finishers in races where more than 7 are allowed to race (like JV races).

Additionally, in the case of a tie between two teams, the 6th place runners from two tied teams break the tie. Whichever team's 6th place runner finishes ahead of the other team's 6th place runner secures the win or advanced placing for their team.

What it Takes to Be Successful

More than anything else, success in Cross Country takes time...time to learn; time to train; time to sleep, rest and recover; after school time; weekend time racing; time away from other interests and sacrificing some social events; and willingness to commit yourself to being a good runner. With the academic responsibilities of being a high school student, most student-athletes are busy all the time. We try to achieve a balance between all things while aspiring to do well in cross country. The willingness to devote the time that success demands in the classroom and the sport of cross country takes DEDICATION. You can't be a good cross country runner without being dedicated and the willingness to push yourself beyond your comfort zone on a regular basis. Many good cross country runners are also strong students in the classroom and other interests or jobs they pursue in life, because they have learned to be dedicated and to push themselves through hard times. They have a desire to succeed and not just settle for 'okay'.

Being a member of the cross country team carries other expectations and responsibilities. Doing what is expected of every team member takes COMMITMENT. Attending team practices every day is one of the commitments expected. At the start of each season, each athlete will be made aware of rules and policies, and the athletic code of conduct and academic eligibility requirements. Our goal is to develop team loyalty and individual responsibility and accountability among all our team members. High school sports are wonderful vehicles for personal growth. We hope that you as parents will appreciate this and support our goals and the goals of your runner.

Another commitment we expect is COMMUNICATION with our coaching staff. If a problem or illness is going to force your son or daughter to miss practice or a meet, we expect him or her to tell us about it personally in advance. (This does not mean relaying

a message through a teammate or friend.) Many such problems can be solved when athletes communicate with us.

It's important that we know ahead of time (more than a week ideally) when an athlete is going to have to miss a meet, because we do our meet entries the week before a meet and we can adjust accordingly.

How Can You Help Your Son or Daughter Before the Season Starts?

We strongly encourage our runners to follow a training regimen during the summer. Individualized programs or specific training might be provided for experienced runners while younger or new runners are given more basic goals of training over the summer to get in miles of running to prepare them for cross country season. Pre-season summer training is essential to build a fitness base for intensive workouts and races during the season. As your aspiring young runner begins the first week of training, you may wonder what to expect and how you can assist him or her as a parent in terms of recovery, eating, sleeping, and mental attitude.

A normal consequence of beginning to train is muscle soreness, which will soon go away. If your son or daughter has not competed in sports before, this may persist up to 2 weeks. They should communicate this to us so we can adjust their training if needed. Usually it just takes time to start feeling better. Any athlete engaged in intensive training and competition can be subject to injury. We can prevent some injuries when our runners tell us about their aches and pains before they become disabling, so we can have them treated. A nutritious, well balanced diet is essential for an athlete. Fatty, fried foods, and carbonated drinks like soda should be avoided during the season. On race day, small portions of easily digested food, including some protein, that's eaten at least 2 hours before competition is best. However, each athlete needs to learn what works best for them in regard to eating before meets and workouts. Drinking water or hydrating is essential. Runners need to try and be drinking at LEAST 64 ounces of water during each 24-hour period. Their drinking should be over the full day and evening, rather than chugging a bunch of water to try and catch up on their fluid intake. Water is preferential to sports drinks, as many sports drinks are full of sugar.

How to Buy Running Shoes

Cross country athletes will need two pairs of shoes to run in. First they will need a pair of training shoes to run in on a daily basis at practice and also will be used before and after races when warming up and cooling down. During the race, runners will be wearing spikes, which provide better grip and are lighter weight that allows them to run faster. Athletes should always buy their shoes at local running stores where there are knowledgeable sales people who are experienced runners and are trained to fit runners with the proper shoes for their feet and how they move. Running shoes should ONLY be worn when running and not for casual wear. The more you wear them, the more they will wear out. DO NOT go to a discount shoe store and think you're buying quality running shoes. The shoes you will find may look like running shoes, but they will not offer the proper cushioning and stability that runners need. You will be getting what you pay for and your runner will more than likely end up with some kind of foot, lower leg, or knee problem. Wearing worn out or cheap shoes is the most likely cause of injuries for runners. Generally speaking most runners will get anywhere from 250-500 miles out of

their shoes before they need to be replaced. If a runner competes in both cross country and track, they will need a new pair of training shoes for each season-one in the fall and one in the spring. Spikes will usually last a year or two as they are not worn as much. Often times a pair of training shoes will cost between \$90 and \$180. Spikes will cost between \$60-\$120. It's important that shoes be selected for their function, quality, and feel, and NOT their pretty or cool colors! We recommend Super Jock 'n Jill in Green Lake (Seattle) for the place to purchase shoes. They are experienced running shops that understand high school running athletes and how to best fit them for shoes. They will also provide a discount for GPHS runners.

It's not necessary to purchase special running apparel and athletes can run in t-shirts and shorts for daily training. However they are going to be much more comfortable in technical running gear that is lighter weight and wicks moisture from the skin. Cotton clothing holds the water from sweat or rain and will get heavier and chafe against the skin. It's also recommended to invest in quality cold weather running gear such as a pair of running tights, a winter weather running top, running gloves, and a running hat so that your runner can be comfortable running in the colder weather of late fall, winter, and early spring. Team uniforms can either be purchased from Exemplar Gear online store or checked out from the school inventory.

Cross Country Vocabulary

- **5K**...3.1 miles-the normal race distance for cross country meets
- **CHIP (CHIP TIMING)**...in invitational meets runners wear a chip tied onto their shoe laces or embedded in their race number that senses and records the finishing time of a runner
- **COOL-DOWN**...easy running after a race or hard workout that allows the muscles to process lactic acid that builds up and to allow the body to settle down and lower its temperature to normal and be better prepared for the next day's run
- **COURSE**...the marked and measured route of the race
- **DUAL MEET**...cross country meet between two teams
- **DYNAMIC WARM-UP**...a warm-up routine that involves movements with jogging and plyometric drills and can last from 10-30 minutes
- **FALSE START**...leaving the starting line before the gun sounds
- **FINISH CHUTE**...a flagged off area that starts by the finish line and funnels past the finish line that moves runners into a single file order of finish.
- **FORM**...refers to the way a runners body moves, trying to maintain good posture and arm and leg action
- **INVITATIONAL MEET**...a multi-team meet of more than 4 schools
- **KICK**...a burst of speed at the finish of the race to beat out other runners

- **NEGATIVE SPLIT**...running the second half of a race or later miles during the race at a faster pace than earlier in the race
- **PACE**...running speed over a particular distance (Ex: pace per mile-what a runner averaged over each mile of a race)
- **PACK**...a group of runners that are teammates that work together in close proximity to one another during the race to try and beat other teams
- **PERSONAL RECORD (PR)**...best ever performance for a particular distance. (May also be referred to as 'personal best' (PB)
- **PLYOMETRIC DRILLS (DRILL WORK OR PLYOS)**...drills that are a part of warm-ups in practice and before races that involve bounding to develop strength and coordination and teach muscles to fire properly and improve running form
- **QUAD MEET**...cross country meet with 4 teams
- **RACING SPIKES**...lightweight racing shoes with screw-in spikes on the bottom for better grip on soft surfaces that allows runners to race faster
- **SPLITS**... times for each mile, kilometer, or other pre-planned distances during a race
- **STATE**...The state championship meet
- **STARTING BOX**...designated area to which a team is assigned on the starting line
- **SURGE**...a tactical increase in pace during the race to shake opponents and open a gap
- **TOP 7**...the scoring members of a Cross Country Team
- **TRAINING (RUNNING) SHOES**...running shoes designed for daily training and warming up or cooling down in
- **TRI-MEET**...cross country meet with three teams
- **WARM-UP**...easy running and plyometric drills that gradually warms up the body for intense running and racing.
- **WORKOUT**...a daily training session

Preparing to Watch Your First Cross Country Meet

When you arrive at the meet understand that while it's okay to say hello to your runner or give them items they may need, please keep your meeting with them brief. We love having family and friends at races to cheer the runners on, but realize that the runners

need to be focused on the race. They have their course review, warm-up, meeting with coaches, racing, and cool-down after the race to be doing and may not have time to hang out with family and friends.

During the race, you can move from point to point along the course to cheer the runners as they pass. We like to say XC is the one sport that makes the spectators run also! Be careful, however, to stay off the course and out of the way of the runners' path. Rules also forbid running alongside a competitor to pace or encourage him or her. If you do this, your runner will be disqualified from the race. You will want to locate the start and finish line of the race and then try to scout out points along the course where you can see as much of the race with as little moving around as possible. Be aware that the start and finish of the race are not always in the same area.

Many parents may be initially surprised at the seriousness their son or daughter shows prior to and during a race. The intensity of competition may reveal a side of your young athlete's personality you haven't seen before. At the finish of the race, the runners will file through the finish chute. It's OK to greet them and congratulate them, but they may have to turn a place card into the coach ASAP so scores can be tabulated. Our runners have other responsibilities after the race. We expect them to start their cool-down run with their teammates within 10 minutes after the race finishes and then to actively support other teammates who have yet to race.

Also be prepared that after a race, runners may need some time to recover and may look completely spent or have trouble even standing. Give them some space. Some runners are more spent than others after a race. Typical symptoms of their effort and fatigue are being out of breath, general weakness, rubbery legs, glassy eyes, salivating, and sometimes nausea/vomiting. A mistake parents sometimes make is to take their son or daughter off by themselves to try and take care of them. Please do not do this! Coaches are experienced in dealing with these symptoms, trained in first-aid, and responsible for their care. If need be, there is usually a trainer on site to care for injuries and illness. To aid recovery, water is the best thing to drink immediately after a race.

Expect the possibility of some disappointment by your athlete after the race if his or her team did not do well, and/or if he or she failed to achieve their goals or run well. Athletes may need some emotional space afterward from both you and their coaches. Later on, they will need verbal support rather than criticism. As coaches, we will talk with them later about the specifics of their race and how they can do better in the future.

Runners cannot typically leave right away after their race is over, unless they have an important pressing commitment (other school function, ACT or SAT, IMPORTANT family function to attend, etc.) If this is going to be the case please let the coaches know of this ahead of time. Again, runners have important post-race duties to attend to and we want everyone to stay and support their teammates in later races and during any awards ceremonies. Please don't force your athlete to leave early because you don't want to wait for them to do what they are expected to do as a team member. It puts the athlete in an awkward position.

Parent Involvement

Remember that children imitate the actions of adults. Please act properly and in a manner that won't embarrass your child or the team and follow the rules of the facility we are at. Also, be supportive in a positive way and don't demean your runner if they aren't doing well that day.

We have a number of areas where we need parents to give their time and energy to help out the program such as helping with home meets, fundraisers, providing drinks at the finish line, and picking up athletes on time after practices and races. We want our athletes, parents and coaches working together all year long. The program is a lot of fun to be around and please make the time to be with our team and make yourself known to the athletes, coaches and other parents. Cross country is a great sport and if you get involved, you might just find yourself hooked on the sport and become a big fan!

Performance Fueling Tips

for the high school athlete



Tip

1

EAT ENOUGH

Aim for 3 meals and 1-2 snacks per day. Ideally, you shouldn't go more than 4 hours without fueling. Eating every 3-4 hours will help keep energy levels up to avoid hunger.



Tip

2

ADJUST YOUR PLATE

Adjust carbohydrates, protein, fruit, and vegetables to provide optimal energy for practices using the athletes plate as a guide. On rest days you may find that you are hungrier - honor that!



Tip

3

STAY HYDRATED

Aim to drink at least half your body weight in ounces daily. Hydration is important for keeping the body cool and helping you perform your best. Beverages and foods like fruits and veggies help contribute to fluid intake.



Tip

4

RECOVERY NUTRITION

Aim for *at least* 15g protein and 50g carbohydrate. Post workout meals/snacks (consumed within 30 minutes) are important for refueling, repairing muscle, and rehydrating so you can recover for your next practice.



Tip

5

PLAN AHEAD

Pack non-perishable snacks in your backpack and always carry a water bottle. Performance nutrition requires planning to be successful. "Fail to plan, and plan to fail"



Kelly Pritchett PhD, RD, CSSD

HARD TRAINING:

FATS

2-3 Tablespoons



Avocado
Oils
Nuts
Seeds
Cheese
Butter



Grains

Pasta
Rice
Potatoes
Cereals
Breads



Fresh Fruit
Stewed Fruit
Dried Fruit



Water
Dairy/Nondairy
Beverages
Diluted Juice
Flavored
Beverages



Coffee
Tea

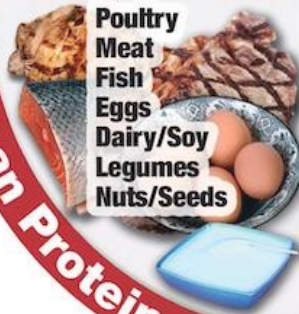
FLAVORS

Salt/Pepper
Herbs
Spices
Vinegar
Salsa
Mustard
Ketchup

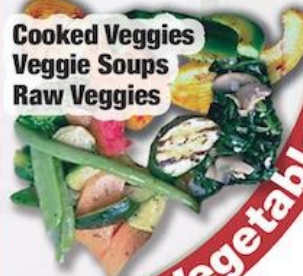


Lean Protein

Poultry
Meat
Fish
Eggs
Dairy/Soy
Legumes
Nuts/Seeds



Cooked Veggies
Veggie Soups
Raw Veggies



Vegetables

Example plate for a balanced meal during training.