

# Spokane Mercury Youth XC Club

## Team Expectations & Policies

### Our Mission

Our goal at Spokane Mercury is to provide a positive, supportive, and competitive environment where young athletes can develop as runners, build confidence, learn discipline, and develop a lifelong love of running.

Participation in Spokane Mercury is a commitment shared by athletes, parents, and coaches. The following expectations help us keep the team organized, safe, and successful.

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## Registration & Payments

- Athletes must be fully registered and have all required paperwork completed before participating in practice.
  - Registration and payment deadlines must be met by the dates communicated by the coaching staff.
  - Outstanding balances must be paid before an athlete can be registered for the next meet. Athletes with an unpaid balance will not be entered into the next competition until the account is current.
  - Parents are responsible for ensuring registration information, emergency contacts, waivers, and payments remain up to date.
  - Meet registration deadlines are firm. Once a meet entry deadline has passed, coaches may not be able to add an athlete.
  - Registration, team, and meet fees are the responsibility of the athlete's family unless otherwise communicated by the coaching staff.
  - Families should contact the coaching staff promptly if they have questions regarding registration, payments, or fees.
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## Practice Schedule

Regular practices will be held on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**, beginning **September 15 at 6:00 PM**.

**Practice locations will be communicated through STACK Team.** Families should check STACK Team before each practice for the current practice location and any schedule updates.

Practice dismissal will vary by age and training needs:

- **Younger athletes:** approximately 7:00–7:15 PM
- **Older athletes:** approximately 7:15–7:30 PM

Parents should plan to arrive on time for pickup and remain available until their athlete has been released by the coaching staff.

Because practices may occasionally run longer or shorter depending on the day's workout, weather, or team needs, parents should monitor communication through **STACK Team**.

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## Weather & Practice Cancellations

Practice schedules may be adjusted, delayed, relocated, or canceled due to weather, air quality, unsafe conditions, or other circumstances that may affect athlete safety.

**All weather-related changes and practice cancellations will be communicated through STACK Team.**

Families are responsible for checking STACK Team for updates before leaving for practice.

The coaching staff will make decisions regarding practice modifications or cancellations based on athlete safety and current conditions.

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## Parent/Guardian Requirement for Athletes Under Age 8

For athletes under the age of 8, a parent or responsible adult is required to remain at practice.

Parents are encouraged to actively support their young athlete by participating, running, or walking alongside their child when appropriate. At this age, having a parent present can help younger runners feel comfortable, stay engaged, and develop positive habits around running.

Parents should encourage participation without putting pressure on their child to perform. Our goal is to make running fun and help young athletes develop confidence and a love for the sport.

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## Pickup & Release of Athletes

Parents or designated responsible adults are responsible for picking up athletes promptly at the conclusion of practice.

Athletes must remain with the coaching staff until they are released to a parent, guardian, or other person authorized by the parent/guardian.

### Independent Departure

Athletes **age 13 and older** may be permitted to walk home independently with prior parent/guardian approval.

This approval must be communicated directly to the coaching staff in advance. Coaches must be aware of which athletes have permission to leave practice independently.

If an athlete's plans change, parents should notify the coaching staff through STACK Team or another established team communication method.

Parents should make every effort to arrive on time for pickup. If a parent will be late, they should notify the coaching staff as soon as possible.

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## Attendance & Communication

Consistent attendance is important for athlete development. Running is a progressive sport, and athletes benefit from following the training plan consistently.

- Please communicate with a coach if your athlete will miss practice or a meet.
- Use **STACK Team** as the primary method for communicating attendance and contacting coaches.
- Athletes should also learn to communicate appropriately with coaches as they become older and more independent.
- Families should monitor STACK Team for important announcements, schedule changes, meet information, and other team communications.

- Coaches may not be immediately available to respond during practices, competitions, or other team activities. Families should allow reasonable time for a response.
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## Meet Participation & Transportation

Participation in meets is an important part of the XC experience, but meet participation requires planning and commitment from both athletes and families.

- Parents are responsible for registering their athletes by the communicated meet deadline unless otherwise instructed by the coaching staff.
  - Meet registration deadlines are firm. Coaches may not be able to add athletes after the deadline.
  - Parents are responsible for transportation to and from meets unless a separate transportation arrangement has been communicated by the coaching staff.
  - Families should arrive at meets with enough time for athletes to check in, warm up, and be prepared for their event.
  - Athletes are expected to remain with the team during designated team activities and should communicate with a coach before leaving the team area.
  - If an athlete is unable to attend a meet after registering, parents should notify the coaching staff as soon as possible.
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## Injuries, Illness & Athlete Safety

Athletes must communicate any injury, pain, or illness with a coach.

Athletes should never feel that they need to hide an injury or continue running through pain to avoid missing practice or competition.

Parents should also inform coaches of any injury, medical concern, or change in an athlete's health that could affect participation.

Coaches may modify an athlete's workout, have them rest, or recommend that they not participate when safety is a concern.

If an athlete becomes injured or ill during practice or competition, the coaching staff will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact as appropriate.

Our priority is the long-term health and development of each athlete.

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# Emergency & Medical Information

Parents are responsible for providing accurate and current:

- Emergency contact information
- Parent/guardian contact information
- Medical and allergy information relevant to participation
- Required waivers and medical forms
- Any other information requested during registration

Parents must notify the coaching staff if emergency or medical information changes during the season.

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# Athlete Expectations

Spokane Mercury athletes are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be ready to participate.
  - Bring appropriate running shoes, clothing, and water.
  - Athletes are encouraged to wear a running watch when appropriate.
  - Listen to coaches and follow instructions.
  - Give their best effort during workouts while understanding that every athlete develops at a different pace.
  - Treat teammates, coaches, competitors, officials, and parents with respect.
  - Encourage teammates and celebrate the success of others.
  - Take care of team and facility property.
  - Communicate with coaches when they have questions, concerns, injuries, or need help.
  - Demonstrate good sportsmanship at practices and competitions.
  - Represent Spokane Mercury positively both on and off the course.
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# Behavior, Accountability & Team Conduct

Spokane Mercury is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and positive environment for every athlete.

Athletes are expected to treat coaches, teammates, competitors, officials, parents, and volunteers with respect at all times.

## Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Disrespectful or defiant behavior toward coaches or adults.
- Bullying, teasing, harassment, intimidation, or exclusion of teammates.
- Fighting, physical aggression, or intentionally hurting another athlete.
- Profanity, inappropriate language, or gestures directed toward others.
- Disrupting practice or intentionally preventing coaches and teammates from participating.
- Refusing to follow reasonable coaching instructions.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior toward competitors, officials, or other teams.
- Damaging team, facility, or another person's property.
- Repeatedly ignoring team rules or expectations after being reminded.

## How Behavior Will Be Addressed

We understand that children and young athletes make mistakes. Coaches will use age-appropriate judgment when addressing behavior and will consider the athlete's age, circumstances, and severity of the incident.

Depending on the situation, coaches may:

1. **Address the behavior directly** and explain why it is not acceptable.
2. **Provide a warning or temporary break from the activity** so the athlete can regroup.
3. **Speak with the parent or guardian** if the behavior continues or is more serious.
4. **Require the athlete to sit out of part or all of a practice or meet** when necessary to protect the safety and positive environment of the team.
5. **Suspend or remove an athlete from the program** for serious or repeated behavior that puts others at risk or significantly disrupts the team.

Serious incidents involving physical aggression, bullying, threats, harassment, or intentional harm may result in immediate removal from the activity while the situation is addressed with the athlete and parent/guardian.

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## Parent & Family Expectations

Parents play an important role in creating a positive team environment. We ask parents to:

- Encourage their athlete and support their effort rather than focusing only on times, places, or results.
  - Allow coaches to coach during practices and competitions.
  - Communicate concerns directly and respectfully with the coaching staff.
  - Encourage good sportsmanship and respect for other athletes, teams, coaches, and officials.
  - Help athletes arrive prepared and on time.
  - Stay informed through STACK Team and other official team communications.
  - Make sure athletes are picked up promptly at the conclusion of practice.
  - Avoid coaching, criticizing, or giving performance instructions to athletes during practices or competitions unless specifically asked to do so by a coach.
  - Model respectful behavior toward coaches, officials, competitors, other families, and volunteers.
  - Avoid discussing concerns or disagreements in front of athletes or other families. Concerns should be addressed privately and respectfully with the coaching staff.
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## Parent Conduct at Meets

Parents and family members are welcome and encouraged to support their athletes and the team.

We ask parents and spectators to:

- Cheer positively and encourage all athletes.
- Respect coaches' roles and allow coaches to manage athletes during warm-ups, workouts, and competitions.
- Respect officials and meet personnel.
- Avoid criticizing athletes, coaches, officials, or competitors.
- Avoid giving athletes race instructions or coaching from the sidelines unless requested by a coach.
- Model the sportsmanship and behavior we expect from our athletes.

Our goal is for meets to be a positive experience where athletes can compete, learn, and enjoy being part of the team.

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## Team Property & Facilities

Athletes and families are expected to respect team equipment, facilities, and property belonging to the club, host facilities, meet organizers, and other individuals.

Athletes should clean up after themselves and leave practice and competition areas in the condition in which they found them.

Intentional damage to team or facility property may result in the athlete or family being responsible for repair or replacement costs.

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## Photography & Social Media

Spokane Mercury may photograph or record athletes during practices, competitions, team activities, and events for team-related purposes.

Photos or videos may be used for team communications, social media, promotional materials, or other club-related purposes in accordance with the permissions provided during registration.

Parents who have questions or concerns regarding photography or media use should communicate with the coaching staff.

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## Team Culture

Spokane Mercury is more than a running club.

**We are a team.**

We expect our athletes to encourage one another, celebrate improvement, support teammates through challenging workouts and races, and understand that success looks different for every runner.

We believe in:

- Hard work
- Consistency
- Accountability
- Sportsmanship
- Encouragement
- Personal growth
- Having fun

Our coaches are committed to developing athletes not only as runners, but also as confident, respectful, and resilient young people.

In return, we ask our athletes and families to contribute to a team culture where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and motivated to become their best.

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## Communication

**STACK Team is the primary communication platform for Spokane Mercury.**

Families should regularly check STACK Team for:

- Practice locations
- Practice schedule changes
- Weather updates and cancellations
- Meet information
- Registration deadlines
- Team announcements
- Attendance communication
- Other important club information

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their contact information is current and that they are receiving team communications.

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## Our Commitment

We will do our best to provide organized practices, age-appropriate training, clear communication, and a safe and encouraging environment for our athletes.

We recognize that every athlete develops differently. Our goal is to help each runner improve while building confidence, discipline, resilience, sportsmanship, and a lifelong love of running.

In return, we ask athletes and families to communicate, be accountable, respect the team and coaching staff, and make a genuine commitment to the program.

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# Acknowledgment

By registering with Spokane Mercury Youth XC Club, athletes and parents/guardians acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to follow these **Team Expectations & Policies**.

We understand that participation in Spokane Mercury is a shared commitment between athletes, families, and coaches and that these expectations are intended to create a safe, respectful, supportive, and positive environment for everyone.

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**Run hard.**

**Support your teammates.**

**Have fun.**

**Get better.**