

Spokane Mercury Distance Parent/Athlete Handbook

Additional Sports Participation

During the track and cross-country seasons, weekly practice plans with suggested workouts and rest days will be posted on our website at www.spokaneyouthdistance.org. Our coaches design workouts to maximize performance at key meets, and additional training can potentially negate an athlete's peak performance. Our workouts, in conjunction with the recommended running on days we don't have practice, are designed to provide the correct amount quality training for our athletes. Coaches respectfully request that you inform them of any additional training, racing, and other sports in which you participate so workouts can be adjusted accordingly. Athletes can easily become over-trained if they are doing more than what is recommended. Over-training can lead to injuries and slower times.

Athlete Conduct

Athletes are expected to remain positive and encouraging with one another and their coaches at all times. For their safety, athletes are expected to follow the directions of their coaches without exception. This includes staying with assigned groups at all times so nobody runs alone outside the immediate supervision of a coach. At competitions, all athletes are expected to display good sportsmanship, even during times of disappointment. Athletes are expected to clean up after themselves by picking up all clothing, garbage, and equipment at practice and meet sites.

Clothing and Shoes

Athletes are expected to wear warm-ups/sweats over shirts and shorts to all practices when the outside temperature is below 80 degrees. At meets, regardless of the weather, athletes must have warm-ups or sweats to wear over their uniforms. Proper running (training) shoes must always be worn to practices and meets in order to avoid injury. In addition, athletes should bring spikes to workouts and meets. The team has many pairs of spikes to loan athletes if they do not want to purchase them.

Coaching Concerns

Our coaches strive to provide the best possible workouts tailored to athletes' needs. If you have a concern about how an athlete is being coached, please request to talk privately with a coach outside of practice time.

Communication

Families are asked to check our website at www.spokaneyouthdistance.org regularly to access all information about practices, meets, etc. During the season, the website is updated each Sunday and throughout each week as necessary. Text message communication also happens regularly for those who indicate on the registration form that they would like to receive text messages. Less frequently, information is emailed to families who provide an email address.

Fundraising

A goal of our nonprofit organization, Spokane Youth Distance Team, is to provide individual athletes and teams with opportunities to compete at the highest levels for which they qualify within the USATF Junior Olympics program. Families are expected to participate in at least one fundraising event during the track and/or cross-country seasons. Participation may include making a monetary donation. All money generated through fundraising will be dedicated to assisting athletes with travel expenses.

Health Concerns

Please make sure your registration form includes any special health needs, concerns, medications, or special considerations we need to make for your athlete. If an athlete's health status changes during the season, parents are expected to inform coaches of the change in a timely matter to ensure athlete safety.

Hydration

Distance runners need proper hydration. During the season, it is important to continually drink water, even on days when it is cold outside or when you might not be running. Athletes are encouraged to bring water bottles to practices.

Nutrition

Participation in endurance sports is enhanced by routinely eating a balanced, healthy diet. Young athletes should be aware that their diet can impact their athletic performance. At the same time, athletes should maintain a balanced perspective that occasional treats are perfectly acceptable as long as the majority of food they consume is healthy. Coaches will provide athletes with pre-race nutrition advice when appropriate. If you have specific questions or concerns related to nutrition, please contact your medical provider or speak with head coach Chris Lewis, who is a medical practitioner.

Parent Conduct

During practices, parents are welcome to encourage athletes. Parents may also participate in workouts with the athletes. It is expected that parents who attend or participate in practices remain 100% positive with all coaches and athletes and refrain from providing medical or coaching advice to athletes. If parents have questions or suggestions about coaching or specific workouts, they should speak with a coach outside of practice time.

Participation

Spokane Mercury Distance is a competitive club and is oriented toward providing high-quality coaching to young distance runners willing to train to the best of their ability for the purpose of improving. To compete as part of Mercury Distance, athletes must fully participate in practices and meets to the best of their ability. Participation includes warming up, working out, racing, and cooling down with the team. If you need to miss practice, please inform a coach ahead of time if possible.

Performance-Enhancing Drug Rules

USATF subscribes to the US Anti-Doping Agency guidelines. While we don't believe any of our team members would intentionally use performance-enhancing drugs, some common over-the-counter or prescription medications may fall onto the prohibited substances list, and we want you to be fully aware of this list. Please follow the link below if your child takes any medications. Medications to be particularly aware of are ADHD treatments, common cold medications with pseudoephedrine, albuterol, caffeine (energy drinks, energy shots, etc.), or steroids. If you think your athlete needs a waiver for prescribed medication, please pursue this process to avoid potential problems at higher-level competitions.

<http://www.usatf.org/about/legal/antidoping/faq.asp>

Registration

Prior to any participation in any practice or competition, a completed registration form must be submitted. This includes obtaining or renewing a current USATF membership, which costs \$20-\$30. Without a USATF membership, athletes are not covered under our insurance. If cost is a barrier to completing the registration, please contact team administrator Carol Lewis to make arrangements for payment or scholarship.

Restroom Use During Practice

Athletes are asked to make every attempt to use the restroom before practice. Understandably, athletes will occasionally need to use the restroom during a workout. If this becomes the case, athletes must always speak to a coach before leaving the group to use the restroom. Coaches will ensure all athletes travel to and from the restroom in pairs or with an adult.

Safety Guidelines

To ensure safety, we expect athletes and parents are aware of the following:

- Parking lots are busy at most of our practice and meet sites. Athletes being dropped off and picked up must be constantly aware of traffic in parking lots and avoid standing in areas where cars drive.
- We practice in public areas. Athletes should never talk to strangers while they are at practice.
- Occasionally we run on roads. Athletes are expected to observe all established crosswalks, traffic signals, etc. Coaches will give specific directions about the safest ways to run in designated areas.
- All athletes should check in and out with coaches when they arrive and leave from practice.
- Athletes should wear bright colors whenever possible and when practice is held in the dark (mainly during cross country) all athletes should come to practice with headlamps and/or blinking lights they can attach to their clothing.