What is Cross Country?

Cross country is a team running sport that takes place in the fall on a measured course over varied surfaces and terrain. Quite possibly the purest of all commonly contested sports, it requires only shoes, shorts, shirt and a running surface. It is an activity as old as history and can be practiced and enjoyed for a lifetime. It is a sport to be enjoyed for its own sake; glory and recognition come primarily from within the runner, not from outside.

In Nebraska, high school cross country athletes run 5,000 meters, also referred to as "5K" which is approximately 3.1 miles.

Many cross country meets are held on dirt trails, in parks or even on golf courses. The Nebraska State Meet is held on the Kearney Country Club Golf Course.

How is Cross Country scored?

A cross country meet is scored by each team adding up the places of its top 4 finishers. As in golf, the low score wins. For example, a team that scores 18 points wins a dual meet against a team that scores 20 points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRLD Runners</th>
<th>Somewhere Else HS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score: 18    Score: 20

8            11

9            12

A team's 5th and 6th finishers can also figure in the scoring if they place ahead of other teams' top 4 finishers. When that is the case, they become "pushers" by pushing up their
opponents' scores, as is the case above. BRLD’s 5th and 6th runners finished ahead of Somewhere Else's 4th runner, helping to win the meet.

If the score is tied after figuring the places of the top 4 finishers, the team with the fastest 5th runner wins the meet.

**Levels of Competition/Participation**

At many of the larger invitational meets, there usually will be four races: girls junior varsity, boys junior varsity, girls varsity, boys varsity. The order of the races may vary.

BRLD is classified as a Class D School for Cross Country, which means that a varsity team is made up of 6 runners. Most meets allow for unlimited junior varsity competition. There are exceptions to this format:

District Meet - varsity only. Top three teams and top 15 individuals qualify for the state meet.

State Meet - varsity only, for teams and individuals who qualify at district meets.

**What it takes to be successful**

More than anything else, success in cross country takes time . . . time to learn; time to train; time to eat, sleep and recover; time before and after school; time on weekends; and time away from other interests.

With the academic responsibilities of being a high school student, most student-athletes have quite a busy schedule! The willingness to devote the time that success demands is called DEDICATION!

Being a member of the BRLD Cross Country Team carries other expectations and responsibilities. Doing what is expected of every team member is called COMMITMENT. Attending team practices every day is one of the commitments we expect. Our goal is to develop team loyalty and individual responsibility and accountability among all our team members. High school sports are a wonderful vehicle for personal growth.

Becoming a good cross country or distance runner also takes PERSEVERANCE in addition to COMMITMENT. Most athletes are ready to make a sacrifice during a race, but those that make the sacrifice through months or years of training and racing are few indeed! Young cross country runners and their parents need to understand that there can be no hurry. The fundamental condition of the young body cannot change overnight, but experience has shown that it can, and will change over a period of months and years of intelligent training.
Another commitment I expect is COMMUNICATION with the coach. If a problem or illness is going to force your son or daughter to miss practice or a meet, I expect him or her to tell me about it personally and IN ADVANCE. (This does not mean relaying a message through a teammate or a friend.) I also expect a phone call or note from you as well to make sure that I fully understand the situation. In the case of injury, I will use my best judgment, but I will expect some communication from a medical expert before I will have an athlete sit out of practice or a meet.

Helping your son or daughter before the season and during.

BRLD runners have been encouraged to be on some sort of a training regime during the summer. Pre-season summer training is essential to build a fitness base for intensive workouts and races during the season. NSAA regulations prevent the coaches from holding an organized practice until August 15th.

A normal consequence of beginning to train is muscle soreness, which will soon go away. However, if a runner has not participated in sports before, this may persist for up to 2 weeks. They should communicate this to the coaches so we can adjust their training. Any athlete engaged in intensive training and competition is subject to injury. We can prevent most injuries when our runners tell us about their aches and pains before they become disabling, so we can have them treated by our athletic trainer.

Here is a list of some common running injuries and 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 prior to an injury 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** 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, 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. Make sure you eat some red meat each week and/or take a vitamin supplement with iron in it.

- **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.

- Other Overuse injuries are sore knees, joints, and stress fractures. It is important to communicate with the coaches about any soreness or injuries you may be experiencing.

Basically, make sure your son or daughter is drinking lots of water. I also strongly recommend taking a daily vitamin. Understand that aches and pains are often associated with competitive long distance running, and the best treatments for nearly all discomforts are proper stretching, ice and possibly ibuprofen. Seeing the school trainer or another physician is also a good idea if the suggestions above have already been tried with little improvement.

**Diet**

A nutritious, well-balanced diet is essential for an athlete. It is important that you provide your body with the proper type of fuel it will need for our workouts. Forget the Atkin’s Diet. Carbohydrates are ideal for the cross country athlete. It helps you reserve water.

Especially on race days, fatty and fried foods, and carbonated or acidic drinks should be avoided. Small portions of easily digested foods eaten at least 3 hours before competition are best. Water intake should never be limited. Most runners crave carbohydrates, since this is the primary fuel for endurance events such as cross country.

Good items: Fruits—especially bananas, bagels, red meat (to avoid anemia), pasta, vegetables, water.

Try to avoid: Soft drinks, candy, junk foods, fried foods.

**Equipment: Shoes and Socks and a Watch**

Feet are important, therefore take care of them. Make sure your son or daughter has proper running shoes and socks. Not every shoe is right for every runner! I recommend buying shoes at a store that deals primarily with running apparel so they can match the shoe to the type of foot that will be running in it. There is no denying the fact that running shoes can be expensive. Ask me for store locations that offer discounts to high school runners. The best way to prolong the life and function of a new pair of running shoes is to wear them for running only, not as school dress or for PE class. A
general rule of thumb for running shoes is they last about 6 months (maximum) and about 400 miles.

Socks are another important item for you. Use socks that have proper cushioning and help with moisture control. Socks come in shoe cut, ankle cut, and then normal length. I recommend ankle cut as I have seen numerous blisters arise with the shoe cut style.

All runners should have a running watch with a Chronometer on it—this does not need to be expensive! This is important for both practice and competition. Having a watch on or nearby will become a requirement the second week of practice.

Loose fitting T-shirts and running shorts are adequate for daily training. On hot days, boys may prefer to not wear a shirt while training, while the girls may prefer to wear a top specifically designed for sporting activity. This is the option of each athlete.

Spectating

Spectators are welcome and encouraged at all our meets. Unfortunately, cross-country isn't the greatest spectator sport because the races go all over the place. Here are a few tips.

- Bring a comfortable chair. Find a spot where the athletes run by numerous times.
- Yell like crazy when they pass. They love all the cheering and hoopla.
- Get a watch and time splits. You can see how well an athlete is doing by looking at their splits.
- Do not run beside the athletes. This is considered pacing and can result in the disqualification of the athlete from the competition.
- Do not touch the athletes during a race. (Obviously someone in need of medical attention is already out of the race so it is ok to help at that point.)

Cross Country Vocabulary

- Blind Spots . . . locations on a cross country course where trailing runners cannot see those ahead. Trees, bushes or hills often create blind spots
- Cool-down . . . jogging and stretching done after a practice or competition to gradually allow muscles to purge themselves of waste products which have accumulated during exercise
- False Start . . . leaving the starting line before the gun sounds
+ Fartlek . . . taken from the Swedish words for "speed play." The workout consists of easy running with the addition of hills or short fast bursts, followed by a return to easy running.

+ Finish Chute . . . a rope bordered funnel past the finish line that moves runners into a single file order of finish.

+ Invitational Meet . . . a multi-team meet

+ Lactic Acid . . . the by-product of anaerobic exercise. Lactic acid is toxic to the cells and can only be tolerated in small amounts. It contributes to fatigue.

+ Kick . . . a burst of speed at the finish of the race

+ Pace . . . average running speed over the course

+ Personal Record . . . best-ever performance on a course, referred to simply as a "PR"

+ Racing Flats . . . special, lightweight shoes designed for racing, rather than daily training

+ Split(s) . . . recording a runner's time as he or she pass a predetermined mark on the course in order to check the runner's pace. Usually splits are taken at the mile mark(s) or at the 1000 meter mark(s).

+ Starting Box . . . area to which a team is assigned on the starting line

+ Top 6 . . . the varsity members of a cross country team

+ Training Flats . . . running shoes designed for long wear in daily training

+ Warm-up . . . running and stretching done prior to practice or competition to gradually warm up the body for more intense training or racing

**Coach’s Contact Information**

High School Coach: Paul Timm, ptimm@lyonsdecaturschools.org

Junior High Coach: Steve Hosch, shosch@lyonsdecaturschools.org

School Phone: (402) 687-2363
# 2018 Cross Country Meet Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Logan View Meet</td>
<td>Logan View</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Wisner-Pilger Meet</td>
<td>Beemer</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Norfolk Catholic Meet</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>Pender Meet</td>
<td>Pender</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Crofton meet</td>
<td>Crofton</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>September 28</td>
<td>Stanton Meet</td>
<td>Stanton</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>East Husker Conference</td>
<td>Logan View</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>October 11</td>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>State Track</td>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent's Night will be held with Softball and Volleyball on Tuesday, Oct. 2 in Lyons**

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# 2018 BRLD JH Boys/Girls Cross Country Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Norfolk Catholic Meet</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>Columbus Scotus Meet</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Crofton Meet</td>
<td>Crofton</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>Stanton Meet</td>
<td>Stanton</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Remove the paper below after you have signed it and have your athlete return it to Mr. Timm.

I acknowledge that I have received the BRLD Cross Country Parent's Handbook. I also acknowledge that my athlete has shown me his/her BRLD Cross Country Athlete’s Season Guide.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of Guardian       Printed Name of Guardian