



# 2021 Great Oak Cross Country

## CIF, State, & RunningLane

### Teams Selection Process



**CIF Prelims** - November 13<sup>th</sup> - 7 athletes compete (Top 16 athletes go and warm-up, cool down)

**CIF Finals** - November 20<sup>th</sup> - 7 athletes compete (Top 16 athletes go and warm-up, cool down)

**State Meet** - November 27<sup>th</sup> - 7 athletes compete (Top 16 athletes go and warm-up, cool down)

**RunningLane National Championships** – Dec 4<sup>th</sup> - 7 athletes compete (selected after State Meet)

**Process Purpose:** To select athletes that will represent our teams in competition, and to bring alternates that are most likely to be running in those races in the future. We always want to further our goal of improving our team from one year to the next.

**Yearly Team Goal:** To win the Division 1 State Championship & a National Championship.

Below is a guide to understanding how the CIF, State, and National Champion teams are selected each season. Please keep in mind that all of these teams have a purpose for team development, and are not designed as “fun trips” for the athletes or a right based on age. These teams are selected with what is *best* for the team *now* and in the *future*. This is a guide for parents and athletes, not a contract or guarantee on how athletes will be selected. The coaches will ultimately select whom they feel are the best fit for the CIF Team. Each season is different, with different dynamics at play.

#### **CIF Team Selection Process:**

The CIF teams are selected looking at the team needs for the postseason using the chart below. This means that athletes will be selected to fill those spots based on past and present season performances, Mt. SAC, and League Finals performances, grade (how many seasons do they have left in front of them to compete for GOHS), varsity attitude, attendance, team dedication, and overall contributions to the team. League Finals and varsity attitude carry the most weight in the selection process, but are not the only factors. Recent racing, then seasonal performance, then current health and full history on the team will be examined. Spots 15-16 were added to focus on younger athletes for future team growth so they will have experience when they are called upon to lead the team in future season. Because of that, a Jr. or Sr. athlete would **probably not** be selected over a top 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grader for those final spots, but they could be depending on team depth for this season. If someone has a really bad race at league finals, they may be left home **regardless** of what they did in the regular season.

#### **2021 Qualifiers - 16 boys & 16 girls**

**Athletes 1-7** - Athletes that will most likely race at CIF Finals, State, and Nationals.

**Athletes 8-10** - Alternates, 5 will most likely race CIF Prelims. Athletes most likely to race if needed.

**Athletes 11-14** - Athletes that may be used if needed, but are here to learn the process for the future.

**Athletes 15-16** - Athletes that are typically younger (typically 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> graders) with a focus on future team development and experience gathering. May go to older athletes if younger athletes already make up a lot of the team.

### **State Team Selection Process:**

The CIF Team becomes the State Team once we qualify from CIF Finals (all 16 athletes). The selection process for who is racing at the State Meet is decided on by Coach Draughon with one goal in mind - **Who is the most likely to contribute to us winning the State and National Championships.** No games, no favorites, no drama. We realize that it can be emotional and everyone wants to be on the line, but all athletes and parents need to understand that this process is designed for us to put out the team that we believe gives us the best chance to win. If your child is not selected, it does not mean we do not think they are capable or do not like them, it simply means we liked our odds better with another athlete at that moment in time. Please respect our selection process and understand that your child has played, and will be playing a critical role at State whether they are running in the race or not. Athletes 8-16 will have specific roles defined by the coaches for the state meet trip and will be expected to positively fulfill their commitment to the team and help us bring home the trophy this year. If you know you won't be able to fully complete the commitment (out of town during the state meet weekend, would rather switch to winter sport, etc), please tell us immediately so we can select someone else. *Any athlete/parent causing drama that is negatively affecting the CIF Team may cause the athlete to be immediately released from the CIF Team at the coach's discretion to ensure we are positively moving towards team goals as a single unit. The team outweighs the individual.*

### **RunningLane Nationals Team Selection Process:**

**Championship Race:** Most likely the 7 athletes from the State Meet unless there is a unique situation with one of the top athletes that prevents them from running at State, or someone has a off race at State, or a health issue/injury and an alternate would be required to step in and help the team. Coaches may have to choose athletes other than the 7 from State and we realize this is emotional and difficult. We have to try to make decisions for the team goals and not the individual in this situation. It is not easy.

If athletes want to extend their XC season, they are encouraged to train for and run at Footlocker West Regionals:

<http://www.footlockercc.com/west/>

### **FAQ:**

**Q. My son is a senior and he is faster than the last couple boys selected for the team. How is that fair?**

A. It isn't necessarily fair. We are only obligated to bring 9 athletes to CIF, but because we are one of the deepest teams in the nation, we take 16 to focus on the development of future generations. If your son is a senior and does not factor into the top 10 mix, there is a good chance that he will not be selected.

**Q. My daughter has run faster times than a lot of the girls selected, why doesn't she get to go?**

A. There are possibly many reasons she was not selected. Please note that grade level, varsity attitude, attendance, team dedication, current health, and overall contributions to the team are very heavily factored into the selection process and may have been the overall deciding factor on whether or not your child was selected.

**Q. My daughter was 3<sup>rd</sup> at League Finals for JV but was not selected. She did strain her hamstring and is unsure if she is healthy enough to train, is that why she wasn't selected?**

A. Yes, athletes need to be healthy enough to train and race to be selected for the CIF team. If they are a top 7 athlete and we believe they will be back and racing in the post season then we will most likely take them. If they most likely won't train or be healthy enough to contribute we will take athletes that can contribute to the process.

**Q. Why take younger athletes over athletes that have worked hard for this team for years?**

A. Whereas we appreciate all of the hard work from our older athletes, our responsibilities dictate that we continue to improve the team each season. For that to happen, our 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders must be ready to compete at CIF and State for us to continue to achieve our goal of winning the State Championship in the future. We understand this can be very hard on some athletes, but it is one that is best for the team in the long run and is currently paying dividends for us right now on this year's team from years past. The best thing anyone can do is leave no doubt that they should be on the team! Your child was afforded this same opportunity when they were a 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grader.

**Q. My daughter ran faster than the #7 girl at Woodbridge, Dana Hills, and SWL Meet #2. I don't understand why is she not on the team?**

A. The simple answer is that we as coaches are planning the season around winning the State Championship and Nationals. Sometimes we'll hold athletes out or back in a race to save them for later. Comparing the data without all of the facts for each athlete is very difficult. Please realize that you may not have enough data to accurately determine who should be on the line. Coaches see all the races, know who was healthy and racing at 100% and who was held out, and who beats whom daily in workouts. We have a very good sense for who is ready for each race.

**Remember that this is a guide to help parents and athletes understand the process. It is not a binding contract of exactly how selections will be made, but should give an idea of what the thought process is behind them.**

**Questions?**

Please (nicely) contact Coach Draughon via email at [tdraughon@tvusd.us](mailto:tdraughon@tvusd.us) as phone calls will not be fielded in regards to selections made.