



Handbook For Athletes And Parents

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1. Overview of the Journey:

Greetings from your Mayo XC coaching staff! As you are, we too are excited for what the next season, or even next few years, may have in store for you. There are many great experiences in life, and we hope that you will find cross country to be one that you thoroughly value and enjoy. Someday we hope you look back with fondness upon the few short years that you put your heart into becoming the best distance runner you could be, for yourself and for your teammates.

We begin the start to our great season by realizing that the most important physical aspects of our preparations for the season ahead are aerobic conditioning and general endurance. The summer is an invaluable block of time to invest your energy into running more outright to prepare for your best season ever. The potential is tremendous.

As distance runners, we attempt to align the progression of our training and effort in such a way that we can 1) get outright fitter and faster, and 2) have the timing to find our best performances at the championships. Our championships come twice yearly -- Late October/November for the cross country season, and May/June for track. Below is a table depicting the amount of work (training volume) a year-round runner will be expected to do monthly.

(Here at Mayo, we encourage a balance of sport, academics, and extracurricular activities outside running. Thus, if you don't follow a yearly training schedule, no worries!)

Month	Percentage of Volume
June	5%
July	9%
August	11%
September	11%
October	9%
November	7%
December	5%
January	7%
February	9%
March	11%
April	9%
May	7%

"You don't become a champion by winning a morning workout. The only true way is to marshal the ferocity of your ambition over the course of many days, weeks, months, and (if you could finally come to accept it) years."

- John L Parker in "Once a Runner"

2. New Runners and Middle Schoolers

We're excited you're taking on the new endeavor of endurance running. While it may seem like a lot, becoming a "runner" is relatively simple. All you need for our sport are some clothes (of course), a pair of decent running shoes, and a positive attitude. Here at Mayo, we are a community which strives to create a safe and supportive environment for all. With that said, we want you to know that we will support you wherever you are in your running journey. Take it slow, and don't worry about jumping into hard competitive training. Instead, focus on getting out the door for regular exercise; not focusing on pace, distance, or intensity. Instead, enjoy the bliss and hard work that comes from running regularly in a community of determined athletes.

It is our expectation for new runners that they prepare the body for the training that will come in season. We do not want you to over-do your running, but we also don't want you to be under prepared. So, get out the door most days of the week, run as much as you see fit, and don't be afraid to push yourself. Focus on attempting to run continuously, building up to running 6 miles without stopping! Once you've gotten to this point, we can begin talking about the next steps to becoming a highly competitive athlete. A general guideline for our athletes is that a minimum of 100 miles over the summer months is essential for every new runner to be prepared for the in-season training ahead (of course, we do encourage more, so long as it is safe for you to do so). Furthermore, we recommend running primarily "distance" days, Monday through Friday, with needed days off on Saturday and Sunday, and few to no quality days (these are explained below). If you have questions or concerns about getting into running, please reach out to our coaching staff.

3. Preparation

The next section details many important preparatory components of long distance running, from training runs to personal help tools.

Summer Practice - A summer of consistent and dedicated running is a necessity for any cross country athlete who wants to have a successful fall. With that being said, there will be summer practices held at Mayo HS, on the track, starting at 8am's, Monday through Friday, beginning on June 2nd (with Saturday long runs being student led). Again, if you want to be running at your best come October, with relaxation and ease, the hard work you put in during the summer months of June and July will pave the path to excellence. Thus, it is necessary that athletes prioritize making it to AT LEAST 2 weeks worth of summer running.

"Cows run away from the storm while the buffalo charges toward it -- and gets through it quicker. Whenever I'm confronted with a tough challenge, I do not prolong the torment, I become the buffalo." -Wilma Mankiller

Mileage - For most, you will get fitter if you assess previous training volume and add incrementally to what has previously worked. If this is your first time running, no worries; our coaching staff will help you find what is right for you. Generally, you should increase your mileage **only** once you've run well off the mileage you've already been at in a previous season. Don't let your desire for big numbers detract from good feeling training. A solid range for High School boys is 250-400 miles, and a solid range for High School girls is 200-350 miles during the offseason, with the majority running on the lower end of this range. As already stated, a minimum of 100-150 summer miles is necessary for every runner to prepare their bodies for hard training during the season. Every body is different, so what works for one person may not work for another. We highly recommend that you keep a daily journal to record your training and observations. That being said, it is a good idea to use your journal to plan each day and week of your

offseason running out ahead of time—write it down! Consult the [summer training program](#) for a reference on how practices will be structured so you can plan ahead.

Pace of runs - The pace of the run depends on the goal of the run. If the goal is to recover, run slow enough to recover and feel good in the coming days. If the goal is threshold (we'll discuss this later on), find the means to run at the appropriate intensity for your threshold without overdoing it. However, for most days of the summer, you should likely be running "distance" pace. A distance run should be covered so that you are pleasantly tired upon completion. We want each of these runs to be a comfortable and steady balance of quality, quantity, and effort. You should be able to maintain this balance from day to day without undue strain or fatigue. Yet, when the occasional day does come where you're feeling tuckered out, feel liberated to run slower at your recovery pace. For more detail on pace, consult the link in the resources at the end of this handbook.

Long runs - Each and every runner can benefit from a weekly long run. These runs should be run at a comfortable pace, but should not detract from the quality of your runs later in the week. A general rule of thumb is your weekly long run should be anywhere from 50-90 minutes of running (for our high schoolers). 50-70 minutes early in the summer and 60-90 minutes later in the summer. Remember, a long run is a quality effort; don't smash the run, but don't "trot" around.

"Quality" - Quality over the summer can vary from athlete to athlete. When we say "quality" we are referring to days where you're focusing on a specific (or multiple) component of training. On these days, running is usually more challenging than a normal distance day. 1-2 days of quality running in the summer can be beneficial to include in a week of training. For guidance on (tempo, threshold, and race pace running) your quality day, consult some [pace calculators](#) to get an estimate on how quick to run. Examples of quality days are as follows:

- *Tempo* run of 2-4 miles (comfortably hard breathing, 1-1:20 minutes slower than current mile race pace). The goal here is to improve the body's ability to clear lactic acid and run more efficiently at faster paces during a continuous effort.
- *Threshold* interval workouts (comfortably hard breathing, around 55 sec-1:05 minute slower than current mile race pace). Has the same benefits as tempo runs, however the rest in-between work bouts break up the intensity; allowing an athlete to work at this intensity longer and run a bit faster:
 - 2-5 x 5 minutes with 70 seconds jog or standing rest
 - 3-7 x 3 minutes with 60 seconds jog or standing rest
 - 1-4xmile with 70 seconds jog or standing rest
 - 8-20x400 with 35 second standing rest
 - Etc...
- *Hill runs* of 30-90 seconds (comfortably hard breathing, should not be going "lactic"). Strengthens muscles, joint mobility, and ligaments, improves lactic acid circulation, forces proper running mechanics, and decreases injury risk.
- *CV workouts* (be careful with these, limit to 1 or 2 at the end of the summer). Challenging workouts intending to improve lactate clearance, oxygen utilization, energy use, and running mechanics. Pace is around "8k-10k race pace". Coaches will instruct athletes on when to perform these.
- *Strides* are 100-150m *Sprints* at mile to 400m pace performed on a flat grassy patch (use smooth and controlled form, focusing on quick turnover, doing up to 8 pieces with full rest between each run. Usually we'll do 2-6 of these after regular runs.)

Strides - You might as well call these, “free fitness”! Strides are a phenomenal way of getting faster, stronger, and smoother. Strides are a 100 to 150m, or 10-20 seconds, buildup involving “light and quick” running, emphasizing form and quick turnover with ample rest in between each work bout (85% of max speed). For these, focus on quick turnover over putting power into the ground. Strides are usually done after a run, either on track or grass, at mile to 400 meter pace. The ongoing communication with your speed during base training is critical for maintaining speed, and tremendously beneficial in allowing a healthy transition to our workouts during the start of our season. My recommendation would be to do anywhere from 4 to 8 100 meter strides barefoot on a smooth grassy stretch after a run. Again, allow plenty of rest in between each. Feel free to do these every day of the week... well, except on workout days or hill sprint days.

"It is always important to try to relax during races and training... keeping the upper body relaxed... which will help you to run faster times without being basically fitter." - Sir Arthur Lydiard

Hill sprints - Unlike strides, which focus on quick turnover, hill sprints focus on putting power into the ground. These power developing exercises are great to do once or twice a week, either in the middle or at the end of a run. Make sure to keep these short (around 10 seconds each). I would recommend 4 to 6 of these lasting 10 seconds each with plenty of rest. Take the first couple easier (85% of max speed), building into a full out sprint (95%), and then get after it on the last couple (105%)! Again, make sure to stand up straight, use good form. On these and strides, NEVER sacrifice form for speed.

Strength, Injury Prevention, and Agility - Should long distance runners lift and prioritize strength? I didn't think we needed to be strong? Well think again... all athletes, runners included, can benefit from the weight room! Long distance runners can benefit TREMENDOUSLY from a routine of strength training 2-3 times a week, injury prevention daily, and agility work 1-2 times a week. For examples of our Mayo weight lifting routines and injury prevention, use this link: [Strength and Conditioning](#). As for agility drills, use this link: [Agility and Speed Drills](#). For a synthesis of both in a weekly plan, see the table below:

Mayo Cross Country & Distance Track and Field

Day	Core and Myrtle (3-4x per wk)	Foot Speed and Athletic Development	Injury Prevention – Daily (B4 practice)
Monday	5-10 minute routine after run (athlete led)	6 x 10 second hill strides or 100m strides Hurdle Mobility (2nd pg of strength doc)	Resistance Band Routine Leg Lift Clams Single Leg Glute Bridge SL RDL
Tuesday		Workout or 6 x 10 second hill strides or 100m strides Resistance Band Routine (2nd pg of strength doc) Weight Room	
Wednesday	5-10 minute routine after run (athlete led)	Workout or 6 x 10 second grassy hill Or 100m strides Agility Drills with hurdles/ladders	
Thursday		6 x 10 second hill strides Or 100m strides Weight Room	
Friday	5-10 minute routine after run (athlete led)	6 x 10 seconds grassy hill Or 100m strides Agility Drills with hurdles/ladders	
Saturday	5-10 minute routine after run	6 x 10 seconds hill strides or 100m strides	

Stretching - A brief period of stretching pre and post run is a must for runners. Dynamic stretching prior to a run gets the body prepared for movement, while some dynamic stretching and some light static stretches following a run can be great to loosen muscles and joints while facilitating further recovery.

Mentality -The mind is one of the most important parts of a happy and healthy individual (as well as a competitive athlete). We believe that in training your mind through the art of running and racing, we are transforming ourselves into mature, contemplative, and conscientious members of society. At practice, we will have designated “mindset Wednesdays” where we will focus on training the mind through small group sessions. These sessions will involve goal setting, goal mapping, body attentiveness, race visualization, conscientious breathing, and much more. Once you’ve harnessed the power of your mind, anything is possible!

Cross-Training - Cross training is a phenomenal way to develop the cardiovascular system in ways aside from running (biking, xc-skiing, swimming, hiking, etc). While usually a tool for injured or injury prone athletes to continue to develop their “engine” (cardiovascular system and energy systems), cross training a couple times a week for a healthy runner can be a great way to increase training minutes while not accumulating more pounding (the strain on muscles from impact with the ground while running) on the body. Keep in mind, the physical work of x-training is somewhat mode-specific, meaning, you may experience a different effort and stress from different types of x-training sessions (biking v. swimming). For all, always keep in mind that it is the running that should be the emphasis rather than the accessory activities. There is no better way to get better at running than by running.

Continued discussion on cross-training...

If we step back and think more holistically about the practice of cross training minutes, we might start to see cross training minutes and running miles in terms of engine-hours per week, per month, per year, or even over a career. In that sense, we can also blur the lines between the mode of the activity (ie, biking, running), and the view of an athlete as a “driver” in developing the cardiovascular system. So while “running miles” carry a very high level of specificity in developing our potential as runners, we might also want to value and account any significant time spent developing the cardiovascular system regardless of mode (eg, engine hours per week). Those of us who are already running as much as is physically advisable may be able to x-train to get the same engine hours (and therefore cardiovascular development) as their high running-mileage comrades. Those of us who are running 55+ miles a week have the resilience to put a strong stressor on developing the cardiovascular system solely through running, and there would be a diminishing-return in aerobic benefit from more cross training. Meanwhile, the cost of additional cross-training might be energy that should be going to running, so now risking injury. So there's a sliding-scale in the amount of cross training from which an individual might benefit, with some primary physical factors being how much running one is doing at the time, biological age, and training age.

Summer Miles Competition - To incentivize solid training for both our boys and girls programs, this year we will create a summer miles competition. Each athlete is challenged to run a minimum amount of miles based on their year in school. If they run over the amount of miles, they will be awarded a “summer miles champion” t-shirt. More details will be released in the first week of summer conditioning. See below for competition standards:

- Senior and Junior boys: 400 miles
- Senior and Junior girls: 300 miles
- Sophomore and Freshman boys: 300 miles

- Sophomore and Freshman girls: 250 miles
- Middle Schoolers/First Year runners: 150 miles
- Parker Valby Award: 60 hours (XT-training over the summer)

4. Well-being and Health

Nutrition - Eat a well balanced diet as you would any other point in the year, choosing foods “close to the tree” over hyper processed foods. However, **food is better than no food at all**. A large amount of carbohydrates and proteins during periods of training and competition are essential to preventing injuries and adapting to exercise. We’ll expand on this below, but above all, please ensure that you are fueling your body adequately for the hard work you’ll be putting into training.

We recommend that men and women take a daily multivitamin every day. Nature Made “Multi for Her” (guys, this one recommended for you too!) has a nice spread of vitamins & minerals for distance runners. Vitamin and mineral supplements are not a replacement for good eating habits, but they can help cover the nutritional demands placed on your body during periods of good training. In addition to your diet, be sure to pay particular attention to daily hydration -- it will do wonders for your recovery from one day to the next over the summer months.

Unless otherwise recommended, all of our girls should also consider taking an iron supplement (“FeoSol” ferrous sulfate is the gold standard), every day, with a source of Vitamin C -- which will help with absorption of the supplemental iron into your body. Boys who have a history of lower iron, and as recommended, keep up your routine of iron supplementation over the summer too. While it may be spendy for your parents, we would recommend all athletes get a serum ferritin test prior to the start of cross country. Serum Ferritin is important because it is responsible for transporting and storing iron in the blood. Whereas iron plays the role of carrying oxygen in your red blood cells. Thus, serum ferritin and iron are working overtime in endurance athletes due to our high demand for oxygen use during exercise.

We’ll talk more about this during the season, but fueling immediately post hard workout is essential for long term recovery and exercise absorption. Following hard workouts, the body goes into a state of fuel burning where it searches for any and every nutrient it can find. During this time (0-30 minutes post exercise), nutrients are most available to the muscles, so it is extremely important to get a snack and hydration (granola bar, banana, hydration, gatorade, etc) immediately following hard exercise, with a high quality meal following your snack within an hour. If you do not fuel quickly post workout, the body will instead “eat itself” (reverting to catabolic processes), burning proteins and fats stored within your muscle cells, which will harm you, not only in the following days and weeks of training, but in the long run.

On the flip side, it is essential that we fuel going INTO a run or quality training session. Ensure that you’ve had a meal at least 2-3 hours out from a run and a carbohydrate dense snack (a granola bar or piece of toast with jam) 1 hour out from a run to make sure that you’re “tapping off your glycogen stores” (the body’s energy reserves). If done correctly, you’ll notice feeling energized and free on your daily runs. However, if done incorrectly (having avoided fueling), you’ll feel lethargic and bogged down on your run.

And lastly, fueling DURING a quality session can be beneficial for athletes at a certain level of fitness. Once workouts begin trending over 5 miles of hard running (example: 5 mile tempo run), or an 75 minutes of total exercise, ingesting a gel, liquid carb mixture (eg, Maurten 160), or gatorade can enhance post exercise recovery and during session performance. If you are an athlete training at this caliber, consider bringing fuel to our weekly hard sessions.

Sleep - If you are training, you won't get very far without 8+ hours of sleep per night. Anything less will limit your recovery and progression as a runner. Recovery, which is primarily the time spent sleeping, is where you actually get fitter—not training. Keep in mind that while 8+ hours is the benchmark, the amount of sleep needed can vary from night to night. With 8 hours of sleep being sufficient at some times, and 10 hours of sleep being needed at other times. Another important component to your sleep is consistency; your body and mind need rhythm and routine to be productive. So, ensure that you stick to a consistent bedtime and waking time to allow your body to flourish. As with all things, put down your phone, listen to your body, and get some sleep!

Injuries - If you get injured while training, please take two or three days off, ice the area of concern, and contact us coaches and/or a medical professional so that we can help you get back to regular running and training. Some common areas of concern for runners are the following:

- Shin splint: overused muscle or inflammation of connective tissue on shins. It can be caused by poor running form or running on surfaces that are too hard.
- Plantar fasciitis: inflamed tissue at the point where the fascia connects to the heel bone (bottom of the foot). Ice, rest, strengthening, and stretching are keys to curing plantar fasciitis.
- Achilles tendonitis: An inflammation of the Achilles tendon, or tiny microscopic tears in the tissue. The Achilles tendon connects the calf muscle to the heel bone. When it is stretched, it becomes swollen, painful, and less flexible than normal. If not treated properly, it can become a chronic problem. Initially, rest and icing will probably be beneficial.
- Stress reaction: An area which does not exhibit a crack in the bone, but diagnostic imaging can detect high stress on a specific area. Without attention, this may often lead to a stress fracture.
- Stress fracture: an internal bone injury that is often found in the lower leg (but also upper leg). Small breakage or hairline cracks in the bone occurs, most commonly in the metatarsals (feet) or tibia (shin). It is serious and needs about 6 weeks of rest for full recovery.
- Osgood-Schlatter's Disease: a common cause of sore knees, especially in adolescents who are athletic. It is caused by the pull of the quadriceps (thigh muscles) on the patellar tendon (just below the kneecap) where it attaches to the shinbone. This is a self-limiting condition which will remedy itself over time in most cases. It's worth getting it checked out by an orthopedic specialist to rule out any resulting bone damage.
- Iliotibial Band (IT) syndrome: The IT band is a tendon-like portion of a muscle called the tensor fasciae latae, running down the outside of the thigh from the hip to the knee. When inflamed, overused, or tightened, it can cause pain either in the outside of the hip or the knee. The best method of recovery is to do exercises which strengthen the surrounding muscles.

Emotional Wellbeing - Paying special attention to your emotional health, in addition to your physical health, is of the utmost importance. While running can be a meditative place for people to work through their problems and improve their emotional landscape, the reverse can also be true. Disordered eating, anorexia, bulimia, negative body image, and many other mental disorders are some of the very real issues that runners are at risk of dealing with. In the case that you, or someone you care about, is dealing with one of these issues, we ask that you talk to our coaches, a trusted adult, and/or seek professional care.

At Mayo, we are members of a community that care, respect, and listen to one another, regardless of differences and personal experiences. It is our mission to create a space where we listen to our bodies, respect ourselves, care for our teammates, and treat others the way we want to be treated. Thus, if it is necessary for an athlete to take a step back from competitive running, then we respect that decision and will help as much as possible.

5. Equipment and Tools

While cross country is a minimalist sport, meaning that it needs very few material things, there is something to be said about special care being given to the equipment and tools you select. Below is guidance on shoes, barefoot running, recovery tools, GPS watches, etc.

Barefoot running - Don't even ask the question... YES you should run barefoot. If you have access to a grass space where it is safe to run barefoot -- free of potential hazards such as broken glass, etc. -- then incorporating some minutes of barefoot running into your weekly schedule can be a healthy addition. Build into barefoot running gradually. Start with strides barefoot a couple times a week; then add on a couple minutes at the end of your runs. Barefoot running allows your body to use its natural biomechanics, working out kinks like overstrides and more--so it is a tool every successful runner should use!

Shoes [minimalist/maximalist/stability] - The technology for support, durability, and versatility in [whatever latest] shoes still can't beat the tandem of a standard training shoe and some barefoot minutes. A standard training shoe and some barefoot running is still the spartan choice. If you don't have access to an area where barefoot running is possible (free of potential hazards), then appropriate daily or weekly minutes in a minimalist shoe, lightweight trainer, or racing spikes might be a suitable alternative. Similarly, mega cushion shoes might be a great option for a few of your runs each week, but I'd be wary of training in them every day.

Shoes where the midsole (the cushy stuff in the middle) should have a moderate amount of cushioning, ten millimeters or less of heel-toe offset (the difference in stack-height between the heel and the forefoot), and if necessary, stability features to adequately pair to your foot's pronation. Be wary of top-shelf models; they will often have too much cushioning or support for your feet, and/or just be too heavy. You want something adequately light. Ideally, the shape of the midsole should also match the curve of your foot. That is, some shoes are more straight-lasted and some shoes more curve-lasted. You want the shape of the shoe to match the shape of the contact-patch that your bare foot has with ground. Most folks with flatter feet have a straighter (fuller) contact patch so your ideal shoe would have characteristics that include a straighter-shape to the sole (both midsole and outsole), aka "straighter last." Most folks with higher arches will benefit from a shoe that has a "curved last." So among other things, the ideal shoe should match the natural shape of your foot. If you don't already have something that works really well for you, then regardless of where you live, it's worth traveling a ways to shop for shoes at a running-specific shoe store. If possible, go in the morning or early/mid-afternoon on a weekday to get the best service. The store probably won't be so busy on the weekend. Tell the individual working with you that you are training for cross country and you want "a standard training shoe - nothing too fancy." That should get their work with you started in the right direction. Before you buy, be sure to wear the shoe around for a while in the store and then take it for a spin -- run some places around the block. Obviously it should fit well (without uncomfortable pressure-points or tightness across the forefoot, etc.), but most importantly when you run it should feel good -- comfortable and smooth underfoot.

Amount of miles for a pair of shoes - Three to five hundred miles is how many miles you can put into a pair of shoes. Four hundred is the benchmark. Going over this amount runs the risk of getting seriously injured. A supreme option, recommended by your coaches, is to have two to three pairs of shoes that you cycle through weekly, phasing shoes in and out as they become exhausted from the miles you run in them.

Specific workout shoes - A pair of racing flats, “uptempo shoes, or “workout shoes” is a great investment for the seasons to come. In training, these shoes will be used on “quality” days (referenced above) allowing your motion to be even more relaxed at fast paces (or absolutely faster at the same effort) than a standard training shoe. Us coaches would recommend staying away from “super-shoes” (Nike vaporfly/alphafly, dragonfly’s, or other carbon plated shoes) during most workout days, as these are racing shoes. Furthermore, running in these models too often weakens lower leg muscles, increasing risk of injury.

Spikes - A pair of spikes for races is pretty much a must for a competitive runner. While not required, we HIGHLY advise runners to invest in a solid pair of spikes. The freedom and degree of movement that is unlocked by wearing spikes on the race course allows for a higher level of performance. More so, it provides the athlete with more secure footing and traction while racing on hilly, and oftentimes, uneven terrain. Currently, the best spikes on the market are those that include a carbon plate in the sole of the shoe. However, we recommend that the runner invests in whatever pair spikes will make them feel fast and relaxed on the race course.

Recovery tools - While nothing can replace the gold standard of quality nutrition, hydration, and sleep; recovery tools sure can help. Here, we refer to recovery tools as technology like foam rollers, massage guns, Normatec recovery boots, voodoo floss, yoga straps, lacrosse balls, etc. Most of these technologies aim at reducing muscle tension, alleviating fascia tightness, improving blood flow, and increasing mobility around important joints. Using these right can be an excellent tool for high performance recovery. Our coach's recommendation would be to invest in a foam roller (or other like tech) and make a routine of 5 minutes of daily rolling on major muscles.

GPS watch - You do not need a watch. While a basic watch for tracking time and taking splits is recommended (timex watches), it is not necessary. While timekeeping GPS watches can be a beneficial tool, they may not be the most beneficial. For example, in training, we want to tune our efforts into our internal body cues on our runs, listening to what the effort of each run says. On the contrary, a GPS watch can dull this internal feedback, giving external feedback that often detracts from our internal sense of feeling. To elaborate further, we are not telling you to not use GPS watches, we just want to caution our athletes to the potential hazard of “becoming a slave to the watch”.

In regard to races, we do not allow the wearing of watches on the race course. While timekeeping is an important source of data in workouts, racing cross country is about competing with the athletes around you, not the clock. More so, we’ve also found that once athletes liberate themselves from the ideal of “racing the clock”, they perform better and race faster.

Training log - Already recommended above, we highly recommend keeping a training log. There are both online and hardcopy versions of running logs available – choose whichever suits you best. Regardless of medium, there is good value in recording the date, distance, time, and some other brief notes (eg, your route, how you felt, any other notable aspects of your run or your day) into your log on a daily basis.

Can I wear headphones when I run? To promote real interactions with your teammates and the natural environment, we do not allow using headphones/earbuds at practice. Similarly, we recommend that you embrace running for what it is, and the meditative time it can offer, and limit your use of headphones when training on your own this summer. Also significant wearing headphones can be a safety hazard – whether training on trails, paths, sidewalks, or roads.

(The guidance in the above sections are extrapolated from the ideas of Luther College XC and TF Coach Steve Pasche)

6. Beginning the Season

In order to begin the season, **your parents must register you for cross country**. Registration will open in July. If you do not sign-up in time, you will not be able to practice or compete with the team.

The season will begin August 11th . Make sure to show up to practice with adequate clothing, a water bottle, a snack, and a positive attitude.

Our first week of practice will include a time trial. Following the trial, there will be a potluck with parents, family, and friends at a shelter. This will be a display of your summer training, so show up prepared and ready to demonstrate the hard work you put in! Anticipate more details in mid to late summer.

Missing practice - If you are to miss practice, it is expected that you communicate with a coach in advance (24 hour notice is preferred). An email or talking to a coach at practice is vital.

On another note, we realize many of our students are involved in other extracurricular activities—this is highly encouraged! We love having student athletes who represent Mayo in multiple arts outside athletics. Yet, we do want to be transparent and let you all know that being a member of the cross country team comes with responsibility. We expect all student athletes to show up for practice EVERY SINGLE DAY unless they have a NECESSARY conflict.

Plan to have the following in-season daily practice schedule (Meets will cause variation):

PRACTICE STARTING AT 3:45PM daily.

Mondays: Workout

Tuesdays: RR + lift

Wednesdays: Distance

Thursdays: Workout or medium LR + lift

Fridays: RR (game day over the summer)

Saturdays: LR (High School only)

Sundays: day off.

(RR = recovery run, LR = long run)

Students, join the google classroom. Coaches will regularly send announcements and communications via our team classroom. Please use the following team code to join: **fmf2iya** . Parents are also welcome to join the classroom to receive announcements; however, emails will be sent with updates and important announcements.

Color Captains - As coaches, we believe that it is vital to have dedicated student representatives on the team to help with decision making, practice flow, leading warmup and drills, organizing saturday practices, planning games and events, and much much more. This year, we will have numerous (12) captains serving under specific colors. The colors detail specific weekly tasks and roles on the team. Anyone can be a color captain—although we prefer Juniors and Seniors. Athletes will volunteer themselves as a captain, and then the coaches will select those they see the most fit.

- 6 color groups. Each group has two captains in dual roles, serving their group. From week to week, athletes will have different roles such as filling water cooler, explaining workout, writing on erase board, planning mindset Wednesdays, planning games and activities, and supporting teammates.
- Weekly Friday color captain meetings with the coaches. These will be held after practice and should be relatively short.

Competition Expectation - All runners are expected to compete in meets if on the team—with adjustments made for those that are injured or dealing with other health related issues. While we love and prioritize the communion of training and hanging out with friends, we are not a run club.

During competition at meets and time trials, we expect our athletes to be standout individuals. We will support our teammates, respect other competitors, clean up after ourselves, and, above all, exhibit great sportsmanship. Furthermore, we expect all athletes to cheer on their teammates during cooldowns and warmups. Confide in each-other and support one another.

Middle schoolers typically race in middle school meets. We believe, regardless of performance, that competing within your age group is an important stepping stone. However, if performance is exemplary, we reserve the right to move athletes up to Varsity and JV (after consultation with parents).

Core Values - All athletes and staff respect individuality and differences. Coaches will work with athletes regardless of circumstances; however, if values are broken enough times, assessment of place on team will be assessed. Our core values are the following:

- Support each other physically, emotionally, and recognize individuality.
- Respect differences of other athletes.
- Exude good sportsmanship and teamwork
- Build eachother up through the highs and the lows.

Competition Attire - During competition, we will wear our uniforms and nothing else (unless instructed by coaches). No headphones, no GPS watches, and no undershirts or shorts. Headbands and hats that match team colors are acceptable. If you have issues with this, please speak with a coach.

Tentative Meets (subject to change)

Fri, Aug 29 Rosemount Invite
Thu, Sept 4 Fairbault
Thu, Sep 11 Mayo Invitational
Fri, Sep 19 Roy Griak Invitational - HS (Varsity)
Sat, Sep 20 Winona (V?)
Tue, Sep 23 Mankato West Invitational (JV?)
Thu, Oct 2 Ev Berg Invitational
Tue, Oct 7 Rochester All-City Championships
Tue, Oct 14 Big 9 Conference Championships
Thu, Oct 23 MSHSL Section 1AAA Championships
Thu, Oct 23 Section 1AAA JV
MSHSL State 1AAA Championships

Resources (links available in online handbook):

- Benefits to threshold training: [link](#)
- Team racing and tactics: [link](#)
- [Pace Calculators](#)
- [Strength and Conditioning](#)
- [Agility and Speed Drills](#)
- [Summer Training Program](#)
- [Spartan Running Log](#)
- [Core and Myrtle Routines](#)

