

as of 9-14

East Ridge Cross Country



Team Handbook



Run

Just like many user manuals, here is a “Quick Guide” to this Team Handbook:

-ABSENCES: Runners need to send a note (via email) to Coach Cronin explaining the absence from practice or meet. Parents should be copied in the email. (Generally, runners need to be present at least 80% of all practices to earn the required attendance ‘point’ on the letter policy). For those who have earned a spot on the V team for post season meets, being present at 2 of the 3 MEA practices is required.

-LETTERING: Though it is not our emphasis as we understand and value everyone’s work, earning a Varsity letter is just that—a varsity letter. Therefore, we have letter points explained in the Letter Requirements page. There are many years where it is really tough to make the V squad. Therefore, we have a system that allows runners to earn V points if they run a full distance race, with a time that corresponds to the V race times, on that particular course. Please see “Letter Requirements” page.

-MEETS: Everyone can run in every meet during the regular season! Varsity is determined by the previous meet for 5-7 of the runners (especially for the first half of the season. Sometimes for the last couple regular meets, we may try different strategies and/or train through a meet). Often times, 10 V runners make up a varsity line up. It takes 7 to score a meet. Ultimately, it is the coaches’ discretion when strategizing meets. Although, all runners run in one heat or another. The last scoring runner is the 5th runner on a team. The places make up the team score with 6th and 7th runners ‘adding’ point to other teams. For school day meets, only those running/training at the meet should be dismissed early to attend. We want students missing school as little as possible. It’s usually a small number, but if there are those on the injured list, they are certainly welcomed to non-school day meets (ie St, Olaf or Milaca Meets).

-PRACTICE/MEET Times: School year practices are Mon.-Sat. 3:30-5 (until 5:30 on Tuesdays) and 9-10am on Saturdays (could be until 10:30 for those going the long route). Again, students are expected to be at practice. Please refer to absences above. Meet schedules can be found on suburbaneast.org. Each week, the info for the meet will be sent out via email and posted on our website (East Ridge Activities →NGIN → Cross Country).



Welcome to the cross country season. You are embarking on a fine adventure as a member of the East Ridge Cross Country Team. I am sure you will find success on and off the race course. This season holds many amazing opportunities for running well. We will also be creating some incredible, new memories as we have fun along with working hard towards our goals, making new friends, and running with old friends, both in practice and in competition. I trust you are ready to begin practicing, both physically and mentally, with this team as we look forward to competition. Choose a great attitude. It is so true that “Life is 10 % what happens and 90% how I react.” (-Swindol). It is equally true that attitude is contagious, good or bad, so please honestly asks yourself—is yours worth catching? I hope you are looking forward to a rewarding season. I expect great things and hope you’re expecting that too.

Thanks to all the parents! Thanks for being your son or daughter’s biggest supporter as they participate in this fantastic sport. Also, thank you in advance for getting your son or daughter to practice and to the bus for meets. Thanks to the few of you who are on the Parent Booster Group. Please refer to the **website** for practices, meets and special activities.

Please know what is required of you—*athletes* must be good listeners, respectful, ready to learn and give their best effort while choosing safe running behavior; *coaches* must be prepared, organized, teach thoroughly, and provide corrective and positive evaluation; *parents* must love, unconditionally, their son or daughter without regard to how fast or slow and whether we win or lose. Please refer to the rest of this handbook for consequences for misbehavior.

I also want to add that I encourage all runners to participate in additional high school sports and activities. Many of you know I had coached swimming for a long time—I think it would be great if some of you tried a triathlon in the off season. However, for now we look forward to this season, as you become a part of this year’s diligent, respectful and hardworking team. Most importantly we expect to have some fun while accomplishing many of these goals. Again, in order to do this, we expect that hard work and dedication as well as having positive attitudes. Our primary goal is to be excellent—on and off the racecourse.

If you have any questions about our program or wish to give input about the contents of this handbook, please feel free to contact me before or after practice (or by phone at my school 768-3673). Thank you.

Go Raptors!

-Coach Cronin ccronin@sowashco.k12.mn.us 651 768-3673

Coach Ness lness@sowashco.k12.mn.us

Coach Gramer gramerfamily@comcast.net

“Runner”- someone who runs.

There many advantages to being a runner. Really, you can learn a lot about yourself and life. There are the many health benefits; it’s a very efficient way to get a workout (your workout starts when you leave the door and ends when you return—other activities require quite a bit of set up etc.). It’s a great way to explore a new area or getting to see a new city by running a races. On this team, we are also going to have fun and we will strive for excellence. Of course, when we usually hear that term we think of performance on the race course. However, success really shows its way in multiple levels. There’s the obvious (winning) but remembering what we’ve learned from highs and lows, teamwork and coming together and as a result using that to become better people is the best measurement of success in my mind.

“Go Raptors!”

PLEASE see suburbaneast.org and our site at East Ridge for calendars and schedules.

MEETS: Please see suburbaneast.org for locations of our meets. I will also post schedules on our website and send out a team email each week. I’ve done the best I could to come up with as much detail as possible. The return time to ERHS after meets is approximate. I wait until everyone is gone from the activities entrance before leaving my self. Please arrange for rides. Remember our district name is on the bus. Clean up the site at the meet, as well as leaving the bus clean. — Represent our communities well. Thanks.

PRACTICES: You are expected to be at every practice everyday (see attendance later for circumstances). Practice is at 3:30 (and generally goes to 5:00 depending on our mileage for the day) at East Ridge High School. *Do NOT walk down to practice if you are late. If you know you’re late, whatever the reason, hustle down to practice!* On most days, PLEASE PLAN ON A 5PM end time—we may get done early on some days but block that practice time out of your schedule everyday. Some athletes going the farthest distance on our long days may need a little more time. So, they may go a little past 5 on a few days. There is an activity bus, which leaves both Lake and Wood. and Cottage Grove Middle -for anyone needing to get to the high school for meets. In this sport you mustn’t be late—you could miss the team as we might already be out. Even though almost all our runs are on paths, remember to RUN against traffic when running on roads. Be courteous of others. If there is a walker, runner or cyclist, have your group move over. We are a large team. Even at meets we are bigger than most teams. Be courteous and move away from the path when warming up etc.

What you will need (athletic office): Athletic office check list (eligibility) Please see Activities office for the official check list and all the forms and fees associated with it. You must be cleared—no exceptions (you may not participate in the team meeting, warm up and workout with out it:

_____ Athletic fee

_____ Current Physical on file

_____ Parents’ Permit and Health Questionnaire

_____ MSHSL Athletic Eligibility Statement (signed and dated)

_____ Any School Dist. 833 Additional Eligibility Forms (signed and dated)

_____ Waiver of Insurance and Media Release (signed and dated)

_____ MSHSL Athletic Eligibility Information

We also, as a team, sign our "Statement of Dedication". Please make sure you do this.

What you will need (specifically for Cross Country):

- *a good attitude and a desire to improve
- *good quality running shoes
- *practice clothes
- *water bottle
- *towels

- *prescriptions/inhalers
- *watch

DO NOT leave valuables (cell phones etc) unattended at our site.

- *TEAM spirit and a competitive attitude
- *TEAM uniform for meets (see uniform check out form)
- *travel bag- towel, water bottle etc.
- *warm clothes when weather is cooler
- *towels
- *prescriptions/inhale
- *watch

*Distance flats and spikes for meets (optional)

STUDENT ATHLETE TEAM GUIDELINES

Runners should treat their membership on the team as a privilege and recognize those responsibilities, expectations, and behaviors that are associated with their membership.

Attendance

Absences (from practices or meets)

Excused – (you must have a note from a parent or doctor upon return.)

- Not at school (illness, family emergency, etc.)
- Appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) – if at all possible, try to schedule after practice

UNEXCUSED

- Any other reason,. (also includes parties, shopping, babysitting, jobs...)
- Leave early without coach permission= one unexcused absence --YOU MUST NOT BE TARDY as we could already be out on our run

- Unexcused absences OR UNACCAEPTABLE BEHAVIOR = not participating in next meet and/or LETTER POINTS REDUCED (remember that lettering not only includes performances as an athlete but also finishing the season in good standing—behavior, attitude etc.

- Detention

General Behavior expectations-

You must be respectful...

- **and listen to your coaches. When they are talking, which isn't a lot in this sport, please listen.**

- take care of school property appropriately AND REPRESENT EAST RIDGE WELL IN THE COMMUNITY.
- Be a team player (no put downs).
- Be respectful of teammates by being in your own space.
- Avoid “dropping” runners, “loop back”- we are a team!!!

Arriving late or leaving early

Excused must have note:

- School work (must have **teacher note**—please refer to late policy)
- Medical appointment (must have **parent note**)
- Sudden illness (**parent note** by next practice) EMAIL NOTES ARE PREFERRED! See attendance above.

Please be ready to go as soon as you can. Your successes depend on the work you put into this.

Runners who miss the day before a meet (due to illness etc), will most likely **NOT** be the meet line up however, the coaches will try to get the athletes back in (if they are present with a note and depending on the reason for absence)-- though this is not guaranteed. Please let me know as soon possible if you will be gone or present. IF you're too injured to run an easier run the day before the meet, then usually it's too much to ask of your body to run hard the next day.

***CALL 768-3673 on any meet day if you know you cannot attend due to sickness etc. Please do this by 10 am so changes can be made –or, EVEN BETTER, email ccronin@sowashco.k12.mn.us**

Behavior and Conduct (All meets)

1. Be respectful toward coaches, teammates, opponents, officials and oneself.
2. Show good sportsmanship
 - a. Participate in team cheers/warm up.
 - b. *Don't burst over a poor performance, concentrate on the next.*
3. Stay with the team
 - a. Never leave the bus without permission.
 - b. Always watch and cheer on your teammates.
4. Wear your uniform.—stay warm.
5. Keep our area clean.
6. Always do the assigned warm-up as soon as you can. Do your warm-down as assigned.
7. Line up as directed and *respect* our national anthem.

Behavior and Conduct (meets)

1. Follow dress code*. By doing so you are showing respect for your team.
2. Be here at least 10 minutes before the bus time. Late = could miss the bus.
3. The district policy is **that athletes ride to and from meets on the bus**. We have buses for weekends and unless otherwise noted, athletes should ride back to ERHS on the bus (if there are special circumstances, please talk with the coach and AD *before* the day of the meet. IF YOU LEAVE THE MEET WITH YOUR PARENTS, THEY MUST SIGN OUT WITH COACH CRONIN, AT THE MEET, BEFORE YOU CAN LEAVE. RUNNERS MAY ONLY LEAVE WITH THEIR OWN PARENTS. Thanks.)

1. Help with meet set up—tent etc.
2. Stay for clean up.
3. Help time when needed.

Practice - Remember your participation is a choice that you have made.

1. Get to practice as soon as you can and be ready for the warm up run
2. Show respect for coaches and teammates.
3. **Work hard** - you get out of a program what you put in.
4. Be positive! -Treat practice as a competition with yourself and teammates.
5. Be prepared (Bathroom break, water bottles for long runs etc. before practice)
6. Inappropriate behavior will result in expulsion and = unexcused absence

Injuries/Medications

1. If you are injured and require medical attention you must have a physician release to resume practice.
2. If you require medication (inhaler, insulin, etc.) you must inform the coach and have your medication with you in case you need it.

Reminder on meets:

Whenever you attend a Cross Country Meet you are representing an excellent school, great communities, a wonderful sport and a proud team. For this reason you are expected to be on your best behavior, I mean that, and dress properly. We will dress up at school for some meets. For some other meets we will, as an alternative, be wearing team shirts or East Ridge apparel to show team unity.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE SEASON

School Work

Remember you are a student first and an athlete second. Your grades will have far more impact in life than a time or a place. Keep in mind in order to letter as a cross country runner, you must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average. Inform the coach before practice if you need to stay after school to complete assignments (teacher note). Your study time will be limited so you need to practice good time management. Refer to attendance policy.

Practice

You are expected to be at every required practice, every day, on time and ready to do your best. You will become very tired or even exhausted. This is to be expected and these feelings will produce great results in the long term. Be smart about the workouts. If the coaches instruct you run long, please don't run too fast. Run at an easy pace. If they instruct you to hit certain times in an interval workout, give it your best shot. You will find within yourself much more energy if you can use your teammates to your advantage. Your muscles will get sore; this is natural and not a sign of injury. You may experience a sharp muscle pain; this is most likely a muscle cramp. Please see the coach as soon as you can if you feel like you cannot participate in a workout due to injury, illness etc. Communicate with your coach! Honestly listen to your body. If you are experiencing sharp, point pain that can not be relieved through stretching or resting, then it's time to see a trainer. If your injury requires the attention of a physician you must obtain a physician's permit to resume practice. In practice think--"If you want to change to do something great, you may have to do something different!" Again, I absolutely value hard work.

Measuring Progress

Throughout the season you will have highs and lows. Don't expect to get your personal best time at every meet. Look at every practice, every workout, and every meet as an opportunity to learn and to challenge your self. Quite often we learn more about our self and our task through failure than success. Don't be afraid of failure, only of not learning from it! Never compare yourself with anyone else. You are a unique individual and you are your only true competition. If you win the battle from within and be your best, there will be no better outcome. Whether or not you get the chance to run in a meet is based on your coaches' discretion. Sitting

out at meets could be a consequence for negative behavior etc. IT is a privilege to compete. Please have fun but also take that privilege seriously.

Invitational Meets

Generally all Cross Country meets are invitationals (many teams invited to a particular meet). The regular season is made up of these. Unlike other sports, there is not a conference schedule. We compete at the conference meet at the close of the season. Again, our main goal is to outscore all of the other opponents. Most use 7 varsity runners and unlimited JV entrants (see requirements below in Meet Day Policies). Some meets have grade level races. The distance for BOYS IS 5 KILOMETERS and GIRLS IS 4 KILOMETERS. (It is my philosophy to have all kids, regardless of grade level to run the full distance—many schools have a separate middle school program and often have many coaches so at times middleschoolers have shorter races. Middleschoolers do have the option to run in those races if they choose. Please let your coach know which race you'd like to run in. They vary in distance (1-mile to the full distance). However, every runner will end up being capable of the full distance as it will be a distance at least covered in practice). There will be chances at a few meets to run middle school races but again most are the full distance. Please refer to the calendar.

Meet Day Policies

- We race in 7-9 meets per season (total through the post season).
- We need all team members at the meet for the entire time. - Those watching should give the athletes/coaches space before and after the races. They should please refrain from coming to the team camp or starting line right before the race begins. This is a time of concentration and focus. WE WILL HAVE A PREMEET ROUTINE TO DO AS A TEAM.
- After the race concludes the athletes need to run their cool down run- Parents, please allow them to do so. AGAIN, WE WILL HAVE A ROUTINE FOR THE CLOSE OF THE MEET.
- Encourage all runners. Cross Country is not the Olympics. Success for each athlete is defined differently.
- **Generally, the top 5-7 runners in each race will run varsity in the next regular season race. During the regular season usually 10 are on the V roster for each meet. THIS IS AT THE COACHES' DISCRETION. THERE ARE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE WE MAY USE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES AS WE ARE TRYING TO OUT SCORE THE OTHER TEAMS --ESPECIALLY IN THE POST SEASON. Also, in the event of injury or illness, the coaches will utilize their judgment on the varsity line up. The coaches will utilize the last few meets of the season to determine post season V rosters. This will be used to determine the top 7 athletes who will be listed on the Section (and State Roster). The top 5 will come from that previous meet and the other 2 will most likely be from the meet too.** Once the top 9 names are submitted one hour prior to the start of the section meet, no substitutions for the original nine are allowed. The section and state meet roster will be announced on the Monday prior to the Section Meet.

Take care of **Uniforms: Wear only for meets.**

Please follow the laundry instructions. Replacement costs are approx. \$30.00; please make sure you turn in the entire set following your last meet of the season. You will sign a uniform check out form at the start of the season. Shorts should be purchased with the singlet being issued and returned.

Championship Meets

The season end meet for a runner will depend on the qualifying position they are able to meet. This could vary from Middle School; Junior Varsity, Sectional or State championship meets. For these meets we will be tapering (more rest), carbohydrate loading etc. You must be in school the

day of all meets (unless the travel time or meet time conflicts), which includes post season meets (sections, state etc.). This is a district policy.

Travel

Once again, when we travel by bus to another community you are representing your community, school, and team. You are expected to be on your best behavior. Plan on being at school 10 minutes before the bus' scheduled time (see calendar). The bus will wait for no one. If you are late, you will miss the bus. If your behavior on the bus is inappropriate, you will incur team consequences.

Team Socials

Team social events are always fun and a great way to get to know your teammates better. Although you and/or your parents are not required to attend, it's a good idea to get involved. It would be nice to have one or two of these (for example, my former teams had families who hosted "pasta parties"— everyone put in \$5 to cover the cost). Please see the team calendar for when and where these are.

Training: Your taper time is based on a whole season of work. If you have put in deposits (worked!), paid your dues, you will be able to draw on that at taper time. This is why from day one you should desire to work your hardest, not skip or cheat on workouts. *Without a training base there can be no taper.*

Attitude: Your performance is greatly affected by your perception as to how you think you will perform. Mental training throughout the season can be just as important as the physical training. You need to learn and practice relaxation, concentration, visualization and creating a positive atmosphere for you and your teammates. I cannot emphasize a good attitude enough!

Preparation: Leave nothing to chance. Prepare for every situation (check meet bag for equipment- uniform, spikes etc.). Learn to accept the uncontrollable (weather, race course terrain) and focus your concentration on staying in the "here and now" which is the only thing you are able to control.

Eating: During a short period before the championship meet your coach may ask you to alter your eating pattern. We cut down or eliminate our intake of meats, dairy products, carbonated beverages, and foods high in sugar. We load up on carbohydrates like breads, pasta, vegetables and fruits. Remember most of the energy you're using in your race is from meals consumed over the last three days, so your meal prior to competition should help you to not go hungry or to be that "good luck" ritual meal. Small snacks high in carbohydrate and low in sugar (i.e. Knox blocks, power bars, etc.) are fine but don't over do it. Remember that we need to drink plenty of water. This applies throughout the season.

Rest: This is very important. A few years ago I read an article where this very successful coach at a University was asked what the common characteristic in all his runners is. He thought for a while and responded with the fact that all his runners get 8 hours a sleep a night.

Season End Banquet

This is the final team function of the season. It is a dress up affair when all team members; their parents and families get together for the coaches' presentation of awards. We will award certificates of participation, letter winners, academic achievement, Team Spirit, Hardest Worker, Most Improved, Most valuable, All Conference and many any other accomplishments made over the course of the season.

LETTERING REQUIREMENTS

See letter form

COMPETITIVE TRAINING PRINCIPLES

Motivation

In any athletic training program motivation is the key factor to success in reaching your goals. In order to become motivated to reach your goals, it is necessary to be committed to what you would like to accomplish.

1. Write down specific goals.
2. Set goals which are obtainable.
3. Set goals in small increments.
4. Use certain meets as target dates for your goals.
5. Talk to someone that has achieved a similar goal.
6. Record your achievements.

Physical Training

Increasing your level of fitness will be the biggest component the achievement of your goals. Total fitness is comprised of many areas, each of which you will need to address in your training program.

Aerobic Capacity: Aerobic capacity, the measurement of cardio-respiratory endurance, is the most important component of physical fitness. It represents the maximal quantity of oxygen that can be delivered from the air to the tissues during heavy exertion. Aerobic capacity will be increased through swimming, jogging, bicycling, or any other exercise that uses major muscle groups for extended periods of time.

Flexibility: Flexibility is the range of motion of a joint or a series of joints. Flexibility prevents injury and increases the body's functional capacity to perform a task. Flexibility will be increased through a daily stretching routine.

Muscular Endurance: Muscular endurance is the ability of muscles to do prolonged work. Obviously, running increases it and will be our main form of training. However, there are other exercises you can do for "cross training". This includes biking, swimming and also some weight training of moderate workloads of long duration with little rest. Endurance components require the greatest investment of time and effort for improvement, but the rewards are long lasting and will return great paybacks at meets.

Muscular Strength: Muscular strength is the contracting force of muscles. It is increased through weight lifting and isometric exercises approaching maximum exertion in which muscle contractions are sustained with minimal repetition and sufficiently long periods of rest.

Anaerobic Metabolism: Anaerobic means "without oxygen" and refers to the output of energy for muscular contraction without the use of oxygen. It is used in any isometric exercise or aerobic exercise when 60% of aerobic capacity is exceeded. This energy system is utilized to the greatest extent within the first 15-20 seconds of any physical exertion and requires the most time to recover. Hence, knowing what level to train at with relation to heart rate and exertion is important. "Bonking" can be miserable too.

Rest

When you are putting stress on your body to become stronger and faster you need to balance your workload with quality rest. Your coach will allow for this within your training plan; however, it

is up to you to complete all your tasks and allow for a good *8 hours of sleep* at night.

Nutrition

When you are in training the demands on your body are increased and it is important that you maintain a well balanced diet to meet the demand. The following are some suggestions to improve your diet:

1. Use more plant foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, and foods made with grains and cereals.
2. Use foods made from whole-grains, including breads, cereals, and pasta.
3. Use more fish and poultry and leaner cuts of beef and pork.
4. Avoid fry cooked foods heavy in oil.
5. Avoid foods with high sugar content.
6. Drink more fruit juices and water (avoid pop—I have lots of literature on this topic).
7. Use low-fat dairy products.
8. Don't skip meals. Eat three well-balanced meals each day.

General Seasonal Training Plan

Early season: Increase *aerobic* base. Hopefully, most runners have a base from the summer. As the season progresses we will increase mileage. Increase flexibility though daily stretching and exercise program. Learn competitive skills and rules through various strategies. Majority of runs are longer in duration to get that important base.

Mid season: Increase awareness of race pace through split-time recording and incorporating percentages of those paces into practice sets. Continue growth of endurance base but start to incorporate some track sets and hill repeats.. More sets with goal times where the amount of rest is based on recovery rates to train specific metabolic systems.

Championship season: Taper down just before big meet(s) however keeping the aerobic level ready for peak performance. Possibly alter diet with a short period of carbohydrate loading. Will include sets of shorter duration with maximum race pace efforts with equal or greater periods of rest.

Runners “energy” Food Menu

For a short period of time (less than three days) prior to your championship meet your coach may suggest the following menu choices as the best energy food selections for peak performance. Although these menu selections are of value throughout the season, you should eat a well balanced diet as suggested in the nutrition article above. (Please don't go hungry). This is not an all inclusive list but a good start to a list.

Apples	Cranberry Cocktail	Honey
Apple Juice	Custard	Jell-O
Apple Sauce	Dates	Macaroni
Apricots, canned or dried	Dried Fruits	Malt-O-Meal
Bagel	Fig Newtons	NO MEAT!
Bananas	Fig Bars	Milk- Only skim
Beets	Fructose	No more than 4 servings a day.
Beans	Fruit Juices	No milk on meet day.
Bran Flake Cereals	Fruit Cocktail in Syrup	Molasses
Cantaloupe	Grapes	Oatmeal
Carrots Cooked	Grape Fruit	Oranges *
Cherries, canned or raw	Grape Juice	Orange Juice
Coconut	Hard Candy	Pancakes
Corn	Hard Rolls	

Peaches, Canned or Frozen
Peanut Butter- No Nuts
Pears
Peas
Pineapple Canned
Potatoes, Baked or Boiled
Prunes
Raisins
Rice

Rye Bread
Spaghetti- No Meat
Squash (Winter) dark
Sweet Potatoes
Syrup Sherbert- Not on day of
meet
Strawberries, Frozen in sugar
Toast
Vanilla Wafers

Wheat Germ
Yogurt with Fruit- Not on
meet day

*don't eat too much citrus on the day
of the meet

The info in this handbook was compiled by Chad Cronin from various research on running and aerobic activities. Some portions of this handbook are from the Team Handbook I used as a head high school swim coach for 14 years (The 1st Edition was created by longtime Coach Doug Tomhave and then I've made several revision over the years.)