

Liberty HS XC Team Handbook

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The Liberty XC season officially begins on Aug. 21st @ 3pm, meeting on the upper fields (Baseball/Softball). Until school is in session on 8-29, we will run off campus with times & locations posted on the web site. During the school year, our meeting site is either directly outside the locker rooms near the stadium or the upper fields.

The use of Final Forms to complete all paperwork is mandatory. No athlete can participate in an official practice without all forms completed/accepted in Final Forms. Since 8 practices are needed to compete in 2mi. races and 10 practices for the 5K races, the longer it takes to complete forms will mean races will be missed. We will close registration at the end of the 2nd week of school.

Parent night is scheduled for Monday 8-28 @ 6pm at Liberty. Parents are required to attend.

During the season, all information pertaining to schedules, practices, forms, information, etc will be posted on the XC home page:

<http://www.libertypatriots.net/cross-country---boys--girls.html>

General Expectations

Prioritize academic achievement throughout the season and school year. Minimum requirements are outlined in the ISD Athletic Code; however, success in Cross Country involves much more than meeting minimum requirements.

Be on time for everything. Being early is better.

Support your LHS XC family with encouragement for all of your teammates, regardless of ability or experience.

Be prepared for practices and races mentally and physically. Hydrate, eat and sleep well.

Communicate consistently, clearly and often with your coaches, captains and teammates.

Hold yourself to a high standard by establishing clear goals for yourself and your team.

Train consistently and sustainably.

Be accountable for your actions and attitude.

Commit to have fun with your teammates.

Practices

Unless otherwise noted, regular, after-school practices will begin 20 min. after last period and end between 1.5 ~ 2hrs after. Practices are mandatory. Roll will be taken, and any unexcused absences will affect the athlete's ability to earn a letter and/or continue to participate with the team. If, for any reason, you must miss a practice, please communicate in advance with Coach Smith via email or advise a team captain of your plans.

Practice days are at a min, Mon ~ Fri, with Sat & Sun being optional. Top Level XC runners who will be competing in College can expect to train consistently 6 ~ 7 days a week, with cross-training, weight lifting and core exercises as part of their daily routine as they advance in the sport. We believe in progression so Freshman will almost always be doing less than Seniors to allow for young bodies to adapt and mature. Athletes should always communicate with the coaches any training activities they do outside of the after-school practices to avoid unnecessary injuries from overtraining.

The Boys & Girls race the same distance, 2mi in pre-season, 5K for regular and post-season. The teams practice together and do essentially the same workouts since we base practices on current effort/ability. For most seasons, the top Varsity Boys will train as a group and the top Varsity Girls will intermix with JV boys. The Liberty rule-of-thumb is a 20min 5K runner trains like a 20min 5K runner, regardless of gender. There are physiological differences between the boys & girls that are always taken into account but we try to base effort/mileage on where we are and where we want to be at the end of season. The goal is to make it to end of the season, healthy and happy.

Varsity Team Selection

During the season, the Kingco league meets consist of 1 Boys & 1 Girls race. The top 7 finishers are considered "Varsity" for that day.

For Invites, performance level as indicated by finish times and finish places in previous competitions is considered as well as athlete availability for the designated meet .

Post Season consists of the Kingco League Meet, District Meet & State. In most years, the top 5 by time are designated as Varsity for the Kingco Meet with Coaches choosing the additional 2 members to make up the squad for this race. The balance of the team participates in the JV meet for the opportunity to make the Varsity squad for Dist. The same criteria will be used for the District Meet & State. Having been on Varsity during the season does not guarantee spots for post-season.

All the above is subject to change at coaches discretion.

Lettering Requirements

Participation Letter Requirements:

The athlete must participate in the program for the entire season and finish in good standing. This includes competing in at least 2 regular season meets.

Varsity Letter Requirements:

The athlete must meet finish the season in good standing, having participated in the program for the entire season.

MEET AT LEAST one of the following additional criterion:

Finish 2 of the season's meets as a Varsity athlete (top 7)

Compete in and finish the Kingco, District championship Varsity races or compete in the state championship race.

Individuals may be awarded a Varsity Letter if an athlete demonstrates unusual contributions the Team. This contribution may be expressed in any manner that enables other individuals and/or the team to achieve success over a four-year period with Liberty XC.

The coaches reserve the right to make all final lettering decisions.

Cross Country Gear Guide

Gear for training/practices:

Training shoes. Take good care of your feet by visiting a professional at Roadrunner Sports, Super Jock & Jill, Fleet Feet, etc. They'll take the time to work with you individually and provide a customized recommendation. Shoes are subject to indiv. wear and there is no mileage rule that works across the board, some runners can get 250 miles, some can wear a pair of shoes for over 500 miles. When the outsole is worn through or the midsole is compressed, it's time. Coach always recommends a new pair tucked away so that you have that new pair avail when you need them.

A watch. There is no need to spend a lot of money on this--there are a ton of adequate options out there for less than \$20.

Clothes. Specialized running shirt(s), socks and shorts (wicking material, not cotton). Gloves & jackets/long sleeve tops, tights/pants for colder runs.

Water. There are limited options avail most days so it's important for all athletes to always bring water to practice.

Gear for Meets:

Uniform

Training shoes

Optional racing flats or spikes. If you have spikes, remember the wrench. ¼" spikes are sufficient for most to all XC courses.

Socks

Warmup Top & Bottoms

Healthy, post-meet food (avoid junk food)

Water/sports drink

Towel (for sitting on and/or drying off)

Watch

Some extra money, if desired (invite shirts, food, etc.)

Layers (see below) if it's cool or raining

Optional blanket if it's really cold

Extra clothing for when you get wet

Nutrition, Hydration and Health

The overall health of all athletes is our #1 consideration. Individual needs, questions and challenges with differ with every individual, so ongoing and regular communication with coaches is crucial. One size does not fit all, but here are some good general considerations:

Food:

Eat! As a general rule, Michael Pollan's advice to "eat food, not too much, mostly plants" serves as a good general guideline. Eat healthy foods in moderation.

In general, the USDA Choose MyPlate for teens offers excellent suggestions. Balance your diet with a variety of meats, vegetables, fruits and whole wheat breads. You're a runner, and you need good fuel!

Avoid the regular consumption of junk food! Treats are great (chocolate chip cookies or ice cream are good examples), but they should be saved for special occasions and consumed in moderation. Homemade treats are best!

As a general rule, avoid eating 2 ~ 3 hours before a race or hard workout, and your race day meals should be balanced, healthy and easy to digest and less than normal. On race days, most athletes are nervous and food will take longer to digest. Being hungry before a race is better than being full.

"Carbo loading" is totally unnecessary and pointless for high school runners.

Hydration:

Sugary sodas in excess are bad for you

Giant caffeinated drinks are bad for you (and expensive!)

Energy drinks as a beverage are bad for you

Water is good for you. The amount you need to stay hydrated will vary. A good rule to remember (and you'll hear from your coaches) is that your urine should always be "clear and copious." If it's not, you're likely dehydrated! 2-3 liters per day is a good guideline.

Practicing good hydration is an all day, every day exercise

Overall health:

Sleep! 8-10 hours per night is the standard for teenagers

Never be shy about discussing aches, pains and soreness with the coaches. "Running through" an injury can often make it worse: if something doesn't feel right, talk to a coach right away. (Disclaimer: all will experience pain at some point). Learning to "listen to your body" is a process that takes practice.

Throwing up before, during or after a race is never normal or healthy. If this happens, please discuss it with your coach. Same goes for collapsing after a race. Keep moving, and replenish with water and good food when ready.

Meets:

ISD requires that athletes ride the bus, if provided, to the meets with the team. The bus will leave the meet after the last LHS race/awards ceremony. It's ok to have a parent/guardian drive their athlete home from a meet or an invite. If this is the case, please communicate with the Coaches and sign the release form before you leave. Students can sometimes drive themselves to meets but a form needs to be turned in prior to the Athletic office. Students can never drive another student home from a meet, parents can transport other athletes if they have the proper form filled out and signed.

There are invites where parent transportation is required and there are no forms required.

From the time we arrive at a meet to the time we complete our team cool down, we expect the athletes to stay with their teammates and coaches. Visiting with parents, friends or fans can be done after the team cool down.

Athletes need time to warm-up on the course, be briefed by their coaches, and prepare for the race with their teammates.

During the race, you can move from point to point along the course to cheer the runners as they pass. Be careful, however, to stay off the course and out of their way. Rules also forbid running alongside a competitor to pace or encourage the runner.

Please take lots of photos and share the good ones on our Photos page!

These expectations help our athletes and coaches be more successful and productive at a meet. We hope you will help reinforce our meet expectations.