



Important Info for Cross Country runners and parents



#1 SHOES!
#2 SHOES!!
#3 SHOES!!!

So, when your son decided to run Cross Country, did the thought “Cross Country, that can’t be very expensive.” cross your mind? Well, it could be worse, but it does require a commitment to keep your runner healthy. Seriously, this is the **most important** one of the few ways you can support your son in this sport of individual performance.

A high quality pair of distance running shoes will help protect him from injury from the cumulative stress on his feet and legs. Getting a proper fit, at least for the 1st pair you purchase, is also vital. It’s a good idea to have a professional help find the right shoes. Mojo Running in West Chester, Bob Ronker’s Running Spot in Obryonville, and Fleet Feet in Blue Ash have staffs that will ensure proper fit. (Sometimes running shoes will be a ½ or whole size larger than their everyday shoes. They need good support, cushioning and extra room in the toe box or their foot will do a lot of banging against the front of the shoe.) Some running stores also offer a discount to team athletes, making them as affordable as other sporting goods stores.

Shoes do not last forever. After about 300 miles, the cushioning and tread are worn. Sometimes the wear is internal and can’t be seen. Replacing shoes **often** is the other critical factor in keeping runners healthy. **Often = every 6 weeks**, especially during high mileage times. Mark your calendar when you purchase the shoes and check with your son about how he is feeling. If his shins are starting to ache a little, it may be time to replace. With experience, runners can tell when it’s time for a new pair of shoes.

HYDRATION

Drinking enough fluids is high priority always. Your son should learn to keep a water bottle with him at all times. Constant hydration is the goal, not just drinking right before or just following a race or long run. He will and should consume gallons of water! Sports drinks are great after a race as well. Water is still the #1 choice.

NUTRITION

Another way you can help your son is by providing him with high quality food choices. A lot of lean protein, quality grains, fruits, vegetables are all good choices in general. Avoid sodas. He should eat 2-3 hours prior to a long training run/race. Bananas, oatmeal, bagel—something that sits light would be well suited. No protein, fats or any heavy foods just before a race. No heavy breakfast before a race or morning practice! After the race or practice....indulge a little....replace the energy you burned!

TICK TICK TICK

Cross country runners must learn to pace themselves. If they run slower than capable on a part of the course, they may never be able to make the time up, resulting in a poor finish. If they run too fast on part of the course, they will expend too much energy at once, from which they will not recover, resulting in a poor finish. Five or ten seconds over a mile can make a huge difference. For this reason, runners should get in the habit of wearing a watch during practice and meets. It helps them develop a sense of their own pace.

ICE ICE, BABY

No, not the catchy dance song by Vanilla Ice. The team training facility is equipped with a large tub, similar to a bathtub. After practices, this tub is filled with ice and water. Immersion in this cold water helps the body recover from the intense physical activity. Runners should ice several times a week. Runners who have sustained prior injuries should ice every day. If you have questions about the value of icing, speak to a member of the coaching or training staff.