

LaSalle Cross Country (XC)

Cross Country Meets for Beginning Parents

Welcome to Cross Country at LaSalle High School. LaSalle has a very strong tradition in Cross Country. However, many parents are unfamiliar with the sport if they have not had a son participate previously. The purpose of this pamphlet is to answer some basic questions and provide some tips so that you can enjoy the meets as much as possible.

Cross Country Meet Basics:

- A Cross Country meet often consists of several races. Typical races are at the Varsity, JV (Junior-Varsity), and Freshmen level. However, it is also common to have an Open race.
- Varsity and JV races are 3.1 miles, or 5,000 meters long. Freshmen often run this same distance especially if they are running in the JV or Open race but some meets have a 2 mile course specifically for the Freshmen. This is the case at the GCL Championship.
- Cross Country meets have both boy and girl races. The most typical format is for the races to alternate boy, girl, boy, girl, etc. Meets can also have different division races, e.g. Division 1, Division 2, and Division 3 schools.
- Team scoring is based on the sum of the finish places of the first 5 runners. For example, if the team's first finisher came in first in the overall race, he has a score of 1. If the team's second finisher came in third in the overall race, he has a score of 3. The total of the team's first 5 finishers is the team's score. The team with the lowest total score wins the meet. The lowest possible score for a team is 15, which corresponds to the team's finishers coming in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th in the overall race. This does not happen very often!
- In a non-Open format race, a team is limited to 7 runners. Only the first 5 score as described above. However, the positions of the 6th and 7th runners can be critical in the case that there is a tie score based on the first 5 boys finishing. This has happened in a championship race!

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Suggestions & Tips for Parents:

A Cross Country meet is not a “sit in your seat” and watch the race event. Staying at the starting and ending point of the race is always an option, but you will miss much of the action and fun if you do this. Therefore, some helpful tips:

- Before the race, find an “experienced” parent who is familiar with the course so you know where you can go to watch the race.
- Wear comfortable shoes so you can run to the different observation points on the course. Wearing shoes with heels is not a good idea.
- Younger sisters and brothers enjoy running to the different observation points. This makes the race fun for them too.

Other suggestions:

- Most races are over in 15 – 20 minutes. However, time is needed for warming up and stretching before the race. Also, the team does a “cool down run” after the race that will take longer than the actual race.
- A wet course can make for muddy shoes and uniform after the race. It is a good idea to bring some plastic bags for the shoes and clothes.
- Since you can be at a meet for several hours, it is often a good idea to bring refreshments or snacks to hold you over. Also, always feel free to bring lawn chairs so you can relax between races. Suntan lotion and a hat are good for sunny days as is an umbrella on a rainy day.
- Don’t hesitate or feel embarrassed to exchange cell phone numbers with experienced parents when traveling to out of town meets. This can help if you get lost. It has happened! We will try to collect numbers and distribute a directory.

Championship Season:

- The championship season begins at Rapid Run Park with the GCL Championship. The GCL meet has races at the Varsity, JV, Freshmen, and Open levels.
- The “Road to State” begins at the Voice of America Park in West Chester with the District Championships. The Varsity meet is held on a Saturday with open races the previous weekdays.
- The Regional Championship is held in Troy, Ohio. There are only Varsity level races from this point on in the state championship.
- The state championship concludes at Scioto Downs in Columbus, Ohio on the first Saturday in November.

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Other Notes of Interest:

- The cross country team is an extended family. You will see the same people every week. Younger (and older) siblings of runners are welcome, as are other family members and friends. It's a friendly atmosphere for all.
- Some meets we go beyond the normal snack food, bringing meals and even grills. You'll know in advance when these are. It is kind of like an all-day tailgate party that rivals anything at a football game.
- If you like to take pictures, be ready to carry your camera and any equipment you need. Sometimes you may have to RUN to get from one photo opportunity to the next.
- Cross country meets are often LARGE events with hundreds of runners and spectators numbering in the thousands. There is a LOT of movement.

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