

Milford Cross Country

Team Handbook

Philosophy of the team

Our goal is to promote academic and athletic excellence in all team members. We strive to produce positive role models for the students of Milford High School. We will always focus on family, school, and team, in that order.

Discipline is a major factor in the success of a cross country runner, and therefore, is a key component of our training, both on the roads and in the classroom.

Expectations

The Milford Cross Country program has always achieved at the highest level academically and athletically. The coaches expect all student-athletes in the program to constantly strive to be the best they can be in school, sports, and as members of the high school community. Athletes in the cross country program will be held to higher standards. The team is our focus, not the individual. Individuals who seek attention through outward physical characteristics such as dress, hair styles, hair colors, piercings, hair length, etc... will be given the opportunity to make changes or be denied participation. Attention should be given to cross country team members because of their hard work and results on the course and in the classroom. If an athlete has any doubt about a decision, they should ask a coach BEFORE making that choice!

Diet

- To promote lifetime fitness, it is important that student-athletes take care of themselves. Coach will provide handouts explaining diet tips that are conducive to cross country success. Meals that are high in carbohydrates and protein are necessary to keep up with the calories that will be burned.
- Water is by far the best drink for a cross country runner. Please discourage the drinking of pop at all costs!

Time Trial

- At the beginning of each season, each athlete will race in a time trial. The purpose of this race is to establish a starting point and judge the athlete on natural ability and on summer conditioning. Athletes who fail to meet minimum standards will be held out of races until the athlete meets those minimum standards. Higher expectations lead to better performance!

Meets

- The meet schedule will be handed out at the pre-season meeting and will be available on the web site. Directions and times will be included. Please note: race times are always approximate! Parents should keep a copy of this information to refer to.
- Transportation will be provided to some of our meets, but not all of our meets. Detailed explanations will be given before the season. Parents **MUST** provide or arrange for transportation home from every meet. Busses will not be provided for the return trip in any case.
- Upon arrival at the meet, all team members will help set up our camp.
- After the meet, each athlete should check out with their coach to receive any information regarding the results or the following week's practices before leaving the meet.
- All team members are expected to wear team-issued clothing and warm ups. During warm up and cool down, team issued clothing will be worn. Bring dry clothes and extra layers to every meet.
- All team members are encouraged to attend the entire meet and to support their teammates.
- All team members will be issued a bag to keep all equipment in during the meet. Use it! Each athlete is responsible for their gear. The coach will provide "reminders" if gear is recovered by a coach.
- The team will be sure all garbage is cleaned up and all equipment is returned to its proper place before leaving the meet site.

Meet days

- Upon arrival at the meet, all team members should help set up our camp. All team members should stay in the camp area until the coach releases them. Schedule changes, the course, meet directions, etc... need to be explained.
- **All team members should know the race schedule** and plan their warm up accordingly. Individual differences must be considered!
- The team will jog the course together according to the race day handout provided. Warming up, stretching, plyos, & reporting to the start line will be done as a team.
- IMMEDIATELY after the race, all athletes MUST report to the team camp. This is NOT the time to visit with friends and family. The coach needs to gather results, check on the condition of team members, prepare the next group, etc... All team members will change clothes and shoes, then head out on the cool down as a team. This is not optional! After returning from the cool down and checking in with the coach, then an athlete can visit with their fans. This cool down is a crucial part of the recovery from a tough race and must be done.
- Remember, everything you do at a meet represents you, your family, your school and your coaches. Always be respectful of the race officials and the host of the meet. Athletes should always wear Milford gear.
- If you miss a meet for any reason other than illness or injury, you may be held out the next meet. Upon returning to the team, you may have to race in the open race to earn your varsity spot back. For example, missing a meet to go to a family reunion is fine. However, you will be held out or race open upon your return. We must prioritize our options. Vacations are also a family event, but an athlete may be held out of a competition for any misses due to vacations.

Practices

- Summer practices are optional, but if an athlete is in town, they are expected to attend.
- Official practice begins August 1st. Any missed practices after this date may result in an athlete being held out of competitions. Each situation will be handled according to the circumstances.
- A calendar of dates and times will be provided to all team members. Changes will be communicated through e-mail and postings on the cross country web site.
<http://www.milfordeaglescc.com/>
- Practices after school will begin immediately after school and end according to the schedule. Typically, practice will end at 4:30 pm on non-lifting days and 5 pm on lifting days. Athletes needing a ride can wait in Coach Ackerman's room.
- Athletes should not wander around the building while waiting for a ride.
- If you need to schedule an appointment, try to avoid practice times. If you must miss practice, pre-meet Fridays are the best day to miss. Any other missed practice must be for a very important reason.
- If you are sick, we do not want you at practice. **Please e-mail or text Coach Ack whenever you are sick if you need to miss school or practice because of it.**
- If an athlete chooses to miss practice for a family function, he will need to make up that practice before racing again. Family is our top priority, but discretion must be used as to what constitutes a necessary miss. Sickness is not the same as vacation.

Pre-meet days

- On days before a meet, all team members should wear the appropriate attire to school. This may include dress attire, a cross country t-shirt, or sweats. Coach Ack will notify the team each week. Failure to follow this team policy may result in the athlete being held out of the competition.
- All team members will check in with Coach Ackerman or another teacher who Coach Ack designates before school to verify team dress and to get any necessary information.
- Workouts will be shorter, typically ending by 4 pm. Please plan accordingly for transportation.
- All team members are invited to a pre-meet pasta dinner to be hosted by a team member each week. Parents will be given the opportunity to host or co-host these dinners. Details and a schedule will be discussed at the pre-season meeting.
- Team members are encouraged to pack their bag the night before the meet: jersey, dry socks, extra t-shirts, racing spikes, water, snacks, etc...
- Remember, if you bring it and don't need it, you just carried a little extra weight. If you need it and don't have it, you are out of luck!

Home meet

- We are fortunate enough to have one of the premier cross country courses in the city on which to practice and race. The course is located at Valley View which is located behind Pattison Elementary down in Old Milford.
- We host a high school and junior high meet during the season.
- We also have been given the right to host the league championship meet each season.
- The only way to host a successful meet is to have parent/family involvement. We will usually “hire” 30 to 40 parents and friends to properly execute the meet. **We ask that all families volunteer their time** to help us make our meets the best that they can be.

Goals

- Each team member will be asked to keep season goals for cross country and for school. Position on the team, Personal Record (PR), GPA, etc... should be realistic, but challenging.
- Athletes will also be asked to provide a “how to” plan to follow in hopes of achieving these goals.
- During the season, the coach will meet with each athlete to discuss these goals and to make adjustments which will lead to the achieving of these goals.

Fundraising

- The Milford cross country team has developed a relationship with the Flying Pig Marathon. By volunteering to help on race day, the team receives a donation that helps cover practice gear for the season. All athletes are expected to participate and to recruit others to work. The marathon is always held on the first Sunday of May.
- The athletic boosters help all teams at Milford. The primary fund raiser for the Boosters is the craft show. All team members will volunteer to help set up or take down the event. The craft show is held the first Saturday in December.
- The Athletic Boosters also host a fundraiser in the spring known as Flight Night. It features a guest speaker, a great dinner, and a chance at many wonderful prizes. Each team provides a gift basket to auction off. Each athlete is expected to support this athletic department fundraiser through a small donation to the basket and hopefully by our parents attending the event.

Team gear

- All team members will receive multiple t-shirts. Bring these to meets for extra layers. You will keep these, so write your name on the tag.
- All team members will receive sweats. Please know your number!
- All team members will receive a bag. Please know your number.
- All team members will receive practice shorts.
- All team members will receive meet shorts.
- All team members will receive a jersey.
- Team members may use short tights.
- Several “incentive” uniforms are also used. These include various combinations of additional sweats and uniforms. Work ethic and results earn these items!
- CK RULE: if an athlete quits during the season, he will return all spiritwear or pay for it, regardless of his participation in fundraisers.

Varsity letters

- Athletes will earn a varsity letter for the following achievements:
- Finish in the top 5 for Milford in 5 meets during the season
- Finish in the top 6 for Milford in 6 meets during the season
- Finish in the top 7 for Milford in 7 meets during the season
- All other varsity letters will be given based on outstanding individual results, effort in practice, and other special circumstances.

Rules of the Road

- 1. Runners will be training off campus, requiring them to run on all surrounding roads.
- 2. Runners will run single file facing traffic at all times.
- 3. Runners will not run through yards.
- 4. Each runner will look both ways and check for traffic before crossing any street. Do not rely on a teammate to check for you.
- 5. Runners will use water fountains designated for public use, but will not use hoses in yards, unless permission is granted.
- 6. Runners will always report to a coach at the conclusion of each run. Never leave without checking in with your coach.
- 7. Runners will not get involved in an altercation with a driver. Report any problems to your coach.
- 8. Runners will not run on any roads deemed too hazardous by the coaching staff.
- 9. Always use caution when running off campus. “Safety” wins over “speed” in all cases. Stay in small groups whenever possible.
- **Please share this with your parents. Runners who do not follow the “Rules of the Road” are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including denial of participation. Any questions should be directed to Coach Ackerman. Be safe**

Chain of Command

- Athletes should take any concerns or questions to a veteran team member. If the athlete does not feel comfortable with the answer, he may always come to the coach for clarification.
- Parents should always encourage their athlete to deal with any problems directly. If the athlete can learn to handle these issues, it creates a learning situation and everyone benefits.
- If the issue can not be resolved by the athlete, the parents are encouraged to contact the coach directly. The coach will answer any questions with the best interest of the program at heart.
- If the parent or athlete does not agree with a decision, then the issue should be referred to the athletic director.
- It will always be a better learning situation if the student-athlete handles the situation on their own, but at NO TIME should an athlete take it upon themselves to deal with a teammate without including the coach in the conversation.

Questions?

- The Milford cross country web site will consistently be updated with information pertaining to cross country. Please check the web site for updates. www.milfordeaglescc.com
- **Any scheduling conflicts should be e-mailed to the coach as early as possible** to avoid last minute notifications. For example, telling Coach on Thursday that “Bill” will be out of town on Friday and Saturday is not acceptable!
- Coach Ackerman checks his e-mail several times per day, so this is the best means of communicating with him.
- Coach Ackerman will send information out via e-mail, so it is important to check e-mail on a regular basis for the team member and parent. Please notify Coach if there is a better or another e-mail address for them to use.

Contact info

- Web: www.milfordathletics.org
- Web: www.milfordeaglescc.com
- Coach Ackerman
 - E-mail: ackerman_d@milfordschools.org
 - Phone: 576-2300
 - Coach's cell: 325-0419