

# SEVEN THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CROSS COUNTRY

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- 1 — Cross country is a sport in which training plays the largest role. **No one** can compete successfully in cross country until he has trained for it. The training build-up is slow and gradual.
- 2 — Since training plays such a critical role in cross country running success, **anyone** can be a successful runner. The athlete just has to make the effort.
- 3 — At Oyster River High, we generally train on a pattern of a “hard” day followed by an “easy” day with no more than four — and often only three — “hard” days each week, including races. “Hard” training days are always comfortably within the athlete’s ability. The athlete won’t be asked to do more than he is able or willing to do. The most difficult aspect of cross country training is not having to train hard, but having to train **consistently**. The athlete who makes running a daily habit is **guaranteed** to improve and to be successful.
- 4 — Cross country training is varied and interesting. It is not simply “jogging”. Rather, cross country training involves running at different speeds, on different surfaces and terrains, and in many different training sites. A single training session may include many varied activities.
- 5 — There is no “bench” in cross country. Everyone can participate equally. (The only exception to this rule is our end-of-season championship meets where we are limited to our varsity seven.)
- 6 — Cross country is a team sport. Every scorer is equally important to the outcome of a competition.
- 7 — Being successful in cross country is not a matter of being the first runner across the finish line, nor is it a matter of beating people. Success is a matter of setting goals, training with diligence, of doing your best, of improving.

“It was time to take something seriously, to be somebody. And I knew that, but when I thought of it, I was afraid...I weighed it all. And just before I started working out, I swore to myself, ‘Okay, this is what I want and am going to get’...When you want something in the way I did, nothing will put you off. I had bad days...but I kept in my mind what it was for.”

— Joaquim Cruz (Brazil)  
1984 Olympic 800m Champion

## OUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- Our first priority is the health and safety of our athletes. Everything else is secondary to that consideration.
- Cross country running should be fun. This is a sport, not a crusade.
- The cross country team belongs to Oyster River High School and to the students who comprise its membership. It is the responsibility of the coaches to adapt the program to the individual and collective needs of the participating students.
- The pursuit of personal excellence in cross country, in school, and in all of life, is a value in itself.
- “Winning” is a matter of personal achievement and fulfillment rather than conquest over an opponent. If the athlete sets realistic goals, works toward those goals to the best of his ability, and competes to the best of his ability at all times, then the athlete is a winner regardless of his position on the team or his finishing place in a race.
- Training is individualized as much as possible within the team environment. That is, each individual athlete trains at a level of intensity appropriate to his actual age, his training age, stage of physical development and current level of conditioning.
- Each individual athlete, regardless of natural ability, should have an equal opportunity to realize his full potential as a cross country runner.
- Long distance running is not merely a means to train for competitive success within a cross country season. Rather, it is an enjoyable, healthful, personally fulfilling year-long, even life-long activity.
- The success of our program is not measured by our competitive record, but rather by the long-term value derived from it by all participants.

“We do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, creed or talent.”

— Ted Haydon  
Founder and Coach,  
U. of Chicago Track Club

# **GOALS OF OYSTER RIVER HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY**

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- To instill a love of running and a respect for fitness in our athletes, not simply to insure competitive success, but rather to have them make running — or similar aerobic activities — a permanent part of their daily lives.
- To teach that the team is not simply the sum of the individual members. Rather, the team is an energy-source in its own right to which we give strength, and from which we draw strength, in equal measure throughout the season, even throughout the year. The athlete should come to care about the rights and welfare of all of his teammates as much as he cares about his own rights and welfare.
- To integrate our sport into the fabric of student life in such a way as to augment, rather than detract from, the spectrum of experiences that make up the high school years. It is not for the athlete to accommodate his personal goals to our program, but rather it is our program which must accommodate the varying aspirations and commitments of each individual.

However, in order to realize our other goals, it is contingent upon coaches, parents and students alike to discipline ourselves and budget our time and energies in such a way that our academic, social and cultural obligations and interests can be fulfilled while we simultaneously pursue our personal levels of athletic excellence.

- To give the athlete an expanded awareness of his physical and personal potential; to diminish his perception of his "limits".
- To actively and continuously encourage the pursuit of personal excellence in all endeavors.
- To encourage setting goals and working hard to achieve them.
- To teach the value of consistent training as a means of achieving one's athletic goals.
- To encourage patience in the pursuit of personal excellence. The athlete should be committed for the long haul, not just for immediate success in the next race.
- To teach the athlete to accept responsibility for his training; and ultimately to accept responsibility for his own successes, or lack of them.
- To teach respect for our opponents and a quality of sportsmanship that finds Oyster River athletes equally gracious and humble in victory or defeat.
- To provide an environment of opportunity in which gifted athletes can reach their personal goals, no matter how high.
- To always represent ourselves, our school, our families and our community in such a manner as to inspire respect and pride.