

Buena Cross Country Parent Meeting – Aug 14, 2014

What is Cross Country?

Buena Cross Country - Rules, Responsibilities, Expectations

- This is a class. Students will receive a grade.
- Commitment- practice / meets 6 days a week
- Communication-in person, email, phone, text, web page, Facebook, XCStats

Clothing

- Invest in a good pair of running shoes; Tri Running, Inside Track, Future Track,...
- Shorts, t-shirt, sweatshirt, socks, sunscreen, sweatpants
- Flats- racing shoes
- Watch-
- Uniforms / Team Warm ups

Nutrition

- Hydrate
- Balance Diet

Injury Prevention

- When are you hurting because you worked out and when is it an injury
- Strength work
- Icing
- Commitment / Communication

Parent Involvement

- Come out watch and support our team, take pictures, video, and CHEER of Course
- Help at our meets
- Spirit Wear, Drive, Fundraisers, Banquet
- Nutrition Donations

Fundraising

- Boogie Nights and other local races
- Banners on Victoria- end of year program, Ventura Marathon booklet,
- Car Wash and / or Jog-a-thon
- Peelers

How to Encourage Your Student-Athlete in Cross Country

As parents, you all love your children and want what is best for them. You appreciate, respect, and support their desire to explore and discover all of their skills. When watching your children pursue their athletic goals, it is common to become emotionally involved with their progress and performances. This is a great and exciting phenomenon. However, unless you have been involved with a similar pursuit, it is unlikely that anyone has ever shared how to approach this effectively. Following are tips to help you understand what your son/daughter is undertaking and how to help them gain personal satisfaction from their sport.

First, parents must understand the sport of distance running. Your child has selected a sport, or in some cases the sport has selected them, that is extremely difficult in many ways. They are asking themselves to teeter the line between supreme mental/physical effort and a complete collapse of the same. Gauging this effort perfectly brings the ultimate performance. Error, ever so slightly in either direction by giving too much or too little can cause a breakdown and perceived failure. Very little margin of error exists. Please try to understand what your child is putting themselves through each and every time they choose to compete. Rest assured that they will 'give their all' in every race. They do not have a choice. Unlike most team sports, there is no 'blending in unnoticed' with an effort less than 100%. If they are not in a position you had hoped for them, it is not due to lack of effort. They might be racing an event that is not best suited to their skills for developmental purposes. They might be in a phase of conditioning in which they are tired. They might be racing under a plan that requires patience early in a race. Even the slightest virus can drastically affect their effort. Or, their performance might be reflecting their current talent/fitness level. Regardless, rest assured that they are giving their all. On top of this daunting task, they do not know where that magical line of effort is placed until they edge over it and get into scary unforgiving territory. Finally, your child revisits this precarious situation over and over with each race. It is a physically and mentally draining chain of events. Once they learn to control this process, they will have become much stronger, tougher individuals in many areas of their lives.

Your sons/daughters have put a lot of themselves into their workouts and races. They have given up countless hours to attend workouts and log training runs. Many have completed voluntary workouts six days a week much of the year. Although they are striving for excellence, do not let them lose sight of the merit of the journey. Help them by acknowledging their dedication and work ethic. This is all that is asked by most student-athletes, recognition that they are becoming more focused, competitive, and well-rounded individuals through their participation. With continued commitment, "most" will see a level of excellence, but "all" will continue to grow into young adults in which we can all be proud.

What should I say and how should I say it? Here is some advice on how to cheer before, during and after a race.

Runners like to have spectators cheering for them, since it helps them muster the courage to see a race through to its end. It means a lot to a runner when you are out there cheering in inclement weather! However, in their fatigued and vulnerable state, runners tend to prefer certain kinds of encouragement. Here's a concise summary to help you "say the right thing" when you see your runner come along with hair plastered to his or her head, dried spit on their face, and mud up and down his or her back:

Before:

- The one over-arching rule: **Don't interfere! Let the athletes go through their prerace ritual**
- **Once they start warming up- they are getting into the zone**
- It's okay to wave, smile or yell a quick "Go Bulldogs!", "good luck", etc.
- Avoid engaging a runner in much conversation--this gets more important the closer you get to race time.
- The runners have jobs to do. Let them prepare mentally and physically as they see fit.

During the race:

- Again, one over-arching rule: **Be positive!**
- Absolute statements are rarely true, but here is one anyway: Saying something negative will never improve a runner's performance. If you are frustrated with your runner, keep it to yourself. You are here for them, not the other way around.
- Remind them of what they already know-- they are strong, they look great, they look loose.
- Cheer on everyone, not just your child. Support team members.
- Encourage teammates to work together, not against each other
- Point out that they are gaining on the person in front of them; encourage them to focus on that competitor.
- Don't worry about sounding and looking foolish, as long as you are being positive. See suggestions below.
- Good Positive statements using the runner's name: "Go Jason!" "Great job, Sara!"
- Anything positive about the runner's form or position in the race, as long as it is at least marginally believable:
 - "Looking good!"
 - "You're looking great!"
 - "Way to go! You're running a great race!" (if they are closer to the front than usual)
 - "They're coming back to you!"
- Anything that directs their attention to maintaining their form:
 - "That's it, stay relaxed!"
 - "Stay smooth!"
 - "Open up!"
 - "Drive your arms!" (in the final 100 meters)
- Anything that focuses their efforts on a single attainable goal:
 - "You can catch this guy!"
 - "Work this hill!"
 - "Pull the rope!" – for running uphill
 - "Crest the top!"
 - "10 Quick!" – use on turns, cresting top, change of surface
 - "Lean forward" – for running downhill

After the race:

- Allow the coaches first chance to talk to the runners. Keep a respectful distance.
- We warm down after our races and as a team after the meet. This is part of our training.
- If it's a home meet, we have clean up responsibilities
- If it's an away meet, we go home together- we pay for it, team bonding, post-race evaluations,
- Let your runner know how proud, impressed, inspired you are. If you aren't, then you have probably never run competitively, because regardless of time or place every runner should inspire you.
- Realize that the racing ability of your child does not affect our concern for your child. While they may occasionally stress us out, we care for them regardless of speed!
- Encourage them to get out run the day after race.
- Encourage them to do their homework / plan ahead.
- **Remember, no one steps up to the starting line intending to run less than their best.**

