

### ***What is Cross Country?***

Cross Country is one of mankind's oldest sports. Historically, the desire to finish first is part of our culture and race. High school Cross Country is a challenging sport where runners traverse a marked 5000-meter (3.1 mile) course over varied terrain. It is both an individual and team sport. Individually, runners excel based on their talent. Key attributes include personal effort, hard work, and persistence. Team wise, running is communal activity. Group training, comradery, and believing the pack is more than the individual is essential for success. Cross Country is unique because runners may compete to finish first for individual honors while at the same time, groups may compete to get 5 runners to finish before another group for team honors. Points are awarded based on place finish. The runner finishing first receives 1 point while the runner finishing second receives 2 points, etc. The points of the top 5 runners are totaled and the lowest score wins (like golf).

### ***When is the Cross Country Season?***

Cross Country is a fall sport beginning mid-August and lasts about 8 weeks. Athletes run 4 or 5 dual/tri meets in September and the first week in October. Teams also compete in 4 or 5 Invitational meets on weekends. Invitationals can be as large as 50 teams with 500 runners. The season culminates with the Mid-Penn Championships held during the second week in October. Up to 7 varsity runners can qualify by time/place for the District Championships held during the last week in October; or by place, for the State Championships held the first week in November.

### ***Who should Run XC?***

All athletes, not just runners, can participate in cross country. Athletes from soccer, basketball, wrestling, volleyball and lacrosse are welcome on the team even if it is just to "get in shape" for their sport. There is no limit to the size of the team and therefore there are no cuts. Everyone is expected

to run in every meet unless injured or held out by the Trainer or Coaches. Many runners also continue to run indoor and outdoor track to complete a year of training.

### ***Why should You Run Cross Country?***

Student-athletes will learn team building and social dynamics skills. It is well documented that participation in Cross Country builds self-esteem, increases confidence, nurtures self-reliance, encourages individual athletic growth, promotes social skill interaction, and provides a general athletic fitness for adolescents.

Cross Country is a sport that permits all those who try out for a team to participate. They are no "cuts" that restrict a willing participant from learning about running and improving skill levels. All student-athletes who participate run in scheduled meets. There is no bench that limits non-varsity participants from competition.

### ***Where is the XC Course?***

The XC course is located on the Central Dauphin Campus starting and finishing next to the track. The course is almost exclusively grass. It is mostly flat with rolling hills but crosses asphalt 3 times. The course consists of 3 loops. The first loop is 1200 meters and is mostly flat. The second loop is 2600 meters and consists of two large up hills. The third loop is the same as the first loop in the opposite direction. Spectators can see nearly 50% of the course with minimal effort. Without moving, spectators can see runners 5 times (start, 900 meter mark, 3200 meter mark, 4200 meter mark, and finish).

### ***What are Practices Like?***

Practices consist almost exclusively of running. All members are expected to participate. Runners begin by running shorter distances and build-up their stamina over the course of the season. Interval training is used to build speed and

strength. Weekly long runs are scheduled where runners run slow controlled distances that are longer than the race distance. These training runs are usually done at other locations other than the school and require District transportation to and from the location. Core fitness and cross training are done to promote overall fitness and to reduce injuries. All training is individualized. Times and distances are adjusted according to ability and fitness level. The top runners are expected to run 4 to 5 days per week over the 10-week summer.

### ***Who are the Coaches?***

The Coaches are Rick Leuschner and Diane Smith. Coach Leuschner is a CD graduate (Class of '80), teaches chemistry and has been teaching and coaching for 35 years. Coach Smith is also a CD graduate (Class of '82). Alex Sheib, Jim Seidler (CD '78), Emma Sheib, and many former cross country alumni also help coach the team.

### ***How to become Part of the Team?***

If you are interested in running or just want more information, please visit our team website at: <http://www.cdschools.info/crosscountry/>.

If you are interested in Cross Country, contact Coach Leuschner by email: [fgleuschner@cdschool.org](mailto:fgleuschner@cdschool.org) or by cell phone: 645-6194.