**Blaine High School Cross Country Information and Policies**

**2015**

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**Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to develop young men and women of integrity who strive to be the best they can be personally, academically and athletically. We encourage athletes to live in a way that helps them (and their teammates) to meet their goals both in life and on the Cross Country team. We will represent Blaine High School in a positive manner and will display sportsmanship in all circumstances.

**Blaine High School Cross Country Rules and Expectations**

**Contact information**

*Head Coach* **Rachel Karel**

Cell Phone (651) 357-8808

[rachel.karel@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:caligirl22@gmail.com)

*Assistant Coaches* **Andy Schwen**

**Tera Hereid**

Captains: Kacey Isle, Abbey Durand, Tom Shogren, Luke Tschida

**All of the following must be on file in the athletic office prior to any Cross Country participation:**

\*Signed MSHSL (Minnesota State High School League) eligibility form

\*Physical exam not older than 3 years on record with the school

\*Paid participation fee

**Daily Rules and Expectations**

* At practice start time (3:00) you must be dressed and ready to run. Middle School athletes will begin at 3:20 and do core/abs after running instead of before.
* Athletes must run in shirts. Boys may not run without shirts and girls may not run in only sports bras. This applies to practices and meets. At meets it could result in disqualification.
* If you have an unexcused absence prior to a meet, you will not run in the meet. More unexcused absences=more missed meets. A note from a parent stating that you **slept through practice** does NOT count as excused. Coach Karel will check the attendance list the day before each meet.
* If you miss a practice or a meet, your parent/guardian must sign a note explaining the absence.
* If you are absent the day of a meet, please try to notify a coach via text or email!
* Captains and other upperclassmen are expected to be positive leaders at all times.
* We will meet as a TEAM with coaches before leaving each day.

**Meet Expectations**

* School policy is that all TEAM members ride to **and from** athletic events on the TEAM bus.
* TEAM members are expected to stay throughout the meet and support teammates.
* On rare occasions an athlete may need other transportation. This must be **pre-approved** (one day in advance or more) by parents, coaches and the athletic director, Shannon Gerrety. The form for pre-approval can be found on the activities website. Failure to follow this procedure can result in sitting out a meet as a consequence.
* Be prepared at meets. Bring: **water, healthy snacks/meal, uniform, watch, warm up clothes (Appropriate for weather! Be aware of the weather!), spikes, training shoes and schoolwork.**

**Meet Rules**

* Be in front of the field house before the bus arrives.
* Help carry the tent and other supplies to the bus.
* Keep 4 (or 2 per bus) seats in front of the bus for coaches and supplies.
* Walk/jog the course **as a TEAM** upon arrival. This will be done together; don’t start on your own!
* Know when your race starts and be at the starting line early.
* Encourage teammates during all races.
* Begin your warm up 30-45 minutes before your race with your group (not alone), stretch and stay warm and ready to run.
* After your race, return to the tent and coaches. When recovered, run a 10-15 minute cool down with teammates **before** going out to visit spectators.

**TEAM Philosophy/Expectations**

Many people consider cross country to be an individual sport. This is far from the truth in the great cross country TEAMs. One of the most important parts of our sport is the TEAM that is created and nurtured within the 12 weeks of our season. The cross country TEAM can truly feel like a family if the right amount of care and attention are given to building a TEAM. Individual accomplishments are great, but the encouragement and strength in a TEAM are much more important. We play, run, celebrate and grow as a TEAM each day and each week. Encouraging your TEAMmates lifts them up and creates relationships within the TEAM that can last a lifetime.

**Contribution to the TEAM**

Every individual makes his or her own contribution to our TEAM. Some of you will be on our varsity squad by the end of the season, others will be recognized as the most encouraging TEAM members or maybe those who can make you smile or laugh even after a tough race. Each of these characteristics is vital to the success of the TEAM as a whole. Be willing to learn about your running and to improve yourself throughout the season. We all have room for improvement in one or many aspects of our running.

Below are some of the things we, your coaches, expect from you every day:

1. **Do your best, every day!** We expect you to give 100% of what you have to offer that day. That might not be the same every day due to physical or emotional circumstances, but your best for *this day* is all we ask.
2. **Bring your TEAMmates up, not down.** When whining occurs in a sport like cross country, it can be very contagious. We expect you to encourage TEAMmates, help each other stay positive, and have a good attitude about what you’re being asked to do. Positivity goes a long way.
3. **Take risks.** This sport is challenging! You will be asked to go out of your comfort zone. Don’t be afraid to push your limits, it is extending your limits which builds champions. Remember, if you want something you’ve never had, you’ve got to do something you’ve never done.
4. This one is the most important: **HAVE FUN!** Running is fun (see pic below)!! The #1 answer given by high school students when asked why they spend so much time in sports is that it’s fun. So let’s make it fun! Every day we need to play and laugh with each other. Have fun with your TEAMmates and smile together, even if it’s just a laugh over how many miles you ran this week. Racing and competing are great parts of this sport, but running and just enjoying the feeling of your legs flying along the trail or the feeling of the sun on your shoulders is really what brings us back every year.

**Captains**

At the end of the 2015 season we will vote for captains for the coming season. In order to be eligible for a role as a captain, a junior must follow all team rules and expectations. If you are interested in becoming a captain for next year, please keep in mind everything the coaches have asked of you and behave this year as if you were already a captain (in terms of your actions and team interactions). This includes warming up and cooling down with the team every meet and not separating yourself after your race. Consider that this is your audition for a captain role in 2016!

**Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement in a high school sports TEAM is an essential part of having a great TEAM atmosphere. We would like to outline how we hope Bengal CC parents can be involved in the TEAM and also when the TEAM/athletes need to be separate from parents.

Ways Parents can be involved:

1. Host a Carbo Load! This is currently up in the air-we will discuss some options in this meeting.
2. Bring snacks to a meet for the TEAM: There will be a sign up for this as well. We would love for the kids to have healthy snacks for meets. Ideas are: Bagels w/peanut butter, granola bars, fruit, water, low sugar sports drinks (Vitamin Water Zero, G2, Powerade Zero, Aspire)
3. Come to the meets and cheer for your athlete and his/her TEAMmates! Kids love to hear their names or Go Bengals!

Parents at meets:

1. No parents at the tent. This is a TEAM area and is for TEAM members and coaches.
2. Please refrain from distraction of athletes from **arrival at the meet** until after they have talked to their coach and **completed the group** **cool-down**. Yes, this means don’t bug them while they’re warming up. It also includes texting. Think of it this way: Does a football coach allow parents on the field during the warm ups before a football game? Allow your athlete to focus.
3. There’s no reason you cannot give your athlete a high five and “great job” when they finish their race. However, before any further conversations, they must complete the TEAM portion of their meet. We expect the groups who run together to cool down as a TEAM and this does not happen if all the runners go their separate ways immediately after racing. Thank you for helping us make this TEAM vision happen. Your athlete will be ready to see you after their cool down is complete.

Expectations for Athlete/Parent/Coach communication (per district/school policies):

1. Be a great encourager. Encouragement is the biggest thing high school athletes say they want from their parents with regards to sports!
2. If there is an issue that an athlete needs to address, the athlete should talk to the coach. Let your athlete learn how to advocate for himself/herself in this way-it’s a hugely important life skill that lots of American teenagers miss out on due to parent “help”.
3. Help your athlete prepare for conversations with coaches if issues arise, but don’t step on his/her toes in talking with coaches.
4. Please avoid giving your athlete strategies for racing that might contradict what a coach has told them.

