

Questions Before The Season Starts

We as coaches strongly encourage our runners to be on a self-training program out of season, especially during the summer. (you can see some of those training programs in another part of this website) Summer training is a must for the cross country athlete as it helps to build a training base for later intensive in-season workouts and also helps to prevent injuries. Additionally, we offer a high altitude training camp that has turned out to be quite a positive experience for the runners that have gone.

As the young aspiring athlete is beginning his first few weeks of training, there are a number of areas that may be of concern to you as a parent. How can you assist them? What should you expect? How should a young athlete prepare and deal with training and competition in terms of eating habits, sleep, and mental attitude?

As a rule, don't change any aspect of the normal daily routine. Everything should remain the same in terms of home responsibilities, appropriate rest, eating, and social habits.

You should also be aware as a parent that a common result of beginning training may be muscle soreness that should soon go away. If your young athlete does not have much background in running, some of this soreness may persist up to two weeks. Hopefully they tell us about this and do not hide it, as coaches we will adjust their workout to help them recover quicker. However, any athlete in intensive training could be subject to an injury. All concerns regarding problems such as this can be helped by contacting the coaches, our trainer, or team physician.

A well-balanced diet is an asset for any individual and especially an athlete. Any nutritional changes should occur gradually. On meet days, high fat and fried foods, eggs, and both carbonated and acidic beverages should be avoided. Take advantage of easily digestible foods in low quantities. Water intake should not be limited. Generally the last time a runner eats should be 2 to 3 hours prior to the start of a race. However, each athlete will learn their own eating routines before races. Gradually you will see your young athlete progress toward a diet that is high in carbohydrates as this is an extremely good source of fuel for their body. While we recognize that each individual has different nutritional needs it is usually better to go into a race on the hungry side. (The opposite can be detrimental.)

Also be aware that high school sports teams (unlike middle school) practice every day after school. We even practice on days off from school. Our workouts usually start at 2 PM (during 6th period) and run approximately 2 hours. Your son is expected to be at **every** workout if they are on the team. If your son is involved in a club sport outside school you will probably have

quite a few conflicts with overlapping times. As per our school athletic guidelines, if there is a conflict the school activity would come first. While we do our best to try and work things out, please keep in mind that my first responsibility comes with making sure that the athlete in question will end up competing for us.

An athlete who misses a practice unexcused will usually find that they will not be running in the meet that next week.