

# MANATEE

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## CROSS COUNTRY

Success is one step out of  
your comfort zone.

#manateexc



**No sacrifice, no victory.**

## FACT:

**Cross Country season begins in late May/early June.** Manatee High School Cross Country athletes must be dedicated to their training. You represent a school rich in history in one of the oldest sports in the world. It is a tremendous sense of accomplishment to look back on a summer and rejoice every time you race well as a result of the hard work you put in. Likewise, it is a constant source of disappointment when you look back for a year and always dream of "what could have been." It is tough to do well if you have not put in the summer miles.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SPORT:

**Cross Country is a team sport.** Teams of runners compete to complete a course over open or rough terrain faster than other teams. It differs from road running or track running principally in the course, which may include a combination of grass, mud, trails, sidewalks, roads, hills, woodlands, and water hazards. When scoring, it is the lowest score that wins. Scoring teams consist of seven runners. It is a popular participatory sport, which takes place in the autumn and winter when soft conditions underfoot prevail. Popular abbreviations for Cross Country are XC or CC.

## THE XC TEAM:

**At Manatee High School,** we encourage athletes of all shapes, sizes, ages, and athletic abilities to try Cross Country. It is a sport unlike any other. The Manatee High School Cross Country team is like a family; we support and encourage each other, celebrating each runner's improvement and accomplishments. We enjoy team dinners, trips to parks, a nice end of season awards banquet, and lots of great team "goodies" such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, bags, and water bottles. Make no mistake, we work hard running mile after mile on hot afternoons. But, through that hard work, we have fun, pushing each other to improve, and appreciating the success of the team and each individual.

The team's success is due to the hard work and preparation of all the individuals over the summer and coming together as a team during the season.

Be sure to check out your Cross Country and Track trophy case in the front desk area of the admin building.

## XC PRACTICE:

We train Monday through Friday and most Saturdays that we do not have a race. The practice schedule is on [ManateeCrossCountry.com](http://ManateeCrossCountry.com). We practice at G.T. Bray's 51<sup>st</sup> Street Park and Robinson Preserve. You need to attend every practice and meet. If you have a valid reason to be absent, please notify your coach **by no later than noon that day**. More notice is better.

## YOUR REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attend every practice and meet. If you have a valid reason to be absent or late, please notify your coach in advance, **by no later than noon that day**. If you know the day before, that is even better.
2. Wear or bring a T-shirt or tank top to practice.

Girls can train in just a sports bra and boys can train without a shirt but you need to wear a shirt during meetings, stretching, on the bus, and anytime you are not running. Shirts must be worn anytime we run on the MHS campus.

## 3. **Turn in all required paperwork and fees:**

- All forms available on [ManateeCrossCountry.com](http://ManateeCrossCountry.com)
- \$50 athletic insurance
- Returning runners - summer training log signed by student and parent
- \$200 team fee covers part of team expenses such as transportation to away meets, meet entry fees, awards banquet, team dinners, team activities, and the many items you get to keep: shirts, hoodies, water bottles, bags, etc.

## TEAM WEB SITE:

**[ManateeCrossCountry.com](http://ManateeCrossCountry.com)**

This site contains the schedule, important news, results, photos, details about the meets we host, an online store for purchasing MHS XC merchandise, and a way to contact your coach.

## XC SEASON:

Cross Country season starts in late May/early June with summer training/conditioning, which lasts until the first day of official practice at the end of July. **We do practice on teacher in-service days, record days, and other days off from school.** Most of our meets (races) are 5K (5,000 meters / five kilometers / 3.1 miles). The meets start at the end of August. Our Labor Day Canes Classic is a home XC meet for us and more importantly, our team's big fundraiser.

The Canes Classic 5K is open to the public so anyone can run in that race. We encourage our XC parents and families to participate in the 5K if they are not volunteering on the course. Regular season meets are usually Saturday mornings but we do have some on weekday afternoons/evenings. Our other home Cross Country meet is called the Bradenton Runners Club (or BRC) XC Invitational and takes place in October at G.T. Bray. The Tri-County Championship Meet has replaced our small Manatee County XC Championship Meet. The **State Series** starts with the 4A District 8 Championship, followed by the 4A Region 2 Championship, and finishes with the State Finals in Tallahassee. **How we finish as a team at District determines if we advance to Region and then how we finish at Region determines if we advance to State.**

## INJURIES OR ACHES & PAINS:

It is our goal to prevent injuries through our dynamic warm up (lunges, skipping, etc.) and gradual increases in mileage, strengthening exercises, and stretching. If you do have an injury or some unusual aches and pains, please keep your coach informed. **Communication is very important.** We do have access to our excellent athletic trainer and the training room in the North (newer) Gym. It is on a first come, first served basis, so please go immediately after school, sign in, and follow all training room rules. Always tell your coach if you are working with the trainer.

### HYDRATION & NUTRITION:

All Cross Country athletes must drink water all day long. Start each day by drinking 8-12 oz. of water when you get up in the morning and continue to **drink all day** at school. Bring a water bottle with you to classes and re-fill it between classes. Try to drink a sports drink or juice at lunch. If you do not drink regularly throughout the day, you will feel the negative effects of dehydration once you start practice in the hot afternoon. You cannot drink enough right after school to make up for not drinking all day; it just isn't possible. If you are even slightly dehydrated, your body will have to work much harder to do the same workout it did with ease the day before. Stay hydrated and you will feel better and run easier.

It is extremely important to eat a good/big breakfast every day. You may find that you need to eat a little lighter at lunch if you feel too full for our hard practices. This is why a bigger breakfast is important. Your afternoon workouts will be challenging so you must fuel your body. **DO NOT EAT MUCH RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL.** If you do eat after school, make sure it is a light snack that is quick and easy to digest. You will have discomfort and other issues if you try to run hard on a full stomach. Please be smart about your meals; eat breakfast and lunch every day. If the cafeteria does not offer items you like, then bring your lunch. You will not be able to run well in the afternoon if you skip meals. After Cross Country practice, it is important to eat something right away to start refueling your muscles. If dinner is not ready right away, have a small snack such as fruit or veggies with some protein like cheese, meat, or peanut butter, cereal with milk is an easy way to get carbs and protein in your pre-dinner snack. After running hard or running in the heat, you might not have much of an appetite, but **the first hour after a workout is the most important time to eat.** That first hour is when you are able to best refuel your muscles to recover from the day's workout and to prepare your body for the next day. Cold, low fat or fat free chocolate milk is a popular recovery drink after a run because it contains both carbohydrates and protein. If milk is not your thing, have a sports drink and a Snickers bar. Be creative but just be sure to start refueling right away.

### XC EQUIPMENT:

**The equipment needed for Cross Country is minimal - good running shoes, socks (no cotton), sports bra, tank top or t-shirt, shorts or running skirt, towel, and water bottle.**

You will need a good pair of running shoes. We have good options with our friends at Fleet Feet Sarasota and New Balance University Park.

**Details about Cross Country Day Events at Fleet Feet will be posted on our calendar at [ManteeCrossCountry.com](http://ManteeCrossCountry.com)**

You will also need "synthetic" running socks - **NO COTTON.** You do not have to spend a lot of money

on socks, just be sure they are made of materials such as Coolmax, Dri-Fit, polyester, spandex, or lycra. When you sweat, cotton socks get wet and stay wet, which causes friction and heat in the shoe, and then results in blisters on your toes and feet. Products such as BODYGLIDE and Blistershield can help, but good socks are your best bet.

BODYGLIDE is a great way to prevent chafing from shorts, sports bras, etc. as well as blisters. If you already have some chafing or blisters, Aquaphor is a great product to help those areas heal. Check with your coach if you have any questions.

**BRING YOUR WATER BOTTLE AND A TOWEL OR MAT TO EVERY PRACTICE AND MEET.**

You should have a water bottle with you all day at school, so bringing it to practice should be no problem. Once everyone is issued the team water bottle, we do not provide cups. **We do not want athletes sharing water bottles (and germs) because that is how the team gets sick!** And certainly no mouths near the spout of the water coolers!!! When filling your water bottle, please do not put the spout of the cooler inside your water bottle. This is spreading all your germs on the spout for everyone else!

### FUNDRAISERS:

The Labor Day **Canes Cross Country Classic 5K Race & 1K Fun Run/Walk** is our team's main fundraiser. Each one of you benefits from the Canes Classic as the money is used to purchase team T-shirts, bags, water bottles, the awards banquet dinner and special awards, our social events such as past trips to Pirate's Cove, overnight trips, team dinners, and our team trips to water and theme parks. Our Cross Country parents are the boosters club. In the past, our XC parents have been so wonderful with their generous sponsorships, race day help, and clean up. We could not do this without all of you. **We always need help securing more race sponsors to cover the costs of the race awards, insurance, race T-shirts, and permits.** For full race details, registration, and sponsorship information, please visit the race Web site at <http://www.CanesClassic.com>.

If you would like to assist with race planning, securing sponsors, door prizes, or hospitality items (food & drink), please contact your coach.

**Recycling:** We collect old cell phones, GPS, laptops, ink jet printer cartridges, digital cameras, etc. and when we mail them in to the recycling company, we earn money for the team.

**Selling MHS Decals:** We sell a variety of MHS decals which are high quality, removable, reusable decals (not cheap stickers that mess up your windows). \$7 each or 2 for \$10. We have Manatee Hurricanes, Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Soccer, Track & Field. If you are willing to help sell these at home events, please let us know.

# Attendance, Meets, Awards

# Coaches

**Fan Cloth Apparel Sales:** We will have 3 short weeks to sell MHS and MHS XC branded apparel items. Each person on the team is asked to sell a minimum of 10 items. Ask your parents, families, friends, teachers, administrators, school board, out of town relatives, alumni, or anyone in the community who might like MHS gear!

## OUR HOME MEET:

The **BRC XC Invitational** in October is our team's home invitational meet, sponsored and supported by the Bradenton Runners Club. Our Cross Country parents/boosters are needed to volunteer at this meet.

## MEETS:

### *Will I run in the JV or Varsity race?*

The Varsity Cross Country team is a "non-cut" team; however, you may be removed from the team for excessive absences, lack of communication, or behavioral issues. This rarely happens because XC athletes are always the smartest students at MHS and strive for excellence in all they do! If you come to practice every day and work hard, you are on the team. Even though we are one team, not every athlete will compete in every single meet. Certain meets or races are only for the top five, seven, or ten, depending on the meet. If you are not in the top seven or ten at the beginning of the season, you will have a chance to move into a scoring spot at any time during the season. Most invitational meets will allow seven to ten runners in the "Varsity" race, so the rest of the team will compete in the "JV" race. In these cases, times from both races will be compared when determining who will be in the top seven to ten at the next meet. There is no set order of the fastest runners on the team. It can change every week depending on how you perform, so keep working hard!

## MEET PROCEDURES:

- All team members are expected to be punctual for meets. The bus will not wait for late arrivals!
- Arrival and warm-up: When we arrive the team walks as a team to set up a team area. The team will assist in carrying team equipment, water coolers, tent, tarps, etc. and then head to the restroom.
- All athletes are expected to start the warm up at least 70 minutes before their race which will consist of running all or part of the course for a minimum of 15 minutes, dynamic warm up, striders, etc.
- Cool down and departure: All athletes will jog a minimum of a 10 minute cool down, do any additional running or workout as instructed by the coaches, and then foam roll and stretch following their race. Everyone on the team will then assist in carrying equipment back to the bus.
- **AT THE END OF THE MEET:** All athletes will clean up their area and are expected to personally thank the host coach for putting on a quality meet for us to attend. Always thank the bus driver when we return home. At home meets all team members must stay to help clean up.

## AWARDS BANQUET:

Details about the awards banquet will be posted on the team's Google calendar. If anyone would like to host the awards banquet at their house, please contact your coach. If no one wishes to host at their home, we will most likely use the MHS cafeteria.

## AWARDS:

There are many awards that can be earned by anyone on the team: Varsity Letter, JV Letter, Most Valuable Runner (or MVP), Coaches Award, Most Improved, Outstanding New Runner, Team Spirit Award. Only those members of the team with good attendance and a positive attitude are eligible for the special awards such as MVP, Coaches, Most Improved, etc. If you are the fastest runner on the team but are not a good teammate or do not have a positive attitude, you will not be considered for MVP. XC is a team sport so you cannot just run fast and only think of yourself to earn one of these special awards. **TEAM FIRST!** You must compete in a minimum of five (5) meets in order to be considered for a varsity letter.

## YOUR COACHES:

**GIRLS:** Coach Rae Ann E. Darling Reed started coaching in 2001 at her former high school in Monson, Massachusetts. She then moved to Bradenton in 2003 and began as an Assistant XC and Track Coach at Manatee HS. In 2004 she became Head Coach for the Girls Cross Country team. Coach Darling Reed has been a runner since age 11, competing in XC and Track at Monson HS and Brown University. She competes in road and trail races at all distances, including marathons and ultras. She is a Road Runners Club of America and USA Track & Field Level 2 Endurance certified running coach. Coach Rae Ann is an active member of the Bradenton Runners Club, RRCA, and USATF, works as a Fit Expert at Fleet Feet Sarasota, and runs her own company, RunnerGirl Inc. at <http://www.RunnerGirl.com>  
Please call her Coach Rae Ann or Coach Darling Reed  
**How to Contact Coach Rae Ann Darling Reed:**  
Cell: 941.586.9375 (call or text)  
Email: [coach@runnergirl.com](mailto:coach@runnergirl.com)  
Mail box at MHS in teacher mail room near the windows

**BOYS:** Coach Mike Smith  
Coach Smith has been head track and field coach at Manatee High School for 17 years. He coaches boys and girls sprint events: 100, 200, 400, 4x100. He coached boys cross country at MHS back in the mid 2000s and has returned to that position this year. He ran track for Miami University in Ohio and earned a 4 year varsity letter. He is currently a professional educator in the School District of Manatee County.  
**How to Contact Coach Mike Smith:**  
Cell: 941.730.1954 (call or text)  
Email: [smith4m@manateeschools.net](mailto:smith4m@manateeschools.net)  
Mail box at MHS in teacher mail room near the windows

<http://www.ManateeCrossCountry.com>

## ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- If you need to miss a practice, you need to call or text your coach by no later than noon that day, however 24 hours advance notice is preferred so we can figure out how you can make up the missed workout. Do not ask a teammate or parent to pass along your absence—it is not his or her responsibility; it is yours! This is your opportunity to learn to communicate and be responsible.
- Miss a practice (with advance notice) and make it up that week = no problem. Make it up **before** the meet and you still race that week.
- Miss a practice (with advance notice) and **do not** make it up that week = 1 excused absence. After 3 excused absences, you are no longer eligible for a Varsity letter no matter how fast you are. If you do not make up the missed practice or workout before the meet, you may not race that week. Miss two practices in a week and do not make them up, you definitely will not race that week.
- Miss a practice and do not let coach know in advance that you will miss it or anytime you no show, no call = unexcused absence. Two (2) unexcused absences and you have quit the team.
- The goal of the attendance policy is to teach the importance of communication and commitment. Check out the attendance policies for other sports teams or jobs and you will find that when you commit to something, you are expected to be there. You are given opportunities to make up missed practices because we know cross country runners are very busy with academics, work, volunteering, and other commitments. Sometimes life just gets in the way. Use those make up opportunities.

## HOW TO EARN A VARSITY LETTER:

Attendance at practice and meets, scoring in a meet, work ethic, meeting the standard, and attitude all factor in to earn a Varsity letter. Attendance is extremely important. **Even if your absences are excused, they are still absences!** You must compete in a minimum of five (5) meets prior to District to be eligible to race at District and eligible to earn a Varsity letter. If you miss a lot of practices or meets, please do not be surprised at the end of the season if you do not receive a Varsity letter or other special award.

## Specific Criteria for Earning a Varsity Letter:

- **Attendance, attendance, attendance!**
- \*Be at every practice and meet\*
- Communicate with coach in advance if you have a legitimate conflict and cannot attend a practice or meet and you can make up that missed practice
- **Give 100% effort every day**
- **Complete all workouts**

- Complete the entire season
  - **Help spread a positive attitude throughout the team**
  - Score varsity points for our team in a meet
  - Return all equipment that was issued to you
  - Pay all monies owed the team for fundraisers or equipment purchased
  - Standards: 20:00 for boys, 23:00 for girls
- You will not earn a varsity letter if you have excessive absences or do not complete the workouts at practice (which includes walking when you should be running).

## CROSS COUNTRY SUCCESS:

**Success in cross country is pretty simple: show up, do the work, and you will improve.** Enjoy this time doing a tough sport that you love with your teammates. They may become some of your best friends. Once you leave high school you may not have another opportunity like this.

If you run it right, cross country is a testament to suffering. Success in this sport requires pushing your body to the brink of exhaustion, demanding all it's capable of delivering for mile after mile of unforgiving terrain. But you do not suffer alone. You run as part of something bigger. You run as part of a team in its truest sense. And that's why, when the pain sets in, you keep running.

