

## How to Earn a Varsity Letter in Cross Country

Cross country is a very unique sport. It is a team sport that allows each individual to strive for personal excellence. Although only seven members of a team may score at an event every member of the team may support the effort and challenge herself to do her personal best. Each individual's ability ranges greatly from the natural athlete who seems to effortlessly stride for mile after mile to the more normal among us who must push themselves and strive for every meter gained. Both of these extremes are equally valuable. The stronger athlete may score and lead the pack but the focused and determined athlete no matter where they place even if they do not score will set the tempo for a squad. They lead and inspire through their effort and ability to understand that reaching personal bests are some of the greatest victories any person may attain.

Valuable team members are not just defined by the simple metrics of success at a meet. Valuable team members are the ones that may be found at each practice giving their best effort. They are the ones that challenge themselves to do better than they have last meet or last year. Whether they are running at a meet or watching their teammates from the sidelines, their presence, their energy, and support are integral to the success of the whole. The individual who simply shows up to practices and goes through the motions, attends the meets so that they can say they were there while filling the bland criteria of attendance are missing the higher calling of an active presence: supporting their teammates and **being a part** not playing a part.

Attendance at practice and meets, scoring in a meet, work ethic, and attitude all factor in to earn a Varsity letter. Attendance **is** extremely important. Even if your absences are excused, they are still absences! If you miss a practice, you may not run in the next meet. Unexcused absences are not acceptable. You must communicate with your coach in advance to let her know when and why you must miss practice. If you do not, you may be removed from the team. You must compete in a minimum of four (4) meets prior to District to be eligible for 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 award such as MVP, Coaches, Most Improved, etc. Remember, you do not have to be in the top seven to earn a Varsity letter, just meet the other criteria.

### Specific Criteria for Earning a Varsity Letter:

- Attendance, attendance, attendance!
- \*Be a positive presence at every practice and meet\*
- Communicate with coach in advance if you have a legitimate conflict and cannot attend a practice or meet
- Give 100% effort every day
- Complete all workouts
- Complete the entire season
- Help spread a positive attitude throughout the team
- Finish in the top seven for our team at County, District, Region, or State
- Return all equipment that was issued to you
- Pay all monies owed the team for fundraisers or equipment purchased
- Participate in all fundraisers

You will not earn a varsity letter if you have excessive absences or do not complete the workouts at practice.