

MANATEE **CROSS COUNTRY**

TEAM & PARENT HANDBOOK 2021



XC is a Team Sport!

FACT:

Cross Country season begins in May in Florida.

It begins two weeks after track season ends. We do encourage a two week break between seasons to let the body and mind recover. 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 of training and rejoice every time you race well during the XC season 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 5K course over typically 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. The seventh runner is just as important as the first runner on a team. This is why cross country teams are so close, like family. We depend on each other, support each other, and succeed as a team.

Cross Country is also an individual sport. You literally get out of it what you put into it - especially with summer training. A common slogan in XC is "No bench, no half time, no substitutions - the only true sport." In addition to team awards, individuals may also win awards by placing in the top 10 or 20 places in a meet. It varies by meet.

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 where we support and encourage each other and celebrate each runner's improvement and accomplishments. We enjoy team dinners, trips to parks, a nice

XC is also an Individual Sport

end of season awards banquet, and lots of great team "goodies" such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, bags, and water bottles to name a few. 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 office of the admin building.

XC PRACTICE:

We train Monday through Friday after school and most Saturdays that we do not have a race. Practices will typically last 2 hours, sometimes more. The practice schedule is on <http://www.ManateeCrossCountry.com>. We practice at G.T. Bray's 51st Street Park, Robinson Preserve, and the Green Bridge. You need to attend every practice and meet. If you have a valid reason to be absent, please notify your coach **24 hours or more in advance so arrangements may be made for you to make up the missed workout.** If an emergency comes up after school, just let us know. A set appointment is not a last minute emergency.

YOUR REQUIREMENTS:

Attend every practice and meet. If you have a valid reason to be absent or late, please notify your coach 24 hours in advance. If it is a last minute emergency, notify us before practice starts.

Everyone must have a water bottle, watch, mini band, warm up card, towel, and mask for every practice and meet. Masks must be worn anytime you are not running at meets that require them. You must bring your own water bottle every single day. We will have to send you home if you do not have a water bottle. Bring your own towel to use for stretching and core work which are done on the ground. **Never share water bottles!**

Injury Prevention

Wear or bring a T-shirt or tank top to practice and all meets. Girls can train in just a sports bra and boys can train without a shirt but you need to wear a shirt during awards ceremonies, meetings, photos, stretching, on the bus, and anytime you are not running. Shirts must be worn anytime we run on the MHS campus.

Turn in all required paperwork and fees:

- 7 page physical packet
- \$50 participation fee/athletic insurance
- Returning runners - summer training logs
- \$200 team fee which covers part of team expenses such as meet entry fees, awards banquet, team dinners, team activities, and the many items you get to keep, like shirts, hoodies, socks, bottles, bags, etc. You may bring in 3 Canes Classic sponsors instead of paying this fee yourself.

TEAM WEB SITE:

<http://www.ManateeCrossCountry.com>

This site contains the schedule, important news, results, required paperwork, 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 May 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 / 3.11 miles). The meets start at the end of August. Our Labor Day Canes Classic is our team's big fundraiser and everyone is required to work this event so please do not make any plans that day. We also need parents to help out please!

The Canes Classic 5K and 1K are open to the public so anyone may run or walk those. We encourage our XC parents and families to participate in the 5K or 1K 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 on October 16th at G.T. Bray. The **State Series** starts with the 4A

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!

District 4 Championship at North Port on October 30th, followed by the 4A Region 2 Championship at Holloway Park in Lakeland on November 6th, and finishes with the State Finals in Tallahassee on November 12th. **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. Specific advancement details are on our team calendar.**

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 MHS athletic trainer and the training room in the North Gym near the bus lane. Always 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 10-12 oz. of water right when you get up in the morning and continue to **drink all day** at school. Bring a large water bottle with you at all times. 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 TOO 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

Equipment

does not offer items you like, then bring your own 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, moisture wicking socks (no cotton), sports bra, tank top or t-shirt, shorts or running skirt, towel, water bottle, mask, and a sports watch or Garmin (or other GPS watch).

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

Details about Cross Country Day Events at Fleet Feet will be posted on our calendar at ManateeCrossCountry.com

You will also need "synthetic" or "moisture wicking" 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

Fundraisers

from shorts and sports bras as well as blisters. If you already have some chafing or blisters, Aquaphor is a great product to help those areas heal.

BRING YOUR WATER BOTTLE, MINI BAND, TOWEL OR MAT, AND WATCH TO EVERY PRACTICE AND MEET.

You must have a water bottle with you all day at school, so bringing it to practice should be no problem. **Please do not share water bottles! This is how sickness spreads and could wipe out the whole team.**

FUNDRAISERS:

The 29th Annual **Canes Cross Country Classic 5K & 1K Fun Run/Walk** on Labor Day, Monday, September 6th 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, socks, water bottles, meet entry fees, awards banquet dinner and special awards, our social events such as past trips to Pirate's Cove, Busch Gardens, and Disney, overnight trips, and team dinners. Our Cross Country parents make up our boosters club. In the past, our XC parents have been so wonderful with their generous sponsorships, securing and picking up donated food and drink for our events, 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 Coach Rae Ann.

Recycling Fundraiser: 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. **We have collection boxes available if you are able to put them out at local businesses.** Please see our team website for a complete list of acceptable items.

MHS Decals for Donations: We have the option to ask for donations around town (you choose a location and get permission) and for every donation of \$5 or more, we can offer a MHS decal as a "thank you" gift. These are high quality, removable, reusable decals (not cheap stickers that mess up your windows). We have a variety of these top quality, removable, reusable decals available, including Manatee Hurricanes, Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Soccer, Track & Field. If you are willing to set this up, please let us know.

OUR HOME MEET:

The **BRC XC Invitational** on Saturday, October 16th is our team's home invitational meet, sponsored and supported by the Bradenton Runners Club. **A minimum of 18 of our Cross Country parents/boosters are needed to volunteer at this meet, please.** If we are short on volunteers and your family has not provided a volunteer, we may keep the athlete out of the meet to work on the course. Canes Classic sponsors also receive recognition at this event, online, on social media, etc.

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 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 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!

Please check our meet schedule on <http://www.ManateeCrossCountry.com>

MEET PROCEDURES:

- All team members are expected to be on time for meets.
- Arrival and warm-up: When we arrive the team helps to set up a team area. The team will assist in carrying team equipment, water coolers, tent, tarps, etc. and then head to the restrooms.
- All athletes are expected to start the warm on time according to that day's meet warm up time schedule. The schedule is there to minimize your race day stress. Just follow it and you won't be rushed or forget to do anything.
- Cool down and departure: All athletes will run a minimum of a 10 minute cool down jog, do any additional running or strength workouts 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 cars.
- **AT THE END OF THE MEET:** All athletes will clean up their area. At home meets all team members must stay until the end to help clean up the entire course.

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 or Davis Theater.

AWARDS:

There are many awards that can be earned by anyone on the team: Varsity Letter, JV Letter, Most Valuable Runner (MVR), Coaches Award, Most Improved, Outstanding New Runner, Team Spirit Award, and Unsung Hero to name a few.

Only those members of the team with good attendance and a positive attitude are eligible for the special awards such as MVR, Coaches Award, Most Improved, etc. **You must compete in a minimum of five (5) meets in order to be eligible to run at District and be considered for a varsity letter.**

Your Coaches

How to Earn a Varsity Letter

YOUR COACHES:

GIRLS: Coach Rae Ann Darling Reed started coaching in 2001 at her former high school in Monson, Massachusetts. She moved back 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 now 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 RunnerGirl.com

Please call her "Coach Rae Ann" or "Coach Darling Reed"

CONTACT: Cell: 941.586.9375 (call or text)

Email: coach@runnergirl.com

Mail box at MHS in teacher mail room near the windows

BOYS: Coach Mike Smith has been head track and field coach at Manatee High School since 2002. He coaches boys and girls sprint events: 100, 200, 400, 4x100. He coached boys cross country at MHS back in the mid 2000s and returned to coaching XC again in 2019. 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.

CONTACT: Cell: 941.730.1954 (call or text)

Email: smith4m@manateeschools.net

Mail box at MHS in teacher mail room near the windows

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- If you need to miss a practice, **you** need to call or text your coach 24 hours in advance 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. If a last minute emergency comes up, make sure you contact us before practice starts.

- 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. 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. Please use those make up opportunities.

HOW TO EARN A VARSITY LETTER:

Attendance at practice and meets, scoring in a meet, work ethic, meeting the time 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 be 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.

***Success is one step out of
your comfort zone.***

#ManateeXC

No sacrifice, no victory.