

Handbook for XC

all athletes must pass a **doctor's physical and submit all paperwork to the school before August 1 or the school will not allow you to attend practices or participate in team activities

You must get adequate **sleep** in order to perform consistently and remain healthy- 8 hours at least. (Parents please, please, please help us out with this!)

Read through the nutrition articles- food is fuel- you need to consume more calories as your mileage output grows- do not cut out fat completely- you need some- don't go overboard there either- McDonald's and pizza and ice cream every day is a bad idea- think **Balance** – monitor your weight and keep a record of it- report gains or losses of more than 15 lbs to your coach and parents.

Hydration- you need at least 64 oz of fluids every day- more if you sweat a lot- which you will- water is best before and during a workout- Gatorade/sports drink afterwards- chocolate milk is another great post-workout drink (good protein and carbohydrates).

Heat- heat and humidity are factors all runners must prepare for and deal with as best they can. During the summer it is smart to run before 9 am and after 5 pm when the heat is not as brutal. Even so, you must take precautions by hydrating and perhaps taking a water break or two during the workout. Run shorter loops where you can get water or bring some money along and hit a store for a beverage. Be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion and back off or stop for a break before you endanger yourself. We should push through fatigue and pain, but not so far that we endanger our health.

*always remember to warm up with about 10 minutes easy jogging and then stretching

*cool down with at least 10 minutes easy jogging and/or walking and then stretching

**supplement your running program with core abdominal exercises, leg strengthening (lunges, duck-walking, tapping, tracing the alphabet with your foot, etc. and weights)

Training Symbols/Abbreviations:

S = Striders- 100m runs on grass that emphasize proper form, “run tall” with head up and looking straight ahead, shoulders back (over your hips), arms and legs working in rhythm, hands “cupping the egg”, relax your muscles from your face to your feet

*it’s a good idea to do strides after most of your runs (4-8x100m) to stretch and strengthen and practice good form- do them barefoot when safe to strength your feet and ankles

E = easy pace/conversational, usually about 1 ½-2 minutes per mile slower than your 5k pace. Recovery runs and long runs should also be at this pace.

L = long run- these runs should be between 25 % - 33% of your weekly mileage, they should be run at easy pace with a strong finish

F = “fartlek” – this is a Swedish term for “speed play” which means that you run a workout with varied pace “pick- ups” throughout the run- you can run at various speeds for various distances and get many benefits from the continuous effort of recovering while still running

T = tempo- should be about 3 - 4 miles or 20 minutes at about 20 seconds slower per mile than 5k pace (ex. 5k pace = 18:40, 3 miles is 18:00 (subtract about 40 secs from 5k to find 3 mile time) average mile then is 6:00 (18:00 divided by 3) tempo pace is then 6:00 + 20 secs = 6:20 per mile for tempo pace.

R = repetitions or “reps”, these are fast and short sprints, emphasis on form and speed development, full recovery between reps means jog an equal distance, then walk an equal distance and run the next rep when you feel you are ready to run it at the same speed with good form (ex. 200m rep followed by 200m jog and 200m walk)

I = Intervals, these are specific distances run at specific paces with specific rest intervals- the rest intervals should be at most equal to the time of the run interval (ex. 800m at 2:30, maximum rest is 2:30). Most times we will prescribe the length of the run, time goals and rest times.

CR INTs = Cruise Intervals, these are runs of 1000m-2000m at tempo pace with 1:00 rest intervals, it’s important not to race these, stay on pace!

O = Off day- ok to cross train (bike, swim, weights, core, etc.)

OYO= On Your Own workout

Static Recovery- standing and stretching rest break after an interval or rep.

Active Recovery- jogging and/or walking after an interval or rep.

“PR” = Personal Record- your best time in a race of a particular distance or at a particular race course

The Spalding XC 500 Mile Club runs from Memorial Day to the day before training camp begins inclusive. Club T-shirts will be earned by all who log 500 or more miles between those dates. Get out and log those miles!!!

The Spalding XC 1000 Mile Club runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day inclusive. Club T-shirts will be earned by those who complete 1000 or more miles between those dates.

Summer Training

- 1) Space out your days off- don't do more than 2 hard days in a row or take 2 days off in a row unless you are sick or injured. Make the pace based on effort until you do a 5k race or trial to establish your baseline. This should be done in Week 1 of your summer training (starts on Memorial Day) and then again every 3 weeks to reset your pace goals. Total weekly distance goals will vary from athlete to athlete and will be individually discussed with the coach in weekly logs.
 - 2) Training "blocks" should be maintained for 3 weeks and then runners should "move up" by running a 5k race or time trial to establish "new numbers". By "blocks" we mean total weekly distances, long run distances and paces for tempo/speed work.
 - 3) Weeks 2-3 6 workouts over 5 days- E/T and E/O/L/E/O/T
 - 4) Weeks 4-5 8 workouts over 6 days- E and T/E/E and T/O/L/E/F
 - 5) Weeks 6-10 9 workouts over 6 days- E and I or R/E/T and E/O/L/E/E and T
- *I and R workouts should be determined by consultation with Coach Witte through logs

Spalding XC Summer Preparation Options

Starting June 2- every Tuesday and Thursday night at 6:30 pm at the Annapolis Running Shop on Main Street in Annapolis- group runs of 5-7 miles led by Jon Line of ARS

Races in the area- look at charmcityrun.com or the Annapolis Striders or brrc.com (Captains will host races in June and July- plan to race at least 2 races each month)

Captain's practices (see schedule)

XC style 5k races at Chesapeake, Old Mill, South River, Arundel (in July and August- more info later)

Spalding Track and Cross Country Camp at Spalding (brochures from Mr. Witte or Mr. Calderone)

****Logs-** use the forms from **our website (spaldingxc.com)** and attach them as Word files to emails and send them to Coach Witte at (wittea@archbishopspalding.org) every Monday (after midnight on Monday, logs are considered late- 3 late logs will earn you a dismissal from the team). As soon as possible, I will respond with my training advice for the week. Then you must respond to me, confirming your receipt of my message. Once I have your confirmation, we are then ready to proceed to the next week of training. Communication is crucial, both during the summer preparation period and the season. Continue to send your logs every week to Coach Witte even if you are injured or on a break. Make sure you date the logs accurately with a start date and end date (our logs are always from Monday to Sunday inclusive). **Questions? Email me or call me at 443 851 9485 or 410 744 3868.**

****Forms-** all athletic handbook and other required forms must be turned in promptly once they are given to you- thanks for your cooperation with this. **Parents, we will need to know who can drive, who can drive other kids, and who will need rides. Please email this information to Jean Doran asap. (jtdoran@comcast.net)**

Equipment- all runners need to have the proper footwear for training and competition. For training, coaches recommend you seek the advice of a qualified professional at a running store (such as the Annapolis Running Shop). I recommend you buy 2 or 3 pairs at once so that you may alternate wearing different shoes on different days. The shoes will last longer and you will allow the shoes' cushioning to rebound if you don't wear the same pair every day. By alternating shoes, you protect your body with the cushioned support of the shoe. For racing and speed workouts, athletes will need racing spikes. Again, we recommend seeking professional advice regarding the purchase of these shoes. Athletes will be provided racing uniforms and sweats by the school. Athletes are responsible for the upkeep and return of these at the end of the season.

Website- athletes are expected to check the team website every day both during the summer and the season for announcements and upcoming events. **Athletes should know the practice and meet schedule.** Parents should also check announcements there regularly. Parents can also use the site to volunteer for driving or helping out at other events.

“Training Camp” - Begins in the second week of August (usually the 10th). A schedule will be sent to you in June with exact times and locations. All athletes are expected to make all the practices. Please do not schedule vacations or driver’s ed., etc. during this time period. Please take them in June and July. Typically we will meet Monday through Friday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at a variety of locations (parks, trails, etc.) and Saturday mornings from 7:00 am to 9:00 am. All athletes should bring a watch and several bottles of water to every practice. (Another shirt and a towel are also good to have- we tend to perspire a bit)

Attendance- all athletes are expected to attend all practices and meets on the schedule; from training camp in August through the completion of the competition schedule in November. Every athlete should bring a functioning watch and several bottles of water to every practice and every competition. In order to earn your letter or numbers at the end of the season, you must attend as many practices and meets as physically possible. **If you are injured**, you are expected to attend rehab sessions with our trainers and report your progress daily to Coach Witte. You should also attend meets to help out the coaches and support your team.

Meets- league meets are on Tuesdays and invitational meets are on Fridays or Saturdays. Our meet schedule will be found on our website as will all results and race information. All athletes are expected to attend all of these meets. For home meets we will use parent-driven or coach-driven car pools to Kinder Park or host here at school. Jean Doran will coordinate parent volunteers to drive. For away meets and invitationals we will use buses provided by the school. All athletes must ride the team bus unless parents make other arrangements with the head coach beforehand.

Meet Procedures- athletes should prepare themselves mentally, physically and emotionally to give their best efforts. This means there should be no “goofing around” before the races. Racing well requires focus and concentration. Athletes should avoid wasting energy before their race. There will be time to loosen up after the races are done. Athletes should focus on hydrating and paying attention during the “course-study” or walk. All athletes should have their own water bottles and a watch. All athletes should know which race they are in and when it starts and when and where they should report for their race. Captains need to help with this, but ultimately it is every runner’s responsibility. All athletes competing in the same races should warm up, stretch, report to the race, support their teammates as they finish and cool down and stretch again **together**- no one is to be left behind! Those athletes who are done for the day (races finished as well as cool down and stretching) should support their teammates by cheering for them.

Pre-Practice/Race Nutrition- for practice days, athletes should eat a healthy, balanced breakfast and a similar lunch- avoid loading up on fatty, greasy foods and soda and excessive sweets. Eat a healthy snack after school and before practice (granola bars, trail mix, dried fruits and plain bagels). You must put fuel into your body without clogging it up.

Adequate hydration is also important- remember that caffeine is a diuretic- it steals moisture and can contribute to cramping and dehydration. On race day eat a good breakfast, but avoid fatty, greasy foods and juices with high acid content. (Water down that orange juice! 3 parts water to 1 part juice) Experiment in the summer with foods and learn which you can tolerate and allow you to race well and which foods cause problems- keep a record of it so you don't ruin your teams' chances on race days with an avoidable poor performance.

Post-Race Snacks and Refueling- We are very grateful to our parents who bring these snacks and drinks to meets for the athletes. Parents please contact Jean Doran through our website to help out with this. Athletes: these snacks and drinks are for after the race, not before. All athletes should check with Coach Witte about their cool down and stretching **before** they do it and **before** they start eating post race snacks.

Supplements – athletes should avoid using supplements or “vitamins” of any type or description without the full knowledge and consent of their parents. There are a lot of things out there that make all kinds of claims about performance gains and energy boosts (“5 Hour Energy” or “Monster” or “Red Bull”). Do not use these things without consulting your parents and your coaches. Many athletes have suffered significant injuries, even death, from using substances such as these without consulting parents or coaches.

Parents/Supporters at Meets- all parents and supporters are asked to remain separate from the athletes before their races so the athletes can concentrate and prepare. There will be plenty of time for visiting after the races are over. Athletes will be “camped” at an exclusive and separate site until their race is completed.

Discipline- all athletes who fulfill the expectations of the school and the team will have a place on the team. Do your schoolwork, avoid disciplinary trouble in school, turn in your logs on time, attend all practices and meets, come to practices and meets with your watch and water, communicate with the coaches regarding issues with attendance before the practice or meet in question, respect your teammates, coaches and opponents, give your best efforts in practice and in all meets. Being a student-athlete means managing your time effectively so that you have balance. It also means disciplining yourself consistently. You will not have as much leisure or free time as some other people who do not share your goals. Between academics, athletics and the other demands on your time and energy (family, faith, friends, jobs, rest) student athletes must accept that sacrifices must be made. “Discipline is remembering what you want.” This often means making tough choices, such is the life of a student athlete and such is the life of most mature people.

Consistency- a distance runner's progress is tied to hard work and consistency over time. If a runner wants to succeed, he must put in the miles consistently over days, weeks,

months and years. This work ethic means running in unpleasant conditions (heat, rain, snow) and through fatigue and discomfort. It also means finding solutions rather than excuses. With regard to traveling on vacations, plan ahead, research and ask questions about safe running routes near your hotel or place that you are staying. You may have to resort to the hotel's treadmill and then jump in the pool! You are limited only by your own drive, desire and creativity!

Preparation- a student-athlete can only help their team if they are adequately prepared to do their best. This means following the training program, maintaining eligibility, getting adequate sleep, proper nutrition and bringing their necessary equipment to practices and meets. **Athletes should pack their bags with what they need the night before and place the bag by the door so they can get up and go in the morning without scrambling and forgetting something.** For practice, athletes should pack their trainers and spikes for speed work, shorts and a t-shirt, an extra t-shirt, a watch, water bottles, snacks (granola bars, bagels, trail mix, bananas). For meets, athletes should pack the aforementioned items as well as their team uniform and other team gear (team t-shirt, sweats, warm ups, etc.) You may also wish to purchase a commemorative T-shirt at meets also (typically \$15-\$20).

Pride- all of our student athletes should take pride in who and what they are. They have chosen a tougher way of life than most people. If it were easy, everyone would do it. It's the toughness and difficulties that make it great! Be proud of the hours of effort, dedication, discipline and sacrifice! Let that pride get you up in the morning to run or out the door later in the day for your second workout. Let that pride remind you that you are part of something bigger than yourself. You are an important member of a team. A team that is counting on you to do your best each and every day! You are also part of a proud program that represents your school. Your choices and performances will be recorded and remembered for many years. Wear your Spalding colors with pride and always do your best! When other teams see the Spalding runners, they should know that they are in for a rough time!

Love- You will find it tough to succeed in XC and distance running in general if you don't love to run. If you can't relate to "runner's high" and the electric joy of flying down a course or track all systems firing, then you are missing something crucial to all XC runners- a running spirit. It's the love and passion you feel that will motivate you to train and prepare and then perform to your absolute limits. If you don't love to run, you should quit running and find something that you do love to do. You should also love your team. This will bring out your best because you won't want to let them down and they won't want to let you down.

Captain's Responsibilities- We believe in a philosophy of **leadership through service**. Captains will earn their recognition and respect through the positive examples that they set for the athletes on the team.

Captains will lead warm-ups and cool downs at practices and meets. They must be sure that runners know where they need to be at the appropriate times.

Captains will lead team stretches and dynamic warm-ups and cool downs.

Captains will be responsible for school water bottles and coolers for meets: they will fill them and get them to the bus or to Kinder Park home meets. They will also be responsible for returning them to TJ Morgan's office upon our return to campus. Captains should remind runners to secure their gear in lockers, not leave it in the hallway. Captains will be responsible for getting team members to make sure the team area at meets is clean when we leave, and that no gear or belongings are left behind.

“Ice-Baths”- once or twice a week, after hard workouts or before competitions, I recommend athletes take a soak in very cold water in the bath tub (or other body of water). They should submerge at least their legs, hips and lower back in water of 45-55 degrees for 10-15 minutes. This will speed healing circulation of oxygenated blood to the muscles and clear lactic acid. This will help in healing and also help prevent injuries. Note the pinkish hue of the skin when you emerge. This is the circulating blood helping you recover from a hard effort or week of efforts. Follow the bath with a refreshing shower. You'll feel better and be able to come back stronger. Once or twice a week is the minimum- there is no maximum- do it as often as you like.

Massage- we have a massage-therapist who works with our teams to help recovery and speed healing and prevent injuries. The school picks up most of his fees. Once in a while we will ask you to pay for a session. Usually \$10 will do it. Our therapist's name is Jim Earley. He has tremendous credentials and experience. He works with college as well as professional athletes and is in high demand in our area. We are lucky to have him- our injuries have decreased significantly since we started working with him more than 10 years ago. If you are hurting, Jim does some house calls- though they will be more expensive- see me for info.

Team-Dinners

These occasions are important, I feel, for team formation. Attendance is required unless adequate excuse is given the head coach ahead of time. We will try to avoid school nights as much as possible. Jean Doran will coordinate these with parents via email and the team website. Thanks to parents for helping with this. The last team dinner will be at Coach Witte's house before the MIAA Championships.

Acknowledgement Form

By signing on the line below, I acknowledge that I have read the XC Handbook and am aware of the expectations for all student-athletes. I also certify that I have read the meet schedule and am aware of those dates and the expectation that all student-athletes will be present if possible.

Student-Athlete's Name (please print neatly): _____

Student-Athlete's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student-Athlete's email address: _____

Cell phone: _____

Parent's email addresses: _____

Cell phone(s): _____

Home phone(s): _____