

# College Park CROSS COUNTRY

## A Parent's Guide to College Park Cross Country – 2011

Welcome to the proud tradition of College Park Cross Country. You have become a part of one of the top rated high school Boys and Girls teams in the state of Texas. Part of our success comes from parent involvement in helping to build and maintain the success of the College Park Cross Country program. There are many things you can do to help contribute to the success of the teams this year. Some things are simple, some require a little time or just plain hard work, and then there are even a few things you should *not* do. Our goal is that this information will help guide you to a great Cross Country experience.

### INTRODUCTION

Michael Gibson is the Cross Country Coordinator. Coach Gibson has been coaching cross country for 17 years and is currently in his 7<sup>th</sup> year as the head boys coach at College Park. His wife Carol is an administrator at Cy-Creek High School; they have two children, Miles and Camden. Communication with parents is important. If you have any questions or comments or simply would like to know how your son is progressing, please contact Coach Gibson at one of the following.

Cell Phone: 713-503-0085

E-Mail at Work: [mgibson@conroeisd.net](mailto:mgibson@conroeisd.net)

Mitch Reed is entering his 32<sup>nd</sup> year of coaching and his 7<sup>th</sup> year here at College Park as the Head Girls Track Coach. He coached 21 years at Aldine and 4 years at Tomball. A 1975 graduate of Pearland High School and a 1980 graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University. Coach Reed ran cross country and track in both high school and college. His wife of 25 years, Lisa, is a nurse at St. Luke's Hospital. They have three beautiful children, Alex 23, Katy 21 and Abby 14. You can contact him at:

Cell Phone: 713-253-4230

Email at Work: [mreed@conroeisd.net](mailto:mreed@conroeisd.net)

Adrian Cortez is entering his 6<sup>th</sup> year at College Park as he serves as an assistant cross country coach and an assistant baseball coach in the spring. Previous to CPHS, Coach Cortez also coached in Spring ISD for 7 years at Dueitt Middle School and Spring High School. His wife is also a teacher who works in Magnolia ISD as they have two young children, Cate and Jace. You can contact Coach Cortez at:

Email at Work: [acortez@conroeisd.net](mailto:acortez@conroeisd.net)

Kim Davis is entering her 2<sup>nd</sup> year as an assistant cross country coach. In addition to coaching cross country she is also the assistant girls' basketball coach. You can contact her at:

Email at Work: [kbdavis@conroeisd.net](mailto:kbdavis@conroeisd.net)

Some additional individuals you need to know are Joe Killeen, Becky Wolhart, Greg VanKlomburg, Valerie Alger. They are the Cross Country Booster Club officers, and are a tremendous help to the program. These people are a great resource if you would like to help. Please feel free to contact them at:

Joe [joseph.killeen@bp.com](mailto:joseph.killeen@bp.com)  
Becky [wolhart@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wolhart@sbcglobal.net)  
Greg [gvanklomp@earthlink.net](mailto:gvanklomp@earthlink.net)  
Valerie [valgertejas@yahoo.com](mailto:valgertejas@yahoo.com)

## COMMUNICATION

Please do not hesitate to contact Coach Gibson or Coach Reed with any concerns you may have. Email typically works best; however, you may call Coach Gibson at 713-503-0085 or Coach Reed at 713-253-4230. In addition to email and cell phones, we are working to update our websites. In order to access our team sites, you simply need to visit the College Park High School main page (via [www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net)), click *Activities--> Athletics--> Cross Country*.

**Website Note** – Our website was updated last year thanks to the hard work of Mr. Alger. The official College Park Cross Country Webs site is [www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net) . Important meet and practice information can be found on the web site.

## HISTORY AND TRADITION

In just seven years the College Park Cross Country team built an outstanding tradition. The girls team has competed in the State Cross Country meet for the last four years and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the State Meet last year and 2<sup>nd</sup> the previous year. They girls have collected 3 Varsity District Championships and 3 Regional Championships. The boy's team has qualified for the Regional Cross Country Meet for the last 5 years. Last year the boy's team had a member place second at the State Cross Country Meet and 8<sup>th</sup> at the Nike National Cross Country Championships. The tradition of College Park Cross Country is a commitment to excellence forged by self-discipline, dedication, and consistent hard work.

## PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The philosophical foundation of the program correlates directly with the philosophy of the Conroe Independent School District Athletic Department. This philosophy "is to maintain a broad based program that will afford all students with athletic interests and abilities an opportunity for safe and healthful participation in the sport of their choice. The philosophy is based on the concept that there is a need for rugged physical development and fitness for every youngster, as well as a variance of interest, abilities, and desires."

### OBJECTIVES OF THE C.I.S.D. ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT AND CPHS XC PROGRAM

The purpose of the College Park Cross Country program is to do more than provide competition between two individuals and/or two schools. It is to teach fair play, sportsmanship, the understanding and appreciation of teamwork, the teaching of discipline, and that to quit means failure and hard work means eventual success (properly defined). We will attempt to accomplish this general objective through the following goals.

1. Keep as many athletes as possible in a good environment.

2. Instill good habits, sound morals, exemplary citizenship, and a high standard of sportsmanship in each athlete involved in College Park Cross Country
3. Encourage students to grow physically, mentally, morally, and socially.
4. Instill in youngsters an appreciation for optimum health and physical fitness. The importance of proper rest, good eating habits, and cleanliness will be stressed at every opportunity.
5. Develop the program in such a manner that the end result will be one of unity, harmony, and success. Mass participation will be emphasized and encouraged among all ability levels.
6. Instill in all athletes the desire to represent College Park High School and The Woodlands community in a manner that will make school administrators, teachers, parents, and other citizens proud of them.

## ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

As a member of the College Park Cross Country team each athlete is expected to:

1. Maintain good academic standing – pass all classes. Students who earn below 70 may not participate in meets. ***However, they will continue to practice.*** If failing grades become habitual the athlete will be dismissed from the team.
2. Keep a detailed Training Log on a daily basis. This will be graded and is 50% of the 9 weeks average.
3. Be a positive example to teammates, parents, and the community wherever they may go.
4. Be selective in their social activities.
5. Maintain good training procedures including proper nutrition, hydration, rest, and injury management. The use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs is contrary to sound training and sound living and will result in a 30-60 day suspension from the team on the first offense and possible removal from the team on the second.
6. Attend and participate in all practices and meets including those scheduled on school holidays. Athletes are not excused for work, hair appointments, etc. **If an athlete does miss a workout for any reason, it is the athlete's responsibility to leave an e-mail or message for a coach on their cell phone explaining the reason for the absence. All missed workouts should be explained BEFORE they occur!**
7. Properly care for equipment loaned to them. Missing equipment items will be paid for (see equipment section below for price list).
8. Be familiar with the rules and tactics of Cross Country.
9. Keep parents informed of all team activities.
10. Report on time to all team functions. **Arrival at the practice start time is not on time.** We have a saying in College Park Cross Country, **“If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, you're rude.”** Be ready to run at the start time.
11. Report all injuries to Coach Gibson or Coach Reed for referral to the trainers. Athletes/Parents please let the coach and trainers know you are injured **before** you go to a doctor.
12. Athletes are not to practice with private sport specific coaches during scheduled practice time. It is our preference that they not consult private coaches at all. We believe that private coaches are ultimately detrimental to the athlete, and more importantly, the team.

*Failure to meet the team expectations may result in disciplinary action including suspension from meets and/or removal from the team. Coach Gibson or Coach Reed reserve the right to suspend any team member for any action he considers inappropriate or detrimental to the team.*

If an athlete is to miss a practice for any reason, they should contact a coach in one of the previously mentioned fashions **BEFORE** practice.

If a team member has a conflict with another **school activity**, the athlete, the sponsor, and coach will discuss the situation and try to create a compromise that works for everybody. If there is a conflict with an **outside school activity**, Cross Country will take priority. Coach Gibson and/or Coach Reed will make the final decision as it affects Cross Country.

## **TEAM TRADITIONS**

- Every year the team and their families gather for our meet the Cavaliers picnic. This year the gathering will take place at Lake Shore Park on August 25 at 6:00 p.m.
- Each Friday evening before Cross Country Meets, the team gathers at a local eating establishment or home for a team dinner. The schedule and times will be discussed and announced during the week before the meet.
- At the close of every meet, the entire program gathers together to reflect on the meet. This gathering is a symbol of our team unity and the significance of every individual to the success of the program. This allows individual athletes and teams to recognize the accomplishments of teammates. This is a very important tradition! Athletes are expected to be present.
- There is a Navy/Silver/Green 2 mile intra-squad the week before the District Meet. Girls and Boys are matched into teams and will race 2 miles on the cross country course. A family race is also run after the Navy/Silver/Green race. Following the races, athletes and their families are invited to eat hamburgers and hotdogs.
- Many of our families make the trek to the Regionals and State championship meets at the end of the season. Even if your son or daughter is not participating, we encourage you to come to these highly competitive and outstanding races. It doesn't get any more exciting in this sport! Don't miss these!!!
- The Cross Country season culminates with an Awards Banquet. **The banquet date will be announced later in the season.**

## NUTRITION

Water/Gatorade – The absolute minimum consumed should be 128 ounces per day (that’s one gallon or 16 eight ounce cups)! Drinking fountain rule applies for school – If you pass one, take a drink!

Proper nutrition is essential to athletic performance as well as good overall health.

- A balanced meal of complex carbohydrates, meats, vegetables, fruits, and fluids is best.
- Athletes should eat before and after every workout and race.
- All athletes should eat at least 8 servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
- What about vitamins? Done in moderation they can’t hurt. (Although they may not help)
- **During the racing season athletes should not be drinking any carbonated drinks!**
- Stay away from “Junk food.”
- All athletes need to consume enough calories to maintain their weight. No one should be on a “diet”, or diet pills of any kind. There are some athletes; especially those who are experiencing exercise and good nutritional habits for the first time that will experience weight loss. If you suspect your son or daughter is not eating properly please bring this to Coach Gibson and/or Coach Reed’s attention.

## EQUIPMENT

Required equipment:

- All athletes must have at least one pair of quality running shoes. Two pairs are better than one!
- All athletes must get and wear a runner’s watch to practice each day (one that has a stopwatch and is water-resistant).
- All athletes will be issued racing equipment at the start of each season. It is **imperative** that this equipment is turned in at the end of each season.
- All athletes will be held responsible for their equipment. If lost or stolen, the athlete will be required to make payment for lost equipment.

Suggestions for keeping up with equipment:

- Athletes should make sure they place their equipment in their locker with the locker locked!
- Athletes should NEVER loan equipment to someone else.
- Athletes should always have someone watching their equipment while they are competing.

Prices for lost equipment:

Meet Top	\$35.00	Warm-up Top (Varsity)	\$60.00
Meet Short	\$35.00	Warm-up Bottom (Varsity)	\$50.00
Spikes	\$60.00	Meet Day T-Shirt	\$30.00
Travel Bag	\$60.00	Practice Shorts	\$25.00
Cotton Sweat Top	\$30.00	Cotton Sweat Bottom	\$30.00

### **Picking A Shoe:**

Quality running shoes generally cost between \$50 and \$125. The most important factor in choosing a running shoe is comfort. If the shoe fits and is comfortable you are probably OK. If injuries are a problem or there is some biomechanical flaw in a person's running form, the best option is to have your runner's stride and running form evaluated. Luke's Locker (2 locations – West Gray near downtown, and The Woodlands), Fleet Feet (2 locations – Rice Village and Louetta/Champions Forest) are all stores that work well with us.

## **PRACTICE SCHEDULE**

### ***Girls***

**Morning Practice:** Practices **start** at 5:55am sharp Monday- Friday mornings. Girls will meet in the hallway next girls track locker room.

**Afternoon Practice:** Tuesday and Thursday 2:50-3:50pm JV & Varsity  
Wednesday 2:50-3:50 Varsity only  
\*Afternoon practices are **MANDATORY**.

### ***Boys***

**Morning Practice:** Practices **start** at 5:50am sharp Monday and Wednesday mornings. We will meet in the Boys locker room. Varsity runners will have 5:50am practices Monday – Friday.

**Afternoon Practice:** Practices begin during 7<sup>th</sup> period and usually ends by 4:00pm.

\*Occasionally, practice times will vary. Your child should keep you informed.

**\*\*DUE TO THE HEAT WE WILL BE PRACTING AT 5:30 A.M. UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. AFTER SCHOOL PRACTICE FOR BOYS WILL NOT OCCUR UNTIL THE HEAT WAVE IS FINISHED.**

**Meets:** See attached schedule and directions. Also, each newsletter will contain a meet schedule and directions for the upcoming meet.

## **BECOMING A CROSS COUNTRY EXPERT**

College Park Cross Country parents have an excellent reputation in the Cross Country community. Coaches from around Texas are amazed at the quality of the meets you help us put on and the knowledge and enthusiasm you bring to each race. This section is especially dedicated to those of you who are new and don't want to go home after a meet and wonder if we won or not.

### **What to Bring?**

Meet Schedule, lawn chairs, binoculars, water, video or still camera, stopwatch.

### **\*\*\*Meet Etiquette\*\*\***

#### ***Do not:***

go into the Cross Country camp ... follow your son/daughter around as they get ready to race... panic when they throw up on your shoes... gather at the starting line with the athletes at the beginning of a race... place extra unnecessary pressure on athletes on meet day, or any day... think that every runner is going to have a great race every week... get in the way of the runners on the course... immediately talk to your child after a race... coach them... bring a “cowbell”

#### ***Do:***

support the entire team as well as all runners at a meet enthusiastically (not just our runners)... be a good sounding board for your son/daughter once their meet responsibilities are done... encourage your son/daughter to be a part of what the team is doing... understand that not everyone has a great race every week... allow them to fail; failing at something does not make a person a failure... be willing to help when needed and be willing to simply watch and cheer when not needed... feel comfortable enough to ask Coach Gibson/Coach Reed about anything... have a great time watching an exceptional group of hard-working kids compete in the great sport of Cross Country running... bring extra water and food to meets... **make sure your child is on time for the bus**

### **PLEASE KEEP IN MIND...**

After a race, a runner will possibly be more physically spent than you would anticipate. Symptoms may include rubbery knees, general weakness, the appearance of fainting, glassy eyes, nausea, and salivating (what a fun sport, huh?). These symptoms usually pass quickly. There are trainers at each meet to treat any more serious problems. Many of these can be avoided with ***proper hydration***.

### **Scoring or “We came! We ran!?! How did we do?”**

Cross Country is a true team sport. *Every* person on the team has an effect on the team’s outcome. You can compare team scoring in cross country to the game of golf: low score wins. Times do not affect team scores (usually). Typically, each varsity and junior varsity team can run between seven and ten runners (sometimes more).

Each individual finishing a race is issued a card in the finish chute with that individual’s finish place written on it (These cards must be turned in to the Coach or manager) For example, the first finisher gets #1, the second #2, etc... The places of the first five runners from a team are added together to compute the team score. The sixth and seventh runners on the varsity and all the additional runners on the JV serve to “bump” an opposing team’s score higher by finishing ahead of the opposing runners.

	<b><u>Team A</u></b>	<b><u>Team B</u></b>
1.	2	1
2.	3	4
3.	5	6
4.	7	8
5.	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
<b>Score</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>
6.	13	10 “Bumps” Team A’s 5 <sup>th</sup> runner
7.	14	11

If there is a tie in the team score, the tie is broken by comparing the finish of the sixth runner on each team. There has been state championships decided this way. **EVERY RUNNER ON THE TEAM IS IMPORTANT! Whether you finish first or 800<sup>th</sup>, your performance is important, if not to the score of the meet, at the very least, to the overall attitude and work ethic of the program.**

## **Race Tactics**

Cross Country racing on the surface appears to be simple, right? The fastest runner wins, how tough can it be? The important thing to remember is that **Cross Country is a team sport**. In fact no other sport emphasizes the meaning of team more. In order to have a good team all of the runners must be able to perform well. Therefore, the most important aspect of cross country tactics is pack running. The most important result of pack running other than the score is the “spread” or “gap” time. This is the time from when a team’s first runner finishes until their fifth runner finishes. Great teams have spread times of less than 20 seconds. Most good teams have gap times less than 60 seconds.

As for the rest being simple, try explaining these: negative splits, positive splits, even splits, crest the hill, gut check, kick, tempo, pace awareness, competitor awareness, controlled hill climb, hard surge, break up the course, long surge, race plan, stay connected, Fartlek, Intervals, recovery run, to name just a few.

## **SPECIAL NATIONAL MEETS**

There are several opportunities for national caliber competition in Cross Country. The Footlocker South Region is the event most accessible and encouraged for some of our athletes. It is in Charlotte, North Carolina and will take place on November 26. If you have a son or daughter who is interested in going to the Footlocker Race, please see Coach Gibson for more information or visit the website at [footlockercc.com](http://footlockercc.com). Another chance for national competition will be the Nike National Championship Meet held on the infield of the Portland Meadows Race Track in Portland, Oregon on December 3. This year, 22 teams will qualify for NTN by placing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in eight Regional qualifying meets. The NTN selection committee will pick two teams each from New York and California as well as 4 national at large bids. The Nike South Qualifier Meet will be held in The Woodlands on November 19, following the Texas State Meet on November 12. We will compete in this meet as a club.

## **THE CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON**

The championship season is comprised of the District, Regional and State meets. On Thursday October 27 the championship season will start with the district meet at Kingwood High School. We must finish in the top three teams at District to advance to the Regional meet. When we accomplish this, we take Varsity athletes to the Regional meet. The Regional Meet will take place in Arlington, Texas on Saturday, November 5. The top three teams advance to the State Meet. This scenario is repeated the following week for the Texas State Meet in Round Rock. All other athletes and parents are strongly encouraged to attend all the post-season meets.

### **The Varsity and The Traveling Team**

There are two groups of runners during the championship season. The Varsity refers to the seven runners that are competing at the Regional and State level. These seven athletes earn their spots based on performances throughout the Cross Country season. Coach Gibson/Coach Reed reserves the right to make roster changes to any spots, especially where health is an issue or as it benefits the team.

The Traveling team includes the seven Varsity athletes and, sometimes, the next 3 finishers at the District meet. These three athletes (or less) are official alternates for the Regional and State Meets. The traveling team has all their expenses to the State meet paid for by the school district.

## IN CONCLUSION

When your son or daughter decided to join this team, you joined too! We want to encourage you to be an active part of this exciting and rewarding experience. The College Park Cross Country program has been one of the best in the state for a long time. You have a great opportunity, whether you are an athlete or a parent, to continue this tradition. See you on the Cross Country course!

## RESOURCES

Check these out for more information on Cross Country around the state and nation.

For College Park High School information: <http://twcp.conroeisd.net/>

The Cross Country team websites: [www.runningcavaliers.com](http://www.runningcavaliers.com)

For the State of Texas:  
*[tx.running.com](http://tx.running.com)*

For the National Scene:  
*[DyeStat.com](http://DyeStat.com)*

For Footlocker meet information:  
*[Footlockercc.com](http://Footlockercc.com)*

For Nike National meet information:  
<http://www.runnerspace.com/nxn>

## CROSS COUNTRY TERMS TO KNOW

<b>Cross Country:</b>	Team sport involving running over varied terrain.
<b>Dual Meet:</b>	A meet between two teams. In Texas we rarely have these.
<b>False Start:</b>	Runner leaving the starting line early. Starter will return all runners to the line for a restart.
<b>Finish Chute:</b>	The roped-off area at the finish, through which runners are directed in order to establish place in a race. (You should stay away from this area unless you are helping with the meet)
<b>Footlocker Inv:</b>	The National Championship individual race at the end of season.
<b>NTN</b>	The National Championship team race at the end of season.
<b>Invitational</b>	A meet between a multiple number of teams. All of our races except District, Regionals and State are Invitational.
<b>Pace</b>	Rate of speed maintained over a prolonged distance. Normally we are trying to run at the same pace over the entire race.
<b>Personal Record (PR)</b>	Best performance time on a specific course or overall for an athletes' career. The best they have ever done.
<b>Racing Flat or Spikes</b>	A lightweight shoe designed primarily for racing.
<b>Starting box, gate, lane</b>	Designated area to which a team is assigned for the start of a race.
<b>Surge</b>	A gradual or sudden increase in speed as a tactical move in a race.
<b>Warm Down/Cool Down</b>	Exercises and running through which the body is physically returned to a pre-running state.
<b>Warm Up</b>	Exercises and running through which the body is physically prepared prior to racing or working out.

## **College Park Cross Country**

### *Answers to the Basics*

- 1. When are practices during the season?**  
See page 6 in the handbook.
  
- 2. When are meets?**  
Meets are primarily on Saturday mornings (although we do have a few Thursday meets). The first meet is the U.H. Classic at Buffalo Bayou (across from St. Thomas H.S.) on August 27. A meet agenda sheet will be sent home with a time schedule of races. Always ask for it – they should have a copy for themselves and one for you.
  
- 3. Where are the meets?**  
Meets are held in parks all over the Houston area. Again, see the attached schedule for locations and directions.
  
- 4. How do runners get to races?**  
The team always goes on a bus provided by the school. Generally, we leave school between 6:00 and 6:30am. Athletes are expected to return to school on the bus at the end of the meet. There are some exceptions to this; arrangements must be made with a coach BEFORE the meet.
  
- 5. Should the runners eat before practice and meets?**  
Definitely!!! This might take some experimenting to find a food they can eat that will not upset their stomach. Bagels, toast, fruit, oatmeal, or juice are good to start with.
  
- 6. Who participates in the meets?**  
*Everyone!* Cross Country is unique because there is no such thing as 2<sup>nd</sup> string. All athletes get to and are expected to participate in each meet. The top 7 runners on the team compete in the Varsity division. The next 7-20 runners compete in the Junior Varsity division. There is also a Freshmen Boys division that includes 7-10 freshmen boys. Everyone else competes in an Open race.
  
- 7. What forms does my runner need in order to participate?**  
Every athlete that wishes to participate must have a physical on file with the CPHS Trainers, Acknowledgement of Rules and handbook form on file. All freshmen must also fill out a Previous Athletic Participation Form. Any person who does not have a physical on file in the training room will not be allowed to practice with the team.