Dear Cross-Country (XC) Parents,

The Battle cross-country season will begin on August 10\textsuperscript{th}, 2020. Everyone is welcome and invited to join our current runners. Cross-country training provides an excellent platform for athletes from other sports to gain base fitness. This is especially true if you plan to run in the spring for our track team or wrestle in the fall. Cross country is also a great way for students to remain or become active and join a great social circle of friends. Plus, everyone competes and runs the same course. We do not “cut” runners, there is no bench to sit on and watch while others play. You set your own goals and we as a team celebrate when you achieve your goals and set new ones.

So, what is cross country? It is a long-distance team sport. It is not held on a fixed track and field. Every week we travel to a different location to race across open terrain, most often through a combination of woods, fields, and hills. The course distance remains the same. We run 3.106 miles in all but one race (Fleet Feet is a 2-mile race).

As a team, we try to score as few points as possible. Yep, the lowest score wins. A varsity cross-country team will typically consist of seven athletes. As the athletes finish the race, officials record where they are ranked in the order of their finished result (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th}, etc.). The team score will be determined by totaling the points scored by the first five (5) finishers of each team. For example, a finish of 1,3,4,6 and 83, will earn a score of 93. Ties in team scoring shall be resolved by comparing the sixth-place finishers from the tying teams. The team with the best sixth place finisher shall prevail. It is important for the team to run as close together as possible.

*Training for our races will occur in the morning. Practice starts at 7 am. We practice in the morning because of the heat we experience in August and September. We realize that most students would rather sleep in, but over the years our cross-country runners have discovered that the benefits of running in the morning far outweigh sleeping late. Early morning practices allow your student to seek academic assistance when needed, to participate in other after school extracurricular activities, or even hold down a part-time job.*

Our practice runs are comprised of long runs of various distances around Battle High School, through nearby neighborhoods / golf courses, and runs on the track. Training will always be supervised by the cross-country coach at various points along the designated routes. We practice Monday – Saturday. Saturday practices are held at Albert Oakland Park. We meet at the pool entrance at 8am on Saturdays. We should be done no later than 9:30, but the length of these runs is dependent on your student-athlete’s ability level. If a practice is cancelled, it will be announced on the coach’s Twitter account @BattleXcCoach and by a text message to our student-athletes.

It is important your athlete abide by the running rules established by the coach. Athletes will be asked to run towards traffic in single file and to avoid specific areas. Students will also be given blinkers and reflectors to wear so that they are easily seen by drivers. It is suggested that you purchase a simple watch that has a stop watch
feature and clothing that will alert drivers to the presence of your runner. Athletes that refuse to avoid specific areas or to run the routes that are asked may be dismissed from the team. We take the safety of our runners very seriously at Battle High School.

Our meets are typically scheduled for Saturday mornings. Most of our meets last a few hours, but it depends upon the organization running the meet and the number of entries. Races are often divided by age group or division. These divisions typically are:

- Varsity Boys – Top 7 runners (sometimes more)
- Varsity Girls – Top 7 runners (sometimes more)
- Junior Varsity Boys - unlimited number of runners (top 5 scores recorded for team score)
- Junior Varsity Girls - unlimited number of runners (top 5 scores recorded for team score)

Transportation to and from meets will be provided to MOST races. This year for the first time we will be racing in Columbia three times! I am asking that transportation be provided to these local events; however, when away our student-athletes must ride the bus to the event. Team members may not leave the event until EVERYONE has finished racing. It is important we support each other to achieve our personal and team goals on the course. Student-athletes may ride home with their parents, but I must be informed of this decision by the parent. Preferably I am notified before the race, but I know that it isn't always possible.

This is our tentative current race schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>CoMo Kick-Off – 3K</td>
<td>Gans Creek XC Course – Columbia, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Fleet Feet XC Classic</td>
<td>Parkway Central High School – St. Louis, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Tolton Invitational</td>
<td>Tolton Catholic High School – Columbia, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Fulton Invitational</td>
<td>Fulton High School – Fulton, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Gans Creeks Classic</td>
<td>Gans Creek XC Course – Columbia, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>Camdenton Laker 5k</td>
<td>Collins Farm – Camdenton, Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Kearney Invitational</td>
<td>Jesse James Park – Kearney, Mo</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>MSHAA Super Regional</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will e-mail you information about the meet and directions to the site. I think parents were satisfied with the level of communication provided last year and I will try to continue this trend into our 2019 season.

Cross country is not the typical spectator sport, because you cannot see the entire race from one location. All course maps can be printed out prior to a meet. I will try to provide you with the map in my weekly race update letter. Spend a few minutes prior to the start of the race to pick your spot(s). One exciting aspect of cross-country races is to watch the start. After the start, you may wish to move to another point long the course to cheer on and watch runners as the pass by. As the race develops, you may want to move to the finish area as the runners complete the race. Please cheer
LOUDLY and encourage all Battle runners. Your encouragement just might be the little extra boost they need to run faster and longer. Please support the opposing runners as well (not as loudly, of course); cross country is a VERY difficult sport. The real race for the runners is not against another team or even against the clock, it is against themselves. Everyone needs some encouragement.

Cross-Country Survival Guide

Communication

Coach Russ Crane – rcrane@cpsk12.org

• E-mail – this is one of the most effective means of communication available to our athletes and their parents.
• Phone – If e-mail is not accessible, by all means give me a call. If you have questions or concerns that you feel should be spoken, I want you to call me. I will distribute my phone number when requested. My office extension is 38446.
• Text – I will put together a group text that will be used by the athletes to communicate with me and each other. I ask that your runner text me their name today.
• In Person – Stop by my office in the “G” wing or catch me after practice. My door is always open.
• Twitter - @BattleXcCoach is my twitter address.

Philosophy of Inclusion: XC is a no-cut sport. I take it several steps further and encourage any and all students who would like to participate, regardless of running background, athletic ability or size, shape or aptitude. I take all interested kids. This year’s team will incorporate collegiate hopefuls, first time runners and everyone in between. We welcome anyone who might be interested, including dual-sport athletes, and we’ll work with anyone’s schedule. As in years’ past, I tailor my coaching to meet the ability level of every athlete. It is my goal to improve the level of fitness and self-confidence of every student athlete as well as develop a lifelong appreciation of health and exercise. Spread the word that all Battle students are welcome on our team.

Parents: You can help your child become a stronger runner and student-athlete by paying attention to these non-running factors:

• Hydration – It is extremely important your student-athlete has a water bottle to drink from at practice, in the classroom, and at races.
• Sleep – at least 8 hours a night is recommended for teenagers; more for those exercising and working out as hard as we will be.
• Nutrition- proper, balanced meals (3-5 per day) with adequate starches, proteins, and yes, veggies. Please consider providing your runner with a healthy snack or two each day.
• **Stretch** – encourage your son or daughter to spend time each evening stretching.

• **Feet** – shoes wear out after 500 miles or one high-school season. Please buy shoes as needed. In my opinion, this is the single easiest and most important way to limit running injuries. If you need assistance putting appropriate shoes on your student let me know. I may be able to help you.

**Parent Help and Volunteers:**

Our cross-country parents have a long-standing tradition of having team meals the evening before a race. Typically, a parent hosts the event and everyone else brings a dish to share. Keep in mind, you can host the event at a park or your house. I will leave it to our parents to keep this tradition alive.

At the end of each season we have a banquet. In past years, we have met at Shakespeare’s South, dined, told stories, and received awards. I am always open to suggestions on how to improve this evening. Please make suggestions on possible locations and dates.

As a group, we can also work sporting events to generate funds for the XC team, but our parents have begun to support the Spartan Alliance, a very fun event in which your ticket purchase goes directly to our team. I’ll alert you to this event later in the year.

Coach Crane