

THE ROAD TO CROSS COUNTRY



Runner Sloane Inskeep (10) jogs lightly before a competition. It might seem counterintuitive to waste energy before such a long race, but it's important to warm up your muscles and joints so they don't get tired or injured as easily.

Cross country was one of the many sports here that tested your willpower the most. "It can be really hard. A lot of this sport is pushing yourself past the limits that you thought that you had, and that is obviously extremely challenging," said runner Asher Lucas (11).

A typical cross country race is about three miles or 5 kilometers. The team of racers line up at the starting line and make their way through the course as efficiently as they can. The first five runners from each team to cross the finish line receive the points that correspond to their place. The team with the most points at the end wins.

These long races could be rewarding to players with grit and endurance, but it could be punishing to those who didn't. "When it's a hundred degrees, and you're two miles through a race, your legs are burning, your lungs are on fire, you just keep running faster. It is a huge challenge," said Asher Lucas (11). It takes time to build up physical stamina; but to cross country runners, mental strength and the will to persevere were most important. "I think cross country is a very mental sport. Apart from it being a very physical sport, it's very mental because you're pushing yourself through a lot of pain," runner Natalie Roberts (11) said.

WHAT IS GOOD RUNNING FORM?

featuring Samuel Andres (10)

COMPACT ARMS

keep your center of mass high and preserves momentum.

BALANCED, SLIGHTLY LEANED FORWARD POSTURE

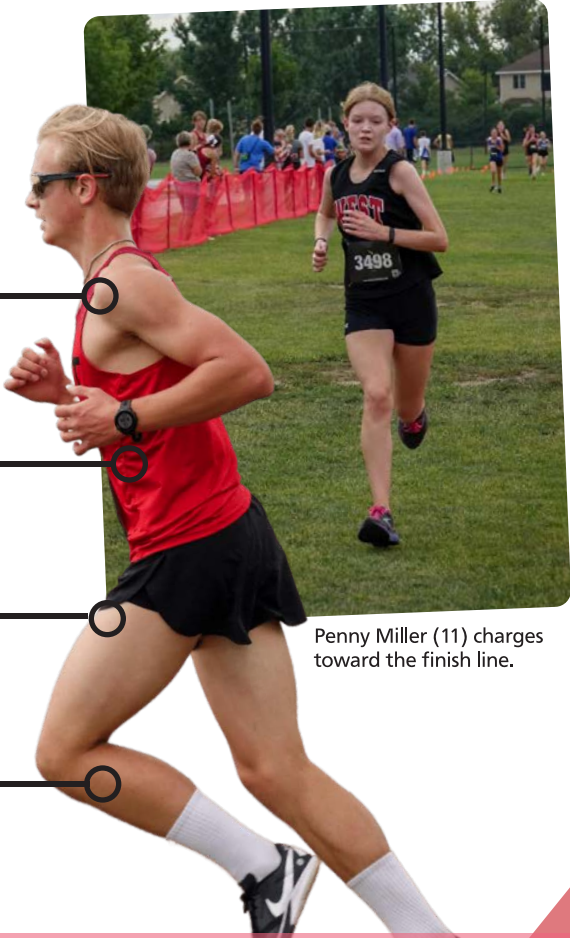
let momentum carry you forward.

HIGH CADENCE

prevents taking steps that are too long (overstriding) and wasting energy.

LANDING ON MIDFOOT

prevents injury.



Penny Miller (11) charges toward the finish line.



Samuel Andres (10), center, with sunglasses, charges forward from the start line.



Jackson Smeal (9) determinedly sprints the final stretch before the finish line.

“CONSISTENCY, FOCUS, AND TEAMWORK CAN MAKE YOU DO SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU THINK. ALL IT TAKES IS TO JUST START.” - America Rodriguez (12)



Ian Borden (11) perseveres until the end.

From left to right: Breanna Maughan (12), Talia Wheeler (11), Clara Swain(11), America Rodriguez(12), Natalie Roberts(11), Sloane Inskeep(10)



Credit: America Rodriguez (12)



Credit: America Rodriguez (12)

BACK: Conlin Patch(12), Dawson Meek (12)
TOP: Andrew Peterson(11), Clara Swain(11), Breanna Maughn(12), Ian Diaz(12), Samuel Andrews(10), Logan Holdcroft(11), Natalie Roberts(11), Savannah van der Wel(11), Olivia Babock(10), Payton Thompson(9), Amani Johnson(10), Sloane Inskeep(10), Lincoln Rogers(11)
MIDDLE: Talia Wheeler(11), Isaac Haber(11), Ethan Bigelow(11), Elijah Mutie(11), America Rodriguez(12), Cameron Castillo(9), Adedoyin Orekoya(9), Jackson Smeal(9), Betty Meyers(10), Ella Strohecker(10), Elizabeth “Lizzie” Thompson(10)
BOTTOM: Asher Lucas(11), Ansel Tanner(11), Chinmay Goutham(11), Charlie Howard(9)

PANTHER PRIDE

The players enjoyed their sport greatly and loved the team spirit. “We’ll go for a run, we’ll have fun, we’ll talk, we’ll enjoy the weather,” said Asher Lucas (11). The team enjoys their time with each other and their time running. “The cross country community is amazing. We’re tight-knit and I feel like it’s not a team sport, but it definitely is,” said Natalie Roberts (11). At practice, they train their endurance and enjoy being outside. Asher Lucas (11) told me that, “At practice we’ll go for a run, we’ll have fun, we’ll talk, we’ll enjoy the weather.” They also have after-school activities for the racers such as team dinners.

Cross country requires a lot of teamwork to score points. If the team doesn’t work together and encourage each other, they won’t score enough points at the end to win. Each runner is an important part of the team, and if they aren’t giving the races their all, the team will fall short of their goals. These after school activities were ways for bringing players together, building a more cohesive positive environment.

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