

---

---

# Understanding Mounds View Boys Cross Country

## *An Unofficial Guide – from Parents to Parents*

---

---

### Contents

<b>HISTORY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>THE RACE SCHEDULE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NON-RACE EVENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
CHEMICAL AWARENESS AND PARENT MEETING .....	2
WHITEWATER CAMP .....	2
ALUMNI RACE.....	2
GRADE-LEVEL TIME TRIALS .....	3
CARBO LOADS .....	3
END-OF-SEASON MEETING AND INTERVIEWS.....	3
TEAM MEETING FOR NEXT SEASON .....	3
BANQUET.....	3
<b>THE RACES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
RACE DISTANCES .....	3
MEETS—WHO RACES? .....	4
ORDER OF EVENTS .....	4
SCORING .....	4
COURSE LAYOUT .....	4
AWARDS CEREMONIES .....	4
OUT-OF-TOWN RACES.....	4
CONFERENCE MEET .....	5
SECTION MEET.....	5
STATE MEET .....	5
<b>PRACTICES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE CHALLENGES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE REWARDS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
LETTERING STANDARDS .....	6
END OF SEASON AWARDS.....	6
APPAREL.....	7
<b>THE OFF SEASON .....</b>	<b>7</b>



NOTE: This guide has been created by parents for parents of boys who are Mounds View cross country athletes. We hope this information is helpful to you! Please forward suggestions for improving this guide to the Mounds View Boys Cross Country captains' parents.

Go Mustangs!

## History

---

Coach Bob Stewart started the boys cross country program at Mounds View High School in 1959. The race length at that time was 1.8 miles. Coach Ross Fleming began coaching both the boys and girls teams in 1986 but later the teams split and the girls have had their own coach for a number of years.

## The Race Schedule

---

There is little variation in the boys cross country schedule from year to year due to annual events and some logical meet choices. The conference and section meets are examples of these. The continuity and unchanging nature of the schedule provides these advantages:

- Athletes learn the race courses during their high school careers.
- Year-to-year performance comparisons are relatively easy.

Meets can be conducted in a variety of ways. Mounds View usually selects to participate in large meets. As few as 8 schools or as many as 25 schools might compete in a large meet. The schedules for the boys and girls teams overlap some of the time, so runners can expect to see their peers at some meets.

## Non-Race Events

---

### ***Chemical Awareness and Parent Meeting***

As required by the Minnesota State High School League, every athlete and at least one parent or guardian is required to attend a chemical awareness presentation in order to be eligible for participation in high school sports. During this time, a short parent meeting will be held to review administration-type items, such as apparel, fundraising, volunteer sign-up sheets, and booster fees. Booster fees help support travel expenses for out-of-town meets (such as the bus to Alexandria).

### ***Whitewater Camp***

Since 1997, Coach Fleming has taken a group of more experienced runners to Whitewater State Park during the first or second official week of team practice. At this camp, runners log between 40-50 miles in 5 days and participate in various games against each other and other schools. Teams from Roseville and White Bear Lake also attend this camp. Runners are only allowed to go if they have run greater than 300 miles over the summer. Typically, around 20 runners attend the camp. Several dads also attend to help transport runners and prepare meals.

### ***Alumni Race***

After the first week of official practice, members of the boys and girls cross country teams – past and present – gather at Como Park for a 2-mile race on Saturday morning. It is an important team-bonding event, and the competition among runners is steep! Typically, the coaches use this race as a baseline for times. The event is followed by a breakfast picnic and a softball game which matches the alumni against the present high school athletes. Runners are highly encouraged to attend.



### ***Grade-Level Time Trials***

The MV team used to participate in a triathlon at Long Lake Park, but starting in the 2015 season the coaches opted to do grade level time trials. There are separate races for parents, siblings, and then each grade (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>).

### ***Carbo Loads***

These events are held the evening before several of the races in the homes of the team members. Typically, runners are asked to contribute bread (hot, sliced, and buttered), salad, fruit, and beverages, assigned by grade level. Additionally, families are asked to sign up to bring a pasta dish to serve 10-12 boys. Directions to each home are provided prior to the date. All runners are encouraged to attend the carbo loads!

### ***End-of-Season Meeting and Interviews***

Coach Fleming conducts a meeting with the entire team at the end of the season and also meets with runners individually to discuss the highlights of their personal seasons and expectations of them for the coming year.

### ***Team Meeting for Next Season***

The team meeting for the next school year typically occurs during the last week of school.

### ***Banquet***

An end-of-season celebration occurs on a weekend in early- to mid-November at a local dining facility. There is generally time for socialization prior to the brunch and awards program, at which letters are handed out, awards are presented, and speeches are delivered. It is open to all athletes, parents, and family members, and an invitation will be given to each runner in early October. A photo slide show compiled from the many photos taken during the year is shown. The banquet is usually a 3- to 4-hour memorable event! There is a fee to attend the banquet to cover the cost of the meal and expenses.

## **The Races**

---

### ***Race Distances***

Minnesota State High School League distances for cross country are:

- 5000 meters (approximately 3.1 miles) for boys
- 5000 meters for girls; prior to the 2015 season girls races were 4000 meters (2.5 miles)

There might be shorter distance races at various meets, and coaches will determine the best distance for each runner. Some of the underclassmen run shorter distances early in the season. For example, 2 miles is a common distance for 9<sup>th</sup> grade athletes, but the coaches will guide these decisions.



## ***Meets—Who Races?***

At most meets, there are varsity and junior varsity races. Some events also hold a race for younger, less-experienced runners. Some meets are only for younger athletes, and some meets are only for varsity athletes. Who will participate in which meets is confirmed with runners during the season.

## ***Order of Events***

Race order varies, depending on the host school or event sponsor. For example, junior varsity races might occur first at one meet and last at another. The girls and boys races are generally held alternately. At some meets the basic framework remains constant from year to year.

## ***Scoring***

Cross country is a rare team sport in that the lowest score wins the meet. The team score is determined by adding the finishing order of each team's top five finishers, and the team with the LOWEST total score is the winner. For example, if a team's first 5 runners finished 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>, the team's score would be 50 (1+2+10+12+25). A perfect score, therefore, would be 15 (1+2+3+4+5). If a team has fewer than 5 finishers, they are considered incomplete, and the team is not considered for team scoring. If there is a tie, the tie is broken by the finishing position of the 6<sup>th</sup> runner.

Most races are timed electronically with chips attached to the athlete's laces or bibs on the front of the uniform, but some are also timed by hand with the use of numbered pieces of paper.

## ***Course Layout***

Cross country courses are often the same from year to year, but various circumstances might prompt a route change. Frequently, a meet will have a "basic course" that is augmented with extra loops to make the total distance accurate for each race. All races use the same finish chute. At some meets, course maps are available. Be prepared to join in the running to view runners at various points on the course!

Course layouts will be emailed to parents ahead of time, when they are made available. Most course layouts are posted at the event.

## ***Awards Ceremonies***

Most races are followed by an awards ceremony. Ribbons, medals, and/or trophies are given to the top finishers in each race. As many as 25 finishers and as few as 1 finisher might receive awards. At some races, awards are given in the finish chute.

In a demonstration of character and in respect to others, runners are strongly encouraged to stay for the entire awards ceremony at a race. The coach will set general expectations in this area and may require the team to stay for the entire awards ceremony. If there is a conflict preventing an athlete from staying for the awards ceremony, be sure to inform the coach.

## ***Out-of-Town Races***

At the coach's discretion and depending on the schedule, the team may participate in out-of-town races: Alexandria and Duluth (Swain Invitational at Enger Park Golf Course) are examples of such meets. The team may stay overnight at these events. An additional fee per runner may be charged.



## **Conference Meet**

Mounds View is a member of the Suburban East Conference (SEC) in the Twin Cities (<http://www.suburbaneast.org/g5-bin/client.cgi?G5genie=19>). The other teams in the SEC include:

- Cretin Derham Hall
- East Ridge (Woodbury)
- Forest Lake
- Mounds View
- Park High School (Cottage Grove)
- Roseville
- Stillwater
- White Bear Lake
- Woodbury

The Conference Meet was held in Stacy, Minnesota, at the Falcon Ridge Golf Course for a number of years. In 2015 the course switched to Tanner's Brook Golf Course, also in Stacy, Minnesota. Performance at the Conference Meet determines who will be honored as All-Conference or All-Conference Honorable Mention. In the past, this has been determined by finishing order. The first 14 finishers in the SEC varsity race receive an All-Conference award, and the next 7 runners receive an All-Conference Honorable Mention award.

## **Section Meet**

The Section Meet determines which individual runners and teams will advance to the State Meet. The top 2 teams and the top 7 individual runners not on one of these two teams will compete at the State Meet. Mounds View competes in Section 5 with these schools: Anoka, Blaine, Centennial, Champlain Park, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Fridley, Irondale, Maple Grove, Osseo, Park Center, Rogers, St. Michael-Albertville, Spring Lake Park, and Totino Grace.

## **State Meet**

The State Meet has been held at St. Olaf College in Northfield for a number of years. Four races are held at the meet: boys and girls race at the AA (larger schools) and A level (smaller schools). In each race there are 16 teams (8 sections with 2 teams per section advancing). The top 7 individual runners from each section also participate. The race is contested at the individual and team levels, and it determines which runners receive All-State honors.

## **Practices**

---

Practices may involve a warm-up, stretching, strength-training, running (with the boys divided into groups based on ability and preparation), and coaches' comments. During the season, runners practice every day after school (with the exception of weekday race days). Saturday practices might be held at locations around the school district (e.g., Snail Lake Regional Park for a hill workout) when there is not a meet scheduled.

Experienced runners may be encouraged to do additional training before school, including either a run from home or a team practice at Highview Middle School for aqua-jogging. These decisions are at the discretion of the coaches.



Runners will participate in a number of types of running workouts. The duration and intensity depends on the timeline of preparation before a race.

- A DBR (day-before-race) is typically a short, slow run.
- A fartlek, which means “speed play” in Swedish, is a run done based on time intervals (e.g. 2 minutes quick, 1 minute easy)
- Progression or tempo workouts are runs at the pace at which acid starts to accumulate in muscles. These are typically 4-8 miles long and followed by a cooldown.
- VO<sub>2</sub>max workouts are typically 800m long intervals with limited recovery and focus on maximizing aerobic fitness.
- Anaerobic capacity repeats are fast, near-maximal speed intervals of 150-200 meters with long recovery in-between. These focus on developing maximal anaerobic fitness.
- Accels are short sprints designed to improve speed and form.

## The Challenges

---

Cross country running is an intense sport, and it is the only fall sport in which the State Meet is conducted outdoors. Conditions vary during the season. Runners and spectators should be prepared for the heat and humidity early in the season and the cold chill of later meets.

## The Rewards

---

Running, unlike some other sports, is a life-long activity. Cross country running offers the opportunity to achieve a high level of fitness while building a firm foundation in a lifetime pursuit.

### **Lettering Standards**

To receive a letter, a runner must meet one of the following standards:

- Run 5000 meters in 17:35 or less on two occasions during the season
- Finish among the top 5 Mounds View runners in a minimum of 5 varsity races.
- Finish among the top 7 Mounds View runners in a minimum of one more than half the varsity races.
- Score in the Section 5AA varsity race.
- Seniors with at least 2 years as a runner.

NOTE: At the coach’s discretion, a letter may be awarded to an athlete who has not met an above standard.

### **End of Season Awards**

At the year-end banquet, awards are presented to runners to recognize special accomplishments. Many of these are voted upon by teammates. Not all awards are given each year, but some frequently given include:

- **Most Valuable Runner:** For the runner who was all-in-all the best runner on the team throughout the season.
- **Courage Award:** For the runner who showed the most courage in the face of physical adversity.
- **Rookie of the Year:** For the first-year runner who had the biggest impact and who shows the most promise for future team contribution.
- **Coach’s Award:** For the runner who has made a particularly significant contribution to the program.
- **Most Improved Runner:** For the runner who has made the biggest improvement from one year to the next; this is not an award for the most improved athlete from the beginning of the season to the end.



- **Duck Award:** For the runner considered to have the most unique sense of humor in the eyes of his teammates.

## **Apparel**

Although it is not mandatory for runners to purchase team apparel, the items sold each year are popular with runners. The traditional green hooded Mounds View Cross Country sweatshirt is standard wear by most runners; many parents purchase this item as well.

The captains traditionally select thoughtful quotes for inclusion on a team t-shirt, and often the year's schedule goes on the back of that shirt. They also choose clothing items and designs available for purchase through a vendor.

Shoes are purchased by runners based on their personal needs. Generally, the idea is to train and run in shoes different from those worn around school. Some runners prefer racing spikes for meets. It is a good idea to have two pairs of running shoes: one older and one newer. The older pair can be used in inclement weather while the newer pair can be worn in good weather.

Green shorts are available for purchase from Coach Fleming and become the runner's property.

Jerseys for races are team equipment, provided by the school. They are required to be returned in excellent condition at the end of the season.

NOTE: Run N Fun on Randolph Avenue in St. Paul (651-290-2747) and Right Fit Running on County Rd 10 in Mounds View (763-267-6277) are stores that traditionally offer discounts to Mounds View runners.

## **The Off Season**

---

Many runners compete in winter sports and most also compete in track in the spring. Runners without a winter sport often decide to join teammates for running during the winter months, both outdoors and at a nearby indoor track facility. Summer preparation for the season is essential for runners and the more experienced runners log 400 or more miles during the summer. Keeping a detailed log of these miles is an expectation of the coaching staff who will collect the logs the first week of practice in August.