

Ridgefield Girls Cross Country Rules and Procedures

Team Philosophy

The coaches of the Ridgefield High School Girls Cross Country Team are committed to developing champions both on and off the field. A **champion** is one who lives by high standards, knows how to set realistic goals, and dedicates themselves toward achieving them. Our goal is to teach our student-athletes:

- The rewards of teamwork.
- The planning and determination required to set and meet challenging goals.
- The confidence to overcome difficult and adverse challenges in life.
- The enjoyment and positive effects physical fitness have on the body and mind.

Although success on the cross country course is one of our main goals, there are many other valid goals for each athlete on the team to strive for. Respect, patience, integrity as well as countless other intangible benefits can and should be acquired through participation in this sport.

Athletes should see their participation on this team as a privilege and an opportunity to build a relationship with teammates, the coaching staff, and the sport. This program cannot support athletes who do not want to be present and develop with their team. We say that the athlete is here for the team; the team isn't here for the athlete.

Forms

All necessary forms (Physical Examination, Parent-Student Agreement, Participation Fee, Emergency Treatment Consent, Concussion and Cardiac Arrest) must be submitted through the school's online system before an athlete can participate.

Practices and Participation

As with most athletic endeavors, cross country and distance running requires a year-long commitment. Failure to attend practice can result in suspension from participation in competition, ineligibility for post-season awards, and dismissal from the team. If you qualify for a post-season championship meet you are expected to participate in that meet. ***This sport is expected to be one of your highest priorities.***

Unless otherwise noted, practices are Monday through Saturday. Generally, practice begins at 2:30 PM after each school day, and 9:00 AM on Saturday and weekday no-school days. Check the online schedule for specifics. Be dressed and ready to run by then, so that we can begin promptly.

We practice even if there is inclement weather. Be dressed for it, such as wearing rain gear, or hats, gloves and spandex if the weather is cold. Cancelled practices are very rare. Check with the coaches or captains if you are unsure. Do not rely on other teammates or "rumor".

- Information regarding missed practices or competition should be communicated to a coach by the athlete. Parents are encouraged to let their daughter assume the responsibility of communicating this with the coaches.
- Attendance is expected once an athlete appears on the roster provided by the school.
- If an athlete joins the team late because they were participating with another team, they will not receive an absence for the days they were on the other team.
- All commitments involving other sports, clubs, vacations, test prep, doctor appointments, Girl Scouts, retreats, and employment should not interfere with practice. These will not be excused.
- Academic commitments, including teacher conferences, extra help, and test make-ups, should be scheduled before or during school. In the event that a student must use practice

time to clear up academic issues, the student must notify their coach ahead of time and come with a pass from the teacher.

- If an athlete arrives late to practice or leaves practice early without completing all work (including exercises and stretches) it will be recorded as half an absence.
- Injured athletes are expected to attend practices and meets.
- If an athlete must miss school and practice / meets for an extended period of time due to illness, the absences will only be excused if a doctor's note is provided.
- Athletes with six absences will be suspended from the next meet.
- Athletes with eight absences will be suspended from a second meet.
- Athletes with ten absences will be dismissed from the team.
- Athletes who miss a competition with communication will be suspended from the next competition.
- Athletes who miss a meet without communicating with the coaches in advance will be dismissed from the team.
- If an athlete is suspended from a meet they must still attend the meet to cheer their teammates.
- Athletes who do not complete the season in good standing will not receive a varsity or junior varsity award.
- We do not allow athletes on the team who do not plan to compete. Any athlete who does not compete during the season will not receive a varsity or junior varsity award except in the case of injury or excused illness.
- It is the responsibility of the athlete to communicate absences and consequences with their parents.
- Athletes who miss an invitational competition will not be invited to further invitationals for the rest of the school year.

Meets

All athletes are expected to stay to the conclusion of all meets, through the team cool-down. If athletes are done competing prior to the end of the meet they are expected to support their teammates. Everyone is expected to help cleanup after a meet.

An athlete who leaves any meet early without an approved excuse will sit out the following meet. Only emergencies will be excused.

Communications with the Coaching Staff

Please refer to the Parent Information section of the RHS Athletics Handbook for guidelines as to what is and is not appropriate for discussion with the coaching staff, as well as the chain of communication for resolving conflicts should they arise.

Varsity Awards and Captains

Being a member of the varsity team is an honor and privilege that takes hard work, consistency, and determination. A varsity letter will be awarded to an athlete who:

- Upholds the good name of Ridgefield High School and does nothing to dishonor her school, team or teammates.
- Follows the guidelines in the Ridgefield High School athletic handbook
- Shows responsibility in tracking progress including mileage, times, and goals.
- Demonstrates passion and enthusiasm for the sport.
- Completes the season and runs at championship meets in which she has qualified.
- Runs in a minimum of two varsity races and averages three points or more against each varsity team we compete with. One point is awarded to an athlete for each top 7 runner she beats from another team.
- If an athlete chooses to run the novice meet or misses a meet, she scores zero points against each team.

- **OR**, if the previous condition is not met, finishes in the top 5 on the varsity team at least twice during the season, or finishes in the top 7 on the varsity team at least three times during the season.
- Competes in the FCIAC varsity, Class LL, Open, or New England championships.
- Is a senior with at least two Junior Varsity awards in cross country, as long as she meets the first five expectations.
- Coaches have the right to award a varsity letter at their discretion if the athlete meets the first five expectations.

Captain status is reserved for those seniors demonstrating the highest level of leadership and integrity.

- Captains must abide by the “Captain’s Pledge” as described in the RHS Athletics Handbook.
- Captains must understand that their role as a leader is a year-round commitment.
- Failure to meet these expectations may result in the removal of captaincy.
- The final decisions on captains will be made by the coaching staff with input from the athletes.

Uniforms

Uniforms must be returned promptly at the conclusion of the season. Uniforms are to be returned to a coach. Do not rely on another athlete or friend to return it for you. You must take proper care of your uniform. Do not keep them with your spikes or other sharp items that can snag them. Remove pins and clips from the uniform before washing them.

Miscellaneous Rules and Expectations

- While running off-campus, all athletes are expected to run single file, against traffic, and with a reflective vest or belt. Exceptions will be communicated by the coaches.
- Athletes are expected to communicate all injuries to the coaches. Every injured athlete receives plans from either the coach or the trainer in order to aid recovery. In most cases, injured athletes are still expected to attend practice.
- All athletes are expected to behave with respect and sportsmanship towards teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and officials.
- All athletes must travel to and from competitions on the bus unless an alternate transportation form has been submitted to one of the coaches at least one day in advance.
- The school policies concerning hazing, smoking, and alcohol and drugs will be strictly enforced.

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