

Cross Country Terms for Parents and Beginners

COMPETITION TERMS:

DUAL MEET: A cross country meet between two teams, usually in the same league.

DOUBLE DUAL OR TRI MEET: A meet with three teams where the scores are tabulated between only two teams at a time. Example: Teams A vs. B, teams A vs. C, and then teams B vs. C. Only the runners between the two teams are scored, with the others not counting in the placing.

INVITATIONAL MEET: Larger meets that are often held on Saturdays. These are open to teams who request to enter and not regularly scheduled as part of a league schedule. While a regular season meet is usually over in a couple of hours, invitations have several races and usually last most of the day.

RACE DISTANCES: In championship races in CT, boys and girls will be running 5000 meters or 3.1 miles. Some of the regular season courses are anything from 2.8 to 3.1 miles.

CHAMPIONSHIPS TERMS:

What some people call the “post season” is what all good runners aim their training towards. There are two organizations that conduct championship meets in CT. The first meet is the conference meet. A conference is a group of teams in relatively the same area of the state or with similar type of schools. Some of the bigger conferences in the state are the FCIAC, SWC, NCCC, CCC, Shoreline, Berkshire, NVL, CSC and the ECC.

The **CIAC or Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference** is our state association that organizes our state championship class and open meets. The class meets are schools of similar sizes in the state and they are used to qualify for the State Open which is made up of the best individuals and teams in the state.

The top 6 teams in the State Open and the top 25 individuals qualify for the **New England Championships** in Cross Country. In the fall, CT, NH, VT, RI and ME all meet the week after the CT State Open at a site that rotates between the states each year. In 2013 it is in Manchester, NH.

VARSITY TEAM- some coaches give varsity letters to more than 7, but only the top 7 runners on each team get to count in the varsity scoring. In cross country, no one sits the bench. Everyone can run in every meet up to the state meet, were only the top 7 can run. Most major meets only 7 can run in the varsity race, but everyone runs in 1 race in dual meets with the exception of runners that may compete in a shorter “novice” race. Each coach has their own criteria for “varsity.”

Scoring- Each place counts for a point. 1st place is 1 point, 5th place is 5 points, 10th place is 10 points, etc. The top five runners on each team score and you add up their points. Like golf, the team with the fewest points wins. The 6th and 7th runners on the team can push back, or cause the other team to score more points. In case of a tie, whose ever 6th man finishes 1st, that team wins.



TRAINING TERMS:

FARTLEK- A type of training where an athlete combines fast and easy running, for speed and endurance.

LSD- Long *Steady* Distance. A long run anywhere from 3-26 miles for the purpose of increasing your endurance. It should be run at an even pace, but not slow.

INTERVALS- Running distances shorter than your race, at a faster pace with a set rest period between each run.

TEMPO RUN- A fast paced run over a long distance at a pace slightly slower than your race pace. There are charts based on your race performances that tell you what your tempo pace should be.

REST- an important ingredient to your improvement. You must work hard to improve, but you must also allow your body to recover from hard workout. It in the recovery is where you actually improve. A good athlete needs 8 hours of consistent sleep a night.

TRAINING LONG- A record of your runs and a history of your improvement. Your "recipe for success".

TIPS TO IMPROVE- The most important thing to remember is to train consistently. Your training must be progressive in nature, increasing a little each year. The last thing to remember is to keep it fun. Find ways to keep the sport exciting and stay with it.

SUPPORTING THE TEAM AT RACES- Use constructive phrases, something that an athlete can do. Things such as "keep good posture", "lift your knees", "lower your shoulders" or "refocus" are examples of constructive cheering. Yelling "run faster" or "you're slowing down" usually does not help because the athlete is usually already trying to run as fast as he can... no matter what it looks like to the fan. Perhaps some athletes want to know their place or a split at a particular distance, but make sure it is accurate. Much of performing to your potential is based on an athlete's mental attitude during the race. Any positive comments that will inspire the runner and keep him or her motivated will help. Sometimes just knowing family and friends are there is the biggest help.

EQUIPMENT:

SINGLET- Your uniform, racing shirt.

TRAINERS- training shoes you can run in every day.

FLATS- racing shoes without spikes. They can be worn on hard days or races where spikes can't be used.

SPIKES- usually refer to the shoes you can put spikes in to give you better traction. The different types of removable spikes themselves are called "pins", "Christmas trees" and "pyramids".

