

CONESTOGA HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

Team Handbook/Survival Guide

An Informational Guide for Parents and Athletes



EAT RIGHT • WORK HARD • AVOID NEGATIVE PEOPLE

CONESTOGA HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

Coaching Philosophy:

We feel it is our responsibility to teach each athlete that cross country is a great, lifelong sport. Balancing hard work with fun is the most important aspect of obtaining success on our team. During an athlete's time on the team we will strive to instill life learning lessons such as responsibility, character, respect, confidence, leadership and discipline. If all of these aspects are applied, the wins, medals and personal records will come naturally on their own. Creating a fun & positive experience while in a competitive environment is our main goal.

2014 Coaching Staff:

Head Coach: Ryan Comstock (Email: StogaTrackXC@gmail.com)

Assistant Coach: Rick Hawkins

Assistant Coach: Mark Tirone

Assistant Coach: Katie Dutch

Team Website:

stogatrackxc.wix.com/stogatrackxc

Athlete Summer Check List

Athletes are responsible for attending to all listed items prior to the beginning of the first training camp practice on **MONDAY, AUGUST 13th 2014.**

- ✓ **PIAA & TESD Paperwork:** Due August 1st Athletes will not be allowed to participate until these forms are all completed. All forms can be downloaded from the Conestoga Athletes Homepage.
 - Pre-Participation Physical Forms
 - Parent Permission Form
 - Parent/Student Guidelines
- ✓ **Required Running gear**
 - Running specific shoes geared to your foot type
 - Discounts available at local running stores
 - Digital Watch with split/lap capabilities
 - Running Shorts (please no "basketball" shorts)
 - Water bottles We will have water provided but are limited with our paper cups
 - BONUS
 - Stretch Ropes, Foam Rollers, Towel, Heart Rate Monitor
- ✓ **Cross Country Athlete Team Contract**
 - Review this handbook then visit StogaTrackXC.com and review team contract and submit your acceptance.
 - *This should be done prior to Pre-Season.*
- ✓ **Communication Tools**
 - StogaTrackXC.com is our team website and used as the main communication tool for the season. It will contain all materials important to the season, including schedules, pictures, results, directions, practice and training information, etc.
 - Every Parent and Every Athlete must be registered for our XC google group. We now have separate groups for all three of our seasons (XC, Indoor & Outdoor) If you were registered last XC season, it will carry over into 2014!

Cross Country Guidelines

Training Groups:

Our team is broken up into 3 training groups. These groups are based on talent, current fitness level but mostly the level of commitment to the program. Athletes will move up and down groups throughout the season based on what the coaching staff feels is best appropriate to the athlete and the team as a whole.

- To be considered for our top tire training group, athletes must maintain a training log over the summer and during the season. **Register at Running2win.com and use the Conestoga Team Code: T-58616122812-28**

We train all our athletes to progressively improve through the season and throughout their years on the team. The ultimate goal is to minimize injury setbacks and have our athletes run their personal best times in their final race in a stoga uniform!

Conditioning & Training Expectations:

We 100% expect our athletes to appropriately prepare over the summer.

Summer training plans are handed out in mid-June. Our plans are very easy to follow for any ability, but will require consistent running of at least 5 days per week with the mileage progressing gradually throughout the summer. Our training camp practice will simply pick up where the packet ends. Meaning if you follow the plan, I guarantee practices will seem easy! If you lack the consistency needed, you will without a doubt struggle. We will work to bridge the gap with our “newbies”, but understandably, we will have little tolerance for under conditioned returning team members.

Please plan on making a commitment to yourself, your teammates and your coaches. Time management skills to balance your academic workload with your team commitment is essential for survival. Work schedules cannot conflict with team practices or meets. Cross country is an excellent means for gearing up for your respective winter or spring sport, but remember, we are a varsity sport, not an after school club. We do not welcome “part-time” participation or an uncommitted approach to our team.

Team Practice

During the school year we will practice daily from 3:00pm to 5pm.

- Mondays through Thursdays we meet at Wilson Farm Park’s Shire Pavilion. A shuttle bus is provided for students.
- All Friday’s we will remain at Conestoga and meet at the track.

Typical Cross Country Regular Season Practice

- 2:30-2:40: Grab water jugs, etc. and board shuttle busses to Wilson Park
- 2:50-3:00: Attendance & announcements at Shire Pavilion
- 3pm-3:15: Break off into training groups, dynamic warm up routines, etc
- 3:15-TBD: Group distance runs, workouts, etc.
- TBD-4:45/5pm: Post-run routines, cool-downs, stretching...
- 5pm: Kids who have not been picked up will board shuttle bus back to school

The Meets

- Our weekday league meets are against Central League schools. Each race is approximately 5,000m or close to 3 miles. The courses are up and down hills, on grass, dirt trails sometime roads or through small creeks. This season in all league meets the boys team will race first (at 4pm) and the girls will start after the boys finish. The cool part of these races is that Varsity and JV are combined and will race at the same time. This allows any athlete at any time to move up positions on the team.
- On weekends we participate in larger meets called invitationals. These meets will host up to 50 or more schools! To accommodate all the participants, expect separate races for Varsity (top 7) Junior Varsity (all remaining runners) and sometimes a freshman only race is provided.

****Please review our team schedule.**

What is Varsity and JV and how are meets Scored?

- In cross country Varsity is considered the top 7 finishers in a race, Junior Varsity is all of the remaining runners.
- A cross country meet is scored by each team adding up the places of its top 5 finishers. As in golf, the low score wins. For example, a team that scores 26 points places ahead of a team that scores 29 points, as follows:

<u>Conestoga</u>	<u>Henderson</u>
1	2
4	3
5	7
6	8
<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>
11	15
13	16

Score: 26

Score: 36

****Stoga Wins!**

A team's 6th and 7th place finishers can also figure in the scoring if they place ahead of the other teams' top 5 finishers. When that is the case, they become "displacers" by pushing up their opponents' scores. Only a team's 6th and 7th finishers can be "displacers", regardless of how many of its runners may finish ahead of an opposing team's top 5 finishers.

Home Course:

Our home cross country course is at Mill Road Park at the intersection of Mill Road & Duportail Road in Berwyn.

Spectators, please park at the Tredyffrin Township Municipal Building. You can use the GPS Address of 1100 Duportail Rd, Berwyn, PA 19312.

- During home meets, our students are shuttled to the park (ONE-WAY). There will NOT be a bus to take kids back to school. Everyone should be picked up at Mill Road. Students are dismissed once they have: 1. Completed their cool-down routine 2. Helped to clean up the course of trash and picked up all orange cone markers. This is usually around 6pm.

Transportation Procedures:

All kids must travel with the team to our meets.

I feel very strongly about our team remaining together for the whole meet and traveling back to school TOGETHER!! If there are extenuating circumstances, kids may go home with a parent. You must follow these guidelines when considering taking kids home from our meets.

- Parent taking their own kids home
 - A signed note must be given to a coach (preferably coach Comstock)
 - *No need to clarify this with the athletic department beforehand.*
- Parent taking OTHER children home (*this one is tricky*)
 - This MUST be pre-approved by Mr. Boyle (Athletic Director)
 - BOTH or ALL Parents involved must send an email to Boyle.
 - He will: cc me on his approval.
 - *There are no exceptions to this procedure!*
- Student wishing to drive themselves to/from a meet.
 - Parent should email Mr. Boyle with the explanation of why this is needed.
 - *This one will most likely will be denied.*
- *No one should ever leave a meet without shaking Coach Comstock's hand.*

Cross Country Guidelines Continued...

Varsity & Junior Varsity Certificates

Athletes must meet the following requirement to earn a varsity certificate

- Finish in the top 7 (varsity) for half of the season's meets
 - Loop hole: *consistently work hard* and make the varsity race at Leagues, Districts or State Meet
- Superior attendance record
- Remain in good standing with school administrators and coaching staff for entire season
- Seniors who have remained in good standing with team, consistent meet participation for their sophomore, junior and senior seasons will be awarded a varsity certificate.

Athletes must meet the following requirements to earn a Junior Varsity Certificate:

- Consistent practice attendance for entire season
- Respectable work ethic at practice and meets
- Does not miss meets.
- Has earned the approval of coaching staff

Trophies Presented at End of Season:

1. Most Valuable Performer

- Decided by coaches based on:
 - Comes to pre-season fit by following prescribed summer training regime.
 - Consistent with maintaining a high standard of effort during practice sessions.
 - Consistently finishes among the top on the team in meets, with preference given to Championship meets.
 - Able to remain in descent standing with school and team throughout the season.

2. Captain's Trophy of Dedication

- Voted by the team's captains based on:
 - Interest in the sport
 - Loyalty
 - Desire
 - Courage
 - Interest in teammates

3. Other special awards are presented as well

- Senior Leadership Award
- Pioneer Spirit Award
- Most Improved Award
- Junior Varsity MVP
- Outstanding Freshman Award

Uniforms:

These are to be kept in immaculate condition.

WASHING INSTRUCTOINS: Wash in cold water and let hang dry. **DO NOT PUT IN DRYER!!**

Athletes are required to return their uniform on the day of their last competition: Leagues, Districts or States

Each uniform is labeled with a number and recorded. This spreadsheet is available for view on our team website.

Cross Country Guidelines Continued...

Race Distance:

All PIAA and Central League competitions are 3.1 miles or 5k
We will attend several invitational's that vary in distance from 3k or 4k distances

Training Guidelines

Coach Comstock will provide a separate training packet; all athletes are expected to follow. We will have several plans based on an athlete's starting point and ability.

It is encouraged to take advantage of any "captain runs" held over the summer. Team leaders are familiar with our dynamic warm-up routines, active isolation (rope) stretches, core and body weight exercises.

- Elite Options are available. Including how to properly use a heart rate monitor for training, keeping an online training log (running2win.com) attending team training camps (i.e. Princeton, Villanova) using ropes for Active Isolation Stretching, foam rollers for self massage therapy. For the 2nd season we are offering Physiological Profile Testing. This is the ultimate way to take the guess work out of your training plan -- ABSOLUTLEY recommend using for anyone serious about getting faster. You will have an in-depth individualized plan to follow. Athletes interested in the testing should contact Coach Comstock ASAP – the sooner the better!

Other Things to consider:

- Have your blood work checked over the summer – we have found many kids with low iron levels, mono, lyme disease, etc!
- Get checked for Asthma – the number of kids with exercise induced asthma who are totally unaware is staggering.
- Eat smart this summer! Nutrition has an amazing impact on your performance and recovery process.
- Messages with tips, articles, video clips will be sent throughout the summer.

Top Educational Websites to Bookmark:

- PennTrackXC.com
- FloTrack.org (excellent)
- RunnerSpace.com
- Letsrun.com (college and professional coverage)
- runningtimes.com
- coachjayjohnson.com
- gambetta.com/blog.html

This handbook is a good way to get started or keep you on track, but it is by no means exhaustive. Make sure to download our training packet when made available (early June) and start running (with a sense of purpose) As we get close to the season I will send out more pertinent information.

--Coach Comstock

StogaTrackXC@gmail.com