

South Saint Paul Packers Cross Country Team Handbook 2023



Important Dates in August & September

Monday, August 14th – 1st day of practice! For the first two weeks, we meet behind the home football bleachers at 8:00 am sharp.

Wednesday, August 16th – Parent Meeting at 5:30 pm in Lecture Hall.

Saturday, August 26th – Ron Kretsch Invite at Bassett Creek Park (9:45 am)

Monday, August 28th – Beginning today, practice will start at 2:50 pm. Both coaches have staff trainings this week and can no longer supervise morning practices.

Friday, September 1st – Irish Invitational at Rosemount (morning meet, time TBD)

Wednesday, September 20th – Walkathon for the SSP Educational Foundation (after a shortened practice)

Personnel

Coaches: Jenna Haack Ramirez and Chris Bakken. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jenna via email at jramirez@sspps.org or on her cell at 920-318-1032. Please identify yourself if you send a text.

Athletic Director: Brady Krueger. Email at bkrueger@sspps.org.

Activities Office Secretary: Kris Nihart. For questions about registration, physicals, or meet cancellations due to weather, please contact Kris at 651-457-9462. Her email is knihart@sspps.org.

Practices

How long is practice? Attendance is taken at 2:50 pm and we warm up for 10 to 15 minutes. After the run or workout, we do strengthening exercises for our hips, abs and arms. We usually end practice between 4:15 and 4:45 pm, though some days may be a little later. We keep practice shorter on the days before meets.

Where is practice? Practice is all over town, but we always meet by the stairs and concession stand behind the home football bleachers for attendance.

What if it's raining? We will run in the rain and/or snow. If there is thunder and lightning, we will practice indoors.

What if I'm injured? This is a team sport, so we expect you to be at practice. If you can, bring a bike when you cannot run.

What if I'm going to miss practice? You must let your coaches know in advance if you know you will be gone. If you are absent due to illness, send Coach Ramirez an email or text. Please schedule appointments around practice. Please make up missed school work in the morning. An unexcused absence may prevent you from attending the next meet.

Meets

We are representing our school wherever we go, so we will carry ourselves with Packer Pride. In its simplest terms, on buses and at campsites, we will behave as if everyone is watching us.

Representing our school at meets is a privilege, not a right.

You will not attend a meet if you have an unexcused school absence or practice absence since the previous meet. Unexcused practice absences are anything other than a school-excused illness.

Lettering

Any runner, regardless of grade, can be a varsity runner! **To earn a letter, a male athlete must finish a 5k race in 21:44 (7 min pace) and a female athlete must finish in 24:50 (8 min pace).**

To earn a letter, athletes must achieve one of the following:

- If a runner is a member of the 7-athlete varsity team at the conference championship, he or she will earn a varsity letter.
- If a runner is a member of the 7-athlete varsity team at the section meet, he or she will earn a varsity letter. The 2 alternates will not automatically letter, but they will if they run at the section meet.
- If a runner participates in 4 meets as a varsity runner during the season, he or she will earn a varsity letter.
- If an athlete has participated on the high school (9-12) cross country team for 3 years, he or she will earn a varsity letter.

To earn a letter, athletes must meet attendance and attitude expectations below.

Attendance will be a factor in determining the earning of letters. We recognize that because our season begins before school, attendance can be spotty in August due to family vacations and students having jobs. That's 3 weeks of our season! The regular season is just over 10 weeks long, and any runner missing more than 3 days after Labor Day will not receive a letter. Coaches may make exceptions in certain circumstances, for example, extended illness. Exceptions will be determined mainly by attitude and hard work.

Attitude is a key factor to your success. Your attitude is demonstrated in how you work in every facet of practice. If we must tell you to get on task during warm-ups, cool-downs, or abs and arms work, or if we find ourselves having to talk to you about a poor effort during a run, you will not letter. If you are a negative teammate, disregard coaches, or represent our school in a way that is not appropriate, you will not letter. Be your best every day!

Scoring

Cross country scoring is simple. **WE DO NOT WANT POINTS.** Points are determined by the place you finish. 1st place gets 1 point. 52nd place gets 52 points. Each team's first 5 runners count toward the team total. The best team score possible is 15. That's 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th place all added up.

Here are the results for the girls from a previous Conference Championship:

PLACE	TEAM	POINTS	PLACES OF FINISHERS						
1	Henry Sibley	27	3	4	5	6	9	12	14
2	South St Paul	53	1	2	13	15	22	32	41
3	Mahtomedi	78	7	8	19	21	23	26	29
4	Hastings	103	11	16	18	24	34	38	43
5	North St Paul	137	20	25	27	28	37	39	42
6	Tartan	149	10	17	31	44	47	49	
7	Hill-Murray	174	30	33	35	36	40	45	
8	Simley	247	46	48	50	51	52		

Why are there 7 finishers if only 5 scores count? Varsity teams are made up of 7 runners. Runners 6 and 7 still matter. If they finish ahead of any other team's top 5, they just raised that team's score. If a school has fewer than 5 runners, they will not earn a team score.

Most of our meet results are posted online, at Athletic.net or raceberryjam.com. I will email an updated spreadsheet of meet times throughout the season.

Fundraising

We do one fundraiser, and that is collecting money for the SSP Education Foundation Walkathon. The team that collects the most money for the Walkathon gets to keep 100% of what they collect. For several years running, the cross country team has done just that. In doing so, we have not needed to hold separate fundraisers or sell anything to raise funds.

Runner Responsibilities

- 1) Above everything else, you will attend class and maintain a GPA that allows you to participate in school activities.
- 2) Show up every day, always give your best effort, and carry yourself with dignity and respect. This includes refraining from profanity and negativity. Let's support and build each other up.
- 3) Get a running watch and wear it every day. A watch is a must if you're serious about getting faster. Without one, you're just out there guessing. No need for a GPS, a simple timer with the ability to collect splits will do.
- 4) Be honest with coaches about pain immediately. We have an official athletic trainer on staff who will be available at all practices. Take advantage of his expertise and prevent little injuries from becoming season-ending injuries.

- 5) Make sure you have all of your possessions when you leave practices, meets, and buses, and take care of the uniform you have been assigned.
- 6) Arrange for transportation to pick you up in front of the service building after meets as soon as the bus arrives.
- 7) Drink a lot of water throughout the day and have a snack to eat after practice. You will not get dehydrated from a workout if you drink plenty of water in the 24 hours leading up to it. Your muscles don't get the full benefit of working out if you don't eat protein and carbs within 30 minutes of finishing the activity.
- 8) Familiarize yourself with Minnesota State High School League rules and regulations for your sport:

https://www.mshsl.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/cc_20212022_rulesandpolicies.pdf

Parents

Please email me at jramirez@sspps.org as soon as your son or daughter has joined the team. I will add your name to the cross country email group, which is my main way of communicating with you throughout the season.

What can you do to help your son or daughter?

- 1) The number one reason runners get hurt is from wearing the wrong shoes. Run 'n Fun (now operating under the TC Running Company) offers our athletes a 15% discount. There is a location off Tamarack in Woodbury in addition to the store on Randolph in St. Paul. For meets, spikes are not required, but they're strongly encouraged.
- 2) If you can, see to it that your athlete has a snack with protein and carbohydrates that they can eat within a half hour of practice ending. Our workouts will put a lot of stress on their leg muscles, and eating within that window helps recovery immensely.
- 3) Pick them up promptly when we return from meets. Coaches cannot leave until all of our athletes have left. **If you wish to take your son or daughter home with you after a meet, you must make arrangements through the activities office the day prior to the meet.**
- 4) We really want to emphasize the importance of wearing a watch with a stopwatch. Our sport requires very little equipment – shoes for practice, spikes for meets, and a watch that will tell them what pace they're running and what their splits are.
- 5) Be as encouraging and present as you can be.