

# Falls Church HS Cross Country Summer Training Guidelines

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Welcome to Falls Church HS cross country! XC is a sport where patience, dedication and plain hard work can overcome an abundance of "talent". We know some of you are running to get in shape, some want to just be part of a team, and some of you have goals of running in college. Whatever your motivation and experience in running we will try to meet your running needs by challenging you at your fitness level. Cross country will test your physical, mental and emotional strength but when your goal is achieved you will have no better feeling. Be committed to yourself and your team. If you stay motivated, you will improve and your team will improve! You are simply cheating yourself if you do not take advantage of your summer vacation and return in August in good shape, because the kids who have been training will eat you alive. It really is that simple.

Many of you have been running and training since school let out. We would love to hear the specifics of your training to help you outline a more specific program. We would also like to hear from new runners! Please email your coaches. Emails can be found on the team website. **Also, consider joining the Strava APP to track your running. Coach Smith has set up a club on Strava called Jaguars Run so we can share our training.** We have about 5 weeks left until cross country practice starts on August 3rd. We assume you are already about week 5 into your training. Below are some summer guidelines and information about the upcoming cross country season can be found in the files section of the team website. Both you and your parents should read this informational packet carefully.

**What is cross-country?** It's a summer sport that's played out in the fall. It is a test of physical, mental and emotional strength; it is one of the most uplifting, thankless, rewarding and frustrating endeavors you will ever pour your heart into.

## Philosophy of Summer Training

The summer program is all about the 'joy of running'. It's about building a base of miles, a training base, so that when the season officially starts, you're prepared and ready to make an impact right away. The summer is not about hard, gut wrenching workouts. It's not about hill repeats and track work. It is all about running easy to moderate paced miles, building up slowly over the summer. Think of it like the foundation of a house - you can't start with the roof!

## How much to run?

Experienced runners (those with at least six months of consistent distance training) should aim to reach 25-40 miles a week of running, on average, by September. Newer runners should shoot for an average of 20-25 miles a week by September. Novice runners should attempt to reach an average of 10-15 miles a week of running by this time. **When increasing your distance over a period of weeks, it's wise to "cut back" every third week to allow your body to adapt to the stress.** Understand that these are general guidelines and that the basic idea is for you to run, then run a little farther, never worrying about increasing the pace until you're comfortable with the distance. Again, whatever your goals in cross-country are, your destiny is almost entirely in your hands.

## The 2020 Summer Season - Mileage Goals

**Experienced runners** (those with at least six months of consistent distance training) should aim to reach 45-60 minutes a day of running (**30-40 miles per week**), on average, by mid-August. **Newer runners** (those who participated in spring track or have done some running as part of another sport) should shoot for a daily average of 30-45 minutes (**20-25 miles per week**) by the time we re-convene in August. **Novice runners** should attempt to reach a daily average of 30 minutes of running by this time. **When increasing your distance over a period of weeks, it's wise to "cut back" every third week to allow your body to adapt to the stress.**

It is the coach's belief that the above guidelines will not only adequately prepare both boys and girls for the upcoming season; it will limit the potential for injury. Be your own judge of where you are at in terms of your running development.

**How to get there? Work backwards!** To avoid injury, miles/minutes must be built up with a steady increase, while following the well accepted rule of no more than 10% increases per week. So if you are trying to hit 40 miles per week with 11 weeks to go in the summer, then you might follow something like this:

Week 11 -40  
Week 10 - 36  
Week 9 - 32  
Week 8 - 24 ( Cut back)  
Week 7 - 29  
Week 6 - 26  
Week 5 - 24  
Week 4 - 17 (cut back)  
Week 3 - 21  
Week 2 - 19  
Week 1 – 17

For a goal of 25 miles per week, if say only 8 weeks to go, you would do something like this:

Week 8-20 (cut back)  
Week 7 - 25  
Week 6 - 22.5  
Week 5 - 20  
Week 4 - 15 (cut back)  
Week 3 - 18  
Week 2 - 16  
Week 1 - 15

The above illustrations follow a straight-line methodology. However, your summer will have conflicts (trips, work, maybe an illness) and you will have to improvise. If you keep the above concept in mind, you can catch back up if you have a bad week. Just don't run 9 miles per week all summer (3 days of 3 miles) and then crank it to 25 or 40 at the last couple weeks (5 or 6 days of 6 or 7 miles per day) or you will get injured. Promise.

Take your ending goal, times .90 to get prior week. Then take that result times .90 for the previous week. (For example  $40 \times .90 = 36$ .  $36 \times .90 = 32$ ... etc.)

### **The Anatomy of a Perfect Summer Running Week**

No, this isn't a science class, and there will not be a test. But yes, there is an ideal running week for the summer. It basically looks the same for JV runners and Varsity. Here's how it breaks down:

- **One LONG RUN per week.** This run, at a comfortable pace (can carry on a conversation while running) should be 25% of the weekly total. So... if you are running 30 miles in a week, then the long run should be 7.5 miles. If you are running 40, your long run should be 10 miles. A 20 mile week is a 5 mile long run.

- **One day that has striders for speed maintenance.** Yes, speed! Not speed as in eight X 200 meters all out. But once a week, all XC runners need to work on stride and speed. Year round! So one day per week, you need to incorporate

striders into your workout. These might be 8 X 50 meter striders at 80 to 90% of top speed. Or 4 to 6 X 100 meter striders at the same speed. Do them in the middle of a run, so that you can 'cool down' your legs afterwards.

- "**Filler miles**"... the rest of the week should just be "running". Do some **varied pace, tempo runs** as you fill your week with miles (or minutes). Do NOT run hard hill repeats. Do NOT go to the track and run repeat 800's on your own. There will be a time and place for that, and it's called "the regular XC season". After two of your longer runs you should do 5x100m striders preferably on grass and stretch between each strider as part of your cool down.

- **Core Work** - Two to three times a week, you need to work on your core - sit ups, planks, pushups, weight work, stretching. Don't wait for the season to start for this - stay in balance! **hasfit.com** has some great core and strength workouts that are planned and easy to follow. <https://hasfit.com/workouts/home/strength-weight-training/>

- **Rest Day**. Regardless of your weekly goal, you need to have at least one day of complete recovery. It's that easy!

- **A few sample weeks:**

**20 mile goal week:**

Mon: 4 miles, course with hills, easy striders after

Tues: 0 miles

Weds: 5 miles easy, perhaps 3 miles, 1/2 mile striders, 1.5 cool down.

Thurs: 3 miles easy (core)

Friday: 3 miles easy

Sat: 5 miles, easy striders after

Sun: 0 miles (core)

Total for the week 20. 1 long run, 1 day with harder course. 2 days of core. 1 day of striders. 2 rest days.

**25 mile goal week:**

Mon: 4 miles easy, core work afterward

Tues: 2 miles to park, 1/2 mile of striders, 2 miles back (4.5 total)

Weds: 3 miles easy

Thurs: 5 miles on a hilly course, easy striders after

Fri: 2 miles easy jog, core after

Sat: 6.5 mile,, easy striders after

Sun: rest

Total for week - 25. 1 long run, 1 strider day, 2 core days, one harder hill run.

**40 mile goal week:**

Mon: 6 miles easy to mod pace. Course with some hills. Easy striders after

Tues 4 miles easy, core afterward

Wed: AM - 5 miles PM - 3 miles easy, with striders

Thurs: 5 miles easy pace, core afterwards

Fri: AM - 5 miles PM - 2 miles easy.

Sat: 10 mile, easy striders after

Sun: Rest

Total for week - 40. 1 long run, 1 strider day, one harder hill run, 2 core days

Do these things first before you start summer running:

1. **Get new shoes** - unless you bought new trainers at the end of track, start the summer with new shoes. Let Mom and Dad know that you will probably need another pair as the season progresses.
2. **Track your training**-Don't hesitate - start this now. You can use the Strava app (join Jaguars Run), log book, a calendar, or a blank notebook. Record your workouts, where you ran, how you felt, special comments.
3. **Hydrate** - It is a no-brainer that you need to keep your body well hydrated over the summer. Drink all day long. Most runners can easily drink 6 or more, 12 oz bottles of water a day. Use your bladder as a guide - when you are constantly running to the restroom, and your urine is clear, you are hydrated. When your urine is dark yellow, you are still very dehydrated.
4. **Buy a sport watch** to measure "minutes run" **or, get to know how to use Google Maps** to track your routes and figure out your mileage. GPS watches are the best. You can map your run **mapmyrun** or connect your watch to **Strava**. I am on Strava so if you follow me I can follow you and see your runs. If you use Strava make sure you set your privacy settings so you're not totally public.

### **Common Sense Guidelines**

Some common sense stuff for running this summer, that we need to remind ourselves about occasionally. This is for new and veteran runners - follow these important rules and you'll make it to the start of the season just fine!

1. **Run with a buddy whenever possible** - not only is it easier for you to be seen by cars when you are with another runner... it is much easier to get the miles in when you are chatting away and not simply focused on "how great this feels"!
2. **Run off road as much as possible.** Running on dirt or grass is much better for your legs. Asphalt is better than concrete - avoid prolonged runs on concrete as much as possible.
3. **Wear bright colors. At night, wear white and some reflective material.**
4. **Carry an ID strap**, or some sort of ID. Even writing your name and phone # in Sharpie Marker on the sides of your shoes is a great idea. Carry your phone in a small running belt for added safety,
6. **Tell somebody** when you leave, the route you plan to take, and roughly when you plan on returning. If you roll an ankle 4 miles from home, you'll appreciate the fact that your parents knew what route you were running and can come find you.
7. **NO head phones while out on the streets.** Cars weigh 3000 lbs or more. You weigh...less. You need all your senses while you are running, especially your hearing. Sing a song in your head, but don't plug your ears with headphones.
8. **Expect to have some bad runs** from time to time, especially as the weather heats up. Learn to tolerate them. The key is being consistent.