

JOHN

By now you guys have read about what it takes to win and how you can become a better, stronger, and smarter athlete. But I am going to talk about something that does not have a lot to do with actually running, but more about something that each of you can do to become a champion.

I have come along way over my three years as member of the SLUH Cross Country team. I have felt the strongest emotions of happiness, and the extreme lows when things did not turned out how I planned. There have been great races, and there have been horrible races. But when all is said and done and I am not going to remember most of those things. I am going to remember the friends, the jokes people made out on a grass loops, and the way the coaches would always be there, no matter what. Because that is what this team is about. We train together, we race together, we win together, and we are a family. And this may sound a little extreme for a cross-country team, but as you younger guys get older, you'll begin to see it. We are different from all other teams at school. I think more than any other team, we know what it is like to form close bonds and work together to achieve something greater than what we are as individuals. The coaches that we have are unparalleled. They have done so much and they have done the little things that make our program special. They love us. And this year, like all previous years, we will have their great presence leading us. We cannot go wrong.

We can all be champions. And there will be a fastest man, and their will be the slowest man, but together we have the chance to form something so great, that it will create champions in all of us, and we will experience one of the best years of our lives. I am honored to be your captain, and I do my best in providing a good example on and off the cross-country course.

PATRICK

We need to stress the details! Especially over the summer, we need to stay focused and make sure we don't skip the little things. First of all, you need to get out and run. Don't let yourself make excuses why you can't run, do it. It's hot all over the state and we need to work as hard, if not harder than everyone else. Secondly, you need to hit cal. Cal is one of those things that makes you a champion. Doing cal makes your body stronger to fight through a tough day. Stress form first on cal. Doing horrible push ups and crunches does nothing for you. Emphasize quality over quantity. Stretching and icing are also very important things to do even though it's just over the summer. Getting hurt doesn't do you or the team any good. Not doing these things shows lack of focus and desire. Work on form while you are out on runs. The summer is a perfect time to tweak and perfect your running form. Make sure to hit the waight room. This will give you a big physical edge over the competition. Keep in touch with other teammates and coaches. Call a captain up, we would love to talk about any running problems you have. Finally, the two major things I wanted to emphasize; have fun, and don't kill yourself. The summer is a great time, have fun with your friends while at the same time working hard. Know the difference between working hard and overworking yourself. Don't go out everyday and hit a hard tempo pace. Set some days aside where you can go easy and enjoy yourself. Don't let the skipping days add up. Make this summer a great one.

TIPPER

It really seems like just yesterday that I came out for my first day of practice, so how I got here, a senior xc captain writing a letter to my fellow runners is truly beyond me. Because of that I want to stress the fact that you absolutely do not have an abundance of years to give. So the time to capitalize on those years is now. Maybe you had a good season last year, maybe you had a bad one, the important thing is that you can improve. No matter how good or bad you think you are there is always time to improve. That's why we have to start now. I'll say it again WE have to start now. If you want to be better, if you want to build a great team it takes everyone to push. Think, for a moment, of a row of domino's. It doesn't matter which domino you push over, each succesive domino will knock over the one in front of it. A team is the same way. No matter where you think you may be, you can always push the man in front of you. The time is now, now when we have a chance to be the best xc team this school has ever seen. But it takes work, and it takes dedication. You have to ask yourself right here and now, do you want it? Because that's what it comes down to. Do you want it? I know I do. Will you help me build a team that is better than any other? The answer is up to you. You can do it, you just have to decide for yourself, and although I would love to decide it for you all I can do is show you the domino, you have to knock it down yourself.