

## *What is Cross Country?*

Cross Country is simply running and racing over natural terrain. The varsity and junior varsity teams generally race 2500 meters to 5000 meters. It is scored on the finishing places of the top five runners on each team, lowest score wins. The sixth and seventh runners are used to displace runners from other teams. There are typically eight to ten meets during the season, most of which are run on one weekday afternoon and Saturday mornings.

## *The Pope John Tradition*

This upcoming season will be my twenty-ninth year with the Pope John Cross Country program. Over that time span, PJXC has compiled an impressive record. Our boys have won seventeen league / conference / county titles and two state group titles, while our girls have won twelve league / conference / county titles and two state group championships. Both teams have placed in the top six in the league / conference in all my seasons of coaching and been ranked in the top twenty in the state regularly over the past three decades. Individually, we have had nineteen league champions, seven state champions, and fifteen All-State runners. Overall, more than eighty athletes have gone on to compete in collegiate cross-country.

PJXC has earned a tremendous amount of success in the past twenty-eight years. This success was a by-product of hard work, dedication and commitment by many athletes and parents. The tradition is not merely winning races, but rather each individual working for self-improvement in the race as well as in the classroom. All of our athletes are very involved in school activities and perform admirably in the classroom.

After reading these accomplishments, one might think that perhaps they might not be good enough to make such a successful team. It might interest you to know that the majority of these young men and women did not run cross country in junior high. Some of our very best athletes never participated in any sport in junior high school or were seeking something new and different from their past athletic endeavors. How do we do it? We do it the old fashioned way. We have a good plan and we work hard.

Cross Country is one of the only places where you can see direct results from work – size is not important and speed is not that important. The heart is what we look for! And we have had plenty of athletes with plenty of heart!

As the coach, my goal is to help each athlete, from top to bottom, to realize the virtues of hard work, dedication, and commitment. If I'm successful, each athlete will leave high school in four years, ready for the next challenge they come across.

For a summer training schedule or general questions, please email Coach Corcoran at [BrianCorcoran@popejohn.org](mailto:BrianCorcoran@popejohn.org) or contact him at (973) 313-1616. Official practice begins on August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8 AM. In addition, athletes on the team (XC & Track), alumni (XC & Track), and coaches (XC & Track) will be meeting Monday nights at 6:30 PM and Thursday mornings at 8:30 AM over the summer, starting on July 7<sup>th</sup> at the Frank Setlock Track & Field Complex for optional training sessions. Feel free to join us and give a boost to your training (whether for cross country or track & field)! Also, results from past seasons and current information are obtainable at <http://www.popejohntrack.com> or @PJ23Track.