

Cactus Shadows High School Falcon

Cross Country Team Handbook

Coaching Staff:

Head Coach: Jessie Nelson jnelson@ccusd93.org 602-717-1724

Assistant Coach(es): Curt Fender and Tandehl Collentine

Program Philosophy: We're entering the 35th season for CSHS Cross Country. Preceding athletes and coaches have set the bar high when it comes to performance, sportsmanship, character, and academic expectations. Please acknowledge the tradition you are becoming a part of. Be proud to be a Falcon.

- **DISCIPLINE:** Our team's success and unity requires discipline and commitment. As a student athlete you must make choices to prioritize and balance academics, family, training, rest/recovery, and social obligations. Discipline is not a matter of personal convenience, but rather a willingness to commit to your team and individual success.
- **PURPOSE:** Everything we do has a purpose and is implemented to contribute to your success. Invest in this purpose, do what is asked, take personal initiative, ask questions as they arise, and support your team's common goals.
- **GRIT:** Grit is perseverance, persistence and the willingness to commit to goals. Success is built over time and earned through consistency, determination, hard work and focus. Embrace the process and be ready to work toward your goals.
- **FAMILY:** We are more than a team, we are a family representing years of tradition, integrity, hard work and high standards.

Expectations:

1. Be **POSITIVE**. Choose a positive mindset and choose to make a positive impact for yourself, your team, your school, your community, and the sport.
2. Be **RESPECTFUL**. Respect yourself, your family, sport, teammates, coaches, school, community and opponents.
3. Be **MOTIVATED**. Regardless of your ability, be willing to challenge yourself to improve and compete.
4. **COMMUNICATE**. Never leave practice with a negative attitude or complaint. Talk things out with your coach before they become a greater issue.
5. **BE ON TIME**. Practices will start as scheduled. Please be ready to warm up at the stated practice start time.

Eligibility

- Registration must be completed and approved in Register My Athlete to participate. This includes the AIA physical form, parental consent form with all insurance info filled out, MTBI acknowledgment and Concussion Quiz certificate.
- Athletic fee must be paid prior to receiving a uniform (to bookstore)
- CCUSD/CSHS Athletic Code of Conduct is found in the student handbook and is available on the Cross Country website. All policies will be followed.
- Academic eligibility: Grades will be checked every week. If you have below a 2.0 or any F's, you are ineligible to compete. Ineligible athletes may continue to practice but may not travel or compete.

Practice:

Season practice schedule is as follows - any changes will be communicated.

- Practices are mandatory
- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 5:15 - 7:00 am, Saturday 6:00 - 8:00 am. We have (8)

scheduled meets, including Sectional and State. Most take place on a Friday or Saturday.

- Practices begin/end on the CCUSD practice field unless noted otherwise.
- All team members will be assigned a locker in the main gym locker room
- Practice consists of warm up, strength training, workout and cool down (both running and stretching), as well as any team meetings. You are expected to participate in all aspects of practice. Please realize, the athletes who are most committed and taking care of the details will gain the most opportunities for reaching their goals and helping the team be successful.

Attendance:

- Attendance and consistency are necessary for success and safe participation.
- Communicate known absences with Coach Nelson ahead of time.
- Any athlete that has 2 unexcused practices in a given week will not be eligible to compete the same week.
- Please prioritize health and safety. If a team member is experiencing any symptoms of sickness, please err on the side of caution and stay home that day.
- Cross Country is considered a Varsity/Junior Varsity level sport and is not a club. Therefore, it must take priority over any Club sport(s) or out of season CSHS sports you participate in.

Athletic Trainer (injuries):

- CSHS has an Athletic Trainer (AT) available to student athletes. The AT should be the first step for any injury/soreness concerns.
- Communicate with your Coaches and they will send you to the AT. The AT will communicate with Coaches on any limitations, rehab plans etc.
- AT will not see/treat athletes without Coach's notification, referral.
- AT can refer athletes out to see the CSHS Team Doctor or other Doctor's.
- Athletes removed from competition for injury reasons can only be cleared to return to sport by the AT and/or the MD.
- Athletes who chose to remove themselves from practice/competition due to an injury without consulting with Coaches and/or AT will not be eligible to return to sport without clearance from AT/MD.

Equipment/Uniforms:

- Professionally fitted running shoes are your most important piece of equipment. Racing flats are optional/recommended.
- Wear a watch. GPS isn't required, but athletes will need a timing device to execute workouts.
- Bring a water bottle not just to practice every day but to school all day. Hydration is crucial!
- Uniforms consist of a jersey and shorts. The jersey is issued by the school, returned at the end of the season. **Athletes are responsible for purchasing their own uniform shorts - they are yours to keep and can be worn multiple seasons.**
- AIA/NFHS require all runners wear matching uniforms (singlet and shorts). Failure to do so can result in team disqualification.
- Uniforms not returned or deemed to have excessive wear & tear from improper care will be billed \$100.00 per uniform to the student's account at the end of the season.
- No boxer shorts will be allowed to hang from the bottom of uniform shorts, compression shorts are OK but must be the same color for all varsity members.

Transportation:

- Athletes are expected to ride the bus OR ride with an adult family member to/from meets.
- Please communicate your intent a minimum of 1 week prior to each meet if you will not be on the bus, as this will have an impact on transportation needs.
- Alternate transportation form must be completed and on file with the Athletic Office.

- Athletes are NOT allowed to drive other athletes to/from meets.

Criteria for Varsity Letter: To earn a varsity letter, an athlete must achieve two of the following:

1. Finish in the top 7 for Cactus Shadows in a minimum of half of the scheduled meets.
2. No unexcused and/or excessive absences.
3. Run in the Sectional Championship Meet.
4. Qualify for and compete in the State Meet.
5. Coach's discretion.

Captains:

- Team Captains will be appointed by the coaching staff.
- Captainship is earned through exemplifying our team's philosophy and expectations.
- Captains will help lead workouts, mentor younger runners, always be on time, and lead by example in the classroom, community and on the course.

Alcohol, Vaping, Tobacco and Energy Drinks:

- We will enforce and follow CSHS, CCUSD and AIA policies for all banned substances.
- Energy Drinks are also banned from CSHS Cross Country (meets, buses, practices). You will be scratched from the entire meet should you violate this policy.

Fundraising: Fundraising is necessary to run a high school athletic program. CSHS Cross Country typically hosts sport specific events that we expect each athlete to participate in.

- CSHS Cross Country Falcon 5k Fun Run/Race. \$20.00 registration from all participants who are not on the team roster. Encourage family, friends, alumni, community members to participate.
- Hosting the Talon Invitational - volunteers are needed to make this a successful event.

Rules of the Road: Most of our training runs are off campus. It is absolutely necessary to always abide by the following:

- Always run the specified daily route and have a running (or biking) partner
- Always run opposite traffic, and as far away from the road as possible. Assume the drivers do not see you
- Always use a crosswalk, even if it's a little out of the way
- Never wear headphones, ALWAYS be aware of your surroundings
- Carry enough water to get you through the workout
- Stay on the trail and keep an eye out for wildlife, no trespassing
- Do not accept rides
- If you are running alone, tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back. Trust your gut, never run where you do not feel safe.
- Late season will require a headlamp or flashlight as sunrise gets later

Volunteer Opportunities: For our events to run smoothly we rely heavily on supporting volunteers. I'll send out respective sign-up genius links.

- Team breakfast: Provide breakfast items for one of our morning practices.
- Home meets: We have 3 events on our home course and need volunteers to help with timing, course monitoring/directions, results, etc. It takes A LOT of volunteer support to make a meet run smoothly.
- Falcon Challenge: We'll need drivers and water stations for the runners
- Gatorades: Contribute Gatorades for athletes on meet days