

Dear Parents,

Hopefully your son or daughter has shared their interest in joining the junior high cross country team this fall. I have sent this letter with students who attended one or both of the team meetings I had this spring about joining the team this fall.

Participation in cross country can be a rewarding experience for student athletes in many aspects of their continuing growth as an individual.

Our team's philosophy is focused on helping the athletes to learn and develop skills that can be used both on and off the course. As coaches, we feel our role as a coach is as a teacher, guide, and mentor to the student athletes. Our goal for the Junior High Cross Country program is to help your child learn and develop teamwork, persistence, confidence, sportsmanship and much more. Most of all, your child should enjoy participating and want to participate for their own reasons.

I have included a training schedule for the students including as much information as I can to get them started. The training schedule is supposed to be a gradual guide to help them increase their fitness. I am sure that many of the boys and girls are across the fitness spectrum, from, never ran or did a sport and, wow, a mile is really long, to, the boy and girl that could go out and run 40-50 minutes no problem. They can start at later weeks and can even repeat weeks if needed. They can even reduce the running or take a couple of days off if they are becoming too fatigued. I don't want the training schedule to become a chore. It is a resource guide that slowly increases their fitness and reduces the chance of possible over training and injury. My greatest concern with over training is the reality that junior high students are growing and their muscular and skeletal systems are still developing. Running can be physically demanding on the body. But the more pre-season running they do the easier the transition will be come August.

As parents, you can help a great deal in getting them started by being encouraging and monitoring their health habits. It will be a fine line between encouraging and what the kids call "nagging", but you will do a fine job. Don't hesitate to run, walk, or bike with them while they are running, or take them to a park, rail trail, or other safe grassy area. Who knows, maybe this is your chance to get back into shape too.

Below are some of the important dates for your information. You can also keep up to date and find a lot more information at our team website, www.rundonegal.com On the site is all of the information sent out, dates, a season schedule and practice schedule, a parent packet, and other useful information to parents. Should your son/ daughter decide that they to not want to be apart of the team, encourage them to contact me and let me know.

Finally, please know that your ideas and concerns are important to the coaching staff and that we encourage you to share them with us in a timely manner. You are welcome to contact me with any questions or concerns.

I look forward to an enjoyable season with you and your son/daughter.

Sincerely,
Coach Phil Koser
philip.koser@donegal.k12.pa.us

Important Dates:

- Team Picnic- July 23- date changed, sorry. Post card with details will be mailed.
- End of June to beginning of August: schedule a doctor's appointment for a physical. Physical packets can be picked up in the high school and middle school offices. Physical papers must be turned in to the office to be eligible for the 1st day of practice.
- Starting June 14- Mondays and Tuesdays at 7:00 we will have optional team runs at the high school.
- August 23- First Day of practice at 3:30 at the high school and a parent meeting at the end of practice (about 5:15-5:30)
- Mini Golf team outing- August TBA

As parents, you are not just a spectator or taxi driver, but an important member of our team, and as such, have significant responsibilities. Here are some things you can do to support your child:

- *Attend* the meets and *Encourage* your child and the team but also acknowledge the efforts made by opposing teams. Negative comments can quickly damage our team's progress. Remember that running is 90% mental and 10% physical.
- *Insist* that your son/daughter eats, sleeps and drinks well.
- *Ask* a question, rather than telling what you thought of the meet.
- *Realize* that the courses are all different, so comparing times may be difficult.
- *Appreciate* how much effort your son/daughter puts into the race, win or lose.