

How To Be A Cross Country Fan

I know it may sound boring to watch kids run around a park, but **cross country races can really be exciting**. There aren't many rules to follow, but it's important to be informed.

All of our races are at parks or on a high school campus. Our schedule lists the name of the high school or park where the race is. Once you get to the location, the easiest way to find the kids is to look for the parked school buses.

Races have start and finish areas that are usually near each other. If you are not very mobile, or you're not interested in running around, this is a good place to stay for the race. If you want to chase the action, follow the herds of parents/ fans as they move from spot to spot around the course. **Experienced XC parents know all the good places to watch** and how to get there before the kids run by.

As you move around the course, or as you wait near the finish, **be VERY careful not to interrupt the race**. Make sure you are not standing in the path of the runners, avoid being right at the finish line, and always pay attention so you don't bump into an athlete as they are running. **You can NEVER jog alongside an athlete** while they are racing, it's especially tempting near the finish line. This is illegal and will get the athlete disqualified from the race.

In some situations, an athlete may trip and fall or become sick or injured during a race. Please be careful when assisting them. **If you touch a down athlete or help them to their feet, they become disqualified from the race**. Give them a second to see if they are going to stand up and finish the race themselves or if they truly need medical attention.

The finish line of an XC race can look like a disaster; kids are throwing up, a few may be crying, some have peed their pants, many are hunched over or laying on the ground. This is totally normal and expected. **CHS runners are taught to stand tall and act like winners at the finish line regardless of how they ran**. They are taught that they aren't going to die, so they shouldn't act like it. Please don't be alarmed when the coach doesn't run over and tend to your athlete that is throwing up or bent over catching their breath. Most athletes just want a drink of water and a few minutes to themselves to catch their breath and let their heart rate come down.

Parent and fan support is really important at XC races, we don't draw the large crowds like football or basketball does. Often times the only fans are families, I encourage you to come cheer at every race you can. Make signs for your athletes and bring them their favorite color Gatorade for after the race. **These kids are working REALLY hard every day, and there is little glory for the high school runner**. All of your support is greatly appreciated by the coaches and each member of the CHS team. It goes without saying, but we must remind everyone that positive comments and cheers are expected.