

Dear Parents and Student Athletes

Welcome to the X-Country season of 2010. Excitement is in the air and I can feel it spreading like an energetic plague. Over 25 girls showed up for Cross-Country conditioning and they came from various backgrounds. Our boy's team is still looking for more runners to appear and become members of our family. Both teams have a wide variety of specialties such as the novice runners, lacrosse players, soccer players, equestrian riders, returning state qualifiers and some that just want to get in shape.

The history of Winter Springs Cross-Country is designed around the premise that no student athlete is chased away or cut from the team. If you can endure what is required to be a champion then you can become a member of the team. Two a day practices consisting of weight training, plyometric drills, hill running, various intervals, cycling, tempo runs, group runs and our occasional long runs have been the recipe for our success. No ridiculous club fees are required to become a member of the Winter Springs Cross-Country team. Some school team sports require families to pay hundreds and sometime thousands of dollars in club fees before even given the consideration for a starting position. That is against our running culture and against our sound doctrine that everyone participates.

Our Varsity team consists of seven runners. The determining factor for making the varsity team is based on fitness and time over 3.1 miles of racing. Although we're only into the infancy of our training, several girls have shown amazing promise. Senior Kristen Yocom has been a stable monument in our program for four years now and as team captain will lead a hungry pack of younger bears. With a personal best of 19:14 in the 5K and 11:39 for 3200m during track, Kristen has the ability to place in the top five at this year's State Finals. Returning sophomores Catie Flatley and Cierra Clark should be our front pack chasers this season. Catie was the team's most outstanding freshman after

running 20:57 for 5,000 meters. Briefly we lost Catie for a season of Lacrosse but she's returned with a fresh attitude and the enthusiastic fortitude to run sub 19:40. After suffering from nasal polyps which blocked 70% of her breathing during the season, Cierra Clark has returned with vengeance to shatter her old Personal Best of 22:16. In track she performed magnificently over 800 meters and her new improved speed should carry over to X-Country. Newcomer Caitlin Carey has been a pleasant surprise and should stabilize a much needed void in the middle of our pack. Co-Captain Darisa Laurens seems to be running a solid fifth for now but lurking in the shadows is a pack of new comers seeking the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> varsity positions. I expect an old fashioned bear clawing brawl from sprinter/soccer player Nicole Kovach, Alysha Szewc, returner and sophomore Mason Leary. This team has the deepest talent in years and should surprise a few teams that think the Lady Bears are finished after the graduation of Mallory Simerville, Caroline Gregory and Taylor Moran. We're a long ways from being finished!

We have the largest group of Girl Junior Varsity runners out for conditioning in four years. What I love about this group is that they seem to enjoy training. With this type of positive attitude towards training we can build upon our future. The team is led by Kristen Stottlemyer, Rebecca Butterfield, Reagan Stelling, Jenny Law, Cassidy Hall, Jaimie Heflin, Xenia Lyne, Isabelle Kalahar, Emily Grey, Yvette Sierra, Brandi Strdgen, Jordan Vela, Kimberly Lock, Natalia Hawthorne, Nadia Hawthorne, Elizabeth Barfield, Bria Harris, Michelle Slinger, Brooke Irwin and Jackie Swisher. An unlimited amount of runners can participate on the Junior Varsity team. As long as we have uniforms a team can be placed on the course.

Our boy's Junior Varsity team is extremely limited this year and we're hoping to have more out once the school term has ended. Currently this group of boys is lead by Patrick Gorman, Ishaq Raphael, Sean Carey and Mitch Stratton. Year after year we lose 115-130 pound boys to football with dreams of becoming a

bone crushing linebacker or the next high scoring running back. Instead they end up holding tackling dummies and standing on the sideline for four years. Cross-Country running is the purest sport since the existence of the human race. No Winter Springs runner will stand on the sideline and observe practice or observe a race. Everyone will train and participate in each competition. As the coach all I ask for is that the parents provide the following; two pair of training shoes for the season, a pair of racing shoes, Cross-Country T-Shirt and the team sweat suit. The total cost for all the items just mentioned is \$300.00. There is no other sport on campus your child could play for that price!

I am ecstatic about the boy's varsity team this year. This is the best team since the 2007 team of Nathan Duby, Richard Kamaka, Brett Hinds, Brian DeKrey, Timothy Nguyen Michael Rody, and Cody Prosser. The 2007 team was Seminole Athletic Conference Champions, District Champions, Regional runner-up and tenth at the state meet. The 2010 team consists of senior and team Captain Timothy Nguyen with a personal best of 16:29.55 I expect Timmy to go below 16:00 and finish in the "TOP 10" in the state finals. Matthew Streich is our quite and calm assassin. Don't be fooled by his quite demeanor, when the starter's pistol is fired he finds a way to finish in the lead pack. With a personal best of 16:47.23 Matt should improve below 16:15. Our third senior is Nathan Dekrey who is still chasing the PR of his older brother Brian who ran 16:22 at the State meet in 2007. Nathan's personal best of 16:56.15 should be obliterated this year and I also expect for him to run under 16:20. Our fourth runner comes to us from an outstanding track season which he excelled in the Mile. Cornelius Wesley was a football player last fall and did not run Cross-Country. During the track season he broke Timothy Nguyen's freshman mile record when he became the first freshman boy to run under 5:00. His time of 4:51.24 placed him in an elite category of freshman. I expect to see Mr. Wesley run under 17:00 for 5,000 simply based on his level of talent and hard work. His mother was a member of several state championship teams at Seminole HS. Stefan Yocom also comes from an outstanding pedigree family of runners. His Mom and aunt were

excellent runners in high school and his sister Kristen as mentioned earlier is currently the #1 female varsity runner. Stefan owns a PR of only 18:05.14 but should drastically improve that time this year. I have informed Stefan that he must train during his summer leave to New York because he is being chased by several newcomers.

The next group of boys is what I call the chasers or those hungry for a covenant varsity slot. The fifth, sixth and seventh positions you be extremely competitive. Jeffrey Henry is the newest kid on the block sporting a personal best of 18:16.31. A determined and dedicated freshman who also competes in triathlons, Jeffrey should crack into the top seven once he adapts to the Winter Springs training philosophy. Daniel Marinelli, an outstanding track runner with a personal best of 2:04 for 800 meters and 52 seconds for 400 meters, was a member of the 2009 varsity team for several races before being injured at the end of the season. Now with a 5K best of 18:39.50 Daniel should be a major threat to crack into the top seven on the varsity team. Junior Justin Brennan comes in with no 5K time but has shown promise in the early weeks of conditioning. Justin is a hungry and dangerous runner who thrives off of training. To those runners who sit in the sacred varsity spots please be aware of these newcomers.

Finally, Coach Mathews will be truly missed due to the blessed pregnancy of twins. Coach Jennifer Williams will be assisting with all of the duties as the strength coordinator. An All-American heptathlete at the University of Michigan her strength training background will definitely add a fresh ingredient to our successful program. This year I've asked the kids to challenge themselves harder than ever before. We've declared the 2010 fall season as "THE SEASON" with no regrets. The training has been adjusted to bring out the very best which should produce phenomenal times and championships. As a former World Class 800 meter runner I always set my goals high. Only a 4:23 miler and a 1:57 800 meter runner in high school, I had dreams of running under 4:00 for the mile and

making the Olympic team. I ran under 4:00 for the mile several times and was the recipient of the Gold Medal at the 1991 Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba. I never made the Olympic team after three consecutive attempts but I never stopped dreaming. This year I strongly believe that we have the talent to place both teams in the top 8 teams in the state finals. Our athletes must also believe by training consistently and believing in their coaches and themselves. The Cross-Country season brings out the best in me as coach because I am blessed with the best kids on campus for only a few months. I'm excited and cannot wait for the racing season to begin in September.