



Arizona Track and Field and Cross Country League Handbook - Cross Country Division

Welcome to the inaugural season of the Arizona Track and Field and Cross Country League!

This handbook specifically outlines the guidelines and regulations for the Cross Country division of our league. We are excited to offer a competitive and streamlined experience for athletes of all ages.

About the Arizona Track and Field and Cross Country League:

The Arizona Track and Field and Cross Country League is a brand-new league alternative for those seeking a competitive experience without all the hassle. Our Cross Country league provides a structured and engaging environment for young and experienced runners alike.

1. Cross Country League Overview

- **Season:** The Cross Country league will run during the Fall season, starting in **late August or early September** and concluding in **mid to the end of November or early December**. A detailed schedule will be released prior to the start of the season.
- **Divisions:** Races will be divided into three sections based on age and grade level:
 - **Little Stars:** 2nd-5th grades (7-10 years old) - Race Distance: ~ **1.5k**
 - **Rising Stars:** 6th-8th grades (11-14 years old) - Race Distance: ~ **3k**
 - **All Stars:** 9th grade and up (15-99 years old) - Race Distance: ~ **5k**
- **League Size:** Each age group division will be limited to a **20-team league**.
- **Team Composition:**
 - Each team must consist of a minimum of **5 members** for each participating age group.
 - There is no maximum number of members on a team roster for each age group and gender.
 - Teams are expected to be committed to competing weekly at the scheduled league events.
- **Individual Participation:** Individuals may compete in each age group who are not formally affiliated with a registered team within the league. These individuals will be scored in the overall race but will not contribute to team scores.

- **Scoring:** Races will be scored using the traditional cross country scoring method: the finishing places of the top five runners from each team are summed to determine the team score. The team with the lowest score wins.

2. Membership and Eligibility

- **Teams:**
 - Membership is open to school-affiliated teams, clubs, and other organized groups within Arizona.
 - Teams must register with the league by the designated deadline and meet any league-specific membership requirements.
- **Athlete Eligibility:**
 - Athletes must meet the age and grade requirements for their respective divisions as outlined in Section 1.
 - All participating athletes must have a signed waiver and consent form on file with their team and the league prior to their first competition.
 - Individual participants must also complete a registration and waiver form.
- **Team Rosters:**
 - Teams must submit an official roster for each age group by the specified date before the start of the season.
 - Procedures for adding or removing athletes from the roster during the season will be communicated by the league.

3. Race Day Procedures and Rules

- **Schedule and Locations:** A comprehensive race schedule, including dates, times, and locations for all league events, will be published prior to the start of the season.
- **Course Marking:**
 - Courses will be clearly marked using flags, cones, and/or paint to indicate the designated running path.
 - Approximate mile or kilometer markers may be present.
 - Any specific course instructions or potential hazards will be communicated to coaches and athletes before each race.
- **Start Procedures:**
 - All races will begin with an official start signal (e.g., horn or verbal command).
 - Athletes must start behind the designated starting line.
 - False starts may result in penalties or disqualification at the discretion of the race officials.
- **During the Race:**
 - Runners must follow the marked course. Any intentional deviation from the course that provides an unfair advantage will result in disqualification.
 - Assistance from coaches, parents, or spectators on the course is prohibited, except for designated water stations if provided. Verbal encouragement is generally permitted.
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and may result in disqualification.
- **Finish Procedures:**

- The finish line will be clearly marked.
- Athletes should proceed through the finish line chute in order to ensure accurate recording of their finish time and place.
- The league will utilize a consistent method for recording results, which may include manual timing or electronic timing systems. The specific method will be communicated.
- **Scoring:**
 - Team scores will be calculated by summing the finishing places of the top five runners from each team in each age group.
 - The team with the lowest total score wins the race for that age group.
 - The 6th and 7th finishers from a team are considered "displacers." While their places do not count towards their team's score, they can increase the score of opposing teams by finishing ahead of their scoring runners.
 - Incomplete teams (fewer than five finishers) will not receive a team score for that race.
 - Tie-breaking procedures for team scores will be determined and communicated by the league.

4. Team and Individual Conduct

- **Sportsmanship:** All participants (athletes, coaches, and spectators) are expected to exhibit the highest standards of sportsmanship at all times. This includes respect for officials, opponents, teammates, and the facilities.
- **Respect for Officials:** Decisions made by race officials are final. Any concerns or questions should be addressed respectfully through the designated coach.
- **Team Responsibility:** Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their athletes and team supporters.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any behavior deemed unsportsmanlike, including but not limited to taunting, arguing with officials, or disrespectful language, may result in warnings, penalties, or disqualification.

5. Safety Guidelines

- **Athlete Well-being:** The health and safety of all participants are paramount. Coaches and parents are responsible for ensuring athletes are properly trained and fit to compete.
- **Warm-up and Cool-down:** Athletes should engage in appropriate warm-up activities before each race and cool-down exercises afterward.
- **Hydration and Nutrition:** Proper hydration and nutrition are essential for athletic performance and safety. Athletes should be encouraged to drink fluids before, during (if applicable), and after races.
- **Weather Conditions:** The league will monitor weather conditions and reserves the right to postpone or cancel events if conditions are deemed unsafe (e.g., extreme heat, lightning). Decisions regarding weather-related cancellations will be communicated as promptly as possible.

- **First Aid:** Host venues will have basic first aid provisions available. Teams are also encouraged to have their own basic first aid supplies. Procedures for handling medical emergencies will be established.
- **Course Awareness:** Athletes should be aware of the course terrain and any potential hazards. Coaches should walk the course with their teams prior to competition.

6. Communication

- The primary mode of communication from the league to teams will be via [Specify Communication Method - e.g., email list, league website].
- Coaches are responsible for ensuring their contact information is up-to-date and for relaying important information to their athletes and parents.
- Any questions or concerns should be directed to the designated league contact person(s).

7. Amendments to the Handbook

- The Arizona Track and Field and Cross Country League reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary to ensure the smooth and fair operation of the league.
- Any changes to the rules and regulations will be communicated to member teams in a timely manner.

We are thrilled to launch this new Cross Country league and look forward to a successful and enjoyable season for all participants! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Contact Us

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