

CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING RACE TIPS FOR SETON!

1. WHAT TO EAT BEFORE A RACE: Although runners should always maintain a healthy diet low in fat and high in carbohydrates, this is especially beneficial the few days prior to a race. Most runners try to eat loads of carbohydrates a day or so prior to the competition. This isn't really necessary for shorter distance races, such as our meets, but it is a good habit to get into during the season to make pasta the main dish on those days prior to the big race. On race day, have a healthy breakfast that is low in fat and high in carbohydrates. Cereal with 2% or skim milk, toast, orange juice, and maybe a banana is a good idea before the morning meet. Bring a snack that will sit well with you to eat right before the race.

2. BRING YOUR GEAR! Make sure you bring your running shoes, shorts, uniform top and any other gear you need to school with you on race day! Be prepared for all types of weather! Always pack a warm up shirt and a dri-fit shirt just in case. Race day is not the time to experiment with a new pair of running shoes, running shorts, or a new sports bra. It's better to stick with your tried-and-true favorites that you know are comfortable.

3. TIE YOUR SHOES! Remember to double or even triple tie your running shoes. This will prevent trips and falls.

4. ACHES AND PAINS: If you have a previous injury or sore spot like a knee or ankle that is prone to give out on them, wear an elastic brace for additional support. Don't ever compete injured.

5. SIDE STITCHES DURING A RACE: One thing that helps to relieve these "side stitches" or "side aches" is to raise your arms above your head while running. *Try not to stop.*

Ultimately, the best thing to do is to prevent these pains in the side by being well hydrated and drinking plenty of fluids prior to race time. A runner should consume large amounts of fluids prior to race time. Water and Gatorade is recommended normally.

6. PAY ATTENTION TO THE COURSE: Pay very close attention to the path or course. If you are supposed to wear glasses, by all means, wear them! Many runners are injured unnecessarily in this way. Keep your head up, keep looking up and watching the runner's back in front of you. Pretty soon you will be passing them!

7. DON'T START THE RACE TOO FAST! One of the biggest rookie mistakes in racing is going out too fast in the beginning of the race. Most runners have at least one story about a race when they felt so great during the first few miles that they ran ahead of pace, only to crash and burn during the final miles. The problem is that if you go out too fast, you'll burn through your stored energy too quickly and your muscles will fatigue faster, leaving you feeling tired and depleted toward the end of your race.

Here are some ways that you can avoid going out too fast:

--Deliberately run the first half of the race slower than you plan to. It's tough to do, since you'll most likely feel really strong in the beginning. But keep in mind that for every second you go out too fast in the first half of your race, you'll lose double that amount of time in the

--If you feel you started too fast, it's not too late to make pace corrections. Just slow down.

--Practice starting out slow during training runs.

--Pay attention to how much of the course is left and know what "sprint" distance you can accomplish.

8. RACE FINISH: Congratulations! Once you successfully finish the race, get a drink if they have it available and DON'T SIT! Start walking back down the course as a cool down and a great opportunity to cheer for your fellow cross country teammates. They will appreciate it!