

# **Plank Pirates**

## **Cross Country 2009**



**“Your Punishment is Our Sport”**

# Message from the Coaches

Welcome to the Plank Junior High Cross Country Team. We are extremely excited as we enter into our fourth season here at Plank. This year approximately seventy athletes have joined our team. Once again, there are many new faces, as well as many returning athletes that will makeup our 2009 team.

It is our belief that cross country is a unique sport. Our athletes run and place as individuals yet they train and compete as a team. Each member of this team participates at the exact same level in every single regular season meet (6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> 1.5 miles, 8<sup>th</sup> 2 miles, these distances may vary at some meets.) We pride ourselves on being a no-cut sport and value each individual, no matter what pace he or she runs. However, we expect our athletes to demonstrate complete dedication to the team and the program through good sportsmanship and following team rules. We welcome any athlete who is willing to make that commitment.

We started off our season with a four day early training camp. Once again the number of athletes that turned out was amazing. Since that time our team has continued to grow and we have seen marked improvement in all of our runners. We are always grateful for their enthusiasm and the hard work they demonstrate everyday.

Running and participating in cross-country is hard work. However, as coaches we know the reward for their hard work will always lead to their personal accomplishment whether it be winning a race or improving on time. The athlete's PR stands for their "personal record" and improving on that time is our goal for them. It is this personal dedication and achievement that contributes to the overall success of our team. Therefore, we ask our parents to support their athlete and all of our athletes to reach this goal.

This year we will continue to compete in the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) Cross Country Meet Championship. This is a very competitive meet where only the best in the State will compete. It is our goal to see as many of our qualifying athletes make it to this competition.

We believe that each individual makes a unique contribution to the overall character, reputation, and therefore success of our team. The most rewarding part of coaching is witnessing an athlete dedicate themselves to the point where they realize their potential as an individual and member of this team. Once again, welcome to another successful year for cross country. Go Pirates!!!!!!

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# Scoring a Meet

Just as in golf, in cross-country, the low score wins. As each athlete enters the chute they are issued a stick or a card indicating their finishing place. The place for the first five runners into the chute for each team is added up to determine the team score. For example, if an athlete comes in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, 3 is added to the overall team score. **If there is a tie, it is the 6<sup>th</sup> place finisher's score that determines who wins.**

| <b>Team A</b>       | <b>Team B</b>    |   |
|---------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  |   |
| 2. 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 4 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 3. 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 6 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 4. 12 <sup>th</sup> | 10 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| 5. 17 <sup>th</sup> | 13 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| <hr/>               |                  |   |
| <b>40 pts.</b>      | <b>36pts.</b>    | <b>Team B wins due to lowest score.</b> |

The following demonstrates scoring for divisions that do not have 5 athletes.

| <b>Team A</b>       | <b>Team B (has only 4 athletes at the meet)</b>                       |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. 10 <sup>th</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup>   |   |
| 2. 12 <sup>th</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup>   |   |
| 3. 15 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup>   |   |
| 4. 16 <sup>th</sup> | 11 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 5. 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 65 <sup>th</sup> (represents number of division runners in the field) |   |
| <hr/>               |   |   |
| <b>75 pts.</b>      | <b>87 pts.</b>  | <b>Team A wins due to lowest score.</b> |

If Team B had **all** 5 athletes.....

| <b>Team A</b>       | <b>Team B</b>    |   |
|---------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. 10 <sup>th</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup>  |   |
| 2. 12 <sup>th</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 3. 15 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 4. 16 <sup>th</sup> | 11 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| 5. 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 40 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| <hr/>               |                  |   |
| <b>75 pts.</b>      | <b>62 pts.</b>   | <b>Team B wins due to lowest score.</b> |

Keep in mind that every runner plays a role at every meet even if they are not in the first five finishers for their team. Their goal is to always pass, not be passed. Every time we pass another team's runner we are adding points to that team's overall score.

# MEET INFORMATION

For the most part, each meet will run differently. Our conference format has the 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> grade athletes running 1.5 miles and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade athletes running 2 miles. However, our end-of-the-season, final conference meet hosted by Traughber has one girls' race and one boys' race. Many other hosts will also run a one girl and one boy race format.

Each of the Saturday meets will run a different format as follows:

Troy – (6 races) 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls/boys – 1 mile; 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade girls/boys – 2 miles.

Parkside – Varsity format (3 races) – 7 girls – 2 miles; 7 boys – 2 miles; open race - 2 miles.

Tiger Trail – (6 races) 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> grade girls/boys – 1.5 miles; 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls/boys – 2miles.

## IESA CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

The IESA only allows fourteen (7 girls/7 boys) athletes from each school to participate at the Sectional meet in October. Please know as coaches it is very difficult for us to narrow down such a large group of talent and dedication to only fourteen, but it is the requirement. Therefore, the criteria for choosing these fourteen will be based on performance. Coaches will also take into consideration sportsmanship and team commitment. We encourage the entire team to come out and support their teammates at the Sectional meet.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUR COACHES

### Food & Eating Habits:

1. Use good judgment. Fruit, vegetables and carbohydrates (contain the most energy) are nutritionally balanced choices. The most important meal of your day is breakfast.
2. Avoid fried foods, especially the day before and the day of a meet. They are hard to digest and will upset your system.
3. Try not to experiment with new foods, especially the day before a meet.
4. On meet days try not to overeat at lunch and eat foods that will nourish you for your race. Try not to eat within four hours of your race. Bring a snack for after.
5. Avoid eggs on race days.

6. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate, and also remember to hydrate. During school hours go to the fountain in between every class. If possible, avoid milk at lunch. Gatorade is not required but it is good to keep those electrolytes balanced, especially on hot days. Always, always, always bring a water bottle to all practices and meets. Keep an empty bottle in your locker to fill up before practice.

### **Equipment:**

7. The most important piece of equipment with regards to health/injury prevention and performance is proper running shoes. The key is making sure they fit properly. Also, keep in mind there are many different styles of athletic shoes, but they may not be appropriate for running.
8. Spikes are not required, but allowed. They should not be worn during practice since we will run on many paved surfaces. If an athlete chooses to wear spikes at meets, bring running shoes as well – just in case the course is largely paved. If they are new, be sure to break them in before the race.
9. Be prepared for all types of weather.

### **Racing Tactics:**

10. Avoid starting too fast. However, if the race is run on a narrow trail where passing is difficult, establish position early.
11. Pass opponents just before coming to a single-file area on the course.
12. On windy days, run closely behind opponents. Let them break the wind.
13. Never watch the feet of the runners in front of you. Always be aware of what's going on around you.
14. When opponents start carrying their arms higher assume they are tiring. Pass them.
15. While passing, always give the impression of being fresh. Increase your pace slightly, and hold until you are well ahead and unable to be re-passed.
16. "Checkout," which means increasing the pace for a few strides. Use this technique as a way to gain a physical and mental lift as well as to get the jump on an opponent.
17. At the end of every race remember your speed training (4x100's) and become a sprinter. Make the necessary changes in speed and form. Pretend the finish line is farther than it actually is.

# TEAM RULES & REQUIREMENTS

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These team rules are for ALL team members and EVERYONE is expected to follow them.

1. You are a **student-athlete**, not the other way around. Your grades and classroom/hallway behavior is your most important priority. Eligibility is submitted by teachers every Wednesday. If you do not meet eligibility requirements (one "F" or two "D's") you will be suspended from meets for one entire week beginning the following Monday. You will be expected to maintain practice schedule and attend the missed meets. Coaches will inform parents of ineligibility as soon as possible.
2. **Attendance is mandatory.** The only legitimate excuse from practice is an EXCUSED ABSENCE from school unless you have the coach's prior approval. These prior approvals must be communicated by note or e-mail prior to the absence.
3. If you have an **unexcused absence** you will automatically miss the next meet. NO EXCEPTIONS!
4. Detentions and suspensions **are not** considered excused absences and will result in missing the next meet (School Policy)
5. It is very important that athletes are not **late to practice**. Quite often the team will run off campus. Athletes are not to run unaccompanied. If you are going to be late to practice tell the coach ahead of time. If you report late, you must have a note from the teacher who detained you stating the time you were dismissed.
6. **Appropriate behavior** is always expected, not only at practices, but also, on the bus and at the meets. Inappropriate behavior prior to the start of the meet will result in an immediate removal from that meet.
7. When leaving a meet early your parent/guardian **must sign you out** on the roster clipboard.
8. Each athlete will be provided with a **uniform** (warm-ups when temperatures change.) They are not to wear their uniforms/warm-ups to or outside of school. They are responsible for keeping these items in good condition and are required to replace if lost, stolen or destroyed.
9. Athletes are required to dress appropriately for all practices and meets (**no street clothes or shoes.**)
10. Lockers – athletes are required to **lock up everything** (especially those things of value) during practice. Many people will have access to those locker rooms. Be

cautious and protect your things. If necessary we will lock personal items in the choir room.

11. **PICK-UP** – all athletes will wait in front of the school to be picked up after practices and meets. You should not be in any other part of the building. Always put your books and belongings in your gym locker. If you do not have a gym locker make arrangements with your coach to get one.
12. Runners are not allowed to attend other **after school events** unless accompanied by an adult.
13. **Parents** – if you attend the meets, we encourage you to take your athlete home after the meet is over. However, in support of team spirit, if your athlete wishes to ride home on the bus we require that you be at the school waiting. See schedule for practice end times. Meets will vary, but we will have your athlete call from the bus to give you an estimated arrival time.
14. **CAR POOL** – if you are unable to pick up your athlete within the required time frame or get them to meets on Saturdays – we encourage you to set up a car pool with other parents/guardians.
15. Injuries can happen so **report all injuries** to your coach immediately. If an athlete reports an injury during practice/meets a parent/guardian will be called promptly in case medical attention is required. If the injury prevents an athlete from practice, it will be at the recommendation of the coach that they not participate in upcoming meets until the injury subsides.

## Training

Each day will consist of a warm-up/cool down run, sprints, stretching, a variety of calisthenics and the main workout. The main workout will vary depending on our meet schedule. Main workouts will consist of easy long runs (incorporating pack running), intervals (200's to 800's) and fartleks (speed bursts.) We encourage our team to train on off days as well. On weekends do a long run (depending on your fitness ability – 20 mins. – 40 mins.) Each following week try and build by adding 3-5 minutes to your time. If you choose to run on a Sunday prior to a Monday meet – a nice, easy, short run is all that's necessary. Consistency in training is important, but **don't over do it**. Rest days can be just as helpful. If you are tired or feeling under the weather - take a day off.