

2016
Monroe County Modified Cross Country
Coaches' Handbook

By Todd Putnam
Webster Modified Cross Country Coach
and Charlie Lowe
Fairport Modified Coach

[Seeing the need for a modified cross country handbook when serving as County Chairman, Todd Putnam (Webster modified coach) undertook in 1992 to adapt the varsity handbook to modified needs. I have updated Todd's handbook to reflect changes made in recent years and have made a few additions where I thought I might be able to improve upon Todd's work. *CL.*]

Introduction

This handbook has been developed in order to standardize many of the procedures at cross country meets. Cross Country has long enjoyed the reputation of being a sport with few conflicts or problems. Our intention is to maintain that reputation through a coordinated approach to running our meets. The handbook is also available online at <http://tytler.net/mcxcws/>.

It is the responsibility of the host schools to organize and run their designated meets. It is suggested that coaches use assistants and/or managers in order to run the meets as efficiently as possible. **PLANNING AHEAD** will help tremendously. If problems do arise, however, coaches should see the host coach immediately. If problems should continue (poor organization, starting, scoring, rule enforcement, etc.), or are not handled in accordance with this handbook, coaches should contact their league chairperson for further action.

The Modified Cross Country Chairperson is:

Charlie Lowe
2335 Turk Hill Road
Victor, NY 14564
(585) 223-5747 (home) and (585) 662-3309 (cell)
crloweny@rochester.rr.com

During the season, each school is responsible for hosting at least one league meet. Each season's schedule will denote the host school for league meets. Responsibilities of the host school are outlined in this handbook.

A. ENFORCEMENT OF RULES:

1. The host school's coach is responsible for enforcing all general rules of Cross Country as applicable in League, State and Federation rule books. Some of those that seem to cause the most frequent problems are listed below:

- a. Any uncalled-for roughness of any kind shall lead to the disqualification of the runner(s) involved.
- b. Any language that is abusive or obscene shall lead to the disqualification of the runner(s) using such language.

2. It is the coaches' responsibility to inform their athletes of proper etiquette and sportsmanship.

3. All infractions of rules must be observed by a coach or admitted to by the athlete(s) when confronted with the issue.

B. STARTING TIMES AND ORDER OF RACES:

1. In general, starting times for all meets shall be 4:30 P.M. However, whenever possible, teams should be given sufficient time to warm (approximately 20 minutes) to warm up. Modified races generally begin around 5:00 P.M.

2. If a team has not arrived by 4:30 P.M., the meet start will be delayed to 4:45 P.M. If a varsity team has not arrived by 4:45 P.M., the modified race will be run first with the varsity races being run afterward in their proper order.

3. When all teams have arrived in a timely manner, the order of races is as follows:

- a. Varsity race 1 (girls or boys)*
- b. Modified Boys and Girls
- c. Varsity race 2 (girls or boys)*

*Includes Varsity and Junior Varsity runners.

C. UNIFORMS

1. Each member of each team is required to wear a team uniform in competition, **except** when team uniforms are not provided by the school district.

2. The rule regarding the need for identical equipment (for example, if one runner wears a gray tee shirt under a racing top, then all must wear a gray shirt) is waived.

3. Follow the jewelry rule as adopted by Varsity (no earrings, etc.; watches okay).

D. COURSES

1. Copies of updated course maps are available on-line at <http://tytler.net/mcxcws/>.

2. The host coach is responsible for sufficiently marking the course and explaining the markings to all runners and coaches sometime before the start of each race. The following color codes shall be used:

- a. Red flag means left turn.
- b. Yellow flag means right turn.
- c. Blue flag means go straight ahead.
- d. A white line means start or finish.
- e. If one pole is used for two or more different moves, the flags are stacked in order of use from the top down.

3. All coaches should agree upon any course changes or alterations (because of weather, course repairs, etc.) before the start of the race. Any alterations must be reported to the Modified Cross Country Chairperson.

4. Course Sites:

- a. There are alternate course sites in case of poor conditions. The host coach is responsible for contacting the County Chairperson and the other schools in the meet concerning changes because of site problems. All coaches involved must receive 24 hours notice of changes. After that deadline, the meet is to be postponed.
- b. The following course sites are in use, each having a 1.5-mile and 2-mile course:
 - 1) Mendon Ponds Park, East Course
 - 2) Mendon Ponds Park, West Course
 - 3) Webster Park

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 4) Seneca Park | 9) Center Park |
| 5) Black Creek Park | 10) Basil A. Marella (formerly English Road) Park |
| 6) Parma Park | 11) FLCC (Canandaigua) |
| 7) Northampton Park | 12) Parma Park Championship Course (2.0-mile) |
| 8) Harris-Whalen Park | |

E. STARTING LINE PROCEDURES:

1. Order on the line:
 - a. Runners will line up by teams with the order determined by the pick of the draw (numbers, straws, etc.). The first five runners from each team will take a place on the line, with the remaining runners taking places directly behind their team's top five.
 - b. Two options exist for starting styles of modified races:
 - 1) Boys in the first start followed one or two minutes later by the girls' start. This is normally used at league meets when Varsity teams are present. It permits separate racing for boys and for girls, but does not unduly delay the meet for the last race of the day. Time at meets is a factor late in the season because of darkness. A dual chute is required.
 - 2) Separate races for boys and girls. This is normally used at league meets when Varsity teams are not present. The order of the races should follow the Varsity scheme: first half of season, boys go first and girls go second; second half of season, girls go first and boys go second. A single chute can be used.
2. Starting command procedure:
 - a. Use a one-command start (no "take your mark" or "set"). Tell the runners what will be used as the start command, call for them to step up to (but not onto or over) the starting line and, when everyone is motionless, give the start command.
 - b. Use a gun, whistle or horn for the start command.
 - c. For an unfair start, recall the runners by sounding the start command.
3. Other start responsibilities:
 - a. The host school shall provide an AED at the start and finish area(s).
 - b. The host coach will give adequate warning of the start of each race (*for example*, first call: ten minutes before the race; second call: five minutes before the race).
 - c. The host coach will call runners to the line and answer any questions about the course.
 - d. The host coach will direct line-up order, explain finish procedures (cards, chutes, etc.) and check to see that timers and all officials are ready prior to the start of the race. There must be at least three timers, one for boys, one for girls and one as a backup.
4. The host school may use certified officials but the host coach remains responsible for the modified races. In general, certified officials will perform duties such as starting the races and being finish judges. It is important to remember, however, that certified officials have many more duties in regard to the Varsity races, and cannot be used for calling out times, recording times, handing out cards or compiling finish results.

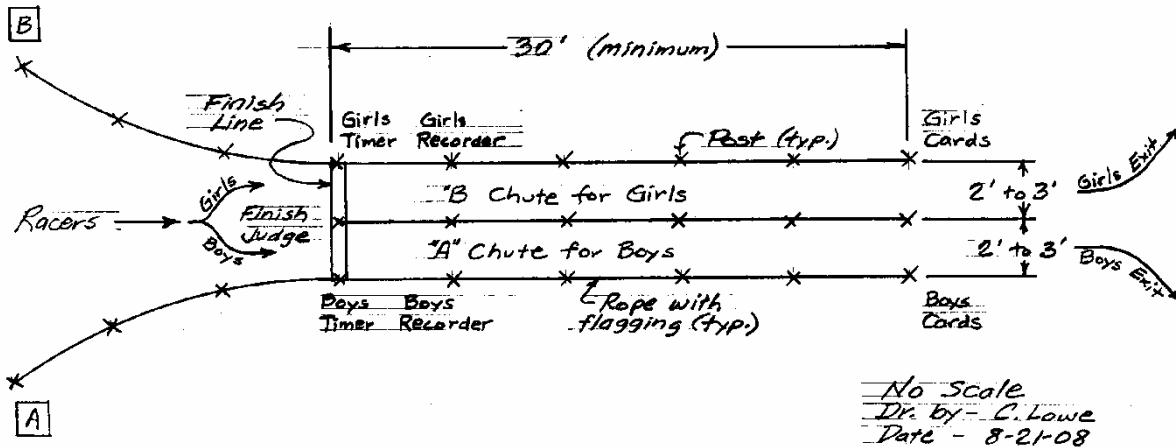
F. FINISH LINE PROCEDURES

1. Chutes: The host coach shall provide a finish area including the necessary chute(s). A funnel shaped area is provided a sufficient length in advance of the finish line to adequately direct runners to the line and to keep spectators off the course. The chute is continued, with a

width such that runners can touch both ropes simultaneously, for a distance of at least 30 feet, at which point cards are distributed. Two styles of chutes are used for modified races:

- a. Dual chute: Used when varsity teams are present. The two chutes should be clearly labeled A and B. Modified boys will finish in the A or right-hand chute. Modified girls will finish in the B or left-hand chute. A diagram of the dual chute is given below.
- b. Single chute: Used when varsity teams are not present. The single chute is similar to the dual chute except that A and B designations are omitted; only one 30-foot-long (minimum) chute is provided; and only one set of timers, recorders and card distributors are used.

Typical Chute Arrangement for Modified Cross Country



2. Cards:

- a. Cards must be clearly labeled BOYS MODIFIED or GIRLS MODIFIED. You may also use different colored cards. Index cards measuring 3" by 5" are often used as finish cards in cross country.
- b. Have enough cards to handle the maximum number of runners in each race. Keep extra cards handy just in case.
- c. Coaches should turn in all race cards to the host coach within ten minutes of the conclusion of the modified race or races. Host coaches should make sure they have responsible individuals handing out the cards, as some finishes can get congested and confusing. All coaches should place each athlete's first and last name, and school name, before turning in the cards. Pre-printed stick-on labels are real time-savers during busy meets.

3. Timing (is EVERYTHING!)

- a. A time must be recorded for every finisher of each race. There must be three watches operating for every race, one for boys, one for girls and one as an extra. Coaches must make sure they have RESPONSIBLE individuals in charge of timing.
- b. When running boys and girls with a one- or two-minute gap between starts, **it is necessary to have two chutes and two separate timing crews!!!**
- c. Two types of timing crews are commonly used for each chute:
 - 1) Times can be recorded automatically with a printout.

2) Times can be called audibly from a stopwatch and manually recorded on the score sheet.

c. For modified races, the following officials are needed at the finish area:

| Type of League Meet | | | | Total No. of Timers and Recorders Needed | | No. of Card Distributors | No. of Finish Judges | Total No. of Officials | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Varsity is Present or Not Present | No. of Modified Races | Type of races | Type of Chute | Electronic stopwatch with printer | Stopwatch with manual time recording | | | Electronic stopwatch with printer | Stopwatch with manual time recording |
| Present | 1 | Coed with delay start* | Double | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| Not Present | 1 | Coed with delay start† | Double | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| Not Present | 2 | One race is completed, then a second race is run‡ | Single | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 |

*Time constraints at a league meet with varsity present prevent the running of boys and girls modified races at fully separated times.

†A coed race when varsity is not present is normally not recommended. Not only does the finish require more setup (double chute vs. single chute) and more officials (7 vs. 4), all with no help from varsity coaches, it more importantly denies modified runners a chance for separate races. Only such safety factors as darkness and weather should be considered when deciding whether or not to have one or two modified races with varsity not present.

‡Varsity practice would be followed for order of races. During the first half of the league meet season, boys run first and girls run second. During the second half of the league meet season, girls run first and boys run second. See also item I.4 below.

d. If a shortage of responsible individuals arises, coaches from “away” teams should fill in as needed.

G. SCORE SHEETS

1. The host coach is responsible for providing score sheets for use at league meets.
2. Five-copy score sheets will be provided to each modified coach for meets they host.
3. Score sheets are completed with place, name, school and time for each runner. Team scores are *not* computed at the meet site, but all information needed to fully score the meet *must* be on the score sheet before it is distributed to the coaches.
4. Score sheets should be completed as soon as possible after the conclusion of races.
5. Away team coaches should offer to fill in their runner’s names and school so that the score sheet can be completed as quickly as possible.
6. The score sheets have carbon copy capability, with enough copies being made so each team can have a copy of the race results. Use a pen, press hard and print clearly so that all copies of the score sheet are legible.
7. The host coach is responsible for distributing results to all coaches as soon as possible before the schools leave.

H. TEAM SCORING PROCEDURES

1. Dual meet scoring is used for all league meets. When computing a dual meet score in a race where three or more teams are present, the finishes from all teams except the two for which the score is being determined are discounted.
2. For modified cross country, official scoring of meets is not performed, nor are team records maintained.
3. Rules for cross country dual meet scoring:

a. Scoring shall be as shown in the following table:

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| First place | 1 point |
| Second place | 2 points |
| Third place | 3 points |
| Fourth place | 4 points |
| Fifth place | 5 points |
| Sixth place | 6 points |
| Nth place | N points |

- b. All competitors who finish shall be ranked and tallied in accordance with the above table. The team score shall then be determined by totaling the points scored by the first five finishers of each team. The team with the fewest points is the winner.
- c. If fewer than five competitors (or other number specified by the Games Committee) of a team finish, the places of all members of that team shall be disregarded and the team scores re-ranked. A dual meet score in this case is recorded as 15 to 50.
- d. Ties in team scoring shall be resolved by comparing the 6th place finishers from the tying teams. The team with the best 6th place finisher is the winner. If one team does not have a 6th place finisher, the team with the 6th place finisher is the winner.
- e. If only five competitors from tying teams finish, the team scoring shall be resolved by totaling the scores of the first four finishers from tying teams.

4. Displacement must be computed before a final score is determined. On each team, runners 8th and up are not figured in the scoring, and the 1st through 7th runners are adjusted accordingly. Displacement is figured because although 8 or more runners may compete, only the first 7 on each team count overall.

5. Tournament-style scoring is used for the Monroe County Coaches' Invitational. Runners after the top seven on each team are deleted, as are runners from incomplete teams of less than five runners. Scores are then computed by adding the scores for the first 5 runners, with the 6th runner breaking any ties as noted above. Other invitations may use a variation of this scoring scheme.

I. MODIFIED CROSS COUNTRY

1. The race distance for modified cross country is 1.5 miles for the first half of the season, as determined by the schedule of league meets, and no more than 2 miles for the second half of the season. The date on which the distance is moved from 1.5 miles to 2 miles occurs on the day after the first half of the league schedule of meets is completed. If an odd number of league meets occurs, the changeover date occurs on the day *after* the middle meet.

2. Spikes may be worn in modified competition. Spikes can be attached or removed from the sole of a shoe, and protrude beyond the sole.

3. Only students from grades 7 and 8, and ages 12, 13 and 14 may participate in the modified program. If an athlete is 14 years old on the starting date, he or she may continue in the modified program for the remainder of the season, and is not required to move to a higher level if he or she turns 15 during the season.

4. Separate modified boys and girls races are provided. Boys and girls shall line up on the same starting line and run the same course. A delay start (boys first, girls about two minutes later), or two races, shall be used.

5. A runner in the modified cross country program shall have at least 6 individual practices before the first scrimmage or meet, with at least 8 team practices being held before the first scrimmage or meet. Runners with fewer than the required number of practices shall not run in scheduled league scrimmages or meets, or invitational meet competitions, in any capacity. At least three nights must elapse between meets. A runner may not run in more than 10 meets in one season. Refer to the state handbook for further details.

6. If a runner competes at the modified level in half or more of the scheduled meets on the modified schedule, he or she must stay with the modified team for the remainder of the season. He or she may be moved up to a higher level of competition prior to competing in that meet which marks the halfway point of his or her season.

7. The changeover date for course lengths in 2016 is Friday, October 13, 2016.

J. CROSS COUNTRY COACHES' ETIQUETTE:

1. All coaches should provide a model of good behavior for their athletes and should exemplify good professional conduct. Any departure from good professional conduct could result in a letter from the County Chairperson to the athletic director and coach.

2. Remember that we are introducing our modified athletes to the sport of cross country, and there are no official won-loss records or championships. Coaches should be flexible in order to allow for a positive learning experience for our athletes.

K. MONROE COUNTY COACHES' INVITATIONAL

1. At the appropriate spot on the Monroe County Cross Country web site at <http://tytler.net/mcxews/>, enter your runners' names and other required information. This should be done within the first two weeks of the season. Updates can be made as needed throughout the season. The password is mod\$xc.

2. On the day of the meet, each runner shall wear the proper bib number as prescribed in a listing handed out to the coach with the bib numbers since team scoring is automated.

3. Meet duties for modified coaches will be the same as those assigned to their varsity teams.

4. The modified coaches meeting will be held near the finish line 30 minutes before the start of the first modified race. This will also be the modified post-season meeting.

5. For races times, see the race schedule which will be posted on the Monroe County Cross Country website. In the past, the modified races have started at 11:15 A.M. and 11:45 A.M.

6. Modified awards will consist of a finish ribbon (or similar) to be awarded at the chute.

L. A FEW TIPS FOR MODIFIED COACHES AT MEETS

1. Have two decks of finish cards and two score sheets, even as an "away" coach.

2. Start your watch whenever a modified race starts, even as an "away" coach.

3. Make sure your team goes through the proper course *before* the race. Ask other coaches if you are not sure of where the course goes. Carry a course map on the day of the meet.

4. If you are an "away" coach arriving at the meet, find the "home" coach and offer to help.

5. If you are a "home" modified coach, have your helpers lined up in advance.

6. If you are particularly familiar with the course, offer your help to coaches unfamiliar with the course.

7. Talk in advance with the varsity host coaches so that the proper chutes and course markings will be in place for the meet. Take responsibility for the modified-only course markings; the varsity coaches may welcome the assistance.

8. Have fun with your time at the meet; it will rub off in a positive way on the athletes.

M. 2016 MONROE COUNTY LEAGUE SCRIMMAGE AND MEET SCHEDULE

1. The official schedule is listed on-line. To reach our league schedule, go to www.mcpsca-ny.org (Monroe County Public Schools Athletic Conference). You can see your team's schedule by highlighting your school name in the box at right. You can then refine your search further on the next page.

2. Host schools for each meet are listed as the "home" team. It is your professional responsibility to know whether or not your team is the "home" team. If you are the "home" team, you are responsible for providing all which is necessary for running the meet.

3. The scrimmage date is: Tuesday, September 20, 2016. The scrimmage length is no more than 1.5 miles.

4. The 2016 league scrimmage and meet dates are:

- a. Tuesday, September 20, 2016 @ 1.5 miles (Scrimmage; w/ Varsity)
- b. Tuesday, September 27, 2016 @ 1.5 miles (League Meet No. 1; w/ Varsity)
- c. Wednesday, October 5, 2016 @ 1.5 miles (League Meet No. 2; w/ Varsity)
- d. Thursday, October 13, 2016 @ 2.0 miles (League Meet No. 3; w/ Varsity)
- e. Wednesday, October 19, 2016 @ 2.0 miles (League Meet No. 4; no Varsity present)

5. The Monroe County Coaches' Invitational date is Saturday, October 29, 2016 on the 2.0-mile-long championship course at Parma Park. The coaches' meeting is at 10:45 followed by the boys race at 11:15 and the girls race at 11:45. Varsity and other races follow the modified races.

N. Communications Between Coaches: For 2016, we will be having an in-person pre-season coaches meeting. Scoring sheets and information will be given to you at that meeting. The meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2016 at Brighton High School.

O. And Finally: If you are a new cross country coach, please do not hesitate to contact me, as your colleague and your county chairperson, for any information you may need. Your varsity coaches will be of great assistance, too, but remember that they may not have ever coached modified cross country.

Good luck on your seasons, everyone, and please give me a call or e-mail me if there is anything I can do to make your season the best it can possibly be.

Charlie Lowe, Fairport Modified Cross Country Coach and
Monroe County League Modified Cross Country Chairperson