



Bengals

CROSS COUNTRY

2024 STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

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COACHES AND CONTACT INFO

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SCHEDULE

2024 SEASON

- **Friday, Aug. 6:** 12 p.m., Flathead Invitational, Rebecca Farms, Kalispell
- **Saturday, Sept. 14:** 4 p.m., Bozeman Invitational, Bridger Creek Golf Course
- **Friday, Sept. 20:** 12 p.m., Butte Invitational, Highland Golf Course
- **Saturday, Sept. 28:** 9:30 a.m., Mountain West Classic, UM Golf Course
- **Friday, Oct. 4:** 3 p.m., Great Falls Invitational, Anaconda Hills Golf Course
- **Thursday, Oct. 10:** 12 p.m., Capital City 7 vs. 7, Bill Roberts Golf Course
- **Wednesday, Oct. 16:** 4 p.m., Crosstown, Bill Roberts Golf Course
- **Saturday, Oct. 26:** 11 a.m., State Championship, UM Golf Course, Missoula

OPTIONAL POSTSEASON OPPORTUNITIES

- **Saturday, Nov. 2:** Montana Cup, Zinn Ranch in Helena
- **Saturday, Nov. 9:** Montana Jr Olympic Championships, Helena
- **Saturday, Nov. 14-17:** Nike Cross Regionals, Eagle Island State Park, Eagle, ID

GEAR NEEDED

1. **Running shoes.** You should have two pairs you can rotate, a daily trainer and a lighter more responsive workout shoe; ask a coach for help or reference our shoe guide in this handbook.
2. **Watch.** Does not have to be GPS. A simple digital watch is enough.
3. **Yoga Mat.** Does not need to be a fancy one. We start all training sessions with rope stretching and finish with post run strength or stretching. This will make it more comfortable.
4. **Running (or athletic) gear.** Represent HHS with a Bengal top at practice, and always wear clothing appropriate for running.
5. **Personal Water Bottle.** Make sure it's full and with you whenever possible.
6. **XC Racing Flats or Spikes.** These are strongly recommended for all team members; ask a coach for help or reference our shoe guide in this handbook.

WHO WE ARE

MISSION

We promote empowerment and self-determination through the development of autonomy, competence, and belonging.

VISION

We are relentless in our mission to empower young women and men to find the magic inside themselves, to honor and love themselves and others for who they are, and to help them develop the character, integrity, commitment, and compassion to lead in a manner that makes a positive impact on society. We strive to present an environment where student-athletes will be inspired to have fun, pursue excellence, remain curious, and develop trust in their coaches, training, teammates, and the process of development as runners and as humans.

PROGRAM PILLARS

EXCELLENCE: DELIVER YOUR GREATNESS

We exhibit commitment, responsibility, integrity, consistency, a strong work ethic, and a positive attitude to be our best in training, competition, and in life.

CURIOSITY: CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

We maintain an open mind, summon courage, and seek opportunities to get outside our comfort zone to grow as individuals and as a collective.

UNITY: LOVE YOUR TEAMMATES

We promote love, shared responsibility, and compassion to provide a sense of belonging and to foster a safe space for curiosity and excellence to thrive.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

BE ON TIME

BE PREPARED

BE PRESENT

BE RESPECTFUL

BE RESPONSIBLE

BE OF SERVICE

BE YOUR BEST

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNICATION IS A MUST

Don't assume your coaches know what you're thinking or feeling. Communicate with your coaches. Help us, help you.

PRACTICE IS MANDATORY

Check-in starts at 3:15 p.m. every day after school and ends at 3:25 p.m. You are expected to be on time and ready for practice, so we can begin at 3:30 p.m.

1. If you are unable to attend practice, ***you must have a parent email or text the head coach to determine whether it will be excused.***
 - a. Excused absences will be granted for things such as illness, injury, family emergencies, and at the discretion of the head coach.
2. One unexcused absence is cause for a one-meet suspension.
3. Missing pre-meet practice unexcused result in a one-meet suspension.
4. Late arrivals will be expected to complete the workout to the head coach's discretion to remain eligible for the team's next competition.

BE A GOOD REPRESENTATIVE

When you are a member of cross country team, you represent the program, the school, and your community at all times.

DEMONSTRATE CONSIDERATION

Recognize the worth of everyone involved with the program and work together to better the team culture and the enjoyment of others. Coaches have a limited time with each individual.

MEET ATTENDANCE

You are required to remain at meets for the duration to support your team and must attend the team meeting at the conclusion.

TRAVEL

We encourage student-athletes to travel home with the team on the bus after away meets to build unity. If you plan on travelling home with a parent or guardian, you must sign out with the head coach at the conclusion of the meet, not during competition.

CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE

Avoid wasting energy on things out of your control.

Here are 10 key things you can control:

1. **ATTITUDE** – Everything starts and ends with attitude. A positive, winning attitude helps you succeed and impact those around you.
2. **EFFORT** – How hard you work is up to you and no one else. If you give up that control, you are giving away one of the main things that sets you apart.
3. **FOCUS** – Focus is relaxed concentration; it becomes especially important in competition where outside distractions can keep you from performing at your best. Your focus must be on the here and now in training and competition.
4. **PREPARATION** – The work you put into your physical conditioning and preparation will directly affect your ability to make a positive impact.
5. **REST** – Sleep enhances performance and recovery. You need 8-10 hours per night to function your best in the classroom, in training, and in competition.
6. **NUTRITION** – It is important to fuel your body for success. The body requires ample H₂O, carbohydrates, protein, other nutrients to function properly. No matter how big your engine is, it won't function without a full tank of fuel.
7. **COACHABILITY** – Your ability to receive, accept, and apply input from coaches will play a key role in your growth. Keep an open mind and accept challenges.
8. **HONESTY** – Choosing to be honest is truly the best policy and it helps build trust. It fosters better relationships with others and with yourself.
9. **COMMUNICATION** – Positive, sincere, assertive, and clear communication with your coaches and teammates will give you and your team an edge.
10. **BODY LANGUAGE** – Experts agree that up to 90 percent of all communication is nonverbal. How you carry yourself is contagious and can lift or sink a team. Be aware of how your body language affects those around you.

VARSIY SELECTION

Varsity runners are determined by the coaching staff prior to each competition. All student-athletes have the opportunity to make the varsity team. Varsity will be determined by time, placing, completion of workouts, and adherence to core values, standards of behavior and expectations. Coaches can run a minimum of 5 varsity runners or a maximum of 7. This is at the coaches' discretion.

GIRLS LETTER REQUIREMENTS

A runner may letter at Helena High by meeting any of the following requirements.

Varsity Letter (Must achieve at least one of the five options below)

1. Run at one of the courses during the season in 21:30 or faster, whether in varsity or junior varsity competition.
2. Score (top five on the team) as a member of the varsity team in any varsity competition where more than 3 teams compete and in which Helena High places first or second as a team.
3. While participating in the JV division, post a better performance (time) than the fifth Helena High varsity finisher at the same meet.
4. Make the state team, consisting of the top 7 student-athletes at the end of the season. The alternate(s) also may achieve a letter at the discretion of the head coach.
5. Receive a Pillar Award (detailed on the Awards page).

Commitment Letter

Discretionary letter from coaching staff for seniors completing fourth full season. Completing four years in the program DOES NOT guarantee a letter.

Earning a letter, it is presumed, is one of the goals of participation in athletics. Be reminded, however, that receiving an award is not guaranteed solely by meeting one of the criteria above. If a student-athlete fails to complete the season or fails to conduct herself by the rules and expectations presented by the Helena School District or this program in particular, she will not receive an award. The award winners are officially announced at the end of the cross country season.

Letters are awarded at the discretion of the head coach.

GIRLS AWARDS

LEADERSHIP

Helena High girls cross country does not designate captains. We strive to develop a program full of leaders. It is our belief that every athlete deserves the opportunity to demonstrate leadership. While we do not designate captains, we will design opportunities to foster this growth. We believe this approach will also keep student-athletes more accountable to one another as they work together to strengthen the program and the culture within it. At the coaches' discretion, we will recognize athletes who exhibit exemplary leadership qualities at the conclusion of the season with a Program Pillar Award and gold star pin.

- **Program Pillar Award:** Student-athletes must demonstrate leadership while upholding our three program pillars and adhering to our standards of behavior; winners of the Program Pillar award are not eligible for other discretionary awards, as this award recognizes all of the qualities that could earn recognition for those discretionary awards listed below.

PERFORMANCE-BASED AWARDS

These awards are based on a combination of performance and coaches' discretion; winners must be in good academic and disciplinary standing; one each.

- **Top Runner**
- **Most Improved:** Year over year improvement.
- **Top Freshman**
- **Top Newcomer:** Non-freshman.

DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

- **Committed Cat:** Student-athlete who most demonstrates commitment to personal and team development throughout the season.
- **Courageous Cat:** Student-athlete who most demonstrates a curiosity in their own abilities, takes calculated risks and a fearless attitude into competition, and maintains an adventurous mindset.
- **Impact Cat:** Student-athlete who provides the greatest impact for the team at the coaching staff's discretion.
- **Linda Paull Heart Award:** Student-athlete who demonstrates grit, persistence and passion, whether overcoming an injury or facing odds stacked against them; advocates for themselves and their teammates; or relentlessly pursues excellence while upholding team values.
- **Coaches' Award:** Coaches' discretion decided by assistant and head coach.

BOYS LETTER REQUIREMENTS

A runner may letter at Helena High by meeting any of the following requirements.

Varsity Letter (Must achieve at least one of the five options below)

1. Run at one of the courses during the season in 17:10 or faster, whether in varsity or junior varsity competition.
2. Finish in the top 4 in a dual meet, top 6 in a triangular meet, top 8 in a quadrangular meet and so ... adding two places for each additional team entered. This can be done in varsity competition only.
3. Score (top five on the team) as a member of the varsity team in any varsity competition where more than 3 teams compete and in which Helena High places first or second as a team.
4. Make the state team, consisting of the top 7 student-athletes at the end of the season. The alternate(s) also may achieve a letter at the discretion of the head coach.

Earning a letter, it is presumed, is one of the goals of participation in athletics. Be reminded, however, that receiving an award is not guaranteed solely by meeting one of the criteria above. If a student-athlete fails to complete the season or fails to conduct himself by the rules and expectations presented by the Helena School District or this program in particular, he will not receive an award. The award winners are officially announced at the end of the cross country season. Also, it is not a guarantee that an athlete will letter once he completes 4 years of running on the jayvee level or if they are named a captain.

Letters are awarded at the discretion of the head coach.

BOYS AWARDS

These awards are based on a combination of performance and coaches' discretion; winners must be in good academic and disciplinary standing; one each.

- **Top Runner**
- **Most Improved Veteran**
- **Most Improved Freshman**
- **Coaches' Award**
- **Team Captains**

DYNAMOB ACTIVATION

Active Isolated Stretching (5 min)

Without rope

1. Knee pulls x 8 on each side
2. Leg extensions x 8 on each side
3. Quad pulls x 8 on each side

With rope

4. Straight-leg ham x 8 on each side
5. Lateral out x 8 on each side
6. Lateral in x 8-10 on each side
7. Up and lateral across x 8 on each side
8. Calf stretch x 8 on each side

Ground Work (5 min)

1. Cat-Cow x 5
2. Child-Cobra x 5
3. Reach through and up x 8 each side
4. Knee circles forward x 8 on each side
5. Knee circles back x 8 on each side
6. Fire hydrant x 8 on each side
7. Donkey kick x 8 on each side
8. Low whips x 8 on each side

Tick Tock and Leg Swings (2-3 min)

1. Standing tick tock
2. Leg swings forward and back x 8
3. Leg swings side to side x 8

Skip and Shuffle Activation (5 min)

1. Low skips with arm swing forward
2. Low skips with arm swing backward
3. Low skips with arm swing across
4. Skip with a twist (switch 360 rotation)
5. Backward jog
6. Backward skip
7. Butt kicks
8. Side shuffling low – down and back
9. Side jacks – down and back
10. Carioca/Grapevine – down and back



WORKOUT OR RACES ONLY

Warmup Run (15 min; 2 miles)

1. 11 min easy, 4 min tempo

Shoe Change (5 min)

Mechanics (3-4 min)

1. A March x 20 meters
2. A Skip x 20 meters
3. B March x 20 meters
4. B Skip x 20 meters
5. Dribbles x 20 meters
6. Prime Time x 20 meters

Stride Progression (5 min)

1. 3 x 150 in-and-out (2 x 90 at races)
(Track: 8-4-8; XC: 16-32-16)

1600/3200/5K

2. 4 x 100 @ 1600 (2 reps at races)
3. 2 x 120 @ 800 (workouts only)

400/800

2. 2 x 120 @ 800, 2 x 75 @ 400
(At races, do only the race pace and cut 120s to 90 meters)

STRENGTH ROUTINES



Core and Mobility x 3 (20-30 min)

Shin Splint Prev w/Band x 10 >> Build

1. Ankle Eversion Sitting
2. Ankle Inversion Sitting
3. Sidestepping w/Band at Feet
4. Standing Single Leg Pull-Up

Shin Splint Prev w/out Band x 10 >> Build

1. Toe Lifts w/Elevated Heels
2. Calf Raise w/Ball Squeeze

Hips w/Minibands x 10 >> Build

1. Clam Shells w/Hand on Pelvis
2. Double Bridge
3. Single Leg Bridging w/Marching
4. Dead Bug w/Hands Stable, Flat Back
5. Leg Lifts w(toes in, out, neutral)

Core x 10

6. Back Extensions/Fish Flops
7. Bird Dog
8. Russian Twists, timed
9. Pedestal Planks, timed

Stretches x 8-10

1. Iron Cross, Scorpion, Groiners
2. AIS Ham, Knee, Quad pulls
3. Pigeon, Dog, Cobra, Child, 2 x cycle

Foam Rolling/Fascia Ball (1-2 min each)

1. Hips, Glutes, Hams, Quads, Shins, Calves, Plantar Fascia

Plyometric Work x 2 (10-20 min)

Pogos 1 x 20

1. Pogo hops
2. Pogo hops forward
3. Pogo Side to side

Skip Series 1-2 x 20 meters

1. Skips for Height
2. Skips for Distance
3. Prime Time

Multi-Throws 1-2 x 5-8 reps

1. High Toss
2. Overhead backward throw
3. Twist toss

Bands (5 min)

All but speed skater both directions

1. Baby Steps x 15-20 meters
2. Baby Side shuffle x 15-20 meters
3. Giant Steps x 15-20 meters
4. Side squat shuffle x 15-20 meters
5. Squats x 5
6. Speed Skater x 15-20 meters
7. Monster Walk x 15-20 meters

Strength Training 3 x 6 (30-45 min)

ARMS

1. Dumbbell Rows
2. 3-Way Shoulder Press
3. Bench Press

LEGS

1. ½ Squat, Bar Speed Up
2. Trap Bar Deadlift (3 positions, 3 each)
3. Bulgarian Lunge
4. Single Leg Dead Lift
5. Toe Lifts w/Elevated Heels
6. Calf Raise w/Ball Squeeze

STABILITY

7. Waiter Walks
8. Horse Stance 2 x 30 seconds