

# Whidbey Island Running Club

## 2009 Cross Country Season Overview

**Cross country running** is a sport in which runners compete to complete a course over open or rough terrain. The courses used at these events may include grass, mud, woodlands, trails, beach, or grass.

Each cross-country running course is different in composition. Distances are generally standardized; however there will be little in common between any two courses other than their length. As such, accurate comparisons cannot be made between performances on different courses or even on the same course on different years as the weather and underfoot conditions can be significantly different.

Races are started in masses, sometimes with each team having its own *bull pen* or *box* along the start line. Boxes may be big enough to fit the entire team on the starting line. In some meets, there is only enough room for one or two runners from each team on the line. The 3-5 remaining team members (a team consists of 5-7 runners) follow in a line, and if permitted may flow into other boxes. A gun or horn is then sounded, and runners have a few hundred meters to converge from the wide starting line into the much narrower path that must be followed until the finish. However, races are typically smaller in the developmental races, so that there is generally enough room for each team on the starting line.

The runner is responsible for staying within a specified distance of the marked path. Courses may be marked using various methods, such as tape, chalk, ribbons, paint, cones, and flags.

The course usually ends at a finish line located at the beginning of a *funnel* or *chute*. The chute is a long, roped walkway that keeps athletes single-file in order of finishing.

When two or more teams of cross country runners compete, a score may be compiled to determine which team is the better. Points are awarded to the individual runners of eligible teams, equal to the position in which they cross the finish line (first place gets 1 point, second place gets 2 points, etc). Teams are considered ineligible to score if they have fewer than the meet's required number of scorers, which is typically five (3 for developmental meets). Only the first five runners in for a team are counted towards that team's score; the points for these runners are summed, and the teams are ranked based on the total, with lowest being best.

Cross-country running involves very little specialized equipment. Most races are run in shorts and singlets. In particularly cold conditions, long-sleeved shirts (Under-Armour type) and running tights can be worn to retain warmth without losing mobility. The most common footwear worn consists of a pair of spikes, which are lightweight racing shoes that incorporate metal spikes into the sole. These spikes are changed depending on race conditions. For example, if the course is muddy a longer spike will be used.

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## Age Groups

The USA Track and Field Youth Athletics program is divided into five two-year age divisions for boys and five for girls to help insure that young athletes generally compete against others of comparable physical maturity. In addition to the USATF divisions, local teams typically offer a Mini-Bantam and Sub-Bantam division at most meets.

Athletes compete in age groups with their “age” being the age they will be at the year-end (December 31). For example, Miguel Guzman, doesn’t turn 11 until October 14th . However, because this happens before December 31<sup>st</sup> he had to compete all of summer’s track season and will compete in this fall’s cross-country season in the 11-12 age group. It’s fair because those kids who will be turning 13 before the end have to move up to the 13-14 age group.

| <u>Group Name</u> | <u>Abbrev.</u> | <u>Ages</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Mini-Bantam       | MB             | 6 & Under   |
| Sub-Bantam        | SB             | 7 – 8       |
| Bantam*           | B              | 9 – 10      |
| Midget*           | M              | 11 – 12     |
| Youth*            | Y              | 13 – 14     |
| Intermediate*     | I              | 15 – 16     |
| Young Men/Women*  | YM/W           | 17 – 18     |

\*The USATF Age Divisions for Junior Olympics. 8 and unders may compete in Junior Olympics, but they don’t have a separate age division for those younger age-groups.

## Course Distances

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Mini-Bantam  | 800m  |
| Sub-Bantam   | 1500m |
| Bantam       | 3000m |
| Midget       | 3000m |
| Youth        | 4000m |
| Intermediate | 5000m |
| Young M/W    | 5000m |

## Scheduled Races for Whidbey Island Running Club

**October 10, 2009. Cascade Striders Invitational.** Wilburton Hill Park. Main Street and 124<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Bellevue WA. Driving Directions: From South on I-405 take the NE 8<sup>th</sup> st. exit. Go east for approx. ½ mile to 124<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Go right on 124<sup>th</sup> (south) for approx. ½ mile to park entrance on Main St.

The info. for this years Cascade Striders meet will not be put out until approx. 1-2 weeks before the meet. Here is the meet info. from 2008. It will not change substantially.

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Cost: \$6/athlete

Awards: Individual: Medals for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place, ribbons for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> place and participation ribbons in all age groups. Team: Awards for 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> teams in all races (a minimum of 3 athletes from the same team/age group are needed to qualify for team awards).

|           |       |               |       |      |               |       |
|-----------|-------|---------------|-------|------|---------------|-------|
| Schedule: | 11:00 | 6 & Under     | 800m  | 1:00 | 11 & 12 boys  | 3000m |
|           | 11:15 | 7 & 8         | 1500m | 1:30 | 13 & 14 girls | 4000m |
|           | 11:30 | 9 & 10 girls  | 3000m | 2:00 | 13 & 14 boys  | 4000m |
|           | 12:00 | 9 & 10 boys   | 3000m | 2:30 | 15-18, open   | 4000m |
|           | 12:30 | 11 & 12 girls | 3000m |      |               |       |

**October 25, 2009. Gliders Cross-County Meet.** Lake Sammamish State Park. Driving Directions: From East I-90 take Exit #15 and follow signs to Lake Sammamish State Park. Park is on north side of freeway.

Official info. for 2009's meet will be available mid-Oct. This is meet info. from 2008.

Cost: \$6/athlete

Awards: Individual: Ribbons to top 10 finishers in all age divisions. Participation ribbons awarded to all remaining finishers. Team: Awarded to top 3 teams in each age division, excluding "open" division. Minimum of 3 members/team to qualify.

|           |         |            |        |
|-----------|---------|------------|--------|
| Schedule: | 1:00pm* | MiniBantam | 800m   |
|           | 1:15pm  | Sub Bantam | 1 mile |
|           | 1:30pm  | Bantam     | 3000m  |
|           | 2:00pm  | Midget     | 3000m  |
|           | 2:30pm  | Youth      | 4000m  |
|           | 3:00pm  | Open       | 4000m  |

\*afternoon times because this is a Sunday meet.

**October 31, 2009. Rain City Flyers Stampede.** Lower Woodland Park, Seattle. off North 50<sup>th</sup>, east of Aurora Ave. and Zoo. Driving Directions: From I-5 take 50<sup>th</sup> west to Woodland Park.

Course info. for 2009's meet will be available mid-Oct. This is meet info. from 2008.

Cost: \$6/athlete

Awards: Individual: Awards for 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, all races. Participant ribbons available. Team: Awards for members of 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams in all age divisions. Minimum of 3 team members to score as a team, maximum of 8.

|           |       |              |       |      |               |       |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|------|---------------|-------|
| Schedule: | 11:00 | 6 & Under    | 700m  | 1:00 | Midget Boys   | 3000m |
|           | 11:10 | 8 & Under    | 2000m | 1:30 | Youth Girls   | 4000m |
|           | 11:30 | Bantam Girls | 3000m | 2:00 | Youth Boys    | 4000m |
|           | 12:00 | Bantam Boys  | 3000m | 2:30 | 15-18, & Open | 4000m |

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12:30

Midget Girls 3000m

**November 14, 2009. Junior Olympic Association Championships Meet.** Lower Woodland Park, Seattle. Same course as Rain City Flyers Stampede Meet.

Current meet info. will be out late Oct.

This meet is sanctioned by our national governing body, USATF. Because of this if you plan on participating in the meet you must obtain a USATF membership for your athlete. Cost is only \$20, pays for the year. (Info. on obtaining this will be out in October, very easy to obtain online)

This meet is a preliminary qualifier for the next level of competition, the Regionals Junior Olympic Championship Meet. The top 25 individuals & top 3 teams in each age group advance to the Regional meet. Minimum of 5 to a team, maximum of 8.

This is the first of the following meets that does not have Sub or Mini Bantam age-groupings. However, Sub's and Mini's are permitted to run in the Bantam age group, and this would be a wonderful experience for the more proficient runners who could handle the distance.

**November 21, 2009. Junior Olympic Regional Championship Meet.** Plantes Ferry Park, Spokane, WA

Participation in this meet is predicated on a top 25 individual finish, or you're a member of a team that finished in the top 3 (minimum of 5, max. 8 team members), from the Association Championship meet.

**December 12, 2009. Junior Olympic National Championship Meet.** Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, Reno, NV.

Participation in this meet is predicated on a top 20 individual finish, or you're the member of a team that finished in the top 3, from the Regional Championship meet.

**I hope** that in all age divisions for both boys and girls we can field full teams as it is the sport of cross-country that affords runners the wonderful opportunity to run with a team purpose. On an individual level the camaraderie, a personal sense of achievement, the opportunity to test limits, find abilities, see hard work pay-off, and an opportunity to formulate goals for oneself are some benefits of competition.

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