

# NASHVILLE YOUTH ATHLETICS

## ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL COACHES TRAINING

Thank you for your interest in coaching youth cross-country! Please know from the outset that Elementary and Middle school cross-country is a competitive sport supported and managed by Nashville Youth Athletics and is not a sanctioned sport under the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA). Nashville Youth Athletics is an organization that is subordinated through the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and USA Track & Field (USATF). The cross country program is open to all individuals and schools (public or private) in the Middle Tennessee area. Home schooled children are also encouraged to participate, particularly since this might be the only competitive sport available to them at the city, regional, and state level of school based competition. Over the last 10 years, state middle school cross-country programs and youth organizations have joined to develop a recognized state championship in cross country. 2013 served as the first year for a state championship at the elementary school level. The elementary programming is similar to all guidelines set forth for the middle school program. The information in this packet will give you the basic tools to get started.

### Important Web Links

NYA – [www.nashvilleyouthathletic.org](http://www.nashvilleyouthathletic.org)

NYA Coach's Informational Page – <http://www.nashvilleyouthathletics.org/coaches-page.html>

New York Road Runner's Club Youth Program - <http://www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools>

Dathan Ritzenhein Form and Flexibility Videos - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhzzpZVMtI4> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWE9hUCzCQo>

### Eligibility

Open to all boys and girls of Middle School age (grades 6, 7, 8) or Elementary School Age (grades 3, 4, 5). We realize that certain school districts have different grade designations for Middle School and Elementary School but we will need to adhere to one state standard. The program is open to all public, private schools, and homeschooled athletes. Home schoolers and or individuals who do not have schools participating may compete as unattached, part of a school team closest to their normal public school zone or as part of a recognized home school cooperative. The same applies to elementary school.

### Distances Run

Middle School = 2 miles; Elementary School = 1 mile. Course maps for the meets are available online under the meets tab.

### Insurance

Practice and Meet Liability Insurance coverage is provided through the USATF (USA Track and Field), our sport's governing body. If you need a liability certificate for your practice site you will need to send NYA your practice location and days/times of practice and we will send you a certificate.

### Costs

\$65.00 per athlete for the entire season (one meet or all 6) please visit:

<http://www.nashvilleyouthathletics.org/registration>.

For those athletes who are not able to afford the program costs, please contact us about our scholarship program. We want everyone who wants to participate to be able to!

\*\*Program t-shirts and sweatshirts will be available \$15 for child sizes, \$20 for adult sizes, for T's (pricing for sweats haven't been set just yet)\*\* These may have to be available online only this year. The parks department wants to charge a big fee for selling items at the meets.

### Check-In & Bib Numbers

We recommend that all athletes be at the race course 1 hour (30 minutes minimum) prior to the FIRST race start time (usually 2:00pm). They will need to go to the NYA tent to check in and receive their bib numbers.

Please head to the check-in tent upon arrival to the course. Check in will open at 1 hour before the first race. Either a coach or designated parent should pick up your packet at check in. In your packet will be a list of your athletes and their bib number for that week. **It is your responsibility to make sure the right athlete is lined up with the correct bib number.** Clearly it will cause big problems with results if this is not correct. Double Check! All athletes **MUST** have a bib on at the line in order to run in the race. Bib numbers should be attached to the FRONT of the athlete's shirt. They will be given 4 pins to attach the bib. It is vital that the bib be attached appropriately because if it is not, it will cause problems in the finish chute and consequently problems with results. There are 4 small holes on the bib. This is where the pins will go. The bottom of the bib is detachable and will be quickly pulled off by a chute volunteer once your athlete finishes the race. If a pin is attached to this portion it is **VERY** difficult to remove the tab. There is a picture tutorial online. If you need help, just ask.

Course maps will be posted on the side of the black NYA trailer for reference.

Each team should have a designated area to gather before and during the meet. Once your team has arrived and bib numbers have been properly attached, coaches can take their team on a warm up run followed by stretching and pre-race routine. It is important to increase blood flow and range of motion to the major muscle groups in order to prepare them to run. We recommend a dynamic routine as it has been shown to be the most effective way to prepare. A dynamic stretch is one that slowly works the muscle in its full range of motion. What most of us are used to doing prior to an

athletic event is static stretching: holding one pose for an extended period of time in order to elongate the muscles. This should still be done, just after workouts and races. You can find sample routines for both dynamic and static stretching on our website.

### Start of the Race

We will make an announcement 15 minutes and 5 minutes prior to the start of each race. All athletes in that racing division should head to the start line no later than the 5 min call. Depending on the size of the meets, we may or may not have boxes for teams. If we do, your team will be assigned a box (painted on the start line) and the entire team will line up in that section. If not, toe the line wherever you can! We pride ourselves at being on time with these races. Check-in will shut down 15 minutes prior to the first race start time, so be sure to have your athletes there on time!

### Finish Chute

Once runners cross the finish line they will be funneled into the finish chute. It is important the runners know NOT to stop when they cross the line but to continue walking forward and stay in their finish order. This is where their bib tab will be pulled and is an essential way for us to tabulate accurate results. It is also important to keep all parents and spectators away from the chute. They can talk to, congratulate, hand water to, their athlete AFTER they exit the chute. Encourage your athletes to cheer their teammates into the finish once they are done but please stress that they MAY NOT run with their teammates NOR cross back over the finish line. A cross country meet is a new experience for a lot of folks. Please help us educate friends and family in order to have a fun, safe, and successful meet.

Please refer to the Meet Etiquette & XC Rules Document on the Coaches' Page on the NYA website. This references pacing and other rules of XC that can be enforced. We are all leaning the sport and, depending on the occurrence and severity, may warn participants and spectators of any infractions but know that at the State Meet, they will not be so lenient. Disqualification can happen.

### Fall Developmental Cross Country Meets

9.9.18 - Season Opener - Percy Warner Park (PWP)

9.16.18 -

9.23.18 - PWP

9.30.18 -

**\*\*\*all above meets will begin at 2:00\*\*\***

10.7.18 - NYA City Invite - PWP

10.14.17 - Nashville Region Qualifier – PWP (must qualify here for state meet, [if you are in the Nashville Region](#))

10.20.18 - TN State Meet - Knoxville, TN, Victor Ashe Park

#### **Registration for State once qualified:**

Coaches will need to decide with their team's parents whether they will be registering the whole team or each individual that qualified will register themselves. Please make sure

everyone is on the same page to avoid mistakes for state. The link to register and registration tutorial is on the Knoxville Youth Athletics website. This must be done AFTER the regional meet and with qualification!

Our fall season consists of 4 regular season meets. 1 Invitational, and 1 championship meet. Our first 4 meets will consist of only runners who have registered for the NYA season. The NYA City Invite attempts to bring runners together from other all other conferences in the Nashville area. Since cross country in Nashville is so fractionated, this meet is a great way for everyone to see some of the competition they will be facing at the regional meet the following weekend. Any individuals and teams are able to register for and run in this race. NYA's last meet of the season will be the Nashville Area Regional Championships for Elementary and Middle School divisions. This is the qualifying meet for the TN State meet in Knoxville at Victor Ashe Park. The top 5 teams per division per gender and the top 30 individuals (ES) and top 25 individuals (MS) not on those qualifying teams advance to state. This is the only qualifying meet for State if you reside in our region. You cannot qualify in another race or by previous times.

#### Inclement Weather Policy

In general, meets will run as scheduled. If weather forecasts call for threatening weather, please do NOT assume that we will cancel the meet. Meet officials will be out on the race course from the morning of each meet through the start of each meet and will assess the weather status as it stands on the race course. IF THERE IS ANY CANCELLATION, we will make an announcement on our webpage, facebook page, and twitter account. If possible, we will attempt to send an email and/or text alert. There is an option to "opt in" to text alerts through your account on the registration site. This would be the only reason NYA would text you and may be a good way to have the most current info. As a general rule, we will run in rain, and even heavy rain. If there is lightening in the area, the meet will be delayed for 30 minutes. If at that time there is still lightening in the area, the meet will be delayed for an additional 30 minutes. If after two 30 minute delays, lightening is still in the area, the meet will be cancelled. Although we will try our best to make up or reschedule the meet, NO guarantees can be made.

#### Results and Awards

Every participant will receive a ribbon for completing the race. Top 10 finishers, per gender per division, at each of the first 4 meets will receive place ribbon. Traditional awards (medals, trophies, t-shirts, etc.) will be given at the 2 remaining championship races. RESULTS WILL BE POSTED on the website and Tennessee Runner/MileSplit before 9:00pm on the day of the race.

#### Practice Logistics

- 1) Find safe running locations. Grass is much more preferable than sidewalks, pavement, or near traffic areas. Running on grass can be much safer and can prevent injuries in the surface is devoid of ruts, holes, or rocks. Encourage parents who walk or run to help out.
- 2) If possible, have options in your running route. Running the same course every day will make for bored and tired young runners.
- 3) Vary the types of runs you do on the course.

- Run some out and backs with the entire team. If someone has to stop, have them stand in place and wait for the group on the way back and jump back in. One fun way to do this is make it a challenge and the last boy or girl to stop wins 😊.
  - Run some continuous relays. Split them up in groups of 2 or 3 and have them race to a point 100 yards and back. Their “rest” is while their teammates are running. Each athlete should be running 3-4 times per race. Have 2 races per practice with a 5-10 break in between. Switch up teams to make it fun.
  - Run some loops or circuits. Mark out a 200 to 400 yard circle and have the kids run a loop, walk a loop, then run again. Alternate between running and rest until you have done 6-10 loops. This is known as interval training. Intervals can range from 100 yards to 800 yards at this age level. This can also be done for a prescribed amount of time.
  - Run some Fartleks. Fartlek is Swedish for "speed play," and that is exactly what it's all about. Unlike tempo and interval work, fartlek is unstructured and alternates moderate-to-hard efforts with easy throughout. After a warmup, you play with speed by running at faster efforts for short periods of time (to that tree, to the sign) followed by easy-effort running to recover. It's fun in a group setting as you can alternate the leader and mix up the pace and time. And in doing so, you reap the mental benefits of being pushed by your buddies through an unpredictable workout. The goal is to keep it free-flowing so you're untethered to the watch or a plan, and to run at harder efforts but not a specific pace.
  - Do the centipede. There are many variations of this. This is where the kids run in single file for a certain distance or time and the last athlete in the line is to sprint up to the front on your signal or whistle. To make it fun and keep everyone involved when there are more than 5 kids, bring out a baton and have them pass it backwards. When the last person receives the baton, he/she sprints to the front of the line.
- 4) Be aware of how your runners perform or group up in practice. Always modify your practice to not only meet their state of physical readiness, but also modify for ALL levels of physical capabilities.
  - 5) Always have a back up or cancellation plan. What will you do in the event of severe weather, heat, or injury. Let parents know what the plan is and how to reach you.
  - 6) Encourage all kids to bring their own water or hydration. Hydration is of vital importance. In the beginning of the season, heat is a major concern and heat related illnesses should be taken seriously. Hydration also helps the body recovery properly after exertion. Please implore upon your athletes the importance of hydration. If practice is directly after school, encourage them to bring a water bottle to school for practice (and maybe a granola bar or something light to eat). Also have their parents bring fluids to pick for after practice.
  - 7) FREQUENCY??? There will be a lot of variation in the level of fitness and the level of commitment with your runners and your parents. Find what's right for each athlete. We recommend running 3-4 active days per week at the elementary level (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade) and 4-6 active days per week at the middle school level (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade). Don't let these numbers scare you! Plenty of kids play other sports during the fall, and those can be counted as 'active days'! The Sunday meets can be considered 'active days' as well! At the elementary level, 1-2 organized practice days per week is fine. At the middle school level, 2-3 organized practice

days per week is fine. Encourage athletes to run at home with mom or dad, or even do conditioning at home!

- 8) DISTANCE??? There are a lot of opinions out there. There is also a lot of scientific evidence out there. It is not dangerous or harmful to growth for kids in grades 3-8 to be running consistently. A general rule of thumb in distance running is that athletes need to be able to run 2-3 times their race distance comfortably. We schedule most of our workouts in terms of time and not mileage. This prevents kids from running too fast or far and concentrate on how a pace feels. Different paces are used to illicit change in different physiological systems, so adhering to the prescribed pace is important.

### Initial Practice Goals

- 1) Elementary School – learning stretching routine and drills (see webpage). Gradual extension of time or distance run without having to stop. The hardest thing for kids at this age to learn is pace. Get them familiar with not running 'all out' for as long as they can, then stopping. However, make games and relays out of it – keep it fun! We want to get them invested in physical fitness as an activity rather than a competitive sport. It can be fun to be active.
- 2) Middle School – here the main goal is to understand your athlete. Some will have been running for a couple of years and some may be beginners. HOWEVER, most have preconceived notions about running that the coach must work to overcome. As a coach you will evaluate form and evaluate fitness level and ability. Group runners together based on fitness level. This builds camaraderie and support. These athletes may be competing with each other (or even against each other) for many years to come.

### Competition – The bottom line

- 1) Manage expectations. For many athletes and parents, the goal is to place in the top X. For others, it is to simply finish. There are many ways to quantify performance without going over the top – all the while, encouraging the entire range of possibilities. Goals and accomplishments can be met week to week at meets as well as at practices. When athletes learn to find these small accomplishments and on a continual basis they will be more successful in the long run. If your runners will stay consistent and realize that success and fitness doesn't come over night, they will set themselves up to have a fun and rewarding season. Stick with it for Success!!
- 2) Time is irrelevant! Place is everything in cross country. Performance/improvement in XC is based on place...from meet to meet and year to year. All XC courses vary in distance and terrain. One mile may take 7:45 to win on one course, while the same effort from the same child may take 6:15 on another course.
- 3) Remember, there is no governing body that has produced an accepted way to certify the distance on a XC course. They are gross estimates, at best. Courses differ in distance, terrain, and degree of difficulty (terrain).
- 4) Educate and engage parents. Get them involved in the sport and supporting EVERYONE out on the course. XC is difficult sport, but one that is very easy to reinforce. Make every child out there feel good about their effort! Also encourage your athletes to come back to and

cheer on the rest of the runners coming in. This is a great way to teach sportsmanship and camaraderie.

5) The most important thing to instill in your athletes is a love for the sport!

We are so appreciative that you all have decided to give the gift of your time and energy to the children of your community. Running is something that the kids will be able to do for the rest of their lives and become healthy, active adults. Know that you all are planting the seeds for many of these kids, and that is such a wonderful thing.

We are always available for anything you all need. Don't hesitate to ask!

-Hollie & Brandon



## **Dynamic Flexibility Routine - Done before workout**

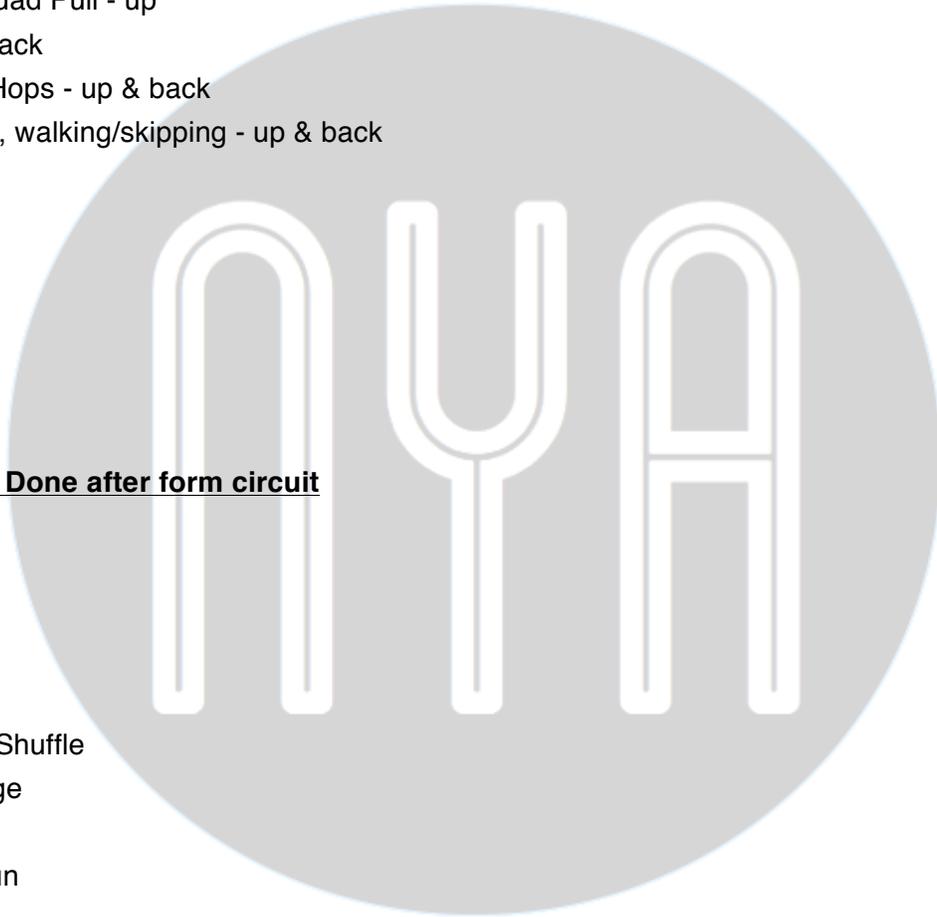
5 minute warm up jog

Mark off a 20m line

- Skips with arm circles forward - up
- Skips with arm circles backward - back
- Sideways skip with arm swing - up & back face the same direction
- Leg Cross toe touch - up
- Toes in Toes Out - back
- Hamstring/Quad Pull - up
- Glute Pull - back
- Hip Opener Hops - up & back
- Frankenstein, walking/skipping - up & back
- Calf Raises
- Ankle Rolls
- Cat/Cow
- Hip Swings
- Iron Cross
- Scorpion

## **Form Circuit - Done after form circuit**

- Butt Kicks
- High Knees
- Carioca
- High Skips
- Straight Leg Shuffle
- Walking Lunge
- Bounding
- Backward Run
- A walk/skip
- B skip
- Fast leg



## **Sample Day 1 Workout**

5 minute warm up jog

- Calf Raises
- Ankle Rolls
- Cat/Cow
- 50-100m strider
- Hip Swings
- Iron Cross
- 50-100m strider
- Scorpion
- Fast leg
- Skips with arm circles forward - up
- Skips with arm circles backward - back
- 50-100m strider
- Sideways skip with arm swing - up & back face the same direction
- Leg Cross toe touch - up
- Toes in Toes Out - back
- 50-100m strider
- Hamstring/Quad Pull - up
- Glute Pull - back
- Hip Opener Hops - up & backs
- 50-100m strider
- Frankenstein, walking/skipping - up & back
- Butt Kicks
- High Knees
- 50-100m strider
- Carioca
- High Skips
- Straight Leg Shuffle
- 50-100m strider
- Walking Lunge
- Bounding
- Backward Run
- 50-100m strider
- A walk/skip
- B skip

Static Stretching

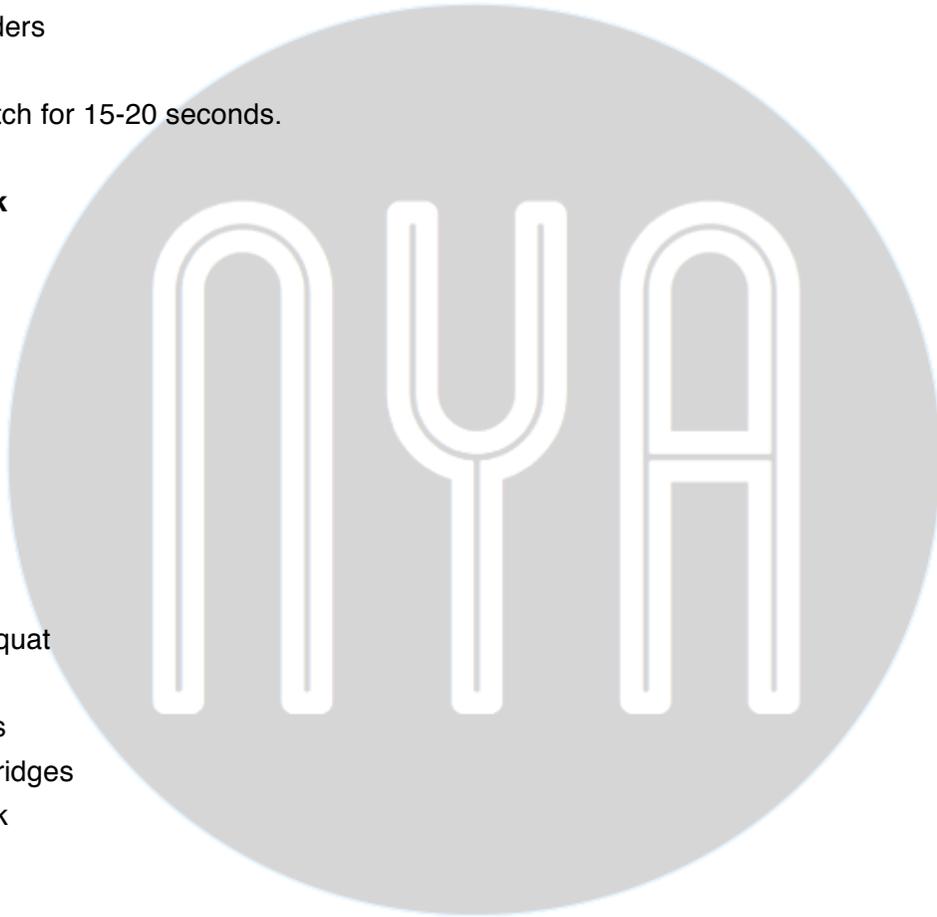
## **Static Stretching**

- Butterfly
- Straddle
- 4 Stretch/glute stretch
- Low lunge
- Calf Stretch
- Achilles
- Hamstring stretch
- Quad stretch
- Arm & shoulders

Hold each stretch for 15-20 seconds.

## **Strength Work**

- V-ups
- Plank
- Crunches
- Sit Ups
- Squats
- Lunges
- Push Ups
- Mason Twist
- Single Leg Squat
- Fire Hydrant
- Donkey Kicks
- Single Leg Bridges
- Monster Walk
- Plié Squat



Always monitor the kids to make sure they have proper form on every rep. Kids should do 8-15 reps (start low and increase as they get stronger) and 2-3 sets. Pick a couple each practice.

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Week 1	Sample day 1 workout Stretch	Warm up jog Dynamic stretching (DS) Form Circuit (FC) 20 min jog easy Stretch	Sample day 1 workout Stretch	
Week 2	Warm up jog DS FC 20-25 min easy jog Stretch	Sample day 1 workout Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 20-25 min easy jog 3-5 striders of 80-100m Stretch	
Week 3	Warm up jog DS FC 30 sec on/off Strength Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 25 minute easy jog 3-5 striders of 80-100m Stretch	20-30 minute run at home	Race Day!
Week 4	Warm up jog DS FC Centipede Run - 20 min Strength Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 20-30 min easy jog Strength Stretch	20-30 minute run at home	Race Day!
Week 5	Warm up jog DS FC Hills - 6-8 x's Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 2 min race pace 2 min rest X's 5 (20 minutes) Stretch	20-35 minute run at home	Race Day!
Week 6	Warm up jog DS FC Out & Back Challenge run Strength Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 20-35 minute easy jog 3-5 striders of 80-100m Stretch	20-35 minute run at home	Race Day!
Week 7	Warm up jog DS FC Fartlek Strength	Warm up jog DS FC Hills - 6-8 x's Stretch	20-40 minute run at home	Race Day!

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Week 8	Warm up jog DS FC Out & Back Challenge run Strength Stretch	Warm up jog DS FC 20-35 minute easy jog 3-5 striders of 80-100m Stretch	20-40 minute run at home	Race Day!

