

2026 Cross Country Coaches Packet



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For additional information related to sports medicine issues concerning athletic participation, please click the “Sports Medicine” tab on the opening page of our website.

WEST VIRGINIA SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES COMMISSION



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BULLETIN

TO: Cross Country Coaches
FROM: Dan Comer, Assistant Executive Director
DATE: July 2026
SUBJECT: 2026 Cross Country

Coaches' Packets are mailed to all varsity high school coaches and all middle schools. If your high school also sponsors a ninth-grade cross country team, that coach may request a packet from this office. **Note** – this is for a high school ninth grade team only. Please share this information with the ninth-grade coach.

Reminders:

1. Refer to the enclosed Rule Book for rules and regulations pertaining to Cross Country.
2. The 2026 season starts **Monday of Week 5 (August 3, 2026)** with the first contest permitted on **Wednesday of Week 9 (August 19, 2026)**. Note: High school varsity teams may have two (2) scrimmages. See enclosed Rule 127-3-22.
3. The 20225 State Cross Country Meet will be held at Cabell Midland High School Course on October 31 , 2026. The meet director is Steve Caldwell.
4. The success of your program depends on your knowledge of the rules and regulations of the sport. **It is important that you read and understand the enclosed information.** If you have questions, please contact me.
5. The WVSSAC is actively involved in promoting good sportsmanship in all of our sport programs. I encourage you to promote good sportsmanship by informing parents and athletes of the importance of supporting this concept and to review the sportsmanship rules located in the WVSSAC Rules& Regulations Handbook. Lead by example.
6. **Rule 127-4-3.7 Code for Interscholastic Athletes** – Coaches are hereby notified to carefully review this rule with special emphasis on 3.7. The first high school cross country ejection would result in a two (2) meet suspension; the first junior high/ middle school ejection would result in a one (1) meet suspension.
7. **WVSSAC Rule 127-2-13 Practice** – Please refer to the enclosed copy of the Practice Rule in the evaluation of your practices prior to a regular season meet.

8. You will also find enclosed information about heat injuries. Please review this vital data prior to the new season.
9. **Head and Neck Trauma Guidelines** – Refer to the approved Return to Play/Concussion Protocol. RTP refers to return to play and return to practice. The appropriate health care professional will determine when a concussed athlete may return to participation.
10. **Use of Performance Enhancing Substances by Athletes** – It is the philosophy of the National Federation and the WVSSAC that students be encouraged and supported in their efforts to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. In promotion of safety and healthy lifestyles, the WVSSAC Sports Medicine Committee requests that coaches assume the responsibility of informing athletes that the uses of such substances should be discontinued especially during the times when dehydration may occur due to potential life-threatening consequences. The committee further encourages all athletic trainers to support coaches in promoting healthy lifestyles.
11. **Injury/ Participation Procedure at WVSSAC Championship Events** – Medical personnel (athletic trainers) will have the jurisdiction concerning the return of a player to competition after an injury. If a parent refuses to follow the determination of the authorized person, a release form must be signed. Athletic trainers will receive additional information at Rules Clinics.
12. **Guidelines for Suspended Coach/ Player** – This information defines what a suspended coach/ player may do before, during, and after a contest.
13. **NFHS Sports Medicine Regulations** –
 - 1) Insulin Pumps with Shunt's must be padded and a physician's letter indicating the need for the athlete to wear the pump during the participation must be given to the officials prior to the start of the contest.
 - 2) Inhalers – A physician's letter indicating the need for the athlete to use the inhaler during participation must be given to the official prior to the start of the game.

§127-3-22. Cross Country (Boys and Girls).

22.1. Rules: Cross country rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations are the official rules for all interscholastic competition unless otherwise provided by Commission modification.

22.2. Organized team practice will begin on Monday Week 5 and first meet may be held on Wednesday of Week 7.

22.3. Length of Season: The cross-country season will end for each team or individual at tournament elimination.

22.4. Maximum Team Contests: A cross country team will be permitted 16 meets exclusive of regional and state contests.

22.5. Scrimmages: Two cross country scrimmages with another high school may be conducted. See Glossary.

22.6. Individual students of a team must have practiced on 12 SEPARATE days, exclusive of the day of a contest, before participating in an interscholastic contest.

22.7. A student may accept awards in WVSSAC sanctioned events and non-sanctioned events during the entire year. These awards must be consistent with the items specified in the Awards Rule.

22.8. Middle Schools: The above rules will apply for Middle Schools with the following adaptations.

22.8a Organized team conditioning practice will begin on Monday of Week 5 and the first meet will be held on Saturday of Week 7. The season will end on Saturday of week 16.

22.8b The maximum number of team contests: A cross country team will be permitted 14 meets.

CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

Robert's Running XC FESTIVAL

Cabell Midland will be hosting the Robert's Running XC Festival Under Lights on Saturday, September 5th 2026. Below you will find information about the meet entry and meet schedule. We welcome all to come join us for this unique event starting in the evening and ending later in the night.

Details of this meet will be posted on www.midlandrunning.com in July.

Regional Information

The Regional Entry Format has changed. This year, we will be utilizing www.RaceTimeEntry.com for **ALL** Regionals. Race Time Entry is a new form of online entry that simplifies entering and hosting cross country meets. The two largest meets in the state (Roberts Running XC Festival and Chick-fil-a) will be using this system as well as ALL West Virginia Regional Championships.

For Regional Directors

All regional meets will be set up on athletic.net. This will be **FREE** for all regional meets. To access your regional meet, you will need to contact RaceTimeEntry@gmail.com for your username and password. After receiving your login information, log in to RaceTimeEntry.com and you will be able to download your Hy-Tek entry file and import it directly into Hy-Tek Meet Manager.

All Regional Directors need to email RaceTimeEntry@gmail.com by September 2nd and inform us what Region and Classes you are hosting, so we will have your contact information and can prepare your meet information.

The old regional forms are no longer needed, and you will not have to enter any names by hand!

For Coaches

First, register your team on RaceTimeEntry.com. If you have already registered for a meet during the season which used RaceTimeEntry.com (Roberts Running XC Festival, Chick-Fil-A, etc.) then you do not need to register a second time. You will simply login with the same information as before. Then, add your regional meet to your schedule and follow the directions to submit your roster.

VERY IMPORTANT: You may only enter a **MAXIMUM of 10 athletes** at the regional meet.

While only seven (7) may run at the regional and state, all the names you indicate will receive a race number and may be substituted at the state meet. ***By entering your alternates ahead of time, you will not need to take the time to get extra race numbers at the state meet.*** The substitute runner will already have an assigned number and be ready the day of the state meet.

If you have any questions about RaceTimeEntry.com, email RaceTimeEntry@gmail.com.

If you have questions about Hy-Tek or any other regional entry items, email Marshall Cavender at mcavender@mail.kana.k12.wv.us.

This new system is designed to make everything much easier for coaches and race directors. It's simple and ready to go.



West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission



2875 Staunton Turnpike, Parkersburg, WV 26104-7219

Phone: (304) 485-5494

E-Mail: wwssac@wwssac.org

Web: www.wwssac.org

Dear Principal and Athletic Director:

If you have **team** or **individual qualifiers** for the WV State Cross Country Championship, program information is due **by the end of the day Monday, October 26th, 2026.**

Please submit a team picture, coach picture, in one email. Also send as a **JPG attachment**, and sponsor information if you have a sponsor paying for your page. The team page cost is **\$125.00**. Please put your school's name in the subject line when emailing all the information for the program. Email all information to:

anna.brown@wwssac.org

Send your room list in a separate email, not with photos.

*****Please let this letter serve as an invoice for payment.**

Thank you,
Anna Brown

*Please mail payment to:
WVSSAC
2875 Staunton Turnpike
Parkersburg, WV 26104



COACHING REMINDERS



Practice: Team members must have 12 practices on 12 separate days - 5 days sports specific if participating in another sport during the same sports season. A student must have 5 days of practice if coming from one sports season into the next sports season without interruption of school days. Only students enrolled in the specific member school and a member of the team are allowed to practice. Rule 127- 2-13.

Sunday Participation: Contests or practice on Sunday is prohibited. Practice refers to any group or individual meeting to view films or activities associated with the activity of that sports season. Rule 127-3- 14.

Physical Exam: Team members must have Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physician's Certificate form completed and on file before beginning practice. Rule 127-3-3. (Must be on or after May 1st.)

All-Star Competition: Any student completing athletic eligibility at the end of current school year because of age or completion of semesters of eligibility may play in one (1) all-star game upon conclusion of the season without loss of eligibility for balance of year. Rule 127-3-4.

Awards: Team members can accept awards from the school sponsoring a sanctioned event or the school. Wearing apparel, championship rings, equipment, athletic goods that exceeds \$100.00 are prohibited from any source. Rule 127-3-5.

Out of Season Coaching: Coaches may not promote, initiate, organize, supervise, or participate in out-of-season events involving students of the same sport as the grade level coaching assignment and preceding grade level except as specified in Rules 127-3-7.2 and 127-3-7.3. Rule 127-3-7.7.

Amateur: Any team member competing for money, receiving any award or prize of monetary value that has not been approved by the WVSSAC, capitalizing on athletic fame, or signing a professional playing contract in that sport is prohibited. Rule 127-2-11.

Participation as Ineligible: Any student who participates as ineligible may forfeit eligibility for up to 365 days. Rule 127-2-12.

Non-School Participation: Participation is limited to school teams only with a few exceptions in individual sports provided the school principal approves and no school contests/activities are missed. Participation includes but is not limited to, practice, fund raising, team pictures, tryouts, etc. Rule 127-2-10.

Sanctioning and Travel: A member school shall not enter a contest, tournament, or competition which requires sanctioning until it is approved 30 days prior to the event. Rule 127-3-16.

*For complete details regarding the above regulations and those governing team memberships, scholarship, undue influence, age, semester, etc. refer to the **Rules & Regulations Handbook** or at www.wvssac.org.*

This is not a comprehensive listing.

§127-2-13. Practice.

13.1. Only students enrolled and eligible to be listed on the eligibility certificate for that sport in the specific member school are allowed to participate in that school's practices. Exceptions are §§12723.2, 1272-3.5, and 127-2-13.6. (Revised 2012-13)

13.2. The frequency and length of practice is at the discretion of each member school.

13.3. Member schools of the WVSSAC may practice on any day of the year with the exception of Sunday practice. §127-3-14.2 further clarifies Sunday practice.

13.4. Individual players of a team must have practiced:

13.4.a. on five separate days before participating in an interscholastic scrimmage. (Effective September 13, 2021)

13.4.b. on 12 separate days, exclusive of the day of a contest, before participating in an interscholastic contest. The following sport(s) is exempted from the provisions of this rule: golf. (Effective September 13, 2021)

13.4.c. a student athlete who is absent from practice with their team for non-medical reasons, and not under a doctor's care, for more than 14 consecutive days must have the required full 12 practice days before resuming participation in a contest. Students participating in football must follow the practice progression as set forth in §127-3-23. (Revised 2011-12)

13.5. A student shall not be permitted to engage in interscholastic practice until that student has filed with the principal a completed Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physician's Certificate Form. §1273 3 further explains this required form.

13.6. A student academically ineligible may begin practicing 15 school days immediately prior to the date of regaining full eligibility. (All other ineligible students may not practice.)

13.7. If a student has established eligibility in a sport requiring 12 separate days of practice and is continuing to participate in that sport or no school days have lapsed from one sport to another sport in a same season, the student may participate in another sport of the season after completing five separate days of sport specific practice in the second sport. (Revised 2018-19)

13.8. Students participating in a sport(s) in one season must have practiced 12 separate days, exclusive of the day of a contest, to be eligible to participate in a sport in the next season with the following exception: the student has continued to practice or participate in tournament play without an interruption of school days. The student must complete five separate days of sport specific practice in the second sport.

3.7. *Statement of Policy.* Insofar as unsportsmanlike actions by students, school administrators, officials, coaches, faculty members, and spectators are concerned, the identical items under the Sportsmanship Rule along with the following guides will be referred to by the WVSSAC:

3.7.a. The school whose coach behaves in a manner likely to have adverse influence on the attitudes of students or spectators may be provided with the choice of taking disciplinary action against that coach or having the entire school disciplined by the WVSSAC.

3.7.b. Any student who in protest lays hands or attempts to lay hands upon an official may be declared ineligible by the principal or by the WVSSAC for up to one year. Any student who strikes an opponent, coach, or a spectator during or following an athletic event may be declared ineligible by the principal or the WVSSAC for a specified period of time up to one year, depending on the seriousness of the act.

3.7.c. Any coach, student, or bench personnel ejected by an official will be suspended for the remainder of the game, match, meet or contest. The coach, student, or bench personnel ejected by an official will also be suspended in additional contest(s): the suspension will be assessed based upon ten.

(10) percent of the allowed regular season contests or post season progression in a playoff tournament for each sport. Any tenth of a percentage from .1 to .4 will be a suspension equal to the whole number of the percent. Any tenth from .5 to .9 will be an additional contest added to the whole number. The suspension will include the number of indicated contests in that sport and at that level and all other sport contests in the interim at any level. A second ejection will result in the doubling of the suspension assessed for the first ejection. If an individual is ejected for a third time during the same sport season, the individual will be suspended from participating or coaching for 365 calendar days from the date of ejection. In accordance with rule 127-3-15.3, an individual ejected by an official may not appeal that ejection, or any subsequent suspension that is a consequence of the ejection by an official.

3.7.c.1. Any coach, player or bench personnel who has been ejected shall not be permitted to attend any contest(s) during said suspension. He/she shall not be affiliated with the team in any capacity. This would include but not be limited to transportation to or from the contest, meeting with the team before, during or after said contest. He/she is not permitted to be in sight or sound of said contest venue. Regular practice or team meetings not affiliated with a contest are permitted.

3.7.c.2. If suspensions are imposed to student or bench personnel at the end of the sport season and no contest remains, the suspension is carried over to that particular sport until the next school year. In the case of a senior student, the penalty will continue to the next WVSSAC sponsored sport.

3.7.c.3. Any coach suspension that cannot be enforced during the sport season in which the ejection occurs will be enforced at the beginning of the next season of that same sport.

3.7.d. In case of spectators physically molesting an official, administrator, coach, or student, the school may be given one of two options: 1) file charges against the offender (s) or 2) accept discipline from the WVSSAC. Any person found guilty of W.Va. Code §61-2-15(a) Assault, Battery on Athletic Officials, while these individuals are working or as a result of working an athletic contest, shall be banned from all WVSSAC athletic events for a minimum of 365 days from the date of being found guilty. The school filing charges shall notify the WVSSAC of the incident and outcome of any legal action.

3.7.e. The school that does not lend complete cooperation in the host school's effort to promote the spirit of good sportsmanship may be disciplined by the WVSSAC.

3.7.f. A coach may be considered as committing unsportsmanlike conduct if they make degrading remarks about officials during or after a game either on the field of play, from the bench, or through any public news media, argues with officials, or goes through motions indicating dislike for a decision, protests the decision and actions of officials pertaining to the game during and after the contest, or detains the official on the field of play following a game to request a ruling or explanation of some phase of the game. If a coach feels he/she has a legitimate criticism of a penalty call or a request for a rule interpretation, such criticism or request should be made in the privacy of the coach's office or the official's quarters and should be made in a courteous manner.

3.7.g. A student or team attendant shall not leave the bench area, team box area, or their designated off-field area during a game or contest other than during that time permitted by game or contest rules. A coach shall not leave the bench area, team box area, or the designated off-field area during a game or contest other than during that time permitted by game or contest rules unless a student altercation is taking place and the official requests assistance. Violation of this rule shall cause the coach, student, or team attendant to be immediately ejected from the contest, team penalized according to game or contest rules and that coach, student, or team attendant will not be eligible to participate in the next contest as outlined in §127-4-2.3.

3.8. Procedure. Unsportsmanship action must be reported in detail to the WVSSAC. A copy of the complaint must also be filed with the principal of the school involved. Each principal involved shall report such information or answers to the report as they deem appropriate. Upon receipt of all reports, the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors of the WVSSAC shall investigate and adjudicate such reports in accordance with the powers afforded in §127-1-8.6 and 8.7 and §127-1-12.2 and 12.3 of the Constitution. Penalties up to and including suspension of member schools may be made in accordance with §127-4.

3.9. The following defines the different types of disciplinary action which may be assessed for violation of any WVSSAC rule by a member school, administrator, coach, athlete or contest official:

3.9.a. *Warning.* A warning may be given by the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director. It is official notice that an inexcusable, unethical, or unsportsmanship action has occurred, is a matter of record, and that such an occurrence must not be repeated.

3.9.b. *Probation.* Probation is a much more severe type of warning and may be expressed two ways: 1) a school, coach, student, or team attendant on probation is told that further violations will lead to a fine or suspension; and/or 2) a school on probation is on conditional WVSSAC membership but may engage in its regular schedule, sanctioned events, and all WVSSAC tournament play, providing a program is filed with the Executive Director of the WVSSAC indicating measures to be taken to alleviate this problem which caused the school to be placed on probation.

3.9.c. *Suspension.* A school/coach suspended from the WVSSAC may not meet in interscholastic competition of any kind with a WVSSAC member school or a school that is a member of another state associated with the National Federation of State High School Associations.

3.9.d. *Fine.* A fine may be levied by the Executive Director.

3.9.e. Each of these sanctions (Warning, Probation, suspension and Fine) may be imposed or levied separately, or in a combination of one or more sanctions.

3.10. *Appeals.* All cases involving disciplinary action against member schools, coaches, students, team attendants, or officials may be protested in accordance with §127-6. However, disciplinary action imposed by an official, including disciplinary action that is a consequence of a decision by an official, such as a suspension for an additional game or games as a consequence of an ejection, is governed by rule 127-3-15.3 and is not subject to appeal.

3.11. Review of Ejections. Disciplinary action imposed by a contest official, including disciplinary action that results in a suspension for an additional game or games as a consequence of an ejection, is not subject to appeal pursuant to Rule §127-6. However, if the individual ejected believes the ejection was improper, he/she may request a review of the ejection by his/her principal. If the principal believes there is merit in the requested review, the principal shall complete and submit the WVSSAC Ejection Review Form within 24 hours or the next business day of the ejection to the Executive Director of the WVSSAC. If a review is properly requested, the WVSSAC will review the officials' special report, the WVSSAC Ejection Review Form, and such other information as the WVSSAC deems appropriate. Upon review, the WVSSAC Executive Director or the designated Assistant Director will either sustain the ejection and any consequent suspension(s), or will determine the ejection was improper and void any consequent suspension(s). A decision by the WVSSAC upon reviewing an ejection is not subject to appeal pursuant to Rule §127-6.

RECRUITING REGULATIONS

If a coach is contacted by a student, his/ her parents, or anyone else regarding a student athlete transferring to his/ her district, the coach shall refer the individual(s) to a school administrator in the district immediately. A coach cannot discuss the matter with the student or anyone else for that matter and should not even listen when the subject is brought up concerning students transferring to his/ her school. School coaches working or coaching in outside school leagues and camps should be warned that a potential problem exists if a student later enrolls at the school where the coach is employed. The school administrator, after being notified by the coach that a prospective student athlete has approached the coach about possibly playing for his/ her school team, should contact the WVSSAC office immediately. Seriously or jokingly telling a student that you would like for that athlete to play for you, or your team shall be considered recruiting. Rules regarding individuals who engage in recruiting shall not be restricted specifically to school personnel.

Approved by the Board of Appeals October
1998

GUIDELINES FOR SUSPENDED COACH/ PLAYER

A coach or player who is ejected from a contest shall be suspended for the remainder of the game, match, meet or contest. An ejected coach shall exit the playing arena (out of sight and sound of the venue) as well as the team and bench areas. If there is not another person hired by the board of education to coach that sport or a professional from that school present to take his/ her place, the contest shall be forfeited. Because of supervision and liability, an ejected athlete shall sit on the bench and shall not cause nor participate in any further problems. Furthermore, a coach or player shall not be permitted to attend subsequent contests of the suspension. He/ she shall not be formally affiliated with the team in any capacity. This would include but not be limited to transportation to or from the contest, meeting with the team before, during or after the contest, wearing a uniform, or sitting on the bench or team area. Regular practice or team meetings not affiliated with a contest will not fall under this policy.



SPECTATOR SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR TOURNAMENTS

The following sport support information is provided for each specified sport. ONLY those items marked with "Yes" are allowed during tournament play (sectional, regional, and state). It is recommended that schools follow these regulations during regular season play.

Vocal cheering and support from team bench areas are encouraged, however, the items indicated on this page are for use by spectators. Schools must stress GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP when allowing any item to be used. All items must be for support of your team and not directed against the opponent.

Legend: BSK Basketball CC Cross Country SB Softball TE Tennis WR Wrestling
 BB Baseball FB Football SC Soccer TR Track & Field
 CH Cheer GO Golf SW Swimming VB Volleyball

SPORT	BSK	BB	CH	CC	FB	GO	SB	SC	SW	TE	TR	VB	WR
Apparel Required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Upper/Lower Body Garments													
Balloons	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Banners on wall/ Stadium	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cheer & Band Member "Human" Tunnels	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Permanent Signage/ Advertisement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Senior Pictures													
Confetti/Paper Debris	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Hand-held Signs (one holder)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inflatable Tunnels	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Laser Pointer	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Miniature sports Balls thrown to crowd	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Noise makers (Horns, cow bells, bells, buzzers, clickers, etc.	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Opening Prayer / Invocation	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Paper banners for team to run through	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pom poms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sprit Towels													
Recorded/taped. music over amplifying system (only pregame or halftime)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Band, Pep Band	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Pressurized Air Horn	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Electronic Bull Horn													
Megaphones (as intended)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cannons & Muskets	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
50-50 Drawing	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Reserve Seating	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
State Only													