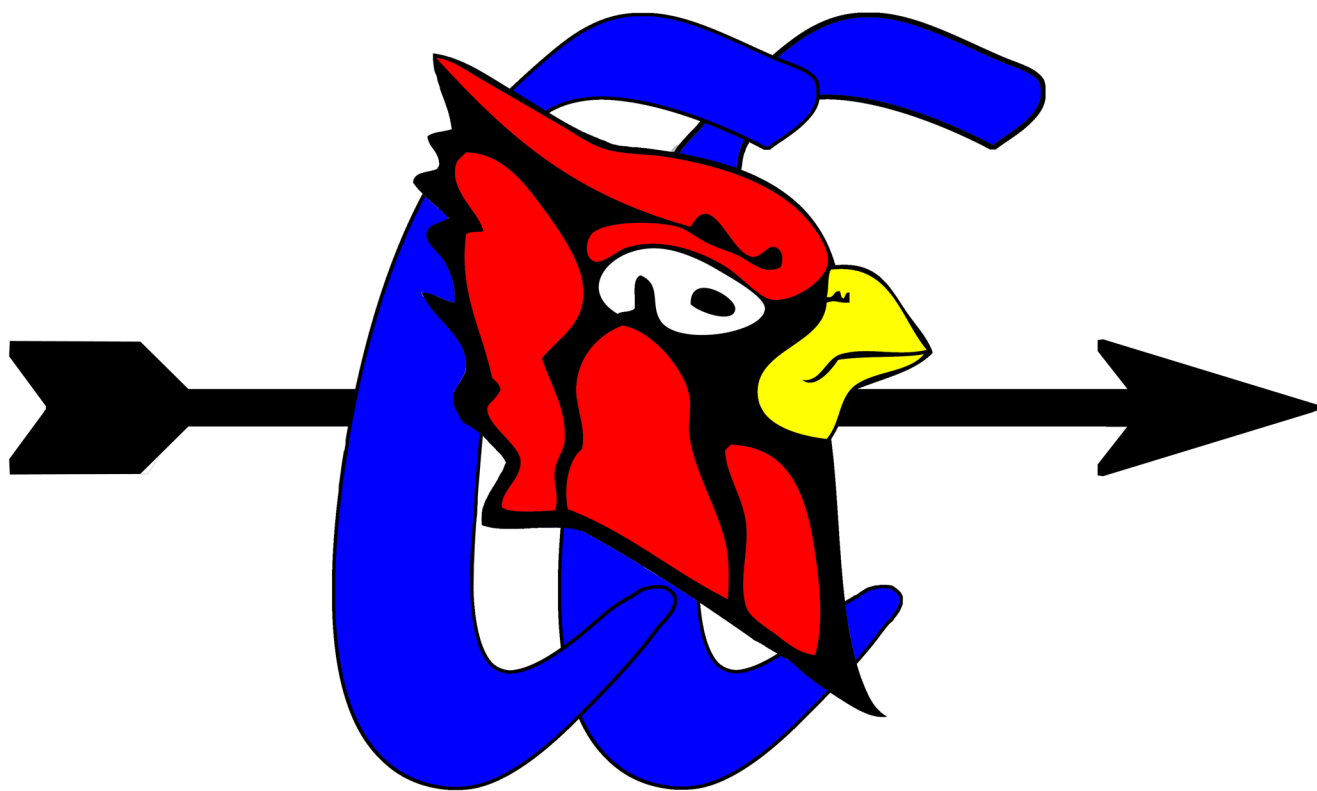


***CHENEY CROSS  
COUNTRY***



# Welcome to Cheney Cross Country!

Thank you for showing an interest in cross country at Cheney. Cross country is a sport that most newcomers don't know much about. I've tried to include most of the basics here, but it is by no means comprehensive.

## COACHES

Rich Simmons - Began as the head cross country coach in 2004. Also serves as the head high school track coach.

Rick Wulf - Cross country assistant coach since 2014. Middle school distance coach in track since 2012.

## TEAM

Cross country is a team sport. Obviously, in a cross country race everyone runs on their own, but the race can then be scored for team results.

To be considered a team for awards purposes, a school must have five runners competing. Athletes from a school with fewer than five runners are removed from the results when team scores are calculated. The number of points a runner scores is equal to their place in the race. The points for each school's top five finishers are added up and the lowest score wins. The sixth and seventh runners can push back the other teams' scorers by beating any of their top five runners and are taken into account if there is a tie. Seven is the maximum number of runners who can race on the varsity team at each meet. A perfect score at a cross country meet would be 15: 1st + 2nd + 3rd + 4th + 5th.

After the top seven, all other athletes run the JV race. There is no limit on entries. Cross country is the only sport with no bench. Every team member is extremely important to how we perform. Without pushing each other in practice and cheering in races, cross country would be much more difficult.

It is a tradition in cross country for the team to eat a pasta dinner together on the evenings before races. For the past several years, the Lutheran Church has been generous enough to allow us to use their Outreach Center for our weekly meals with families taking turns to prepare it.

If possible, I prefer all athletes to return home with the team after a competition. This is another important part of building a sense of team.

I also think it is important for our team to make an effort to support the other fall sports and encourage all athletes and parents to attend as many football games, volleyball matches, and golf meets as they can. The more support we give, the more we will receive.

## PRACTICE

Practice is every day after school. We meet behind the bus barn and often run around town, on the dirt roads, or on the turf/track. For extreme heat we could possibly reschedule to the evening. Although we will be racing in the heat of the day, so we will have to spend some time getting used to it. We will most likely follow the football team's lead. If they're out there, plan on us being out there too.

If an athlete is going to miss a practice session, I need to know as much ahead of time as possible. If doctor visits are scheduled, try to avoid Mondays and Thursdays. Monday workouts will be harder to make up on your own and Thursdays are when most of our meets are (see season schedule).

It is also important that everyone run at least once over the weekend. This can be on your own, but I can schedule a time to meet, if necessary. There are occasional morning practices. I will let the team know ahead of time when so they can make arrangements for transportation.

Join the Cheney Cross Country "class" through remind.com by texting @42fec to 81010. It allows me to send mass text notifications throughout the season. We also have a Facebook group (Cheney Cross Country) and a Twitter account (@cheneycctrack) that you can follow.

## MEETS

The standard race distance for high school is 5 kilometers (3.1 miles), with the exception of some JV and Freshman races that are 2 miles. Eighth graders usually race 2 miles with one 1.5-mile race on our schedule. Seventh grade races are all one mile. Short grass is the most common terrain for a cross country race, although most anything is possible. The number of competitors in a race can range from under ten to over a hundred.

We have five scheduled meets that are combined middle school and high school meets. For the couple remaining meets, middle school and high school meets are on different days.

The times listed on the schedule indicate the starting time of the first race that day. The number of races at a meet varies. I will provide more detailed information for the meets as I receive it. I will try to make sure it is available on our team's Facebook page and email it to the athletes directly. Parents should arrive early enough to have time to find exactly where we are, especially when being 10 or 15 minutes late could mean missing a race entirely.

## POST SEASON

Everyone will have the opportunity to run in the first seven races of the season. The high school varsity teams will then run at the regional meet. Ten boys and ten girls can be entered and considered the regional squad. Only seven will race, but this allows us to have substitutes ready for injury or illness. From the regional meet, the top three teams and top ten individual runners qualify for the state meet the following week in Lawrence. Individuals outside of the top ten can qualify if they are one of the top five runners not on a qualifying team.

## TOOLS

There are three items that I strongly encourage all athletes to have for cross country: 1) a water bottle – to have a ready supply of water with them throughout the day; 2) a watch – either a wrist-watch or a handheld stopwatch. I will often have some extras on hand, but we have always been short in the past and you'll find it is much easier to have your own; 3) running shoes – just like you would for football or basketball, you need to get shoes designed for our sport to minimize the risk of injury. High school varsity runners should also have a pair of distance spikes. Running shoes can vary from \$30-\$100+ depending on where you go and how nice they are. Not replacing your shoes often enough can lead to injury. I recommend shopping at First Gear or FleetFeet. They are owned and operated by runners.

## NUTRITION

Nutrition and hydration are too often under emphasized. Basically, high school athletes should be following the food pyramid and drinking lots of water. Ample carbohydrates and protein are a necessity for runners, while still getting plenty of fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats and minimizing sweets. This is the FUEL you have to run on. Check out [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more detailed information.

Hydration needs to occur continually. Ideally, you should need to use the restroom between every class. Small amounts of water throughout the day should prevent feeling waterlogged. We have water available at practice, but athletes need to come to practice hydrated!

We're usually racing on school days and may not have a lot of options for our lunch. Dairy and high fat foods are harder for the body to process, so we try to minimize them on race day. Grab water at lunch instead of milk on race days. Any snacks between lunch and the race should be limited to easily digestible foods. Bananas, bagels, carrots, and granola bars are four of the most common pre-race foods for runners. Gatorade is something I usually save until after the race, but a few sips beforehand are fine; just drink more water than Gatorade.

## LETTERING

Earning a varsity letter is an important distinction awarded to those athletes who exhibit class and good sportsmanship while representing our school at the varsity level. However, I won't hold it against an athlete if there just happens to be more talent ahead of them than the year before and they lose their varsity spot. Their hard work continues to push the varsity to excel.

In addition to the standards outlined in the Student Activities Handbook an athlete in good standing can earn a letter in cross country: 1) by running in the majority of the varsity races; 2) if they lettered the previous season and perform better during the current season; 3) if they compete in the varsity race at league, regional, or state; 4) at the discretion of the coaching staff.

## GOALS

As long as we have fun and perform to the best of our ability, the season will be a success. A term often used in running is “PR” (Personal Record). Everyone has a different ability level, but everyone can set PR’s. Our goal is always to see as many PR’s as possible throughout the season.

Team goals give everyone a common objective to strive for. The league, regional, and state meets are the pinnacle of our season.

Participation numbers have been down across the league in recent years. We have been able to capitalize on that by simply making a point of fielding a full team. Last year’s success will be a tough act to follow, but several athletes have been putting in the off-season work to get there.

## RULES

Cross country is a school sponsored activity and as such participants must follow all guidelines outlined in the Student Activities Handbook.

Unless an athlete is at home sick, the coaching staff needs to be informed BEFOREHAND if a practice session will be missed. Notify the office if you cannot find a coach before practice.

Practicing with the team is a privilege and conditioning will not be used as a form of punishment, however, athletes should expect to have to make up missed conditioning.

If the coaching staff feels too many practices have been missed, the athlete will not be allowed to attend one or more meets depending on the severity of the transgression.

Athletes must remember that while at a meet we are always representing Cheney schools and should behave accordingly. We have fun, but we are there to compete. Inappropriate behavior could result in either missing out on team activities or being withheld from the next meet.

## RECORDS

Keep in mind that cross country records are not as fair as track records because, unlike tracks, cross country courses vary drastically. One runner may not have had the chance to run on a “fast” course that another did. But, there is enough variety that everyone who sticks with it should get a chance to show his/her best.

Also note: In 1988 boys switched from running only a 2 mile race to primarily running 5K races. In 2006 girls switched from 2 miles to primarily 4K races. Then in 2015 the girls began running 5K.

The complete records list can be found on [www.tracknerds.com/cccc](http://www.tracknerds.com/cccc).