



The Bulldog Bark

The Voice of Alhambra Cross Country
"Where Lunacy Has Permanent Residence"



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Week 1 In The Books

We Finally Get To Run !!

It took weeks of waiting to be able to actually be permitted to conduct summer running. The Covid shutdowns in early March affected all things, and protocols took months to hammer out.

Excellent Enthusiasm

But here we are, and the veterans (and a few newcomers) were more than eager to get going again. Our attendance numbers are already better than last year's, just in the first three days. Cheerful participation is on constant display, and the athletes are all obviously grateful for a chance to have an organized daily gathering.

The Rust Is Showing

Clearly, the long layoff shows up early in our workouts. With all athletics having been put on hold the last 4 months, not everyone stayed active in that time. This is not a worry, as we still have the rest of the summer to get going, and with this level of initial involvement we will get our troops into shape in due time.

On Your Own

Weekend Running Encouraged

As a program, Alhambra cross country has goals and aims. Primary among these goals is to promote the improvement of each runner as much as possible.

6 Days A Week Program

On Your Own (OYO) runs are the weekend voluntary runs. We encourage each athlete to run on at least one day of the weekend. This is to mirror the actual season, where we have many Saturday races. This way we can acclimate the runner to running on weekends.

OYO Recommendations

Here are our suggestions for OYO's for each of our "pods":

Group 1 - - 60 minutes continuous

Group 2 - - 30-45 minutes

Group 3 - - 30 minutes

These runs are not about distance, or even effort, but just minutes spent in continuous running. These "easy" runs allow the body to more gradually climb the improvement curve, and are often called "recovery" runs, or "shakeout" runs.

Masks and Distancing

Learning the New Protocols !!

Our permission to even hold workouts is based on our rigorous compliance with a set of clear and forcefully emphasized restrictions. And since this is all new, the coaches have had to be a bit loud and a bit edgy about making sure the runners are always careful.

Masks

Face masks have been shown, both here and abroad, as the single greatest individual factor in tamping down transmission of the virus. Athletes have to wear masks during all group activities such as warmups, drill, and core work.

Masks need to be at the ready on the neck during the actual runs, so that they may be pulled up over the nose when coming within 6 feet of other runners, or people encountered on streets and trails.

We have team masks ready to dispense, and have another order coming in soon. Athletes are free to bring their own masks, kerchiefs, or "gaiters" if they wish.

Distancing

Teenagers are extremely social, and tend to involuntarily gather inside of the 6 foot limit. We have marked seats in the bleachers for each athlete so they have to be apart. For the drills we have "waves" of athletes in alternate lanes and in rows. When on the runs they are instructed to be single file, or if side by side, double arm distance apart.

Hand sanitizer

As any workout progresses, athletes are encouraged to frequently use their sanitizers to minimize the impact of contact on surfaces.

Permission Is Precarious

Nothing Is For Sure

As the defining crisis of the last 70 years continues, all social norms are under constant refining as officials struggle to find the right procedures that will help bring down the impact of this virus.

Very Strict Guidelines

What appears to be the greatest concern to health officials are the twin elements of group events, and careful observance of masking and distancing. It is under these requirements that we are allowed to even have workouts, and it is under the understanding that we will be scrupulously and unflinchingly adamant about enforcing these requirements, that we are allowed to continue.

We Could Be Shut Down Anytime

With this understanding, the coaches are happy to report that our runners are more than willing to hold to these requirements. Even when reminded about lapses, they all understand this is what allows to gather at all.

Coaching Vigilance

On perhaps a humorous note, the coaches have had to stand guard over the workouts at times, and shoo off members of the general public who want to use the track, and are unmasked. Most folks don't seem to mind, but occasionally there is the one person who gets miffed and stalks off. Too bad for them.

How Long?

It seems to be a trickle down consequence. As the general social situation changes, so also do the edicts from the various health officials, and it then redounds upon the schools to follow suit. At times it seems day-to-day, and at others it appears that we have some breathing room. We just don't know.

Aches & Twinges & Tweaks & Blisters & Pains

The first few days of any running program are going to involve discomfort. Starting up as a brand new runner, or starting up after a layoff, is going to place a demand on the body. Heart and lungs will be worked, muscles will get sore, shoes may rub and chafe, ankles may get wobbly, and in general it may just plain "suck", as common speech would describe it.

But it always gets better. Of course we need to be careful not to encourage injury, and all discomforts should be reported to the coaches, but these often are the expected outcomes of getting into shape.

New Shoes - - this is the first line of injury protection. This is a great time to get that new pair of shoes so that the runners have brand new cushioning to take up the impact of running. Also, shoes need to be snugly tied. Despite constant reminders, many teenage runners will not tie their shoes snug enough to actually absorb the impact, rather than pass that impact along to the leg joints.

1600 Time Trial 7/03/2020

We needed some benchmark data on our runners so that we can better individualize workouts to each runner. So, we had a time trial on Friday to establish that benchmark. The chosen distance was 1600 meters on the track.

Kennel 1 (since we are the Dogs, "kennel" is as good a name for a group as "pod"). This is our top group of boy veterans. Alumnus Carson took it out from the start, with Nolin and Sam right behind. After a fairly close opening lap, Carson and Nolin moved out a bit, Sam held steady, and Ben and Colby dropped off. It was Carson at the finish. He and Nolin had a good set of consistent laps. The other boys showed some rust.

Even though the times were not stellar, the efforts give us the starting point to set our course for improvement. And these are all varsity veterans and have the determination and drive to dig into the workouts necessary.

Kennel 2

Vince took off well and established himself well into the lead. Renae, Kylee, and Ali formed a cluster not too far behind. Vince looked like he was going to turn this into a rout, but started to bind up going into the last lap. Renae had separated herself from Kylee and Ali, and went after Vince. To his credit, he responded as she passed him going into the homestretch but she had the jump on him.

Not too far back Kylee came back with her own strong last lap. Ali held on to his pace. Alexia had a 3rd lap fade, but showed some gumption to regather for a strong finish. Pearla is still testing herself after a full year off to recover from surgery, and so gingerly stepped through the effort.

Kennel 3

This group is our newbies, and our veterans with the longest layoffs. Jonas took the lead right away and even though he had a tough third lap he was able to muster a strong finish.

Kaelyn led the rest of the pack with an inspired start. The rest of the group ran in a careful cluster for about two laps until Jenny decided to jump ahead and push the pace. This galvanized Rebecca who followed her lead. The rest of them held onto their pace as best they could.

Rebecca took off on the last lap with confidence, and surged ahead of both Jenny and Kaelyn. Jenny came up on Kaelyn, who was able to muster enough to hold her off at the line. Noura surprised herself with a consistent run. Reyna held onto a steady pace. Laila struggled but kept at it to the end. Reina was having hampered by sore legs and did her best to keep consistent.

Overall:

Today was not about time so much as it was about effort. Running is more a skill than a physiological set of motions, and time trials like this reveal quite a bit. What the coaches saw today was universally a set of athletes who showed a lot of heart and determination. We can work on conditioning . . . that's the easy part. The real talent is desire, and that was in strong evidence today.

The times will improve. It won't be long before each athlete will crush these marks in upcoming workouts. We've got a good bunch of competitors.

Kennel 1			Lap:			
runner	time reference		1	2	3	4
Carson Edwards	elapsed		1:08	2:29	3:49	5:07
	lap: min & sec		1:08	1:11	1:20	1:18
	lap: sec		68	71	80	78
Nolin Searls	elapsed		1:12	2:31	3:53	5:14
	lap: min & sec		1:12	1:19	1:22	1:21
	lap: sec		72	79	82	81
Sam Dibetta	elapsed		1:11	2:32	4:01	5:32
	lap: min & sec		1:11	1:21	1:29	1:31
	lap: sec		71	81	89	91
Ben Smyers	elapsed		1:17	2:50	4:28	6:01
	lap: min & sec		1:17	1:33	1:38	1:33
	lap: sec		77	93	98	93
Colby Thompson	elapsed		1:16	2:48	4:26	6:03
	lap: min & sec		1:16	1:32	1:38	1:37
	lap: sec		76	92	98	97

Kennel 2			Lap:			
runner	time reference		1	2	3	4
Renaë Searls	elapsed		1:21	2:56	4:31	5:55
	lap: min & sec		1:21	1:35	1:35	1:24
	lap: sec		81	95	95	84
Vince Montegrando	elapsed		1:12	2:42	4:23	5:56
	lap: min & sec		1:12	1:30	1:39	1:33
	lap: sec		72	90	99	93
Kylee Phillips	elapsed		1:23	3:02	4:43	6:15
	lap: min & sec		1:23	1:39	1:41	1:32
	lap: sec		83	99	101	92
Ali Sobhy	elapsed		1:22	3:03	4:49	6:31
	lap: min & sec		1:22	1:41	1:49	1:41
	lap: sec		82	101	109	101
Alexia Hisquierdo	elapsed		1:34	3:23	5:14	7:01
	lap: min & sec		1:34	1:49	2:01	1:47
	lap: sec		94	119	121	107
Pearla Lopez-Cardinale	elapsed		1:52	4:20	6:50	9:09
	lap: min & sec		1:52	2:08	2:30	2:19
	lap: sec		112	128	150	139

Kennel 3			Lap:			
runner	time reference		1	2	3	4
Jonas Knopf	elapsed		1:35	3:36	5:40	7:37
	lap: min & sec		1:35	2:01	2:14	1:57
	lap: sec		95	121	134	117
Rebecca Breedlove	elapsed		1:57	4:18	6:22	8:10
	lap: min & sec		1:57	2:21	2:04	1:48
	lap: sec		117	141	124	108
Kaelyn Nguyen	elapsed		1:43	4:01	6:15	8:19
	lap: min & sec		1:43	2:18	2:14	2:03
	lap: sec		103	138	134	123
Jenny Dawson	elapsed		2:04	4:12	6:18	8:20
	lap: min & sec		2:04	2:08	2:06	2:02
	lap: sec		124	128	126	122
Noura Sobhy	elapsed		1:56	4:17	6:40	8:53
	lap: min & sec		1:56	2:21	2:23	2:13
	lap: sec		116	141	143	133
Reyna Arce	elapsed		1:57	4:24	7:00	9:28
	lap: min & sec		1:57	2:27	2:36	2:28
	lap: sec		117	147	156	148
Laila Flahiff	elapsed		1:58	4:35	7:18	9:56
	lap: min & sec		1:58	2:37	2:43	2:38
	lap: sec		118	157	163	158
Reina Felson-Lamb	elapsed		2:15	5:04	8:05	10:50
	lap: min & sec		2:15	2:49	3:01	2:45
	lap: sec		135	169	181	165