



The Bulldog Bark

The Voice of Alhambra Cross Country
Where intensity is not a crime.

Friday September 10, 2021



First Invitational of Season! Ed Sias Invite Opens Bulldogs' 2021 Competitive Schedule

The 2021 Bulldogs are off to nearby Hidden Valley Park for our first official race of the season. The Ed Sias Invitational is our traditional season opener, and a benchmark for seeing just where our team stands in the early part of this year's campaign.

We run our athletes in the small school division, since that is our enrollment size and those are the schools we will be vying with at season's end in championship races.

Prognosis

Even though it is really too early to tell, the coaches are cautiously optimistic about our teams' preparation. Our veteran runners have been running even through the pandemic, and are in solid shape right now. We have several promising newcomers who have shown excellent progress even in the first few weeks of the season.

Lots of schools

39 high schools have entered this meet, so there will be a large number of athletes to run against. Often there are 100-150 athletes per race, so our runners will be challenged. This is a good way to get into the season, especially for the new runners, and become acclimated to the big meet atmosphere and learn to be competitive in a big race.

Logistics Meet Considerations

For this meet, since it is right here in Martinez, we ask all of our runners to arrive early to see all of our races, and stay to our last race, and then help take down the team area and tote it to Coach Brewer's truck.

(For our later invitationals, given the travel time and distance, athletes will be allowed to leave after their race cooldown.)

Parking is tight

There are very few parking spots right at the park, and those will be gone right away. We ask our athletes to arrive early . . . parents may have to drop off the runners and find street parking and walk back.

Bring a chair

Our team area is the nexus for athletes - race chips and bibs, the medical kit, team central for getting squads together for warmups and cooldowns, water refill station, et cetera.

Parents can assemble around this team area, and we will be in a relatively shady area, and having a chair will be a big plus.

DAL foes

Who Do We Watch Out For?

Our first concern is within our own Diablo Athletic League (DAL), which is 13 area schools. We are in the Valley Division of the DAL, which pits us against Benicia, Berean Christian, Concord, Mt. Diablo, and Ygnacio Valley. We are always looking at them for league bragging rights.

Week V in the books! Heat, Team Picture, Aches and Pains: We've Got It All

As the Bulldogs settle into the school year, and the season, we have just completed the 5th week of a 13 week season. The team is coalescing nicely.

We 26 athletes on the roster, and have settled into our team routines. It is exciting to see our newcomers, many who started out a bit hesitantly, see their own improvement and become more confident in their training.

Heat on Tuesday

The temperature rose dramatically, even though the air quality was in the acceptable range. We modified the workout to add water misting on the track, emphasis on hydration, and we kept the workout on campus and shortened it, so we can monitor the athletes more closely.

Despite air quality or temperature, all athletes are to attend all the workouts. We can always find places (indoors!) and ways (run through sprinklers!) to adjust to the weather.

Aches and Pains

The new runner and the out-of-shape veteran runner often share the same leg soreness in the first few weeks of a season. The first culprit is always the shoes.

Shoes

We have preached the necessity of having a good set of running-specific shoes. This is the first line of injury prevention. And these shoes need to be replaced every 10-12 weeks during the season, since the cushioning degrades through constant use.

Sloppy shoe-tying is another big no-no. If an athlete can slip off a shoe without untying it, that set of loosely tied shoelaces has made that shoe nothing more than a slipper. Snugly tied shoes are essential.

The trainer

We have on site a highly credentialed expert in sports physiology, Bri Barnes. She is available after school every day for athletes to consult about aches and pains. She can provide diagnoses, treatments (ice, stretching, tape, rest) and report back to the coaches.

Athletes are told to report to her if there is any reoccurring ache or pain, so we can get an expert eye on the issue sooner rather than later.

For the curious

Meets For Parents: Hints and Tips Viewing the races

Our team area is between the starting line and the finish line, so it is just a few steps to see both ends of the race. The course also loops back on itself early on, so that is also clearly visible.

The races then disappears to the far side of the park for about a mile, and the re-emerges across the foot bridge and up the Finale Hill. So without too much hustle and bustle, one can see most of the race.

Race Results

With the miracle of modern race technology, the timing crew can pick up each runner's time from the ID chip each runner wears, and the places, times, and scores are all then broadcast in real time on-line. Amazing.

Athlete Time

The runners need to be with their group from about 45 minutes before race time to about 20 minutes after race time. This provides the squad focus time and adequate race preparation and recovery time, without distractions.