Managing a Championship XC Program

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Iowa Central Community College
5 Minute Synopsis

• Improve the fitness level of your athlete
• Don’t screw them up
• Coach their MIND – that is the limiting factor in performance
• How you manage your team is where you can make the DIFFERENCE!

• I run an NJCAA Division I program with an NCAA Division III mentality.

• What does that mean?
Division I or Division III

• Recruit everyone
  • TAKE-A-AWAY #1: Just say “NO”

• Opportunities for all

• Coach #1 and #40 equally

• Same standards for participation = academics

• Relationships and Experiences are the key
My Background

• Genetically predisposed to not be an athlete

• Moved to Fort Dodge, IA (population 25,000) in January 2004
• Finished my 15th cross country season here this fall

• BA – Luther College (1996)
• MS – Springfield College (2001)
Since Coming to Iowa Central

- Women’s Cross Country – **7 NJCAA Titles**
- Women’s Half Marathon – 4 NJCAA Titles
- Women’s Indoor Track and Field – 4 NJCAA Titles
- Women’s Outdoor Track and Field – 2 NJCAA Titles

- Men’s Cross Country – 3 NJCAA Titles
- Men’s Half Marathon – **6 NJCAA Titles**
- Men’s Indoor Track and Field – 5 NJCAA Titles

* NJCAA Record
Athletes Produced

• Adva Cohen (‘18) – University of New Mexico (43rd D1 XC)
• Aden Alemu (‘14) – Adams State (2016 - 20th D2 XC)
• Stanley Kebenei (‘13) – Arkansas / Nike
• Abbabiya Simbassa (‘13) – Oklahoma / Nike
• Ashenafi Hatte – Oklahoma State (27th D1 XC)
• Karim Achengli – Northwest Missouri State (38th D2 XC)
Assumptions & What You Need to Know

• Working with athletes for two years at most
  • Some have started other places and come here to finish up

• 70% of the team is brand new each year

• No “Senior” leadership

• Culture & Tradition must be taught
7 Keys to Our Success

1. Team Culture / Atmosphere / Tradition
2. Relentless Recruiting
3. Academics
4. Meet Scheduling
5. Strength Training
6. Communication
7. Training Plan
Key #1 - Team Building Retreat

• 5 Night Team Building Camp
  • Each team member pays $100

• Team Challenges / Bandanas
  • Tower Building          Miniature Golf
  • Watermelon Relay        Bowling
  • Scavenger Hunt          Skits
  • Canoe Derby             Kitchen Duty
  • Breast Cancer Shirt Design
Team Building Retreat

• Family Oriented Fun
• Entire XC/TF Coaching Staff
• Coaching Staff Families

• Daily Challenges & Trail Runs
• Free Time – hiking, canoeing, kayaking, basketball, napping

• Teams take turns preparing & serving meals to each other
• Evening Camp Fire Activities (build trust & friendships)
Key #1 - Culture / Atmosphere / Tradition

• Team Meeting on move-in day
  • Team Meeting 2 weeks later

• Team Rules / Expectations
  • Kid friendly language
  • One and done
  • Tardy policy
Key #2 - Relentless Recruiting

• New team each year
• Recruiting Coordinator
• 10 Men’s & 10 Women’s Cross Country Scholarships
  • Amount based on ability/talent level
  • “Full-ride” or international scholarships
  • Rely heavily on Pell Grants, academics, Iowa & Bordering States

• Typically 10-15 women and 20-35 men in XC program
  • Yes, that is a lot of walk-ons!
Key #3 - Academics

• This is why they are in college!
• Employment beyond IC
• Team study hall
  • Entire XC/TF Coaching Staff checks grades

• Poor Grades or attendance = no travel
  • Make examples early
Key #4 - Meet Scheduling

• Early season / shorter distance meets

• Lots of High School Boys learning to race at 8k
  • Progress your distances
    • 5k to 6k to 4m
  • Team results
  • Who races?
  • Will hold anyone out for the smallest thing (injury/academics/attendance)
2018 XC Schedule

• 8/25 Region Time Trial 5k/5k
• 8/31 Hawkeye Invite @ U. of Iowa 4k/6k
• 9/8 Luther College All-American 5k/4m

• Augustana Brissman-Lundeen (JV) or Chile Pepper Festival 5k/8k
• Roy Griak Maroon II @ U. of Minnesota 6k/8k
• Jim Drews/Tori Neubauer @ UW – La Crosse 6k/8k
Key #4 - Meet Scheduling

• First competition – Region Time Trial (5k)
  No Spikes / Target Mile Pace / Pack Running

• Women’s 6ks in middle of season, make our championship 5ks easier

• Do not race ridiculously fast courses early on!

• Emphasis on JV Schedule: Region, JV Cup, HM
Key #5 – Strength Training

• Have a sound plan, make time for it

• Pre-Season – only core exercises, nothing in the weight room.
  • 45-60 minutes total build up to 1 minute per exercise

• In Season
  • Tuesday & Thursday – Circuit Days
  • Wednesday, Friday – Core days
  • Saturday (post meet) – “mini-core”

• PURPOSE: address as many of the common weaknesses or inefficiencies on our team with a 14-station circuit (Groups of 3)
FMS Circuit

• Functional Movement Screen (FMS)
  • Identify weaknesses / inefficient movements
  • 7 tests / 10-15 minutes per person by our Athletic Trainer

• Initial screening took place August 20th – 22nd prior to first competition
• By September 11th we were in the weight room 2 days per week completing 1-2 FMS circuits each day.
• Retested at the end of the month
Our FMS Circuit

• #1 – Single Leg Swiss Ball Jack Knife
• #2 – Dumbbell Box Step Ups
• #3 – Dead Bugs
• #4 – Mountain Climbers WITH Band (alternating legs)
• #5 – Goblet Squats
• #6 – Shin Stretch (On Rollers)
• #7 – Torso Twist WITH Band
• #8 – Single Leg Push Up on Barbell
• #9 – Calf raises
• #10 – Pretzel Stretch / Iron Cross
• #11 – Windshield Wipers
• #12 – Single Leg Good Mornings WITH Band
• #13 – Hamstring Roller
• #14 – Bench Bridges
FMS Testing Results

• Scoring
  • 1 = poor    3 = excellent
  • Final score is summation of all 7 movement scores
  • Highest score would be 7 * 3 = 21

• Initial testing of 17 athletes
  • Averaged 13.8

• Retest of same 17 athletes
  • Averaged 15.8
Key #6 – Communication

• How do I build trust?
  • Trust them first until proven otherwise
  • Allow them to be kids, they will mess up. Be there to pick them up
  • 1 Day Rule

• Befriend them but make sure you aren’t their friend.

• Coach them equally. Treat them equally. No favorites!
  • Scholarship vs Walk On Varsity vs JV
  • Men vs Women #1 vs #40
Key #6 – Communication: Campus Visits

I want my athletes to be more:

RESPONSIBLE
ACCOUNTABLE
PUNCTUAL

Young adults capable of making good decisions to be successful in their next step after Iowa Central

Do I have to try out to be on the team?
Key #6 – Communication: Individual Meetings

• During Preseason upon return from Team Camp
  • How has the athlete settled in so far / Transition from HS
  • Roommates / issues
  • Goals for XC/TF/Academics/Training
  • Sophomores – Plans beyond Iowa Central
  • Prior Training Volumes / Training Age / Injury History

• Post XC (Nov/Dec)
  • Oral post season evaluation

• Track Season (Jan)
  • Goal Setting for Indoor / Outdoor / Training
Key #6 – Communication: Weekly Meetings

• 3-5 minute motivational video
• Housekeeping items
• Return Training Logs
• Address the past weekend’s competition or practice
• 2 hand outs for the week
  • Daily Schedule
  • Spreadsheet with mileage
• Meet with Athletic Trainer
Tuesday, September 18 (Bus #)
2:00 pm – Workout Sunkissed Meadows (12 miles men / 10.5 women)
Everyone – Short Warm up.
Long Cool down: Marion, Lilian, Winrose, Marta, Abeba, Florance (10m); Jhordan, Ezekiel, Innocent, Will Whalen (11 m)

Women: 2000m at tempo pace; 3 minute rest; 3x800m at race pace (half rest); 3x400m (each one faster); 90s rest
Men: 3200m at tempo pace; 4 minute rest; 4x800m at race pace (half rest); 4x400m (each one faster); 90s rest
5:00 pm – FMS Circuit Training

Wednesday, September 19
2:30 pm – Follow the leader at Kennedy Park
Followed by Hurdle Drills at Rec
8:00-10pm Cross Country Team STUDY HALL in AST 105 (mandatory)

Thursday, September 20
2:00 pm – Easy Run in Town / Followed by Mini-Core

University of Arkansas Group (Chile Pepper Festival)
Bring Training Logs
Depart from Cafeteria after dinner 5:30pm in Van #47
Drive 4 hours to Kansas City, MO tonight

Friday, September 21
7:00 am – Team Breakfast / 7:30 load bus
Leave for Fayetteville, Arkansas (3:45 away)
Run course (5miles/3 miles) when we arrive

@ Augustana College (Rock Island, IL) With Coach Ekei & Caleb
JV Departs from Café at 9:10 am (dismissed after 8 am class)
3:00 pm – Women’s Gold Race (6k)
# 2018 Triton Cross Country

## Week 7 Plan (75% Vol)

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Key #6 – Communication: Training Logs

- Meet Schedule
- Warm Up Routine
- Core Routine
- Weekly Diary / Log Pages
- Goal Sheet
- Race Evaluation
- History / Records / Top Times
- ICXCTF Code of Conduct
Athlete Biography

Athlete Name_________________________  M/F  Frosh/Soph

High School_________________________  Class/Division _______ of _______

Height ________  Weight ________  BMI __________

Weight on:  Sept 1. ______  Oct 1. ______  Nov 1. ______

DOB__________  Age__________  Training Age __________

Years of HS Cross Country ______  Years of HS Track and Field ______

Years of MS Running ________  Total Years of Running ________

HS PRS:  800m_____  1500/Mile______  3k/5k__________  XC 4k/3m/5k_____

College PRS:  800m______  1500/Mile______  3k/5k__________  XC 5k/6k/8k_____

Average MPW Last year ________  Largest MPW last year ________  Longest Run ly ______
DISTANCE RUNNING LOG

Goal for the week: ____________________________

"In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can"
-Nikos Kazantzakis

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<th>Date/Day</th>
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<th>Morning Heart Rate</th>
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Goal Sheet

Meet: Region XI Time Trial       Date: 8/25/18       Location: Bettendorf, IA

List at least 3 goals for this meet. Be specific:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Any additional tactics or strategies?
Race Evaluation

Meet: Region XI Time Trial      Date: 8/25/18      Location: Bettendorf, IA

Height: ____________  Weight: ____________  BMI: ____________

Weather Conditions/Temperature __________________________________________________

Race Course Difficulty (scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is easier) ______________________

Finish time ____________ Overall Place ____________ Place on our team ____________

Your mile splits ______________________________

In general, were you pleased with your performance? ________________________________

Why, or why not? ______________________________
Key #6 – Communication / Key #7 – Training

• One Training Plan with 40ish variations
• Not a dictatorship
  • Our Training Plan Reflects the Goals of the Athletes
  • I welcome input / make them part of the process
• JV athletes like the structure
• Varsity athletes will have ideas on
  • Volume
  • Doubles
  • Rearranging daily schedules to fit / Days Off
Key #7 - Training Plan (Daily)

• Meet in Courtyard / Receive Email From Training Room
• Warm up Routine
• Daily Announcements
• Break into training groups if necessary

• Return from run
• Strides / stretch / training room / weights / etc.
Key #7 - Training Plan (Weekly)

• Monday – Day Off / Team Meeting
• Tuesday – Hardest day of week
• Wednesday – Recovery Day (*could be doubles*) / Lab Day
• Thursday – Moderate Day
• Friday – Pre-Meet Day
• Saturday – Race Day
• Sunday – Long Run Day
Key #7 - Training Plan (Fall)

• Pre-Season(Weeks 1-3) is for building (*relationships & mileage*)
  • 3x per day

• First 1-2 weeks I will give them a mileage range for the day

• Training Plan starts at week 4
Considerations

It is a **PLAN**. It changes (a lot).

“Ready to Play” from Injury
- Transitional week(s)
- Adjust “max” and recalculate

Competing at Indoor Nationals?
- No – recovery week while I am gone
- Yes – drop volume further
Workouts

• Have benchmark workouts

• Most are timed, some are better of being perceived effort
  • A lot of that in winter training / weather dependent

• RECORD KEEPING
  • 15 years of performances on each course and each workout
  • See where our team is now compared to past teams
Conclusion

RELATIONSHIPS

EXPERIENCES
Take-A-Way #2: Thank your Mentors!

• Coach Betsy Emerson – Macalester College
• Coach Todd Lane – LSU
• Coach Niels Anderson – St. Mary’s University
THANK YOU!

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