



## Welcome Letter - Cross Country – 2014

Dear Parents:

If you are new to us, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Florence Track Club. If you are returning for another season with us, welcome back!! Last season we saw an upswing in our number of athletes with over 200 joining us for our track and field season, and many going onto the USATF Regional and National Championships. As for our cross country season last year, we had 39 qualify from the team for the Regional Championships, and 25 of those athletes, more than 6 times more than the previous year, qualify for the National Championships in San Antonio, TX! We have 10 scheduled meets prior to the State meet, and this season, both the State and the Nationals will be held in Myrtle Beach! We have many returning athletes this season, and some exciting times ahead!

We will try to follow our schedule as closely as possible. We will run both at West Florence HS and at McLeod Health and Fitness center. When we practice at West Florence HS, we have been asked to make sure to park only in the parking lot and NOT in the grassy areas. If there are changes, we will announce them both down on the field with the group, and on our announcements page on the website. We will also be e-mailing out Newsletters and updates in an effort to make sure all are informed as well as possible, so please be sure to check out our listing for you and ensure we have a correct email address on-file.

Many of you (especially those of you with Facebook accounts) have seen folks do the 'ALS ice bucket challenge'. ALS is a crippling disease which atrophies the muscles, eventually leading to death. The ALS ice bucket challenge's goal is to raise awareness and funds for this disease. In support of this, we have decided to start a challenge of our own – with the members of the FTC kids whose parents are willing to provide the \$5 donation to ALS, and bring a bucket for the challenge. We will be supplying ice and water for those who choose to accept this challenge, and do a 'mass ice bucket watering' of the kids at the end of practice on Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. We will film it and post it on utube and our website, and challenge both the Mt. Pleasant Track Club, and the Summerville Track Club to the 'ALS ice bucket challenge'. Be sure to send a towel with your child that day!

Our first 'running opportunity' will be in Summerville on September 20th. We will be posting a signup for this meet on the website, so be sure to check the website and signup if you plan to attend this meet. Signups for away meets (or meets with a cost associated with them) are imperative, as there is typically a charge for us to attend, and we want to ensure all athletes have transportation to the meet as well. More details to follow.

Track uniforms are costly. Last season alone, the FTC invested over \$3500 in new uniforms. A new track uniform costs ~\$25. We have decided to handle uniforms much the way the Boy Scouts do. The uniforms (many of them from last season) will be available for purchase for \$10. This is yours to keep (and potentially be able to use next season, and the season after that, and can be passed down to siblings, etc.) If you plan to order a new uniform instead (and pay \$25), the order (and funds) will need to go in by Thursday, Sept. 11th. Uniforms *should* be worn to all meets, and *must* be worn for the USATF Jr. Olympic State meet, and subsequent meets. No refunds!

We are handling the team shirt a bit differently this season as well, as several parents have requested to be able to purchase these to support their child. The team shirt will be a white (when it starts!), long-sleeve cotton shirt. These will be tie-dyed as part of our tie-dye/swim & pizza party. If you would like to purchase a shirt for yourself and have it tie-dyed, you will need

to have it ordered and paid for by Thursday, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. The shirts will be printed with the FTC logo on the front and an emblem and sponsor recognition on the back. They are free for the athletes, but a cost is associated with the shirts for other family members. The cost and ordering information will be posted on-line on our <http://www.florencetrackclub.com> website. Alternately, and while supplies last, a navy, short-sleeve team shirt from last season may be purchased for \$10. See Alicia Truman or one of the team moms down on the field to purchase one of these.

Since cross country is an all weather sport, please assume that we will meet when scheduled. Practice is **cancelled only** when thunderstorms are threatening, or if it's been raining all day. The **announcements page** on our <http://www.florencetrackclub.com> website is used to post updates and weather cancellations. Be sure to take a look at this if you are unsure whether we are cancelling practice, as well as for other announcements. We try to post the cancellation here at least a half hour to an hour before practice. We will also use the Links page to post a weekly newsletter, full of information about upcoming meets, any coaches concerns, volunteer opportunities, etc. Email will also be used for announcements and newsletters.

We do understand that situations may occur during the year that may prevent your child from being out here at all times but we do encourage that they come out and participate with the team as much as possible. Be sure your child has sweats to wear as the cold weather can set in quickly in the evenings. Also, please make sure they bring water to drink.

In general, practices will be starting around 6:00pm and ending at 7:15pm. This schedule will shift towards the end of September as the evenings begin to see darkness come earlier and earlier. Pay close attention to the schedule dates and times!

Although we will practice as a team, cross country is essentially an individual sport which requires self discipline. Therefore, progression will be the responsibility of the athlete. We will be here to help that progression but we can only help if they show up. It is also important that you ensure that your child arrives promptly to practice or meets and has a way home after practice. Our practices will normally last about one hour. The coaches will not be expected to provide taxi services for your children. Please be safe with drop off and pickup. At the High school, drop off and pickup will be in the High School parking lot. At McLeod Health & Fitness, we will be meeting at the backside of the building, nearest the gate to the Rail Trail.

We will jump into conditioning from the beginning. The goal for our program is to have each child prepared for the state meet in November. Please do not get discouraged if your child is unable to compete right away. Cross Country is a sport that takes time and perseverance. As long as your child follows the schedule along with some work on his/her own, there will be a notable difference from the beginning of the year to the end. We will also track their times throughout the season to see their improvement.

We will be providing a fund-raising opportunity through the sale of \$20 coupon books. These more than pay for themselves, and if you can sell just 5 books, the 6<sup>th</sup> book is yours to keep, or sell to make \$20 to reward yourself! We will be looking to get the funds back from these sales no later than October 2<sup>nd</sup>, but funds can be turned in prior to get books right away. Sell them to friends and family!

The following table shows the distance that your child will be training for depending on their age division. Age is based off how old they will be on Dec. 31, 2014. Sub-Bantam (6-8), Bantam (9-10), Midget (11-12), Youth (13-14), Intermediate (15-16), and Young Men or Young Women (17-18).

<b><u>Division</u></b>	<b><u>Distance</u></b>
Sub-Bantam	2k
Bantam	3k
Midget	3k
Youth	4k
Intermediate	5k
Young Men/Women	5k

Last but not least, we want to thank you and your child for taking an interest in our program. It takes a very special child to want to compete in middle to long distance running and I commend each one of you for coming out. If you should have any questions during the year please do not hesitate to ask. We certainly want to keep the lines of communications open to all involved. Also, if you would like to help, please let us know. We are eager to have all the help that we can get and it is especially a bonus if you have participated or coached Cross Country before! Thanks again for bringing your child out to us.

*Florence Track Club Coaching Staff*

Bill Truman – FTC President  
Julie Allen – FTC Treasurer  
Alicia Truman - FTC Administrative Coordinator