



JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MUD!

# Cross Country (Crib Sheet!)

## Cross Country is upon us!

By Coach Nett

Every year Poole Runners put together a team for cross country. To be in this team there are no times you have to accomplish, no exact training plans that must be followed, and definitely no selection criteria that must be met under any circumstances. You will however be a member of a very supportive team, learn a lot about your abilities as a runner and also just how much you as a person can take on as a challenge. However much you enjoy yourself, you will probably at some point say "I am never doing that again" and then you will turn up at the next race. It is a challenge and it is hard work but it is fun and it is open to every person of every ability.

To run cross country you must be aware that there is a high probability that you will spend the winter cleaning mud off your trainers and question why you have chosen to stand in a cold muddy field when others remain in their nice warm houses. You will learn to pack most of the running kit you own into one bag and will bring every item home covered in mud. You will rediscover that welly boots are great and will now be worn regularly, probably on par with your average 3yr old.

Cross country covers a broad spectrum from running around football pitches, to last year's

national cross country where they dug ditches and filled them with water. Some will be relatively flat, whilst others will feel like you are never on flat ground. Some will be completely dry others will be like running through a paddy field. The same courses from one year to the next are never quite the same, it is always a bit of a surprise!

Most frequent concern, kit!!!

### Basic kit list:

- \*Trainers, trail shoes, spikes (with different size spikes available). It depends on the course and on the weather as to which you need. Any questions ask myself, Alan Lewis or Sarah Swift and we will guide you as best as we can.
- \*Shorts or favoured alternative
- \*Club Vest
- \*Wellies or boots for walking the course
- \*Lots of warm clothes /towel
- \* Spare set of clothes that you leave in the car, inc shoes!
- \* Black bin bags And Baby wipes.
- \* You may end up packing as though you are going camping. Less is NOT more at cross country!



### The Events:

We enter two leagues as a club, Wessex and Hampshire. This is paid for by the club (as long as you are a current full member with EA affiliation) so all you need to do is sign up so that we can enter you. After that there is the South West, Southern and National competitions. Under 18's also compete in PEDSA events with the aim of reaching the English Schools Events.



### Individual race information:

Below are the events and dates so far available:

#### Hampshire X-C League:

*This league is suitable for all abilities. It will offer you a real taste of what X-C is all about. This league is recommended if you plan to compete in any of the bigger X-C events. i.e. South of England, National.*

#### **14/10/17 – Bournemouth, Kings Park.**

This is mostly playing fields with a short trail path section. If you like a fast course then this is the flattest course in this league.

#### **11/11/17 –QE Country Park, Petersfield.**

This course is located at a stunning woodland country park in the South Downs. It's packed full of fantastic trails, often used by mountain bikers. So hills, mud and course to really challenge you.

#### **02/12/17 – Popham.**

This is possible one of the courses that is most weather dependent. Whatever the weather it's a great course. Hills, twists turns, through a small wooded area.

Brilliant viewing for spectators.

Deceptive with the hills but also a fast course and you can see most of the competitors at all times.

#### **13/01/18- Reading.**

Last cross country before South of England cross country Events. This is out around playing fields that I have never known to be dry underfoot. Up steep short hills that really need a good leg drive. Fun downhills to follow. You requires energetic



supporters at this event. Well positioned for preparation for the bigger up and coming events.

#### **10/2/18- Aldershot.**

New event for this year. Hampshire league are not known for disappointing in the challenging cross country event and so I look forward to what they have planned for the final event and prior to the National Cross country.

#### Wessex League:

*This League lends itself to People that previously have chosen to run track or roads. A gentle introduction to off road running with the exception of Yeovil.*

#### **1/10/17. Canford Heath.**

Mostly run around playing fields with a small wooded area. Minimal hills so can be fast for those looking for times. If it hasn't rained then it is suitable for your normal trainers.

#### **22/10/17. Bryanston.**

This event is run at the school on the playing fields before dropping gently down to run a little way along the river. A short sharp climb back to the fields and a steady gentle climb into the finish. If there has been no rain then your normal trainers should be fine. Lots of rain and trail shoes/ spikes may be useful.

#### **5/11/17. Yeovil**

For the course, if you do no other Wessex league then this is the one to run. Hills and I mean Hills. Great training for nationals this year! Some mud but not known for the mud it is a challenging course but is suitable for all that are up for a challenge.

**10/12/17 Bryanston.** Returning back to this course. But the important thing to be aware is that this is the Dorset cross country competition. So you can run as just the league but for the Dorset competition you do need to submit an entry form.

#### PEDSA

*For those who still attend School 18yrs and under. On returning to school, please get in touch with the head of PE. They will need to know that you are interested in competing in theses competitions as it is organized by the school.*

**21/09/17 Thur Sandbanks:** 3.45 p.m.

**12/10/17 Thur Baiter Park** 3.45 p.m.

**09/11/17 Thur Canford School** 2.30 p.m.

**07/12/17 Thur Ferndown Upper Sch** 2.30 p.m.

## The Big Field Events:

*This again is where I want to take the time to assure everyone that these events are truly made to be open to all. There are cut off times in some but I was assured last year that I could practically walk it and make those times. Last year after 10 yrs+ away, having not raced over 400m, I competed in 8km over Parliament hill. Mainly due to the 'crazie crew squad' and the X-C team (which includes the supporters) and a fair bit of training. If you want a challenge in a safe environment these are great events.*

*These events are amazing and the atmosphere surrounding everyone is beyond words. So if you want to do these events then just speak to people involved in cross country.*

*Our Biggest Advocate at present for going to a National Event is Colin Somers (can be seen in the photo on page 1 running at Nationals in 2017). 1<sup>st</sup> Nationals who told me to put his name down for 2018 straight after finishing his 2017 race!*

*So the Dates you need to know are:*

**07/01/2018 South West XC Champs, venue TBA.**

If you competed at the Dorset event on the 10/12/17 you may be asked to compete wearing the Dorset vest, if not its Poole Runners all the way!

**18/01/2018 Dorset Schools XC Champs, Bournemouth**

This Event is where we see an ever increasing number of our 18yrs and under athletes get selected to compete in the large X-C events around the country.

**27/01/2018 South of England XC Champs, venue TBA**

This Event is the 2nd of the big events, previously run in Brighton and on Parliament hill. A big field of athletes and abilities. Always a

strong atmosphere for getting everyone to accomplish their goals.

**03/02/2018 South West Schools XC Champs, Devon**

2nd stage of the Schools events. There is no let up. These Schools events are definitely not soft options for cross country so watch out for our guys results!

**24/02/2018 National XC Champ's, Parliament Hill.**

Slightly biased I think. This is my all-time favourite course as both an athlete (pre and post my rest from X-C) and as a coach. This course is never the same from one year to the next. What it has always got is a great start for all watching, as everyone thunders up the first hill. Twists and turns. Mud, though some years there's more than others. At this event our X-C team comes into its own, we are there to support as much as compete. What you give in cheering you will receive back when it's your turn. All of this is done whilst looking down upon London!

**10/03/2018 Inter Counties XC Champs, Loughborough.**

This event is selection by Dorset. So in the big events times and positions within those from Dorset may mean that you receive an email/letter asking if you are available to compete for Dorset. If you can, then it is yet another great event to take part in.

**17/03/2018 English Schools XC Champs, Leeds.**

So when everyone else thinks that cross country is done for another year, we still have a band of our "crazie crew" still working very hard on their cross country. They will have made it through all the many rounds of schools events to Compete against the top England Athletes. This is no mean feat. Last year saw an increase again in the number of

our athletes that made selection. They again ran and represented our club so strongly after a very tough and long cross country season. So when you hear of the English Schools event coming up you will have some idea about what these athletes are up against.

**At this point it is then about 3 weeks until the track season will be upon us!**

### In Summary:

You will travel around the country this winter in order to take on an unknown Challenge. You will try and plan and sometimes it may even work. You will learn a lot about yourself not only as a runner/athlete but as a person. As soon as you run your first X-C you will become a member of an amazing team of people that will happily push you in accomplish things in your races, that you yourself might doubt. You will laugh, it may be at yourself it may be at someone else's expense. You will want to cry, you may even do it but it may be exhaustion/ happiness/relief.

You will Laugh some more. Your washing machine will hate you and you will spend half your life cleaning kit or shoes (buy a bucket). You will have an amazing time!

So if you have any questions please don't fail to ask myself, Sarah Swift, Alan Lewis, Colin Somers or any of the Under18's "Crazie Crew" middle distance squad.

Special thanks to Nat Willmore who found all the dates for these events, which is no mean feat!

