

MUSCLE MATTERS. Taylor Peer (6) leads the team in warm up stretches at the beginning of practice. Practices were held every Tuesday and Wednesday for two months, and coaches came up with some creative training drills. "Once they set up some cones and we had to run between them like different kinds of animals," said Peer.



photo by Iwicke



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"My favorite part was playing the games like relay races and red light green light because I am fast and they are fun."

-Caleb Hottovy (7)



photo by Iwicke

STRETCHING FOR STRIDES.

Turner Federico (7) warms up in preparation for practice. This year, students competed over a computer. "We couldn't have in-person meets with other schools, and we had to time ourselves," Federico said.

STRONG FINISHER. Kaitlyn Herald (7) and team push to make it to the finish line. "I just have to keep pushing. Even though everything would hurt I would sprint toward the end," said Herald.



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CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP

Cross country continues despite COVID-19, providing a sense of normalcy and camaraderie for participants.

By Aislin Shannon

While flag football was canceled, one sport kept running its course: Because of its outdoor practices and the ability to social distance, cross country was the only sport running in the fall despite the COVID-19 virus. "This year has just been so so crazy. [Cross country] kind of gave a sense of normalcy, and it's a really fun sport. I had a great time," said Palmer Johnson (8).

The team was led by Coach Leon Vasquez and Coach Jocelyn Rovik. Leon Vasquez said, "First, I love to run. It helps me get rid of the CRAZIES! And I wanted to share my passion with other runners!"

Due to COVID-19, some changes were made to the season. First, it was shortened and only included two 3K and two 4K races. Second, instead of gathering as a league to compete, league administrators sent out a map of a given course and gave runners a week to run it and report their times. "Obviously, I wish it were like normal, but it still gets you out and running with other people, so that was good," eighth-grader Katielin Nicholas said.

If the course was near enough, the team would

meet and run it together, sometimes with better results than others. "We ran Addenbrooke together and got lost on the course," said Coach Rovik. "The map was terrible! We were supposed to turn on a little trail, and kids ran past it. Some kids showed up late when the rest of us were almost done running. It was a mess, but it was fun to run together."

To incentivize the team, coaches awarded Smarties to kids who beat their own personal record during training. "They'll do anything for candy," Rovik said. Another fun event was when coaches set up a scavenger hunt around the school, and "Boy, did they run fast," said Vasquez. Throughout the season, the team improved their overall times and developed some speedy runners. "My fastest time in a 5k was 22 minutes and seven seconds," said Turner Federico (7). His fastest time for a 3K was 12.31 minutes. The fastest girl was Esme Allison (6), who ran a 3K in 15.13 minutes.

Even with the strange circumstances that surrounded the season, runner Anna See (8) had no regrets. "It was still really fun. I made a few friends, and I got better at running."

GOING THE DISTANCE. Palmer Johnson (8) runs at the front during practice. Consistently one of the top female runners, Johnson had a strong season. "I love cross-country because it is both an individual and a team sport; it's a year-round sport, and I love to travel for meets," Johnson said.



photo by Iwicke

DRINK UP. Macie McGaffic (7) hydrates. Cross country was one of the few sports allowed this year. "The only reason I joined was that there weren't any other sports to do" said McGaffic. **FRONT AND CENTER.** Taylor Peer (6), Oliver Schwietzer (7), and Kianna Smith (7) lead the pack. "[Practice] was fun because we went to different places to run," said Peer.

CHASING A PASSION

Seventh grader Turner Federico discusses his interest in cross country running.

Q: Why did you choose to participate in cross country?

A: I've done it since I was little, and I'm good at it.

Q: What was training like?

A: We had practice two times a week and we just did different running workouts.

Q: Tell us about receiving the fastest time.

A: It felt great. I didn't find out until like a day later because all the different schools had to compare their times. It was pretty exciting.



photo by kKline