

Cross Country 101 – Developing a Successful Program

**Paul Vandersteen, Head Coach – Neuqua Valley High School
paul_vandersteen@ipsd.org**

I. Develop Some Values and Communicate Them Often

- A. Put it in writing – see notes
- B. Include the athletes in writing them

II. Surround Yourself With Good People

- A. Assistant Coaches – give them ownership
- B. Parents – involve them (awards, pasta parties, fundraising)
- C. Administration – include them
- D. Faculty – invite them
- E. Role Models – e.g. Dave Cameron, Jim Spivey, Jim Galen, Jeff Bovee, Al Carius, Ken Popejoy, Don Volkey, Roger Fredrickson, Craig Virgin, Larry Schuldt

III. Create a Family Atmosphere

- A. Shake hands
- B. Show an interest in EACH guy no matter their talent level
- C. Oregon camp – see sample itinerary

IV. Develop Ways to Communicate and Recognize Achievement

- A. E-mail list serve – add to it every year
- B. Website – www.nvxc.net
- C. Post Season Booklet
- D. Awards Ceremony – DVD, special awards, scholarships
- E. Mileage shirts – 500, 750, 1,000
- F. Marketing – logo
- G. Perks – possible because of Run-a-thon (see notes)
- H. Recruit – attend middle school meets, freshman orientation, empower freshmen to recruit their friends.
- I. Form a Positive Relationship with Track/Field and other coaches – Brian Griffith, Robert James, Alake Kashyap, Carlton Folster

V. Develop a Year-round Conditioning Program/Philosophy

- A. Attend Clinics, Read, and ‘Steal’ from Others
- B. Develop your own workout plans and philosophy – see notes
- C. Invite as many as possible to run during the summer – Jimmy Riddle, Chris Derrick, Danny Pawola, etc.
- D. Involve middle school coaches in your summer running program

Neuqua Valley Men's Cross Country



Core Purpose

- Develop meaningful goals and pursue them vigorously
- Develop life long memories and relationships
- Build confidence in oneself

'We value a **commitment to excellence** in all we do' - part of the Neuqua Valley High School mission and values

What exactly does it mean to 'commit to excellence'?

From Anson Dorrance, The University of North Carolina soccer coach -

There is a guy named Herb Greenberg who started a company called Caliper. He is paid a lot of money to analyze athletes for professional sports. His method is relatively simple. He analyzes an athlete's character through a battery of tests to determine:

1. Self discipline
2. Competitive fire
3. Self belief

If an athlete does not possess even one of these traits, it is recommended that a professional team not invest time and energy in their future.

We all know that a lot of athletes have talent. Our team possesses a lot of talented athletes. However, so do a lot of other teams in Illinois and the country. What separates the great teams from the good teams? The answer is the number of athletes that possess something that Dorrance calls, '*athletic character*'.

According to Dorrance, "What is notable about athletic character is that it is a choice. You get to decide whether you will possess the self discipline, competitive fire, and self belief to succeed. These kinds of people are sometimes called *champions*. "Champion" is another word for individuals willing to do difficult and uncomfortable things on a daily basis that no one else is willing to do."

In summary, your athletic character and value to this team is about choice and accountability. It has nothing to do with talent level; a commitment to excellence has nothing to do with talent. I am convinced it is about committing to a common ideal. According to Dorrance, "It's about making a choice to have *athletic character*."

The core values written below are based off of ten years as head coach of this program and doing a lot of reflection after reading Dorrance's values. In many cases, our values are similar to Dorrance's because I also believe in what he does in many cases. However, these values have been written by all of the past and current athletes and coaches whether they realize it or not. They are the compilation of eleven years of perseverance, various personalities, and a lot of experimenting on what works and what does not. Some of these values come from athletes that have graduated and what I learn later about their athletic character in college.

I ask that you embrace the core values and commit them to memory. Our culture and core values are only as strong as our leaders and what they endorse and drive as acceptable behavior.

The core values will be used to measure our progress and will be the cornerstone of being a valuable teammate. I will use these core values to make decisions on lineups, travel teams, and season-ending awards. You should hear these core values communicated often.

The Core Values of Neuqua Valley Cross Country

1. We do something truly extraordinary every day to achieve a goal. This individual has remarkable **self-discipline**, does every workout from beginning to end, and has a daily plan to do something to get better. A young man with self-discipline does the whole workout when the coaches are not around. He does not follow the path of least resistance; he consistently asks himself, 'what can I do to improve?' *"The dictionary is the only place success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must all pay for success. I think we can accomplish almost anything if we are willing to pay the price. The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."* **Vince Lombardi**
2. We want our high school years to be rich, valuable and deep. This person leads his life with the proper balance and makes good choices socially. "Running should be a part of your life, not be your life." The same can be said for school, friends, family, and faith. This well-balanced individual understands that a good education is very important and that drugs and alcohol are not needed to change his mental state. He also recognizes that peer influence is powerful and places his role as a good team member above their possible bad choices. *"Too many people fail because they give up what they want most for what they want in the moment."*
3. We set challenging and meaningful goals. This young man sets attainable, challenging, and measurable goals. He does not rest on his laurels if he achieves a goal. He recognizes that success is a journey, not a destination. We learn from our experiences and realize the most important step is our next opportunity to improve. *Desire is the key to motivation, but it's the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek.* **Mario Andretti**
4. We choose to have a positive outlook on life and running. No matter what the circumstances may be, we have the power of choosing to stay positive. We love to run. We love the feeling of being part of a team and striving for common goals. There is nothing better than working hard and feeling good about what we have accomplished. *"Nothing great ever happens without enthusiasm."* **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
5. We are very confident in our abilities. Because we work very hard and are extremely fit, we know that we come to the line well prepared to do battle. **Self-confidence** is the intangible trait that separates the good teams from the great teams. If we get injured, sick, or fall during a race, we know we can easily rebound from this setback because 'we have done our homework'. Inner arrogance is a good thing. As other competitors go into oxygen debt early in the race, we hold steady due to our incredible fitness level and knowledge that we are very well prepared. *"Confidence... thrives on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations, on faithful protection and on unselfish performance. Without them it cannot live."* **Theodore Roosevelt**
6. We genuinely care about one another. We are a family. We treat everyone with respect. A caring person goes out of their way to never separate himself from anyone or make anyone feel beneath him. "There is no elitist separation by academic class, social class, race, religious preference, or sexual orientation." – Dorrance. Respect in our organization is shown with a greeting of a handshake and their name. Greetings to one another are genuine and forthcoming. *I judge a person's worth by the kind of person he is in life – by the way he treats his fellow man, by the way he wants to be treated, and by the way he respects people around him* **Calvin Murphy**
7. We value a positive and influential leader. "A great leader is less concerned about his popularity and more concerned about holding everyone to their highest standards and driving his teammates to their potential." - Dorrance. *Not long ago, to 'believe in your self' meant taking a principled and often lonely, stand when it appeared difficult or dangerous to do so. Now it means accepting one's own desires and inclinations, whatever they may be, and taking whatever steps that may be necessary to advance them.* **William Damon**
8. We are humble. A humble athlete wins like he is used to it. This is the person who is thankful for everything that he has been given in life and has a contagious optimism. Losing is taken in stride and lessons are learned from the experience to be put to good use during the next race. *"To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them."* **Carlos de Montesquieu**

9. We are fearless and are not afraid to fail. We will not hang back in a race and hope for the best. We race smart and we always have a plan. We possess a **competitive fire** and we will back down to no one. We deserve the rewards from our hard work and we are willing to put it on the line and push through the discomfort. *"I never blame failure – there are too many complicated situations in life – but I am absolutely merciless toward lack of effort."* **F. Scott Fitzgerald**

10. We recognize and KNOW that it is the little things that add up to make the biggest difference. This is the young man who eats nutritious foods, goes to bed at the same time every night, drinks water before practice, and puts out his running clothes the night before. Preparation is of the highest priority. Workouts are planned and made a priority during the 'off season'. *"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared."* **Merlin Olsen**

11. We take great pleasure in serving others and make it a priority. This young man believes in the intrinsic value of every person and aims to further the dignity of anyone he can by influencing them in a positive way. *"Always take the time to show compassion for those less fortunate, and there are many. Take the time to help a young child cross the street, or to carry a bag of groceries for an elderly lady. And every now and then, look up into that big, beautiful, blue sky and admit that there are things in this world more wondrous than yourself."* **Jack Lambert**

Training.....the big picture

Phase 1: May 27th – August 12th (11 weeks). Emphasis is on **base building**. We will be doing a lot of easy running with quality strides mixed in to stay sharp. We will engage in one long run per week and start with lactate threshold runs of 8-11 miles and do repeat 1200m's with very little rest during the interval. We will also begin our strength training with long hills.

Phase 2: August 13th – September 2nd (3 weeks). Emphasis is on developing the mechanics and ability to run efficiently at a faster pace without the stress of intervals – **running economy**. We will continue hills and will run short repetitions at slightly faster than mile race pace with a lot of rest between the reps. The traditional long wood loop workout continues. School begins the last week of this phase. We continue our a.m. workouts with a 4.5 mile run M, W, and F.

Phase 3: September 3rd – October 14th (6 weeks). Emphasis is on building our ability to use oxygen efficiently - **aerobic capacity** (VO₂). Repeat 1200m's and miles continue but we will take more rest in between the reps and the reps become faster. Fartleks and racing also become part of our training. We will run in the a.m. 3x a week to maintain good mileage. Sleep is critical during this stage!! One long run every 7-10 days will also be a staple workout during this time frame. We will also have some fun time trials on the track, especially for the younger guys.

Phase 4: October 15th – November 3rd (3 weeks). Emphasis is on getting sharp to run our best. We continue to run intervals (repeat miles) but they will become even faster with complete recovery. Our primary focus will be with threshold running so we can recover more for the races. A couple time trials to boost our VO₂ max to its highest will also occur on each Monday.

Oregon (IL.) Cross Country Camp **Sunday, July 22nd – Wednesday, July 25th, 2007**

Who? Young men entering 8th - 12th grade are eligible.

When? Leave Sunday, July 22nd at 1:00 p.m. Return Wednesday, July 25th at 10:30 a.m. We will leave from the circle drive of Neuqua Valley High School. Transportation is by charter bus.

Where? Lorado Taft Field Campus/Lowden State Park. Oregon, Illinois.

Directions: Take I 88 west to I 39 north to 64 west into Oregon. Take a right on River road (it is the last right before the bridge after the Pizza Hut). Go approx. 2 miles on River road and turn left into the entrance of Lowden State Park. Follow the signs to Lorado Taft Field Campus and park in the parking lot. Approx. 80 min. drive.

Registration fee: \$225.00. Fee includes three nights lodging, special programs, transportation, insurance, and most meals. **Make checks out to “Wildcat Cross Country”.** Registration deadline is Monday, July 16th.

What you will need:

Sleeping bag

Towels (2)

Water bottle

Shoes (2 pairs)

Insect repellent

Long pants

T-shirts

I pod (not a necessity)

Flashlight

Snacks

\$40-\$50 for swimming, bowling, movie

Pillow case

Running gear (socks, shorts, T-shirts

6-7 pairs of socks

Rain gear

Sun screen

Sweatshirts

Swimsuit

Camera

Board games

Cards

Please put your name on any valuables!

What not to bring:

Matches, lighter

Pocket knife

Other things to know:

Emergency numbers: Taft Campus 815-732-2111 and wait until someone answers if it is an emergency. If you want to leave a message (not an emergency) for your son call the same number and use extension **123** to leave the message; **Hospital - KSB** located in Dixon, Illinois. **815-288-5531**. Coach Vandersteen's cell number is **815-263-4303**.

Expectations: All athletes are to abide by the rules set forth by the coaches. This includes bringing unwanted materials, breaking curfew times, and not following safety measures such as building fires, climbing trees, swimming in the river, etc. Any rules broken will result in an immediate call to the parents for them to come pick up their son. If the infraction occurs after 9:00 p.m., parents will be expected to come pick up their son before 9:00 a.m. the next morning.

Questions? e-mail me at paul_vandersteen@ipspd.org

Itinerary

Sunday:

1:00 p.m.	Leave NVHS at circle drive
2:30 p.m.	Arrive at Lorado Taft
2:30-2:45	Unpack, get ready to run, and gather in designated meeting room
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Expectations and procedures
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Afternoon workout - getting to know the area
5:00 - 5:45 p.m.	Shower
6:00 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 10:30 p.m.	Load bus for a movie in Rockford
11:00 p.m.	Lights out!

Monday:

5:45 a.m.	Rise and shine and get ready to run!
6:00 – 8:15 a.m.	Led Zeppelin hill workout
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Shower
10:30 a.m.	Bus to White Pines State Park
10:30 – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch, Wiffle ball, frisbee
2:00 - 2:30	Travel back
2:30 – 3:30	Relax
3:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Load bus - easy run at Castle Rock State Park
6:00	Dinner
7:00 - 8:30	Speaker: Coach Bovee – Illinois State Univ.
8:30 – 10:00	What is Athletic Character? Do you have it?
11:00 p.m.	Lights out!

Tuesday

7:30 a.m.	Rise and shine
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00	Load bus for Sterling
9:45 – 11:15	Run Sterling course
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00	Load bus to go swimming at lake
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Swimming
3:00 p.m.	Load bus to run trails at Lorado State Forest
3:30-5:30 p.m.	Run trails (bring your bug spray!)
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 – 9:00	Bus to Bowling/Arcade/Wallyball in Dixon
12:00 p.m.	Lights out!

Wednesday

6:00 a.m.	Rise and shine
6:15 – 8:00	Morning workout – easy run
8:30	Breakfast
8:30- 9:15	Shower and pack
9:15 – 10:30	Return to NVHS

Neuqua Valley Men's Cross Country

Run-a-thon

Saturday, August 26th 2006

6:30-8:00 p.m.

(actual run begins at 7:00 p.m.)

Neuqua Valley High School Track

A fundraising event organized by Neuqua Valley Cross Country. All proceeds help support our program.

Dear Parents: I encourage you to participate in the Run-a-thon by running/walking yourself and/or help your son collect pledges. We want to get as many people involved as possible. Other sons and daughters are welcome too!! Our goal is to raise over \$8,000 for our program. Money goes toward charter buses, t-shirts, awards, and hotel costs.

Feel free to bring sport drinks and snacks for afterwards.

The Naperville Running Company (running shoe store) will also be on site. Great deals on running shoes, spikes, and other apparel. Top two money raisers receive \$75.00 gift certificates to Naperville Running Company!

Sponsor Record and Collection Form

Take this form with you to get sponsors. This form should be turned in with the collected money!

Attention Sponsor:

Please pay by check or money order. Make checks payable to "Neuqua Valley Cross Country". *All sponsorship contributions are TAX DEDUCTIBLE (#) - your canceled check will serve as your receipt.* Questions? Call Coach Vandersteen at 630-428-6040.

Sponsors may make a flat donation or pledge per lap.

Name of Runner: _____

This is to certify that the above named has completed _____ laps.

Signature of counter _____

Attention Runner:

After you have collected your pledges, return this Sponsor Collection Form with the checks/money orders to Coach Vandersteen in an **envelope** clearly marked "NVHS Run-a-thon".

No.	Sponsor's Name	Address & Zip	Phone #	Pledge per lap	Sponsor Initials	Amount Collected (After run-a-thon)
1						
2						
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4						
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