



2017 Prairie School Track and Field Team Handout



Good Evening and Welcome to the 2017 track & field season!

Thank you athletes and parents for your attendance tonight. We have a great group of kids and the coaching staff is ready to make this a season full of personal records and fun. I am looking forward to a great season!

I am Kathleen Rooney, Head track & field Coach. I work during the day at Red Apple school in the 4K program. My husband and I have 4 daughters, all of whom went to the Prairie School and were student athletes. My expertise is long distance. I have been assistant cross country coach the past 5 years, 2 years as track & field assistant coach and starting my 3rd year as Head Coach. I enjoy coaching your kids because they keep me in good shape and I enjoy seeing the joy on their faces when they have accomplished something they never thought they could. I will be absent from 3/25 - 4/2 as I am chaperoning the high school New Mexico trip. Head Cross Country Coach Jim Larsen will be filling in for me. Managing such a large team would not be possible without my coaching staff.

Joining the coaching staff this year is Coach Kelsey Hanson. Coach Kelsey is a Prairie graduate where she was a three sport athlete all four years. She has a degree in exercise physiology and a minor in athletic coaching from Concordia. While at Concordia, she competed in track and field, volleyball, and lacrosse. She is now working on her Master's in human movement and sports nutrition and another Master's in coaching and athletic administration. She is looking forward to coaching at her alma mater.

We have three coaches returning for their second year of coaching for our team. Coach Johnson will be working with the sprinters. Two years ago she coached a 4X400 boys relay team to 2nd place at D3 State and a school record. She had coaching experience at Case High School prior to coaching at Prairie. Coach Johnson has the advantage of knowing a lot of our athletes as she is an Art teacher here at Prairie. She will focus on the sprinters. Coach Vanko comes to us with many years of coaching experience with middle school athletes and he is looking forward to the challenge of working with high school throwers this year. Last track season, Coach Vanko coached our girls relay team to DII state where they placed 7th place and earned a school record. With that being said, Coach Vanko will also assist Coach Johnson with the sprinters from time to time. Coach Graham will continue as our jumping coach. Anton comes to us as a current competitive athlete with personal training experience and football coaching experience. We are very fortunate to have Shaun train our hurdlers this season. He will only be with our athletes part-time as his primary responsibility is associate athletic director.

Attendance is mandatory!! If at all possible, schedule ortho appointments, Dr. appointments, and driver's ed. after track. If an athlete misses a practice, I would expect them to make up that practice on a Saturday morning practice. Regardless if you are a JV or a Varsity athlete or an injured athlete, practice and meets are mandatory. Those of you who need an exercise credit need to be at all practices and meets. Practices are Mon.- Fri. regardless of weather unless we are competing at a track meet. Practice will end at 6:00pm but there may be days that some of the athletes will finish at 6:15pm. It all depends on what the workout is that given day. Sprinters, long distance, throwers and jumpers will all have different workouts. So, athletes will leave no earlier than 6:00 pm and no later than 6:15 pm. There will also be

optional practices held on Saturday mornings when we are not competing at a meet. Those practices are great for those who want or need some extra training especially if they had missed a practice. If possible, some Saturday practices may be at Parkside outdoor track. There will be a few days throughout the season that a practice will be held offsite such as Carthage or Parkside.

In order to have our athletes focused during practice, I'm asking parents and non track friends to show their support after practice. Athletes, please be dressed and ready to go with a water bottle at 4:00...that includes having your running shoes laced and tied. Distance runners are required to have watches on them at every practice. Captains will start warm-ups at 4:00 sharp. If an athlete has asthma, a well labeled inhaler has to be on them. One will have to sit out during practice and/or a meet if the inhaler is not present. During our track season, the weather can change from day to day. Make sure you have layers of running clothes ready to go in case weather changes. I'm asking all athletes to bring a recovery snack(an energy bar, dried fruit, nuts, yogurt, chocolate milk, etc.) to be eaten within 30 minutes after their workout. It was stated at the track & field clinic that I just attended that this snack will improve an athlete's recovery 60% more than one who doesn't have a snack. This means they'll be ready for the next workout. Don't worry, they'll still be hungry for dinner.

Spring Break is always difficult on all of our sports teams at Prairie because our spring break doesn't coincide with other schools' spring breaks and it is two weeks long. Our break will be Saturday 3/25 - Sun. 4/9. We will continue to have practice Mon. - Fri. during break in order to be ready for the indoor competition season. There are three meets scheduled during spring break. I'm passing around several clipboards for you to let me know your spring break plans. This will enable the coaching staff to plan a workout for your child if you are going to be out of town. I understand and respect if an athlete is going on a family vacation. But if you are in Racine, I expect you at practice.

Our team has athletes who will also be participating in a club sport. Those athletes will be monitored closely so that they are not overtrained. There will be days that those athletes will not be at a track practice or a meet either because they have another practice or game that day. They will not be penalized for missing track because they are still training that day and I believe cross training is beneficial to any sport. So, there is that possibility that they get entered into meets that have limited entries because they have a faster time. We had this situation occur last season with a couple of athletes. We were able to manage it but it is not an ideal situation since it puts a lot work on the athlete. It also gets tricky with relay teams, but with good communication, it can work.

Unfortunately athletes do get injured from time to time. Injuries will be reported immediately to Kayla our athletic trainer. She will assess the injury and determine a plan of recovery. If possible, the athlete will rehab in the fitness center until it is determined by Kayla that the athlete can return to team workouts. If in doubt, Kayla will suggest and refer a Doctor that the athlete could see within a day or two. Injured athletes will stay during the entire practice...they will not be excused unless they are seeing the Doctor or going to therapy.

Our first boys indoor meet will be on March 14th at Park High School and the first girls indoor meet will be on March 16th at Park High School. The meet schedule can be found on the Prairie School website. I am also sending you home with a schedule but please keep in mind that the schedule could change. It is school policy that only those athletes participating(including alternates) in the meet will be allowed for early dismissal(during the school week). There are limited entries in some of our meets. Team members must travel on the bus ROUND trip unless a parental release form is on record with the athletic office

AND prior written notice has been given to the coach. Team members can only go home with a parent. All track athletes are expected to attend the Saturday meets.

How does the coaching staff determine who runs what? Luckily, we have some meets with unlimited entries. Other meets, entries will be determined by performance. There are other factors that go into the decision....physical health, could be a training meet for one but a race for another, etc. Keep in mind, once entries have been sent (usually 3-5 days prior to the meet) they cannot be changed. If I only have 2 spots for the 2 mile, and an athlete tells me 2 days before the meet that they have a wedding to go to, I've lost that spot and I could have put someone else in the race if I'd been told earlier. Conference and regionals are definitely limited entries and entries will be based on time. One has to qualify at regionals (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th) to go onto sectionals. One needs to place 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or special qualify at sectionals to go onto state. Athletes are limited to run a maximum of 4 events...4 individual, 4 relays, or a combination. Just a reminder that if an athlete is thinking about running in college, the senior season doesn't mean much to colleges. They look at your times from earlier in high school because most college decision deadlines are May 1st.

Pasta dinners are a great opportunity for the athletes to chill and to team bond. Typically, a few parents will host the dinner and those athletes that want to attend will pay \$5.00 to the student pasta organizer. And the organizer will give the \$\$ to the hosts. These are not mandatory but I highly recommend them for team bonding and a good meal before a meet. The dates of the dinners will be Fri. 4/21, Thurs. 5/4, and Tues 5/16. Parents, please sign up either on clipboard or email Beth Polzin(team parent).

The team will have uniforms and warmups. Washing instructions for uniforms....wash in cold, delicate, and hang dry. Warm ups will be distributed before a meet and returned at the end of the meet. It is my intention to keep these uniforms and warmups looking nice for many years as they are quite expensive. Beginning on Thursday 4/6, there will be a dress code for meet days. Boys will wear dress pants, shirt, and tie or suit if they wish. Girls will wear skirt and top or dress. No tennis shoes, jeans, polo shirts, or t-shirts on dress up days. Beginning Friday 5/12, dress code on meet days will be the senior t-shirt.

Senior night will be on Friday May 12 in West Allis. Please come and support all of our seniors! Tentatively, the end of the year track banquet dinner will be on Thursday June 9th at 6:00pm at Di'Carlos (Meadowbrook Club). My hope is that all athletes and parents would attend...more information to come in the future.

Student athlete conduct - you are representing yourself, your family, your school, and your community. Please keep that in mind throughout the entire season on and off the track. Our track & field staff will enforce all rules. I don't expect any issues but know that all school discipline procedures will be followed.

If you haven't done so, please sign the clipboards to note your conflicts during spring break.

We are all looking forward to working with your athletes. I'd be happy to answer any questions now. If you have any questions that could not be answered tonight, please contact me.

GO HAWKS!

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