

Dear Prospective Student - Athlete,

I am writing this letter in order to invite you to become a member of the Pomona Cross Country team. Our team is full of student athletes who possess a solid work ethic and strong character. Both of these traits help to drive our successful program. I believe that these traits are more important than any athletic ability.

Due to peer and faculty recommendations we would like to extend an invitation to you because we feel that you possess the qualities that would make you a wonderful addition to our team. Having these qualities will ensure that you are well on your way to achieving personal triumphs not only in cross country, but in life.

Of the many student athletes who have joined our program, a majority of them hesitated because they felt that running three miles was an unattainable goal. As the coaches and athletes worked together to create a family like atmosphere, each athlete quickly learned that this was a very attainable goal. Once you have chosen to join the program, you will find that your teammates are supportive of not only your athletic goals but your academic and personal goals as well.

The coaching staff believes that supporting athletes goes way beyond the running. The coaches believe that part of their roles is to invest in the development of their athletes on a consistent basis, not just the three months they are running for the program.

Many of our athletes use our program as conditioning for another sport. Through cross country, each athlete enters that season with increased aerobic conditioning, improved speed, and a decrease in chance of injury. This is possible because as we train, we are working to improve the entire musculoskeletal system. Through cross country, many athletes have seen increase playing time and for several, walk into varsity spots for other sports throughout the year.

I understand that you are not quite sure if you want to join cross country. These are probably a few of the following thoughts running through your head.

*1. I've never done a sport before.*

That's okay. You have to run at some time in your life; even if it was after the ice-cream truck or away from a not so friendly dog. It didn't kill you and this won't either! So you don't find that too reassuring, how about I recognize the fact that it takes time to develop the level of conditioning needed to run competitively. The coaches' job is to help you achieve that level at a comfortable, yet challenging rate.

*2. I can't afford it.*

Cross Country is probably the cheapest sport. The most important piece of equipment is your running shoes. They can make or break you injury-wise. Expect to pay \$80 - \$100 for proper running shoes (no cross trainers!). If you don't know what kind you should get, ask me!

3. *I've got too much schoolwork.*

Cross Country runners almost always have the highest average GPA out of all the high school sports in most high schools. Running and racing teaches you how to be mentally strong, efficient, and focused. Time and stress management goes along with that.

4. *But I have to condition for wrestling or basketball*

What do you do for conditioning? You run, build strength, stretch, etc. Sounds like your typical cross country practice. You will go into that season in the best shape of your life.

5. *But I HATE running.*

Admit it. Your experience with long distance running has been doing laps in gym or for punishment. Anything you do for punishment will be given a negative connotation. Regress to your early childhood. You loved playing tag, hide and go seek, and those types of RUNNING games before evil gym teachers and coaches corrupted the activity for you, squeezing the joy out of it. Give the sport a try! You might surprise yourself.

In conclusion, the current team and coaches would like to invite you to join the Pomona Cross Country team. Thomas Edison said, "Life's greatest accomplishments are those that at first seem impossible." If you choose to become a part of our team, you will quickly learn how true this statement is. We look forward to seeing you at our next practice.

Respectfully Yours,

Jack Swartz  
Pomona High School  
High School Cross Country Coach  
High School Track and Field Assistant Coach