



*Bengals*  

---

**CROSS COUNTRY**

2022 STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Page 3:** Coaches and Contact Information

**Page 4:** Schedule and Gear Needed

**Page 5:** Program Core Values

**Page 6:** Standards of Behavior

**Page 7:** Program Expectations

**Page 8:** Control the Controllable

**Page 9:** Girls Letter Requirements

**Page 10:** Girls Awards

**Page 11:** Boys Letter Requirements and Awards

# COACHES AND CONTACT INFO

## GIRLS

### HEAD COACH



**Jesse Zentz**

406-422-3039

[jzentz@helenaschools.org](mailto:jzentz@helenaschools.org)

### ASSISTANT



**Jonna Schwartz**

630-947-9707

[jschwartz@helenaschools.org](mailto:jschwartz@helenaschools.org)

## BOYS

### HEAD COACH



**Kelley Gilbert**

406-449-3040

[kgilbert76@charter.net](mailto:kgilbert76@charter.net)

### ASSISTANT



**Michael Kauffman**

406-431-6124

[michael@drakemt.com](mailto:michael@drakemt.com)

## FOLLOW US, LIKE US, JOIN US

**Website:** [www.helenahighxc.com](http://www.helenahighxc.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/hhsbengalsxc](http://www.facebook.com/hhsbengalsxc)

**Instagram:** [@hhsbengalsxc](https://www.instagram.com/hhsbengalsxc), [www.instagram.com/hhsbengalsxc](http://www.instagram.com/hhsbengalsxc)

# SCHEDULE

## 2022 SEASON

- **Friday, Aug. 26:** Billings Invitational, Amend Park, 12 p.m.
- **Thursday, Sept. 1:** Missoula Invitational, Big Sky Equestrian Park, 4 p.m.
- **Saturday, Sept. 10:** Bozeman Invitational, Bridger Creek Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- **Saturday, Sept. 17:** Mountain West Invitational, UM Golf Course, 9:30 a.m.
- **Friday, Sept. 23:** Great Falls Invitational, Anaconda Hills Golf Course, 3 p.m.
- **Friday, Sept. 30:** Butte Invitational, Highland Golf Course, 1 p.m.
- **Thursday, Oct. 6:** 7 of 7, Bill Roberts Golf Course, noon
- **Wednesday, Oct. 12:** Crosstown (Senior Day), Bill Roberts Golf Course, 4 p.m.
- **Saturday, Oct. 22:** State, UM Golf Course, TBD

## OPTIONAL POSTSEASON OPPORTUNITIES

- **Saturday, Oct. 29:** Montana Cup, 12 p.m., Missoula
- **Saturday, Nov. 5:** USATF Montana Junior Olympic XC Championships, TBD
- **Saturday, Nov. 12:** Nike Cross Regionals, 10 a.m., Eagle, Idaho

## GEAR NEEDED

1. **Running shoes.** You should have a new pair each season (possibly two pairs).
2. **Watch.** Does not have to be GPS. A simple digital watch is enough.
3. **Running (or athletic) gear.** Represent HHS with a Bengal top at practice, and always wear clothing appropriate for running.
4. **Personal Water Bottle.** Make sure it's full and with you whenever possible.
5. **XC Racing Flats or Spikes.** Not required, but strongly recommended.

# THE BENGAL WAY

## MISSION

We are relentless in our mission to empower young women and men to find the magic inside themselves, to honor and love themselves and their teammates for who they are, and to develop the character, integrity, commitment, and compassion to lead in a manner that makes a positive impact on their team, their school, and their community. We strive to present an environment where student-athletes will be inspired to have fun, pursue excellence, remain curious, and develop trust in their coaches, training, teammates, and the process of development as runners and as humans.

## CORE VALUES

1. **COMMITMENT:** Through discipline, dedication, and persistence, we make a full investment in our individual and collective pursuit of competence and excellence.
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** We make the choice to accept ownership, become involved, and engage with our development and that of the team, always striving for our best.
3. **STRENGTH IN UNITY:** When we work together, we build trust, experience more fun, create more opportunity, and have a greater impact on our teammates and on our community.
4. **INTEGRITY:** We strive for high moral character by doing the right thing, because it is the right thing to do. We act with sincerity and loyalty within our team, school, and community.
5. **LOVE:** We are passionate about our team and our sport, and we commit to bringing a positive and infectious attitude to everyone and to every situation. Love lifts us.

# STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

**ACADEMICS** are and always will be a priority.

**BE ON TIME** for training, road trips, competitions, and team functions.

**BE PRESENT**, which means being present in the moment, paying attention and focusing on the task at hand, whether that's listening to a coach, teammate or official, training, or competing.

**BE RESPECTFUL** of your teammates and coaches. Treat others with sincerity and compassion.

- No hazing, bullying, or mocking others.
- Listen (don't talk) when others are addressing the team, a group, or an individual.

**GIVE YOUR BEST** in each rep, practice, or competition.

**REMAIN CURIOUS** because curiosity is a pathway to growth. Our coaches are passionate about the sport and will be eager to explain, enlighten, or accommodate your learning.

**HOLD YOURSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE** to these Core Values and Standards of Behavior.

# GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. **COMMUNICATION IS A MUST:** Don't assume your coaches know what you're thinking, feeling or experiencing. Communicate with your coaches. Help us, help you. This is a must if we hope to function smoothly in a collaborative effort to provide you with the optimal environment for development.
2. **PRACTICE IS MANDATORY:** Always be on time and ready to go. Training BEGINS at 3:30 p.m. at Helena High School. If you are unable to attend, your parent or guardian must personally contact a coach at least three hours prior to practice and provide a valid reason for being absent, at the discretion of the head coach. DO NOT tell a friend to tell the coach.
  - a. One unexcused absence is cause for a one-meet suspension at the coaches' discretion.
  - b. If an athlete misses the practice the day before a meet without permission, you will not be allowed to compete in the meet.
3. **BE A GOOD REPRESENTATIVE:** When you are a member Helena High Cross Country, you represent the program, the school and your community at all times. Your actions can impact the team at all times.
4. **DEMONSTRATE CONSIDERATION:** Each athlete – and coaches, too – are trying to improve and often need help. Realize the worth of everyone involved with the program and work together.
5. **MEET ATTENDANCE:** You are required to remain at meets for the duration to support your team and must check out with your head coach at the meet's conclusion. If you do not check out, you will be ineligible for the following competition. If you have a valid reason to leave early (appointment, family emergency, illness), you must have your parents sign you out.
6. **TRAVEL:** We encourage student-athletes to travel home with the team on the bus after away meets to build unity, one of our core values. If, however, you plan on travelling home with a parent or guardian, you must sign out with your head coach at the conclusion of the meet, not during competition.

## VARSITY SELECTION

Varsity runners are determined by the coaching staff prior to each competition. All student-athletes have the opportunity to make the varsity team. Varsity will be determined by time, placing, completion of workouts, and adherence to core values, standards of behavior and expectations. Coaches can run a minimum of 5 varsity runners or a maximum of 7. This is at the coaches' discretion.

# CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE?

Avoid wasting energy on things out of your control.

Here are 10 key things you can control:

1. **ATTITUDE** – Everything starts and ends with attitude and if you get it right, all else will fall in line with it. A positive, winning attitude helps you succeed and impact those around you.
2. **EFFORT** – How hard you work is up to you and no one else. If you give up that control, you are giving away one of the main things that sets you apart from the rest. Your effort must also be smart and reflected in your work rate in practice and competition.
3. **FOCUS** – Focus is relaxed concentration; it becomes especially important in competition where outside distractions can keep you from performing at your best. Your focus must be on the here and now in training and competition.
4. **PREPARATION** – The work you put into your physical conditioning and preparation will directly affect your ability to play while making a positive impact for your team.
5. **REST** – Sleep is a performance enhancer and high school student-athletes need 8-10 hours of sleep per night to function their best in the classroom, in training, and in competition.
6. **NUTRITION** – Your performance is directly impacted by your food and hydration choices. It is important to fuel your body for success. The body requires ample H<sub>2</sub>O, carbohydrates, protein, and a variety of other nutrients to function properly. No matter how big your engine is, it won't function without a full tank of fuel.
7. **COACHABILITY** – This has to do with your ability to receive, accept, and apply the input from your coach. The smartest athletes not only learn from the coach, but also from teammates.
8. **HONESTY** – Choosing to be honest is truly is the best policy and it helps build trust. It fosters better relationships with others and with yourself.
9. **COMMUNICATION** – Positive, sincere, assertive, and clear communication with your coaches and teammates is not only something you can control, but will also give you and your team an edge.
10. **BODY LANGUAGE** – While this is a part of communication, it is actually the most visible and easiest thing you can change. Most experts agree that 70 to 93 percent of all communication is nonverbal. The way you carry yourself is contagious and can lift or sink a team.

# GIRLS LETTER REQUIREMENTS

A runner may letter at Helena High by meeting any of the following requirements.

## **Varsity Letter (Must achieve at least one of the five options below)**

1. Run at one of the courses during the season in 21:45 or faster, whether in varsity or junior varsity competition.
2. Score (top five on the team) as a member of the varsity team in any varsity competition where more than 3 teams compete.
3. While participating in the JV division, post a better performance (time) than the fifth Helena High varsity finisher at the same meet.
4. Make the state team, consisting of the top 7 student-athletes at the end of the season. The alternate(s) also may achieve a letter at the discretion of the head coach.
5. Receive a Pillar Award (detailed on the Awards page).

## **Commitment Letter (Must be a fourth-year senior and achieve all four items)**

Discretionary letter from coaching staff for seniors completing fourth full season; completing four years in the program DOES NOT guarantee a letter.

Earning a letter, it is presumed, is one of the goals of participation in athletics. Be reminded, however, that receiving an award is not guaranteed solely by meeting one of the criteria above. If a student-athlete fails to complete the season or fails to conduct herself by the rules and expectations presented by the Helena School District or this program in particular, she will not receive an award. The award winners are officially announced at the end of the cross country season.

***Letters are awarded at the discretion of the head coach.***

# GIRLS AWARDS

## LEADERSHIP

*Helena High girls cross country does not designate captains. We strive to develop a program full of leaders. It is our belief that every athlete deserves the opportunity to demonstrate leadership. While we do not designate captains, we will design opportunities to foster this growth. We believe this approach will also keep student-athletes more accountable to one another as they work together to strengthen the program and the culture within it. At the coaches' discretion and along with completion of a leadership assignment delivered by the coaching staff, we will recognize athletes who exhibit exemplary leadership qualities at the conclusion of the season with a Program Pillar Award and gold star pin.*

- **Program Pillar Award** (student-athletes must demonstrate leadership while upholding our five core values; winners of the Program Pillar award are not eligible for other discretionary awards, as this award recognizes all of the qualities that could earn recognition for those listed below)

## PERFORMANCE-BASED AWARDS

*These awards are based on a combination of performance and coaches' discretion; winners must be in good academic and disciplinary standing; one each.*

- **Top Runner**
- **Most Improved** (year over year improvement)
- **Top Freshman**
- **Top Newcomer** (non-freshman)

## DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

- **Committed Cat** (student-athlete who most demonstrates commitment to personal and team development throughout the season)
- **Courageous Cat** (student-athlete who most demonstrates a curiosity in their own abilities, takes calculated risks and a fearless attitude into competition, and maintains an adventurous mindset)
- **Impact Cat** (student-athlete who provides the greatest impact for the team at the coaching staff's discretion)
- **Linda Paull Heart Award** (student-athlete who demonstrates grit, persistence and passion, whether pushing through an injury or facing odds stacked against them; advocates for themselves and their teammates; or relentlessly pursues excellence while upholding team values)
- **Coaches' Award** (coaches' discretion decided by assistant and head coach)

# BOYS LETTER REQUIREMENTS

A runner may letter at Helena High by meeting any of the following requirements.

## **Varsity Letter (Must achieve at least one of the five options below)**

1. Run at one of the courses during the season in 17:10 or faster, whether in varsity or junior varsity competition.
2. Finish in the top 4 in a dual meet, top 6 in a triangular meet, top 8 in a quadrangular meet and so ... adding two places for each additional team entered. This can be done in varsity competition only.
3. Score (top five on the team) as a member of the varsity team in any varsity competition where more than 3 teams compete and in which Helena High places first or second as a team.
4. Make the state team, consisting of the top 7 student-athletes at the end of the season. The alternate(s) also may achieve a letter at the discretion of the head coach.

Earning a letter, it is presumed, is one of the goals of participation in athletics. Be reminded, however, that receiving an award is not guaranteed solely by meeting one of the criteria above. If a student-athlete fails to complete the season or fails to conduct himself by the rules and expectations presented by the Helena School District or this program in particular, he will not receive an award. The award winners are officially announced at the end of the cross country season. Also, it is not a guarantee that an athlete will letter once he completes 4 years of running on the jayvee level or if they are named a captain.

***Letters are awarded at the discretion of the head coach.***

# BOYS AWARDS

*These awards are based on a combination of performance and coaches' discretion; winners must be in good academic and disciplinary standing; one each.*

- **Top Runner**
- **Most Improved Veteran**
- **Most Improved Freshman**
- **Coaches' Award**
- **Team Captains**