

DEERFIELD BOYS CROSS COUNTRY – The DFDC

Dear incoming freshman parents,

I'm thrilled your son is potentially interested in joining the Deerfield cross country team. I truly believe joining the team is the *second* best decision a high schooler can make. That might sound like a sweeping statement, but consider my perspective.

My name is Scott Friedlander, and I am the head coach of the Deerfield boys cross country team. Nine short years ago, I graduated from Deerfield High School, and 13 short years ago, I attended 8th grade activities night and put my name on a list of incoming freshmen potentially interested in joining Deerfield cross country. My experience between 13 and 9 years ago completely changed my life and set me up for success well beyond high school. I am sincerely indebted to my 8th grade self for putting my name on that list.

I arrived at my first practice as a regular kid, an average athlete, and with no intent of making cross country any more than an after school activity and good exercise. But immediately, juniors and seniors on the team started voluntarily conversing with me. They taught me cross country, showed me their running routes, and included me in social activities. I wondered - *Why?* They told me that my classmates and I are the future of the team. *Why do they care if they'll be out of high school by the time I'm their age?* They said they care because even when they're no longer at Deerfield, this team will always be important to them. *Really?* And then DHS cross country alumni started showing up to practice. College kids. College graduates. They had such bigger lives to live, *why did they bother come to our practice?* They said they learned so much from their teammates, their coaches, and the sport of distance running that they applied to their high school running careers, and later, applied to life. They said they were better students, better professionals, better family members, and better people because of the lessons and discipline they learned from Deerfield Cross Country. Plus, they said some their fondest memories came from their time as a Deerfield cross country runner, and it's fun to go back to reminisce and meet the next generation. *Wow.*

After learning this, I decided to buy in to the culture. And *that's* the best decision a high schooler can make.

We call ourselves the **DFDC**, which stands for Deerfield Distance Crew, because it's more than just a regular high school sports team. The moniker was invented by the team in the late 1990s, so I'm too young to know all the details of how it started, but I helped carry the torch. It represents the unique mentorship and inclusivity of one big unseparated team – from freshmen to seniors and from slowest to fastest. It represents keeping your eyes on your goals at all times - from working hard at practice to making smart decisions about diet, sleep, time management, and attitude when away from practice. It represents being model students and citizens with an excellent history of academic success and a school-wide reputation for being good kids. Pride in knowing we're the cleanest program in the school when it comes to drugs and alcohol - not because we're told to, but because it's detrimental to our training (and I'm confident about that, since I *know* it was true a decade ago, and I'm confident it hasn't wavered since).

I've heard from countless cross country parents, including my own, that they wish there were a magic way to tell the parents of all incoming freshmen that there is an easy way to guarantee an extremely positive high school experience that you and your son will be proud of. Everybody who joins the cross country team is proud they did.

As I said, I bought in. I made great friends, I worked hard, I had fun, and I improved – a lot. I ran a mile in 7:35 during the first week of practice, and I ran a mile in 4:29 before I graduated. I built myself an identity, and I had something to strive for. When I ran a three-mile cross country race in 14:45 my senior year, that was my ticket into Brown University – an educational experience beyond my wildest expectations. But as an admitted athlete at Brown, I had to rely on the mentality I developed as a high school runner to survive in a very tough academic environment. If my work ethic could create an All-State runner out of an average athlete, I learned that same work ethic could create a competitive Ivy League student out of someone who was admitted for athletics. I did it, and I did it well, and I got a lot out of my college experience. I absolutely credit Deerfield cross country with equipping me with the skills and mentality to do that, and I am much better off today because of it. It doesn't stop there. I apply those lessons to my career, and I try to apply the same work ethic as coach as I did when I was a runner.

There are countless DFDC stories like mine, many more being constructed right now, and even more that will begin next year. When my coach retired, I came back to coach because I wanted to help maintain the incredible culture he helped develop. I get a ton of satisfaction from helping kids learn and grow through cross country and putting great young men out into the world after high school. I hope your son will be a part of it.

If you have any questions whatsoever, feel free to send me an email or give me a call. Anything at all. It is not a bother, this is my passion!

Scott Friedlander

Head Coach – Deerfield Boys Cross Country

DFDC Class of 2008

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Twitter: @CoachScottDFDC

Head Coach

Scott Friedlander
DFDC Class of 2008

Assistant Coach

Joe Sullivan
DFDC Class of 2008

Assistant Coach

Rohan Johnson
DFDC Class of 2008

2016-17 Team Captain

Robby Winter
DFDC Class of 2017

2016-17 Team Captain

Brett Schneider
DFDC Class of 2017

2016-17 Team Captain

Justin Lew
DFDC Class of 2017

2016-2017 Cross Country Team Roster**Seniors – DFDC Class of 2017**

Andrew Burmeister
Andrew Gorden
Justin Gorden
Mikey Hull
Justin Lew
Ben Michel
Brett Schneider
Lucas Wathen
Robby Winter

Sophomores – DFDC Class of 2019

Daniel Ballenger
Julian Becerra
Declan Black
Reed Brockstein
Bradley Brodsky
Daniel Chertow
Israel Hernandez
Matt Krengel
Spencer Lewis
Brett Needelman
Jonathan Walkk

Juniors – DFDC Class of 2018

Noah Blaustein
Matt Butler
Aaron Cohen
Zach Dolnick
Will Dowell
Jack Fisher
Jacob Flignor
Matt Gold
Ben Kamen
Matt Kamen
Seth Neiman
Jaxson Perlow
Henry Shore
Dylan Wheatley
Ben Wolfe

Freshmen – DFDC Class of 2020

Joe Ariano
Zach Breger
Wyatt Browdy
Aleksandar Burmeister
Mac Cooley
Jason Dahlberg
Grant Fisher
Zach Kehlert
Ben Kraemer
Matthew Kroscher
Jacob Nitsun
Micah Plofsky
Ben Rosen
Coby Segal
Matthew Seltzer
Elai Spector
Seth Sugar
Ben Zuckerman

2016-17 Accomplishments

Varsity

IHSA 3A Sectional Qualifiers

CSL North Conference Runners-Up

CSL North Individual Conference *Champion*: Matt Gold (Jr)

Three CSL North All-Conference Runners: Matt Gold (Jr), Robby Winter (Sr), Henry Shore (Jr)

Junior Varsity

CSL North Conference JV Runners-Up

Five CSL North All-Conference JV Runners: Lucas Wathen (Sr), Will Dowell (Jr), Noah Blaustein (Jr), Justin Gorden (Sr), Zach Dolnick (Jr)

Sophomore

Four CSL North Sophomore All-Conference Runners: Bradley Brodsky (So), Brett Needelman (So), Declan Black (So), Matt Krengel (So)

Freshmen

One CSL North Freshman All-Conference Runner: Ben Kraemer (Fr)

Deerfield Cross Country Recent History

CSL North Conference Champions

2008, 2007, 2006, 2005

IHSA State Championships 2A Team Qualifiers

2015, 2014, 2012

IHSA State Championships 3A Individual Qualifiers

Alex Gold (2011 – 35th), Billy Malmed (2008 – 28th), Scott Friedlander (2007 – 21st), Noble Schermerhorn (2006 – 11th, 2005 – 36th), Dan Bailey (2005 – 85th), Jeff Bailey (2001 – 96th)

Collegiate Cross Country Runners

Charles Nash	DFDC Class of 2015	University of Iowa
Billy Anderson	DFDC Class of 2015	St. Olaf College
Reilly Grant	DFDC Class of 2014	Grinnell College
Alex Gold	DFDC Class of 2013	University of Illinois
Pat Wylie	DFDC Class of 2010	University of Pittsburgh
Dan Channon	DFDC Class of 2010	University of Wisconsin – Stout
Michael Bukszar	DFDC Class of 2010	Loras College
Billy Malmed	DFDC Class of 2009	Vanderbilt University
Scott Friedlander	DFDC Class of 2008	Brown University
Joe Sullivan	DFDC Class of 2008	University of Chicago
Colin Johnson	DFDC Class of 2008	Augustana College
Jordan Bell-Masterson	DFDC Class of 2008	Grinnell College
Noble Schermerhorn	DFDC Class of 2007	University of Illinois
Chris Sally	DFDC Class of 2007	Augustana College
Dan Bailey	DFDC Class of 2006	Augustana College
Matt Cervarich	DFDC Class of 2006	Valparaiso University
Jeff Bailey	DFDC Class of 2003	Augustana College
Nate Stopps	DFDC Class of 2002	Butler University

Unique Features That Make Cross Country Awesome!

Everyone can join – no cuts. Everyone competes – no benchwarmers. Everyone has a chance to accomplish individual goals.

Although cross country contains varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, and freshmen levels, the separation only applies to racing. We are truly one single team of about 50 runners from freshmen to seniors and from slowest to fastest. There is one coaching staff and one big, altogether practice each day. We all go to meets together, but compete at different times, which means the freshmen get to watch and cheer for Varsity, and Varsity gets to watch and cheer for the freshmen.

Most runners do not disband after the season ends. About 80% of our roster becomes the distance crew on the Track & Field team in the winter and spring – joining forces with sprinters, jumpers, and throwers on a roster that reaches nearly 100 athletes. Head cross country coach Scott Friedlander is also on the Track & Field coaching staff as the long distance event specialist.

Summer: We hold optional practices over the summer. All summer long, we meet at 6:30 AM Mon-Fri before the runners disperse to summer school, work, etc. This is a great way to get a head start on training and get to know your teammates before the school year starts. Email sfriedlander@dist113.org for more details. But again, it is optional, and we welcome any newcomers who want to begin once the official season starts in mid-August.



HEAR WHAT OUR PARENTS HAVE TO SAY

"I am the mother of a senior runner. My son has spent the past four years running cross country and indoor and outdoor track. I must say I was surprised when my son decided to do cross country. He had played other sports; baseball, basketball and volleyball. But running as a sport...never. In fact, I didn't get him running shoes before his first practice, thinking once he learned about the sport, he wouldn't do it. Was I wrong!!!

I can't tell you how grateful I am as a parent to see all the positive aspects that come from being on the DFDC. The friendships that form are bonds that are so strong. Most of these boys end up running all year long. They get hooked. It happened with my son. Another positive aspect to the sport is that kids from different grade levels are all together. When my son was a freshman, the older boys would drive him home from practices and the many food runs (you burn lots of calories, so food is a must!!) It is part of the culture of the team, look out for your team and help one another.

I can't end before talking about the fabulous head coach, Scott Friedlander and his assistant, Joe. They set the tone for the team. They are positive, motivating and truly passionate about the sport and give that to the team. I am so thankful to have them be such a positive influence on my son. They have taught him not just about the sport of running, but life skills...dedication, perseverance, tenacity, and commitment"

-Felicia Schneider
Mother of Brett ('17)

"Our son who is a freshman and autistic was welcomed as part of the team on day 1! He doesn't run fast, and the other boys finish ahead of him, but when he does cross the line, many of his DFDC teammates are there urging and cheering him on. He goes to all the team pasta dinners and is accepted as a teammate and friend. This team IS a family and have each other's backs."

-Mila and Neil Burmeister
Parents of Andrew ('17) and
Aleksandar ('20)

"Joining DFDC was the best decision, the greatest start to Bradley's high school career. Bradley was hesitant to join but after the first practice, he was hooked. Since that first run, he has never looked back, not ever wanted anything different. It is the greatest group of boys, friends, mentors and coaches that any parent could wish for. It is a FAMILY from day one. The way the boys support one another, stick by each other and have fun together is second to none. It is a parents dream to have their child participate in something so healthy, so strong, so formative as the DFDC."

-Debbie Brodsky
Mother of Bradley ('19)

HEAR WHAT OUR PARENTS HAVE TO SAY

“We are the proud and very grateful parents of 3 devoted and accomplished members of the DHS Cross Country and Track Teams – Danny (2009), Alex (2013) and Matthew (2018). We cannot rave enough about how we feel the program enhanced their high school experience and how the program enriched their character and maturity. Running is an incredible sport and teaches remarkable life lessons on and off the course. It requires hard work, dedication, sacrifice, smart decisions with rewards that are incredibly satisfying and real. The team is like a family and the boys look out for each other across all grades. They have so much fun and follow countless creative and hilarious traditions. The friendship created among these boys is so strong that alumni continue to return to meet long after graduation. Many of the alumni will tell you that the life lessons learned from running at DHS continue to help drive their decisions in college and beyond. We highly recommend that you encourage your son to give the teams a chance.”

-Laura and Mike Gold
Parents of Danny ('09), Alex ('13), and Matt ('18)

“Sending a shy, chubby, non-athletic BOY to high school is daunting, and I was nervous that even a no-cut sport would not be able to make room for my son Reilly. Indeed, he was the slowest entering freshman when he started, but earned the respect and friendship of his teammates by showing up and working hard each day. The team culture of inclusion, hard work and peer pressure to succeed as a student by making good, healthy choices became Reilly’s way of life - a way of life that has followed him through college. I could not be more grateful for the structure that culture provided during a time when peer influence can derail a high school student’s path to success. I credit the DFDC (and the great coaching) with putting Reilly on the right path and running beside him until he could see his way to his own potential.”

-Mimi Noonan
Mother of Reilly Grant ('14)

“From Justin’s first week as a freshman with the team he knew that he wanted to work hard and be great at his sport. What he didn’t expect was that the lessons he would learn would go far beyond XC. Through the influence of the wonderful coaches, mentorship from older teammates and hard training these young men discover their potential at a critical age. This transformation will affect the way they see the world and approach challenges throughout their lives. We have loved watching Justin grow through this sport over the last 4 years and are so grateful to the DFDC community for all of the support and friendships. Thank you for a lifetime of memories!”

-Vic and Laura Lew
Parents of Justin ('17)

A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATING CAPTAINS

Robby Winter

DFDC Class of 2017

6th Place Finish at Conference Champs.

Attending Northwestern University



From the very beginning, the DFDC taught me that running is an input-output sport--the more hard work you put in, the more you get out, no matter where you started from. So even though I was one of our slowest runners my freshman year, being a part of the incredible DFDC culture pushed me to work hard and become a varsity runner my sophomore year. More importantly than making me fast, the DFDC taught me how to be a teammate, to work hard, to set goals, to push myself, to make the most of opportunities, to be confident, to be more social, and to be a leader. In the end, the DFDC is a team that uses running to make my teammates and I better young men, and I think that's pretty great.

Justin Lew

DFDC Class of 2017

17th Place Finish at Conference Champs.

Attending Baldwin Wallace School of Music



The DFDC is an amazing, life changing program. The team accepts everyone, no matter how fast or slow. The DFDC has a unique, long lasting culture with tons of great traditions. Unlike most sports, cross country is one big team rather than splitting people up into varsity, junior varsity, and frosh/soph. Not only does the program teach you to be a better runner, but it teaches you important life skills and creates strong, long lasting bonds with your teammates!

Brett Schneider

DFDC Class of 2017

26th Place Finish at Conference Champs.

Attending the University of Illinois



I have had pretty much the same friends since elementary and middle school and we have become very close. But as I leave high school and go to college the thing I will miss most about Deerfield and high school in general is the cross country and track team. The relationships I have made with my teammates are like no other even though I played basketball for so long and always imagined myself as a basketball player in high school. I am very glad I made the switch to becoming a cross country and track athlete, and although running can hurt at times, the joy of success, winning and making great friends is worth it.