

What does respect really look like?

Running cross-country is one of my favorite things to do. Throughout my season, I realized that cross-country teaches students not only how to run, but also how to respect those around you.

One of the reasons I love running cross-country is the peaceful atmosphere. I always feel welcome and safe while running with my teammates. I believe that is because of the coaches emphasizing the importance of respect at every practice and meet.

Every day, it is expected that every runner says thank you or goodbye to at least one of the coaches. We show gratitude to them; they do the same to us. This shared respect allows our coaches to trust us for fun activities, going off school property and having practices run smoothly.

There are times when



A kid's perspective

By Brogan Hennessy

my team isn't running at its full potential or listening to directions from coaches. At these times, our coaches are serious and call us out for it. Then we show the coaches we are sorry by listening to their directions.

I know that we aren't trying our hardest on those occasions, and I understand why we must be recognized for it. To get better, we have to learn from the mistakes we make and respect the coaches enough to try our best.

Cross-country is one of the only sports I know

where the majority of people are cheering on other teams, and not just their own. I feel that is very important and rare, because in some sports people treat their opponents very poorly. This is what helps make the environment so welcoming.

As I am running, I see these people I don't know telling me I'm doing a great job. This encourages me to push myself and run the best race I possibly can.

I try to show respect by being there for my teammates. Everyone

always tries to run the fastest race at competition and practice. But being a good teammate is just as important to the coaches as running good times. Supporting other runners shows you want to be there and be a part of cross-country.

I also believe that respect doesn't have to be only for other people. I respect myself in running by trying my hardest and being the best I can. I know that not everybody will get up early on Saturday and go run 2 miles, but I know I can, so I do. There was a huge time during sixth-grade when I believed I couldn't compete, but I fought through it, got in shape and continued telling myself I could.

Mahomet-Seymour Junior High doesn't use the word slow. We have athletes who can run 2 miles in 11 minutes, and some that run races in

19 minutes. Time isn't all that important to the coaches, which is why I feel respected. I know that I will probably never be the fastest runner on my team, but I keep coming back because the team makes my role feel equally important.

In my mind, being a fast team is only half of what makes a team great. I feel that the way a team acts is as equally important. While other teams are messing around and not following directions, the Mahomet-Seymour Bulldogs know better and show it through our actions.

I love running, but I love who I run with even more. I know we are strong physically, mentally and socially. Running may not be for everybody, but I know it is for me. We are strong as athletes, and strong as people. We are Bulldogs, after all.