



VALHALLA, I'M
COMING!
GVXC 2025

Over the years, GVXC has been built into a program rich with tradition and success. I want to maintain the same level of commitment and competitiveness of the program along with finding ways to include all ability levels and add variety to the training. While being competitive in the conference and at the state level is the goal for the varsity athletes, I also want to stimulate and foster the joy of running for all. Running is a wonderful and healthy life-long activity that everyone can enjoy beyond their high school years. Having a positive coach/athlete relationship is very important to me and is, what I feel, is the difference between just training and coaching. Training is the science behind coaching with numbers, dates, times, etc. Coaching goes beyond the numbers and incorporates the personal aspect of getting to know what each kid needs on a given day. We all need to remember that these are kids who have a lot going on in their lives that affects their daily performance. My coaches and I will work with them physically and mentally to build towards a successful season.

To all the returning GVXC athletes, your role as team leaders will be important to help maintain the traditions, we have built up here at Geneva. Welcome the younger and new athletes to the program and help them to gain familiarity with the team's system and level of expectations. As coaches, we will rely on you daily at practice and at meets to set the tone and to make sure that everything is organized and done as expected.

To the new athletes, I welcome you to GVXC. By being part of this program, you are joining into a group of dedicated and inclusive athletes who work hard but have fun doing so. Most people think that cross country is an individual sport, but you will find that in this program, you are not alone. You have the support of the coaches and teammates, and many lasting friendships and memories are made during the season. There will be a lot of new things you will need to learn, but there will always be an upperclassman or coach to help you figure things out. You just need to be willing listen, learn, and have a positive attitude.

As you have noticed, I always sign off with "Run HAPPY", and I wanted to explain what is meant by each letter.
H – Hard – Each runner, no matter ability, can put forth a good effort when necessary in workouts and races.
A – Assertively – At certain times in races runners need to learn to be assertive and go for it!
P – Passionately – As a runner you need to have a passion that drives you to be the best you can be every day.
P – Patiently – It takes time to grow in fitness, there are no quick fixes, but given time your body will adapt.
Y – Your own race – Focus on yourself and don't let competitors dictate your race. Control your own destiny!

As we begin this new season of GVXC, the future is full of possibilities and excitement, and I look forward to working with my asst. coaches, athletes, and parents to make it a success. We need to seize each day and each run and have the right attitude to deal with whatever is thrown our way this season. We are all in this together, and the support and help from everyone is greatly appreciated.

Run HAPPY,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Raak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Coach Raak

Coaches' Profiles

Of course, GVXC is much larger than any one person, and I am blessed to have wonderful assistant coaches. With all their knowledge, experience, and passion for running, I am confident that they will help take GVXC to the next level. Please see below for a little about each member of the GVXC coaching staff.

Head Coach – Peter Raak – Praak@geneva304.org

I have been teaching science and coaching xc and track at Geneva HS since 2002. I started running on the junior high xc team and have stayed with it to this day. I continued to run cross country and track at Libertyville HS, the University of Vermont, and now run alongside athletes as a coach. Of late, I have transitioned to obstacle course racing (OCR) including the OCR World Championships a few years ago in Vermont. I look to continue to challenge myself with different events, and this year I plan to do an Elimination Style run at Johnson's Mound. Along with coaching XC, I have also been the Head Girls' Track and Field coach since 2006. Along with coaching, I also teach biology here at GHS. Science and running have always been passions of mine, and I feel blessed to have a job where I can pursue and share both my joys.

Asst. Coach – Ben Jeffrey – BTJeffrey@gmail.com (Be sure to spell correctly!)

Ben began coaching at GHS in 2018 and we are looking forward to having his enthusiasm and positive energy back for another year. He was a 3-sport athlete at St. Charles HS competing in XC, track, and wrestling. Since he started coaching xc again, Ben has found a renewed passion for running and has plans to continue to train for marathons and ultramarathons. Ben is also a social worker at the Independence Center for Early Learning in U-46. Along with coaching xc, he is also a wrestling coach in the winter at GHS. Ben and his wife reside locally in St. Charles, right by one of our favorite running hills, and has three growing children.

Asst. Coach – Tom Robertson – TRobertson@geneva304.org

Coach Robertson worked with GVXC in the past, and we are pleased to have him back in a part time role. He is also the boys distance coach for track and field, and it's nice to have a connection between the two programs. Tom also teaches 5th grade at Mill Creek. Tom has been an athlete involved in multiple sports with a focus on running his entire life. He competed at Taylor University and like Coach Raak, he focused on the steeplechase in track and field. Coach Robertson seems to always be in good shape, enjoys logging miles, and often competes in some ½ or full marathons each year. Coach Robertson lives in the area with his wife and boys who are busy and growing up fast!

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

IT'S ALL ABOUT DEDICATION, COMMITMENT, AND DISCIPLINE

PHILOSOPHY: *Our goal is to run a program where athletes are expected to make a significant commitment to self-improvement, yet which does allow for some consideration of external obligations. We strongly believe that success in Cross Country, as in any endeavor, is dependent on consistent effort and commitment to long-term term goals. Participation in high school athletics is not a right but a privilege; while we support all athletes, regardless of ability level, we feel that to earn the privilege of being on the team, all members must be willing to make an equivalent sacrifice. While we certainly encourage the development of well-rounded individuals, we also recognize that the value of athletics cannot be truly realized if the athlete is unable to make a full commitment to his/her sport. This may require that athletes have to make some difficult choices, but the team will derive strength from the shared sense of sacrifice that all individual members are making.*

Practices start promptly on school days Monday-Friday at 3:05 pm. Meet at the water tower M-F.

ATTENDANCE – Every athlete is expected to attend every practice. **Any season long conflicts with cross country (i.e.: club sports, work, other school activities) must be discussed with the head coach at the beginning of the season.** Practices are extremely important, because that's how we prepare for competition. Good cross-country athletes are made through lots of consistent, appropriately hard work. Missing a practice is a missed opportunity to better yourself and the team. If you are absent from school, you are also excused from practice and may not attend practice. It is also YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to email all the coaches ahead of time to let us know you will not be at practice. If you do not communicate about an absence, we will treat this as UNEXCUSED. We will need to know 1 week in advance if a meet is going to be missed. Even excused absences will need to be made up. More info to come on how to do this. Competing in the meet on weekend is only earned after attending 5 days of practices during the week and completing all the runs as directed by the coach. After the conference meet, only the team's top 7 boys plus 7 alternates will participate (practices and meets) in the state regional meet and beyond.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES – Missing a practice without a valid reason is a significant issue and will result in being ineligible to compete in the next meet you are scheduled to run. The athlete is still expected to attend the meet to support their teammates as a first step towards remediation. A second unexcused absence will result in being dismissed from the team.

TARDIES – Practice begins promptly on school days at 3:05 pm on Monday-Friday. Attendance will be taken at this time. Tardiness is unacceptable unless it was prearranged with the coaches' knowledge. Getting help from a teacher would be a perfect example. Please bring a pass from the teacher that was helping you. This tends to me more of an issue on days when there is no school. Please plan to arrive early, not at the last minute to avoid any tardies on these days. If you are late, there will be a 25 push-up penalty. If tardiness continues to be a regular occurrence, a discussion and remediation will take place if the athlete is to continue to be part of the program.

INJURIES – If an athlete is injured, attendance is still expected at practices and meets. If unable to run, the athlete can still keep in shape in a variety of ways under the advisement from the athletic trainer or doctor. If the athlete is taken out of participating by a doctor, please provide a note from the doctor explaining the nature of the injury. The athlete will not be able to resume participation until we receive a written notification from the doctor stating that the athlete is clear to do so.

CELL PHONES – With the exception of necessary situations, don't bring them to practice. Athletes should be focused on their practice at hand instead of messing with their phones. We often leave our bags out and unattended while we are out for a run, and ideally, phones should be kept in their lockers for safe keeping. This should hopefully eliminate any issues with lost/stolen phones and distractions at practice. Most of the time, there is no reason for track athletes to be on their cell phones at practice. To be on this team, athletes need to be able to survive for 2 hours without their phones. It is more than acceptable for an athlete to call home for a ride once practice is completely over, but not during stretching. The same goes for headphones. Besides being a distraction and a

safety concern while out running, I want to promote socializing with teammates, instead of isolating oneself with headphones.

Summary – BE THERE & BE ON TIME

ATTENDANCE

- Contact coaches in advance for **any and all** absences.
- No communication = unexcused = does not compete in the weekend's meet.
- Contact coaches directly in the event of emergency.
- Written excuse must be provided in advance for all non-emergency absences.
- Missed practices will need to be made up.

TARDIES

- **DON'T BE LATE!** Bring a parent note or teacher pass if you are.
- **25 pushups for being late**
- Habitual tardiness will result in a discussion if the athlete is to continue to be part of the team.

INJURIES

- Doctor's note is required to be excused from and returned to full participation.
- Attendance is still expected at practice

CONSEQUENCES

- 1st Unexcused absence: withheld from the next meet you are scheduled to compete in
- 2nd Unexcused absence: dismissed from the team

GVXC Code of Conduct

Words to RUN by

- **Respectfulness** – To teammates, coaches, fellow competitors, and all others we encounter out on runs.
- **Brotherhood** – Support, help, encourage, and trust one another.
- **Positivity** – Come to practice with a good attitude willing to listen, learn, and work appropriately hard.
- **Gratefulness** – Be thankful to be part of this team and don't take it for granted. Add to what makes this team special to be a part of.
- **Humility** – Think of more than yourself. Know that you are part of a team, a GVXC program that is greater than any one person.
- **Responsibility** – Be prepared and be on time every day for practice.
- **Dedication** – Be there for one another and the team, even when there are other challenges and opportunities. The team can count on you, just as you can count on the team.
- **Legacy** – How do you want to be remembered? Build the team in a positive direction.
- **Trustworthy** – Coaches and teammates can trust that you will do as asked, to your best in practice, make good choices, and represent GVXC positively out on runs, at meets, and in the classroom.
- **Accountability** – Hold yourself and teammates to these standards. Help and encourage teammates to follow these standards and dissuade others from deviating from the standards.

Geneva High School Cross Country Award Criteria

Qualifications for earning letters, etc.

FRESHMEN: All freshmen will receive numerals. You can earn a Minor "G" if you compete in half or more of the meets as the top 7 in a F/S level. You can earn a Varsity "G" if you compete in half or more of the meets at the varsity level.

SOPHOMORE: All sophomores will receive a minor "G". You can earn a Varsity "G" if you compete in half or more of the meets at the varsity level.

JUNIOR: All juniors will receive a JV "G". You can earn a Varsity "G" if you compete in half or more of the meets at the varsity level.

SENIOR: You will receive a Varsity "G" if you have been and active member in the cross-country program for all four years since you were a freshman or for all three years since you were a sophomore.

A certificate may be awarded if you already received an earned letter previously.

To be considered for an award or letter, in addition to the requirements listed above, you must complete the season in good standing. A PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATE may be awarded in lieu of a letter. The following criteria will be used and expected of you to complete the season in good standing:

- Effort in both practices and competition
- Punctuality and attendance
- Commitment to oneself and to the school or team
- Responsibility and accountability
- Good Sportsmanship
- Respect for coaches and fellow team member
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior as a representative of Geneva H.S.
- Stay academically eligible
- Complete all obligations in regard to uniforms and equipment
- Adhere to the Geneva High School Code of Conduct
- Coaches' discretion

Above all, have fun; enjoy the accomplishments this season will bring you with hard work, dedication and commitment. Winning an award is an honor and a privilege, not a gift. It has to be earned and achieved.

OTHER CROSS-COUNTRY INFORMATION

Rides To and From a Meet – The school provides bus transportation to and from all meets. It is mandatory that all athletes ride the bus. Athletes (or parents) may not drive or be driven to a meet. It is expected that all athletes remain for all races and awards even after the completion of their race early in the meet. We understand it may be necessary for a parent to take their child home from a meet. If this situation arises, a written notification must be given to either coach **7 days in advance**. The meet the week prior is a perfect time to do this. Only the parents may take their child home. Parents must personally come up to one of the coaches to inform them when they are taking you so we don't have to be looking around for you. Remember! – You cannot ride home with somebody else's parent or drive yourselves.

BUTTONS & STICKERS

We will be awarding buttons and stickers for individual accomplishments.

Buttons and stickers will be awarded as follows:

- You will receive a button every week of perfect attendance. Perfect means perfect, regardless if it's excused or not.
- You will receive a PR sticker when you run the fastest race of your life, a PR.

Most Valuable Runner Award – One girl and one boy will be selected for this varsity award. The team will vote for the award winners at the end of the season. This is not to be a popularity vote. Careful consideration of all varsity runners is important. Who were the leaders and role models? Who always set the positive examples? Who gave you encouragement? This person might be but is not always the teams' best athlete, but all things considered, would leave a big noticeable hole in the team if they had not been part of it.

Most Improved Runner Award – One girl and one boy will be selected for this varsity award. The coaches will determine the award winners based on season statistics. This usually includes the greatest drop of time over the course of the season from the previous season, therefore, freshman or anyone that did not compete for GHS the previous year are not eligible. In addition, consistent improvement, development of technique, understanding of the sport, and growth of character and leadership will be expected.

Uniforms – Every new runner will need purchase a new uniform jersey and shorts.

Warm-ups – Everyone will receive a warm-up jacket. These are in very good condition and need to remain that way. It is expected that all issued equipment is returned at the end of the season in the same condition (normal wear is expected to happen) as it was issued. Please wash in cold water and let it hang to dry.

The new uniforms with normal wear and care should last all 4 years if necessary. The coaches and some athletes were involved in the design process. We hope you like the results and wear them with pride.

Replacement/purchase cost on the garments is as follows:

- Boys Warm-up Jacket \$100.00 (these are brand new!)

Watches – It is expected that every runner has a watch every day. GPS watches have come a long way these days are an excellent training tool and provide a lot of data about your runs.

Academic Eligibility – Every athlete is required to meet weekly academic eligibility requirements. Requirements state that an athlete must be passing five courses, (including physical education and

driver education). If you become academically ineligible, it lasts for a week (it will begin on Monday and end on Saturday), assuming the grades were brought back up. You are still expected to practice and attend meets. Academic eligibility lists are posted weekly. Let a coach know before a crisis occurs so they can assist you get the help that you need. Your education comes first but with proper planning there is room for sports and other activities! Work on assignments and study for tests as they are assigned. Don't wait until the day before things are due. Missing a practice because an assignment is due the next day that you waited on when it was assigned two weeks earlier is unacceptable. You are a student/athlete and need to be responsible for both.

Captains/Leaders – All seniors were eligible and expected for this role. The selection focuses on dedication, commitment, understanding of the sport, demonstration of being a good positive role model, prior participation in the sport, leadership, ability to give direction, participation in the summer program and respect of his or her peers. We have girls and boys as leaders. Leaders are an extension of the coaches and carries with it responsibility and respect. Leaders must be willing to take charge, take responsibility, and have the team's best interest in mind.

If for any reason you have a concern or problem, please don't hesitate to talk with one of the coaches privately.

Geneva Vikings 2025 Cross Country Meet Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Meet Name</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>1st Race</i>	<i>*Bus</i> <i>Departure</i> <i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
8-30	Saturday	ALL	Kane County Invite	8:00am	7:10am	Settlers' Hill
9-6	Saturday	ALL	Leavy Invite	8:30am	7:10am	Settlers' Hill
9-20	Saturday	ALL	Richard Spring Invite	9:00am	5:00am Girls 5:15am Boys	Detweiller Park, Peoria IL
9-27	Saturday	ALL	Rock River Run	9:00am	6:15am	Woodlawn School, Sterling
10-4	Saturday	ALL	North Star Invite	9:00am	7:30am	LeRoy Oakes
10-8	Wednesday	ALL	Naperville Twilight	4:30pm	3:00pm	Settlers' Hill
10-18	Saturday	ALL	DuKane Conference Championship	9:00am	7:00am	Lake Park HS East Campus
10-25	Saturday	Varsity	Regionals	TBD	TBD	TBD
11-1	Saturday	Varsity	Sectionals	TBD	TBD	TBD
11-8	Saturday	Varsity	STATE	1pm G 2pm B	Leave Friday morning	Detweiller Park, Peoria IL

****Athletes are expected to be at GHS 15 minutes prior to the bus departure time.***

An information sheet will be handed out each week (and emailed) with information on each upcoming meet. This sheet will include race times, the race each athlete will compete in, directions to the meet, and the time the bus will depart.

This schedule is subject to change and still needs to be fine-tuned. The emailed weekly information sheets will have the most up to date information.

Sleep, Hydration, and Nutrition – These are ESSENTIAL to your success. Simple in concept, but difficult to follow through with. But if you are serious about maximizing your potential, these are equally, if not more important than the workouts.

- Along with training, these are the biggest factors to an athlete’s success and yet, they are often the most neglected.
- Sleep – 8 hours – Set a schedule and make this a priority in your life.
- Hydration – Carry a water bottle with you during school and refill before practice
- Nutrition – Your body is growing, and it needs to have plenty of fuel just for this stage in life. On top of that you are running every day and are putting more of a nutritional demand on your body. Have breakfast every day, snacks during the day, lunch, full plate at dinner with lots of carbs (add some more protein after workouts or races), another snack after dinner.
- In general, athletes should FUEL FREELY! At this age, they just need to be eating enough! Your body doesn’t care where the carbs, protein, or fats come from, it just needs them!

Geneva Vikings XC Race Day Nutrition

Credit: USOPC Sports Dietitians (<https://www.teamusa.org/nutrition>)

The day or two before, focus on carb loading. It’s the carbs that give your muscles energy, not protein. You still need protein and fat in your diet, but carbs are the key these days leading to the race.

With morning races, depending on when you race (some early, some hours later) have a light/heavy breakfast with foods that you know digest easily and well. Oatmeal, Cereal (be careful with milk), Bananas, Toast with Peanut butter, Breakfast Bar, etc. Bring snacks to consume afterwards and start the recovery process as meets tend to last until 1 or so. Post race dinner should focus on replacing carbs and protein for repair and rebuilding.

ATHLETE’S PLATE

HARD TRAINING / RACE DAY:

FATS
2 Tablespoons

- Avocado
- Oils
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Cheese
- Butter

Grains

- Pasta
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Cereals
- Breads

Lean Protein

- Poultry
- Beef/Game/Lamb
- Fish
- Eggs
- Low-Fat Dairy
- Soy (e.g., Tofu, Tempeh)
- Legumes/Nuts

Vegetables

- Cooked Veggies
- Veggie Soups
- Raw Veggies

FLAVORS

- Salt/Pepper
- Herbs
- Spices
- Vinegar
- Salsa
- Mustard
- Ketchup

Water
Dairy/Non-dairy Beverages
Diluted Juice
Flavored Beverages

Coffee
Tea

Geneva Vikings XC Race Day Warm Up

Arrival at race site

- In cool weather, dress to keep your body warm. Longer warmup jog may be needed. Keep sweats on.
- In hot weather, use shade, cool drinks, and light clothing to keep your body cool.
- Sip fluids if thirsty and eat small snacks if hungry
- Use the bathroom as needed

50 minutes before race start

- Jog for 5 minutes (start slowly, gradually build to a steady pace).
- *If you like to run a longer warm up, start earlier according to your run time, but meet back up with the entire team for a 5 min jog together.*

45 minutes before race start

- Stretch
 - Hurdle Stretch
 - Butterfly
 - Hug Knee
 - Pigeon Stretch (Butt 1)
 - Pretzel Stretch (Butt 2)
 - Down dog (calf)
 - Hip Openers (runners lunge)
 - Flamingos
 - Toe Taps
 - Leg Swings

30 minutes before race start

- Dynamic Warm Up Drills
 - High Knees
 - Butt Kicks
 - Stickman
 - Skip A
 - Skip B
 - Karaoke
 - Step Up, Reach Out, and Touch Toes

25 minutes before race start

- Complete 4 strides building speed and focusing on form.

15 minutes before start

- Jog to start line
- Put on spikes – Do a few more strides if desired and time allows.
- Prepare your mind.
 - Remember your “why.”
 - Remember your mantra.
 - Focus on what you can control.
 - Run HAPPY!
- Break it down enthusiastically! 1-2-3-GVXC!
- Exhale 2-3 times as you wait for the starting gun. You got this!

Coach Thomson was a long-time coach here at GVXC who built a successful program founded on many principles. Below are his Top Ten tips for success garnered over 40 years of coaching. You'll notice there are 11, which is classic Coach Thomson: when asked for 10, give 11!

Thomson Ten

1. Don't do anything stupid!
2. Summer is ½ the season
3. Hydrate, eat well, & get good sleep
4. Set realistic goals
5. Have patience and work hard
6. Team before self – self sacrifice
7. Test your limits
8. Trust yourself, teammates, & coaches
9. Be coachable and teachable
10. Always Believe!
- 11. HAVE FUN!**

Quotes of meaning:

The finish line is only the beginning of a whole new race – Teddy Ebersol

You'll never become a failure, until you fail to try – Unknown

Mental toughness surfaces in how you respond when the going gets tough. When things are going the worst, will you bring your best? – Jordan Hasay

The winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am. Others, on the other hand, concentrate their waking thoughts on what they should have or would have done, or what they can't do. – Dennis Waitle

To Give Anything Less Than Your Best is to Sacrifice the Gift. – Steve Prefontaine

A race is a work of art that people can look at and be affected in as many ways as they're capable of understanding – Steve Prefontaine

Success is measured by your racing time, not your training mileage - Unknown

You are the person who has to decide. Whether you'll do it or toss it aside; you are the person who makes up your mind. Whether you'll lead or will linger behind. Whether you'll try for the goal that's afar. Or just be contented to stay where you are. – Edgar A. Guest

Your success depends on your mental level of aspiration. If your standards are not high, you will wallow in mediocrity - Coach Joe Vigil

Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it – Maya Angelou