

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother...”

- from Shakespeare's *Henry V*

What we love most about Cross Country is the “oneness” it creates. Everyone on the team, from first man to 31st man, is doing the same thing in practice and competition. Everyone can relate to what each of his teammates is going through. We all understand – equally – the challenge that Cross Country training and racing presents because we are all going through it together. Metaphorically speaking, we shed blood together. Consequently, there is a bond that forms that is stronger than any other sport . . . or, perhaps, any other activity of any kind.

This team truly was *a band of brothers*. You cared about each other. The camaraderie you shared created a strong bond that made this team much more than a *collection of individual athletes*. In every competition it gave us an 8th man . . . a little extra edge over the countless *collection of individual athletes* we faced on the course throughout the season. It is what allowed our varsity to win the Burlington County Championship (for the 16th time in school history) while the JV squad beat the rest of the county combined by a score of 21 to 37. It is what rallied our freshman squad to an impressive victory in the South Jersey Open with a low score of 30 points. And, it is what helped our varsity seven all set personal bests at Holmdel on the day of the State Championships to place 8th in one of the deepest fields ever, while the rest of the team was there cheering them on. Yes, it felt special this year, and each of you contributed to that through your commitment to the team and your appreciation of each other.

The kind of camaraderie we enjoyed this year would not have been possible were it not for the leadership of our seniors. Whether it was first year runner, **Josh Annandsingh**, working hard and dropping almost 4 minutes from his 5k time during the season; or **Lenny Wen**, dealing with a season-ending injury but still cheering on the varsity runners at each championship race; or **Noah Gil**, fighting all season for a spot in the varsity seven, and keeping just as positive an attitude whether he was racing with the varsity or cheering from the course. Each of you helped to make this a great year for Cherokee Cross Country. In particular, we owe a debt of gratitude to senior captain, **Justin DeTone**, our lone four-year runner. Always a responsible, hardworking athlete, Justin took it a step further this year. In addition to leading by example, as he always has, Justin assumed the responsibilities of team captain and did a great job of being that needed liaison between the coaches and the team. Neither the positive team attitude nor the success we enjoyed this season would have been possible without the outstanding leadership Justin provided. His selection by the South Jersey Track Coaches Association as the recipient of the Cross Country Scholar-Athlete award was well deserved. Thank you Justin, Noah, Lenny and Josh for your contributions to the Cherokee Cross Country Program. Our best wishes go with you as you move on to college. Please know that, whatever we accomplish in the coming years, you are, and will always be, a part of it . . .

. . . *"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."*

- Thomas Jefferson

Underclassmen, we also respect your efforts and appreciate your contributions. Led by **Nick Falk** and **Jack Shea**, two of the three top sophomores in school history (along side state champion and hall-of-famer, Marc Pelerin), it is an incredibly talented group of returning runners that has us very excited at next year's team prospects. In fact, with three freshmen earning varsity letters and six freshmen among the top 15 on this year's squad, the future looks bright for years to come. But, for now, let's keep our sights set on next year . . . on what is possible by next November. Dream big dreams, set the goals high . . . then do what is required to reach them.

"With ordinary talent and extraordinary perseverance, all things are possible."

- Sir T. F. Buxton

Thank you . . .

Thank you **parents** for the support you provide. It may not be said often enough but your sons . . . and their coaches . . . truly appreciate it.

Thank you, **Mrs. McShane**, for being an awesome booster club president!

Thank you, **Mr. Agnew**, for being an athletic director that truly appreciates Cross Country!

Thank you, **Mr. Smyth**, for all the great photos and for keeping the website up to date!

Most of all, thank you athletes for your hard work and dedication. As your coaches, we feel incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to work with such great young men. We are proud of you!

- Coach Shak & Coach Cal