

why do i run cross country

Sydney Denton

Why do I run Cross Country

Run. To move at a speed faster than a walk. For me, it is the way of life. Cross Country. Across fields or country-sides. To me, this is my family. Running isn't just a pick-up and go, as someone once told me it's a process in itself, a regular task done at the same time repeated over and over as the days run on.

Who would attempt to push far beyond his second breaking point when most people would give up far before their first? Runners are a peculiar bunch to most; we attempt to push beyond, we bond through the appreciation of pain, knowing we go through it together. Before there were basketballs, there was the simplicity of feet alone. Running is our happy place, where nothing matters. You can decompress and reflect on life.

To describe running would be like someone that's blind trying to see. Running makes me who I am. We are unique, the uncommon kind maybe even a rare breed. This sport is unlike all others, you either fail or succeed to your own willpower, no one to blame except for yourself.

The reason I love this sport so much, is because it's not only physically challenging, but mentally challenging as well. No matter how physically inclined you are, this sport will always be mind over body.

For a runner a race doesn't start on the starting line, but the night before when we feast on pasta and bread. We load up on all the carbs our bodies can obtain. Our diet and sleep before race day can be a big determinate in our performance, but the biggest factor is where you're at mentally, such a small thing that in the end has the greatest effect.

It's an hour before our race, you will find us clothed in warm-ups and

walking the course to determine our game plan. When returning to camp, I try envisioning the race, everything I once feared is now gone, I've said goodbye to negative thoughts. In my headphones go, and my mind is now in the zone. Finally, it's time to warm up with 10 minutes left. This is the most crucial part before the race while focusing on breathing as my nerves take over, I take my trainers off to put on my spikes.

My toes now sense the tight fit and notice these aren't regular running shoes while my body sends electrical pulses of adrenaline telling my mind it's time to race. I say a small prayer hoping that God will keep me mentally tough through this race, knowing that with him I can conquer all things.

Running is a way to connect and cleanse my mind, to see the world for what it is. Cross Country is the way of life illustrating how I can overcome all my struggles. No matter how bad you want to quit there's always something waiting on the other side. I have experienced pain beyond my comprehension and the unwillingness surrendering to it. I have witnessed best friends collapse in exhaustion.

The beauty of running stems from a choice, the choice to continue to live life in the best way possible. Running is freedom, with no rules, stipulations and on a run, infinite paths reveal themselves like opening doors. With every step that strains our burning muscles, With every gulp of breath and no air in return, I will never give up for the satisfaction of achievement awaits and failure isn't in a runner's vocabulary.

With every instinct telling me to stop, my stomach feels as if tiny shreds are slowly tearing apart but with each step, I lunge forward faster knowing that pain is always temporary and will inevitably come to an end. This is why I run Cross Country.

- Sydney Denton