

Waxahachie Cross Country

Cody Herndon was the first Waxahachie runner to qualify for State in Cross Country, was part of the 1995 State Qualifying Team who made Waxahachie History by making it to State for the first time in the schools history.

What do you feel where the changes that helped your team from your junior to your senior year to the programs first District Championship and its first berth into State? There were multiple forces at play that impacted our rise from the '94 season to the '95 season. From my vantage point, one of them was simply maturity in the sport. I didn't compete in Cross Country until my junior year. Many of the others on our team were active in the soccer program and others, like myself, ran in the 800m or the mile in track. So our '94 season was a learning process. It was also a learning process of building belief in ourselves, in one another as a team, and as a program. There was no history in the sport up to this point. If I recall correctly, I was the first to reach Regionals in over 20 years in the '94 season and the first ever to qualify for state (individually or team) in '95. When you are trying to build a belief system in the sport, the team, and yourself, having no history in the program can be a huge obstacle to overcome. But we bonded. We pushed each other. We believed that we could leave a legacy. And coming into the '95 season, we had leaders emerge that KNEW we could go to State. I believe that Coach Woodhouse also paved the way as he pushed us more and more each year to become the leaders we needed to be, as well as the runners we needed to be. Timing was great as we had some amazing athletes. But there are plenty of amazing athletes whose talents are never fostered correctly. Coach Woodhouse knew how to foster our talents and maximize them.

Did you run year around your junior and senior year? I competed in Football, Basketball, Track and Cross country. Once I left football to compete in Cross Country, I still had obligations during basketball season. But, that proved to play in my favor as the drills we conducted in basketball made me tough to contend with in a sprint out. I was also enrolled in basketball as 1st period year round so during Cross Country season I would compete in basketball drills early in the morning through first period and then run in the afternoons.

Did you have a summer program? As the program was young, there was no formal program. But I knew that if you did not train during the summer, you would not improve. I ran some meets with USA Track and Field summer program but mainly ran on my own. I did not do sprint work during the summers but would run 3-7 miles per day, 4 days per week, at a 75% pace, just so that I did not have to "start over" in the fall. In hindsight I wish I would have treated the summer like an "offseason" for football players. In the offseason, football players really hone in on their skills so that they are better players the next season. I was just trying to stay in shape as opposed to vast improvements.

What was the most mileage you run in the summer per week? 20 miles per week was the most I put in during the summer months. Again, if I had to do it over again, I would probably increase that mileage as well as incorporate some track work.

What is something you would tell the athletes in today's program? There are MANY things I would say. The first of which is to understand nutrition and the role it plays. My parents were great cooks. But it certainly wasn't always the healthiest. And as with many other families and time constraints, there were a lot of sugary cereals and drive thru burgers. Additionally, I drank sodas much more than I drank water. After Cross-Country and Basketball of my Junior year, I stepped on the track again in which I competed in the mile and two mile. The previous season I ran in the 10:40's for the two mile. I had the hopes that leaving football and competing in Cross Country would help drive those times lower. But there I was, running in the 10:40's still. It was a meeting with Coach Woodhouse that we talked about nutrition and the things I would need to change. We took out the sodas. We implemented good breakfasts and complex carbs for fuel. By the end of the season I had set the school record twice in the two mile with times dropping from the 10:40's to 10:16 and 10:13 respectively. My mile times dropped as well from the high 4:50's to 4:41 that season. They continued to drop the following year in Cross Country and in track and I attribute a lot of that to nutrition. So, get your nutrition right!

Additionally, take pride in yourself and what you are doing. You never know what it is going to lead to. You never know who you will become because of it. As the sport did not get a lot of notoriety, I remember having the sense that I wasn't one of the coolest "athletes" on campus. Waxahachie, and all of Texas for that matter, is known for Football. Our basketball team was ranked number 11 in the nation my senior year. So Cross Country wasn't on people's radar. But we put it there. We built a legacy. At the time we didn't realize it. We knew we had a goal of reaching State but had no idea what we were creating for ourselves and for our school. The great thing about goals is the person that you must become in the process to achieve them. The mental strength, belief, never give up attitude, the will to win, the leadership, the mentality to always be Challenging myself...all of that came from Cross-Country. Those are attributes you will carry with you your entire life. I use them today to inspire people all over the Country and the world, to be a leader and facilitate change in our Healthcare system, and to be the friend, son, father, brother, and husband that my friends and family deserve.

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