Saint John’s High School Cross Country History

In 1957, Brother Chad, the Saint John’s Headmaster, wanted to expand the athletic offerings beyond the traditional sports and brought Brother Berard to Saint John's from Saint Xavier High School in Louisville, Kentucky where he had coached many successful cross country and track and field teams. In 1957, the first year of Cross Country at Saint John's, the team posted a record of three wins and four losses, but one of the wins came in the last meet of the season when the team registered a major upset by downing Wachusett Regional of Holden by a score of 27 - 28. For the next two years the team grew in number of participants and in prowess and in 1959 posted its first winning season with a record of five wins and two losses.

In fall of 1960, Seniors and Juniors as well as some Freshmen and Sophomores moved from Temple Street in Worcester to Main Street in Shrewsbury. The remainder of the underclassmen stayed on Temple Street while construction was being completed on the cafeteria, gymnasium and classrooms in what is now Conal Hall. From 1960 to 1963 the cross country team was a victim of the split campus.

The second manifestation of the sport occurred in the fall of 1964 when Brother Fintan Curran turned runners loose on the roads, trails and fields around the Shrewsbury campus. That year Shrewsbury High School was Saint John's first Cross Country opponent, the Pioneers won the inaugural meet defeating the 1962 State Champions, starting an intense rivalry that continues to this day. Wachusett Regional of Holden, shut out the Pioneers by a score of 15 to 50, yet another great rivalry was born. In 1966 Doherty High School of Worcester opened its doors and the first athletic event in Doherty's history was a cross country meet with Saint John's, won by the Highlanders. Many opponents have come and gone over the years but these three traditional rivals provide a link to the past and a standard for all Pioneer Teams to measure themselves against. The 1964 team achieved a record of five wins against three losses establishing a winning tradition that continues to this day. Only one team in fifty five years failed to post a winning record.

Over the years the team has compiled nineteen undefeated seasons and a dual meet record of four hundred eighty five wins against ninety losses and one tie, a winning percentage of .842. Saint John's Cross Country teams have won forty conference championship meets and fifty-one invitational meet titles including Wachusett, Kiwanis, Middlesex News, Catholic Memorial, Brown University, Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association, Wickham Park, Ocean State, Manhattan College Eastern States Invitational and the Bowdoin Cross Country Classic. The teams have won twenty six MIAA Central Sectional Championships and made forty five appearances in the MIAA All State Meet. Highlighted by a state championship in 2017, the Pioneers have finished among the top five teams in the All State Meet on thirteen occasions including runner up performances in 1998, 1999, 2006 and 2015. Since 1968, when the MIAA adopted its current qualifying format, no other team in the state can claim more appearances in the state final than the Pioneers. In its fifty eight year history, the Cross Country Team has won a total of six hundred three competitions, an average of more than ten per year.
Individually, thirty eight Pioneer harriers, including the 2018 champion, Co-Captain Michael Hayeck '19, have won conference championships. Twenty five Pioneers have won individual invitational meet championships, including Joshua Rahn '2018 who won the MSTCA Championship at the Bay State Invitational Meet. Eleven Pioneer Harriers have been crowned MIAA Central Sectional Champions including Rhan, the 2017 champion. Christopher Georgules class of 1991 and Jonathan Green class of 2013 won two titles each. Other Pioneer Sectional Champions were John Turpin 1975, Jeffrey Daoust 1987, Eric Burns 1992, Timothy Curran 1998, Jonathan Drappi 1999, Richard Downing 2000, Matthew Tieuli 2005 and Ben Kovacs in 2016.

Georgules was the Individual State Champion in 1990 and Green captured back to back State Titles in 2011 and 2012. Green set all time records on the 5000 meter Goddard State Park Course in Warwick, RI with a time of 15:29.0, the Gardner Golf Course, 13:50.8 for 2.9 miles and on Northfield Mountain's 5000 meter course at 15:29.7. Georgules placed fourth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional Championship and advanced to the National Finals in San Diego as one of the top thirty-two runners in the country. Green made two trips to San Diego, his second after finishing second in the Northeast Regional to the eventual national champion, Edward Cheserek.

The history of the sport of Cross Country at Saint John's High School is indeed defined by a tradition of excellence.

2017 Division I Cross Country State Champions
Thomas Goodhue, Mitchel Witt, Dominic Mastromatteo, Tyler Griffin, Joseph Walsh, Joshua Rhan, Patrick Craemer, John Sullivan, Benjamin Morris, Jeffrey Secrist