

XC 2021 Season Summary

The Ridge Girls Cross Country team started the season off strong with a win in the senior race at the Ocean Country Park Invitational. The freshmen girls also earned themselves some medals at their first high school cross country race. This meet really set the tone for the season, giving the girls the confidence to attack bigger races and go for their goals throughout the season.



Nearly a week later, the junior varsity squad competed at the Magee Memorial Class Meet. The biggest highlight of this meet was freshman, Mattea Ryan, placing 5th in the freshman girls 2 mile race in a time of 13:26.80. This was the first team appearance of many at the course at Oak Ridge Park. It was a great opportunity to trial the course and learn the best way to run it.



Our first bigger meet of the season was the Somerset County Meet at the team's home course, Pleasant Valley Park, with almost all of the girls competing. Despite not securing the team title, seniors Sammie Shimsky and Grace LaCapra placed in the top 5 finishers. In addition, the junior varsity scored big with their win in their race with some fast times from the top 5 runners.

Again, the junior varsity girls showed off their hard work when they won the Skyland Conference Championship with a HUGE margin of 55 points! Senior Lilly Keiling blew the competition away with a 1st place finish. In the varsity race, Sammie Shimsky raced her way into the top 5 finishers. For the varsity girls as a whole, the conference proved itself to be the toughest race of the season.

The Deer Park Invitational served as a much needed confidence booster and opportunity for all the girls to work on correcting past mistakes before moving on to larger scale meets. The girls raced exactly as planned, sticking to that 'pack mentality' that successful cross country teams demonstrate. This meet can be considered the turning point in their 2021 Cross Country season.



The JV/Frosh State Championships marked the last race of the season for many of the girls. They truly left it all out on the course. Many JV and freshman girls won lots of medals, ran multiple personal bests, and ended the season on a good note.

The highlight of the 2021 Ridge Girls Cross Country season was their win at the State Sectional Meet. This was their first time becoming North 2 Group 4 Sectional Champions since 2014. Everyone did their part which resulted in many personal best times and 5 girls placing within the top 20!

After the Viking Last Chance Meet at Oak Ridge Park, it was a final great accomplishment for the team to qualify for the Group 4 State Meet. The girls raced their hearts out and the seniors will forever remember this bittersweet final meet in their high school Cross Country careers.

Congratulations Girls!

Cross Country Highlights

Coaches

Captains

<p>Coach Braga-<i>Girls Head Coach</i> Coach Gilhuley-<i>Boys Head Coach</i> Coach Evangelist, Coach Alston, Coach O'Connor, Coach Lyons</p>	<p>Grace LaCapra Samantha Shimsky Maura Medenilla</p>
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Varsity

Jannah Attia	Katharine Frank	Christine Haggard	Lilly Keiling	Grace LaCapra
Maura Medenilla	Jamie Melillo	Cate Morath	Mattea Ryan	Sara Sahadi
	Zarin Saifee	Samantha Shimsky	Annika Svensson	

Junior Varsity

Addison Daniel	Elayna Douglas	Jane LaCapra	Emerson McCarty	Emma O'Leary
Allison Ott	Valentina Paez	Maia Ryan	Maisha Takahashi	Grace Tan
		Yuying Wang		

Freshmen

Jackie Grant	Madura Rajkumar	Lina Randriatsimalona	Madeline Troso
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<p><u>Skyland Conference Honors-Raritan Division</u> Samantha Shimsky: 1st Team All Conference Grace LaCapra: 2nd Team All Conference Katharine Frank: Honorable Mention</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Awards</u> Most Improved Freshman: Mattea Ryan Most Improved Grades 10-12: Christine Haggard</p>
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Girls WON the North 2 Group 4 State Section!

Athletes of the Month

<p><u>September: Sammie Shimsky</u> Samantha Shimsky had a standout performance at our first meet of the season. On September 17, Sammie competed at the Battle @ Ocean County Park in the Senior Girls 5K race. She put herself in the race from the beginning and placed 3rd in a time of 19:35. Her efforts led her three-person team to victory. Sammie's dedication to her training is paying off and we're excited to see what else she will accomplish this season.</p>	<p><u>October: Mattea Ryan</u> Mattea Ryan is a freshman this year, but has already established herself as a varsity athlete. Over the course of the season, she has dropped over three minutes off of her 5k time. This culminated in a PR at the Red Devil Invitational where Mattea ran an impressive time of 21:16. She has had to step up due to athlete injuries and compete in the State Section, as well as in the upcoming Group Championship meet. Her journey is only beginning and we are incredibly excited to see where it goes.</p>	<p><u>November: Christine Haggard</u> Christine Haggard worked incredibly hard all season. She consistently performed well in workouts, but was struggling to reach her full potential in meets. Due to unforeseen injuries and illnesses, Christine was asked to step in and run in the North 2 Group 4 State Section, which was going to be an incredibly close race. That day Christine had a breakout performance and ran a minute and a half faster than her previous time with a PR of 20:40. She ended up finishing in the top 20 and helped our team win its first sectional victory since 2014. It would not have been possible without her!</p>
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