

Why I Love XC
by Bevin McDevitt '16

Preseason for cross-country is my least favorite part of summer. The weather is hot, sticky and humid and I always manage to get sunburnt. What makes up for the worst part of the summer is being with the best and most supportive team during those hard first weeks. As a freshman, I remember being frightened to go into high school, and the thought of joining a team was terrifying. The first day of preseason I walked up and shyly introduced myself to everyone in a whisper. I was assigned a "buddy" who I then spent the next weeks running with. I knew immediately that I had made the right decision by joining the team.

Last week, I was trying to avoid thinking about this season coming to an end I began to remember about what it was that made me love the team so much, and why I wanted to be a part of it in the first place. From my very first week freshman year, the encouraging atmosphere of the team and friendly smiles from everyone carried me through difficult practices. During those hard, sweaty, weeks we were often rewarded with watermelon feasts or refreshing swims. Inspiring posters and baked goods filled my locker each week, and I couldn't help but smile when looking at action shots on the website. Not much has changed, except I now get the honor of designing posters.

"Family" is the word that comes to mind when I think of our cross-country team. Unlike other teams we do everything together. From weekly team dinners and manhunt, to boxer-polo day, you could say we become pretty close. Dress like Profe day, Jerome's after ManVites and the timed mile are some of the reasons I have stuck with this family.

My life would not be the same without the team, without you all. How is it possible that all the best people land on this team? The team eased my transition into high school, helped push me to my limits, and encouraged me to try my hardest. Without the traditions and the people that carry them on, it would not have been the same experience. I am proud to say that I have been a member of the cross-country family, and I know that these memories will stay with me forever. I will miss the stretching circle, I will miss our goofy team spirit, and most of all I will miss everyone who has made these four years the best they could have been. I can't believe I am saying it, but I will even miss that feeling of absolute relief and exhaustion after crossing the finish line. I will miss *this* more than I can describe. I know I am only a small part of Hanover Cross-Country, but Hanover Cross-Country is by no means a small part of me.