**Checkers Cross-country Factsheet**

Below you will find the key information needed to enjoy the Checkers XC season and specifically participation in the Pete Glavin XC (PGXC) series which is a 5 race series with info on the Genesee Valley Harriers website [here](http://www.gvh.net/pete-glavin-xc-series/).

This doc does target novice participants so for the well-initiated here’s the key info you need:

* + Sign-up link for the Pete Glavin XC Series is [here](https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/Rochester/PeteGlavinXCSeries).
  + Yes you can sign up on the day but it’s not advised
  + Singlets are an additional $10 with race sign-up paid to the XC team captains (Amy & John McMahon, Pete & Kelsey Gratien) or our XC administrator Collen Newman
  + No, you don’t have to wear the black shirt to participate but it’s preferred
  + Carpool: Race 1 in Syracuse, September 11. We are meeting at the I-90 / Transit Rd. Park & Ride at 7:30am for a 7:45am departure

**So you’re thinking of signing up for Cross-country! Here’s what you need to know:**

* **First you need to sign up for the races.**
  + Sign-up link for the Pete Glavin XC Series is [here](https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/Rochester/PeteGlavinXCSeries).
  + You have the option to sign up for the series or individual races.
  + The series is $85, individual races are $25 each. Each sign-up has a processing fee ($5.93 for series, $2.45 for individual race) plus tax, so 3 races individually is cheaper than the series price but only just.
  + Yes you can sign up on the day but that’s not advised, these are long drives for the ‘away’ events and it doesn’t give us a chance to plan teams, make sure we have a shirt for you etc.
* **Which brings us to shirts**
  + The Checkers XC shirt is a black singlet
  + The singlets for 2022 are the same as the 2021 singlets
  + Singlets are an additional $10 with series sign-up paid to the XC team captains (Amy & John McMahon, Pete & Kelsey Gratien) or our XC administrator Collen Newman
  + Singlets are $25 to those participating Checkers members who have not signed up for the series
  + No, you don’t have to wear the black shirt to participate. Any Checkers shirt will do, it just looks pretty badass when we’re all in the black singlets.
* **What’s all this talk about USATF?**
  + USATF is it’s whole own thing, we will be doing another one of these factsheets just for USATF
  + Where there’s cross-over and where some of the confusion comes from is as follows:
    - The last race of the Pete Glavin series is a USATF 8k Cross-country championship. This year on November 6. For this race, USATF members sign-up with an association to a club for the club USATF competition.
    - The same folks who coordinate our USATF events are coordinating XC. They are separate but same folks lead us as a club so they can feel like they are more related than they are
    - If you’re a USATF member you get a discount on sign-up for PGXC
* **What are the gear requirements for XC**
  + From the knees up you’re going to make all of the same choices you would for a road race based on weather, etc.
  + Shoes is where XC differs, but you pretty much have just two options – trail shoes, or XC spikes. This is because you can find yourself running through muddy areas. If you know it’s going to be dry under foot you can absolutely get away with regular running shoes
  + Each race has a different variety of surfaces to run on. Some with extended sections of gravel which is not ideal for spikes, most will be on predominantly grass, some have trail sections, some will have road crossings, often a race combines all of these surfaces.
  + XC spikes are different from track spikes, they are a more robust shoe. As always, the internet has a wealth of info on this stuff for runners. I found this article [here](https://www.livestrong.com/article/437454-what-is-the-difference-between-track-spikes-cross-country-spikes/).
  + A good idea if you are not sure is go trail shoe, and if you have XC spikes, bring both just in case the surface is not suitable for your spikes
  + Apart from shoes think about the prospect of getting wet and consider bringing a towel and a full change of clothes for after the race
  + Bring post-race snacks and yum-yums and drinks – more on this further down.
* **Some of these events are 2 hours away! How do we get there?**
  + Well, we don’t have a Checkers bus *yet* so we all drive there!
  + There is an informal car-pooling solution involving meeting up at the I-90 / Transit Rd Park & Ride
  + Timings for the Park & Ride will vary slightly race to race and will not exist for the Akron event
  + Race 1 in Syracuse of September 11. We are meeting at the Park & Ride at 7:30am for a 7:45am departure
* **What happens when we arrive?**
  + There is a registration desk / packet pick up type station at each race for you to go and collect your race number and make sure you are entered correctly
  + Once you are registered and have your number look for Checkers Shirts and the Checkers flag (if someone remembers to bring it!). Reminder that Amy & John McMahon are the masters team captains and Kelsey and Pete Gratien are the open team captains, Colleen Newman is our administrator and any number of the Checkers board will be participating. So look for these faces in the crowd if you have any burning questions not answered here.
  + There is no coordinated warm-up! The reason being we are all different paces and have different needs. So do you. You should have an idea how to do a 10 min low aerobic warm-up jog followed by stretches (just think back to your last track session and do what Vicki had you do). You will see folks heading out in groups to warm-up, these folks simply know each other and know they have the same warm-up needs. Sometimes you’ll hear folks coordinating, if you do, just tag along. Don’t be offended if folks take off without you, it’s not a snub of any kind, it’s just folks focused on the race, getting themselves ready to kick \*ss. Look for faces from your track night group and chat about warm-up to get a group going. Worst case just trot it out (you’ll see tons of other folks warming up solo) and use the time to gather your thoughts about your race.
  + There is a coordinated Cheer! About 5 mins before the start you’ll see folks congregating at the start line. Line up with the checkers team and wait for Pete Gratien to call everyone in and lead the cheer. Enjoy!
  + Get back to the start line, and find yourself a spot. Pick a depth from the front of the pack / start line that represents your ability. Same as any road race, you neither want to be in someone’s way, or scrambling past slower starters.
* **What happens after the race?**
  + The XC finish line has a different feel from regular road races in that there are very few spectators at these events. Almost everyone there is either part of the organizer crew or is a participant. This means the finish line can be a little sparse.
  + Folks do tend to hang out at the finish to watch everyone come in but depending on a person’s finish time, whether or not folks got wet, and what someone’s preferred cool-down entails you will notice folks drifting away as time passes.
  + If you are a towards the tail end of the pack, unfortunately the finish line can be a little quiet. For this reason, we encourage all participants to hold on at the finish line for as long as possible to cheer all members home but also want everyone to understand up front that **everyone’s effort is appreciated by Checkers!!** Do not take a sparse finish line negatively, just congratulate yourself on a job well done for the team and come find everyone to get warm!!
  + Similar to warm-up, you will see folks trotting out cool-down runs. Exactly the same as the warm-ups these are not team coordinated groupings these are just spontaneously folks wanting to do the same thing at the same time. Keep your eyes and ears open and ask around if anyone is doing a cool down.
  + Typically there is some kind of shelter, where everyone groups up to hear the results and share snacks and yum-yums. Do pack yourself a few bites and something to drink to refresh yourself after the race, and enjoy the rousing cheers as all of the checkers winners are announced!!!
  + Congratulations on your first XC with Checkers!!! Enjoy a safe drive home and if car-pooling swap tales with co-passengers and refine your story of an amazing experience for co-workers on Monday.