

Montana Cup Vision Statement

The Montana Cup cross-country meet offers an exploration of Montana's vast & magnificent open spaces: the racecourse is a new discovery for participants. It is not a road race, nor is it an ultra-endurance trail run. It is a team race, which brings together runners from all of Montana's cities for competition, racing across country, for the glory of claiming a "traveling trophy" - the Montana Cup.

The Montana Cup's underlying mission is to unite the state's widespread runners & running communities, to foster continued training & racing among Montana runners of all ages, and to leave each participant thinking "that course was excellent, exciting & beautiful!"

Montana Cup Rules

These rules were established to provide the event's direction, design, & consistency. The current *USATF Rule of Competition* (available online in pdf format) will apply as default rules in situations where the Montana Cup Rules inadequately address important rules issues that must be resolved.

1. Host city will be selected from this rotating schedule: Bozeman-Billings-Great Falls-Kalispell-Butte-Missoula-Helena
 - A city may forgo its turn to host in which case the next in the rotation may host.
 - Hosts may switch hosting turns upon mutual agreement.
2. Host city/organization shall retain all of the races' financial proceeds or absorb all losses.
 - Host will produce & release (to subsequent hosts) a profit / loss statement for the event.
 - Host is responsible for organization, promotion & staging expenses incurred by race officials.
 - Host will inherit (at no charge) all surplus jerseys from the previous host.
3. Men's & women's races shall be run separately but over the same course, starting about mid-day on the weekend following the state high school meet. Men race first only during odd years.
4. **Racecourse specifications:** A centrally important task for successfully hosting the Montana Cup is thoughtfully designing and then preparing a simple, fun and effective race route.
The following are required:
 - From 5 to 8 kilometers in distance, marked in kilometers, and safety & directional markings are obvious.
 - Blaze orange flags / cones (or another high visibility/contrasting color) shall be used to mark the course adequately under all possible race-day conditions. Paint/marking chalk may supplement (but not replace) flags / cones. Space flags / cones to be clearly visible and so that the next marker along the course shall always be easily within the line of sight/visibility.
 - Marshals / physical barriers shall be provided on courses where there is any critical location that could, even with good markings, have the possibility of someone going off course.
 - Shelter & toilet(s) will be provided for runners at start & finish area(s).
 - Course audit – course setup decisions are the responsibility of the host; however, before the ~September 1st opening of participant registration, host will invite Cup Committee members (see "Cup Committee" rule below) to preview tentative race course to discuss/review/consider/advise important course design/setup issues. Committee members are not obligated to attend; but, goal is that committee members from at least 3 Cup team-regions attend.
 - Host shall produce & distribute a course map on race-day.
5. Seven standing teams will exist, representing Montana's largest cities (see "Uniform" rule below). A runner **must** compete for the city that he/she lives in or geographically nearest to. Eligible runners (see "Eligibility" rule below) who attend a college in a Montana town other than their hometown can choose to run for either their college town or their hometown.
6. **Registration** (Done exclusively via online registration service ... no USPS mail-in registrations allowed):
 - No race-day registration.
 - Early registration ends, at latest, 2 weeks prior to the Friday before the Cup.
 - Late registration fee of at least \$10 more than early registration closing not later than noon on day prior to meet.
7. **Eligibility:**
 - Each scoring runner must be a current Montana resident & must not be a member of a collegiate cross country team ('Red-Shirt' or otherwise). Endurance/distance runners who intend to be included on the following spring's collegiate track team rosters are also excluded by this rule.
 - State residency is defined as "currently living, working, or schooling inside Montana." This includes military personnel stationed in state.
 - Non-resident/ collegiate runners may enter to run unaffiliated, but they must purchase and wear a purple jersey, and they will not be eligible for scoring or prizes.
8. **Uniforms:** Participants may not race without wearing an official MT Cup jersey with logo. The price of that jersey shall be included in the entry fee, unless the entrant already possesses an official uniform from a previous year.
 - Team jersey colors are: Billings – Black, Bozeman – Gold, Butte – Green, Great Falls – Red, Helena – Blue, Kalispell – White, Missoula – Maroon, Unaffiliated – Purple
 - Pre-race jersey inspection required.
 - Conducted by Meet Director or designee ~five (5) minutes prior to each race start.
 - Team organizer responsible to make every reasonable effort to supply an official jersey for each runner.

9. Each master and junior competitor must be able to verify her or his age. Masters (40+ years) must compete with an "M" on the back of race jersey. Juniors (19 and under) must complete with a "J" on jersey back.
10. Each team's organizer(s) shall be reimbursed a sum equal to his/her entry fee, provided he/she competes as part of a scoring team (5 or more scoring runners). Host may grant additional incentives.
11. **Finish line procedure:** At a minimum, primary and secondary methods of recording participant finish order & time will be employed by the meet host.
 - The Montana Cup Scoring (MCS) program is recommended as the primary timing and scoring method.
 - A *MS Access* program that requires
 - Considerable practice to master -- see "MCS for Dummies" step-by-step instruction sheet.
 - Elevated or otherwise unobstructed finish line view of finishers.
 - No danger of interference from finish line spectators or meet officials.
 - In the event the computerized scoring system(s) malfunctions on race day, the meet host shall be prepared to hand-score the meet and give awards with accuracy and in a reasonable amount of time immediately following the meet.
 - Motion filming is recommended as a final backup.
12. **Scoring:** The second of the two centrally important tasks for successfully hosting the Montana Cup is being prepared on race-day to perform a well practiced effort in scoring the meet.
The rules are:
 - There is no limit on individuals per team, & top seven (7) are not declared prior to racing.
 - Individual places of each team's top five (5) runners will be totaled, and low team score wins.
 - A team's 6th & 7th runners increase other teams' scores by displacement.
 - Additional team runners (8th, 9th, 10th...), all unaffiliated runners, & all teams with less than 5 scoring runners are removed from scoring.
 - Team scoring ties are decided by the placing of each team's 6th runner.
 - If one of the tied teams does not have a 6th runner, that team automatically loses the tie.
 - If none of the tied teams has a 6th runner, the place of each team's 5th runner will decide the tie.
 - Race results (team) are removed from public access and confidential until announced at the awards ceremony.
13. Runners may only be disqualified or removed from team scoring by ruling of the Cup Jury of Appeals (see "Jury of Appeals" rule below) for:
 - Lying on his or her entry form.
 - Any action that results in an unfair advantage, or the wrongful impedance of another runner.
 - Any action deemed unsportsmanlike.
 - Not racing in an official team jersey with MT Cup logo (Jury of Appeals will remove offender(s) from team scoring if it was reasonable to expect that a jersey could have been worn).
 - Any current meet official or Cup team organizer may report rules violations to the Meet Director or designee.
 - Violations must be reported within 30 minutes following the completion of the final race in the meet.
14. **Jury of Appeals:** Seven (7) member group formed to make race-day decisions regarding any reported rules violations.
 - Chosen and announced by Meet Director (MD) prior to the meet.
 - Picked from the pool of team organizers, and comprised of at least one representative per Cup team region.
 - Goal to have at least 3 of each gender on the jury.
 - Each jury member should familiarize with Cup rules prior to meet.
 - Each jury member must linger near the finish line for 40 minutes following the conclusion of the meets' final race.
 - MD not included as part of jury but may attend jury meetings to provide information in a non-voting capacity.
 - MD designates person(s) from meet organizing committee as jury alternate in case one or more region reps absent.
15. **Awards:**
 - Open team champions will be awarded the Montana Cup. This class includes runners of all ages in the race.
 - Masters' team champions will win the Masters' Cup. This class includes runners aged forty (40) or older.
 - Individual recognition (and tangible awards at the discretion of the meet host).
 - Given to the first seven (7) finishers in each of three age divisions: Junior's (19 and below), Open & Masters
 - Juniors and masters runners who place among the top seven (7) open division finishers will be included in the awards for both categories.
 - Any individual award presented to a current Montana HS (or younger) athlete must not be cash or exceed \$50 in value due to MHSA eligibility rules.

16. **Cup Committee:** A group of volunteers including not more than two representatives* per Cup team region, who gather when needed (typically once or twice per year) between Montana Cups to:

- Refine Montana Cup objectives, rules & procedures.
 - No formal committee voting. Rules/guidelines developed by consensus in spirit of Montana Cup tradition.
- Assist meet hosts in designing fun and fail-safe race courses.

* Informal gatherings of multiple representatives from any/all regions may also be held to discuss ideas of interest.