

Dear Track Parents and Athletes,

Thank you for your commitment to the 2026 track season. My name is Joe DayRider and I am the head coach for the High School track team. This will mark my 4th year as head coach and my 16th season coaching track for the Fusion. I look forward to this season. My goal is to put your athlete into events that will give them the best opportunity for success, both as individuals and as part of the R&L Fusion track team.

As of writing this, coaches this year will include myself and Shawn Lien, who will be my assistant for the high school. Mackenzie Rask and Jacalyn Wright are the JH/Elem track coaches and we are currently looking at a 3rd coach as well. Junior high and elementary usually has quite a bit of participants, so it would be wonderful if parents could help out the coaches, especially at track meets.

Coach Lien and I will be working to get as many high school athletes to state as possible. Athletes can qualify for state in 1 of 2 ways: meeting or exceeding the qualifying standard in a particular event or making it out of the district and divisional meet. More information on this will be sent out later. MHSA limits how many entries we can have in a particular event, so jump-offs/run-offs may need to be done, especially for the district meet.

Athletes must have competed in two regular season track meets to be able to compete at the district track meet. Missing meets for **school sponsored activities** are excused with notification. Spring is always an adventure in Montana and if meets get canceled, one may not have enough meets to get to participate in the district meet. Excessive unexcused absences from meets will factor into the coaches' decisions on entries for events and any relays that qualify for state.

Practices this year will be in Lambert all season, unless otherwise stated. Athletes must have **8** practices before they can participate in any meets so attendance is a priority. Athletes should come to practice with proper attire (sweatpants, sweatshirt, hat, gloves, and proper fitting shoes, a water bottle, a good attitude, and a good work ethic. We will try to be outside as much as possible so athletes should be prepared for that. It is always easier to shed layers than add layers. Any misbehavior can result in the athlete being removed from practice. A healthy snack would be beneficial for the athlete as well, as there is a long time between school lunch and practice. If athletes are efficient and work hard at practice, practices should not go much beyond 5:30. You are expected to be at all practices, unless prior notification is given to the coaches. Excessive absences will result in an athlete missing a meet, including districts, divisionals, and state, and could factor into decisions on relays that qualify for state.

Thanks for your time and support,

Joe DayRider

Contact Information:

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- School #: (406) 773-5523
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Important Dates:

- March 16th – First day of HS practice
- March 23rd – First day of JH (7-8) practice in Lambert
- March 30th – First day of Elementary (5-6) practice
- March _____ – Parents meeting
- May 12th – Elem/JH/HS District 2-C Track meet @
- May 21st – Eastern C Divisional Track @
- May 28th – 30th: State C Track meet @ Laurel