

- I plan on taking 10-12 minutes of your time.
- I've talked to coaches at SCVAL, League Reps of CCS, and now League Commissioners.
- I'll cover my observations at Crystal Springs during League Finals Week and CCS.
- My intent is to get the Running Community to change their paradigm towards the Crystal Springs course.
- History: CS opened in '65 as a course. The current course has been in existence since '71. Created by Bob Rush & other HS coaches with SFPUC and CSM support. Neighborhood Association is BHCIA (not an official HOA) which covers about 770 homes. By '82, about 75 neighbors were complaining of XC traffic. Supposedly, a meeting with neighbors, County Supervisor and Parks & Rec Director was to take place. There was no follow-up article in the local newspaper detailing what was discussed or the outcome. The issue appeared to languish and disappear from the news. Jump ahead 20 years.
- In 2002 a CS Calendar of events was created.
- In 2003 a CS handbook (guidelines & rules) was created.
- 2001 had 13 events – 2003 jumped to 33 events (Middle Schools discovered CS)
- 2010 all time high of 37 events (15 practices, 9 MS races & 13 HS/JC/Open).
- 80% of the meets had < 300 participants, considered non-traffic issue events.
- Since 2010, BHCIA (11 members) have had enough of the growth of XC meets.

Coaches,

To understand what the Belmont Heights neighborhood has been experiencing for the last 18 years (>30 events & > 8000 athletes per year) I went to every League meet at Crystal (2021) and compiled data on number of spectators, inappropriate behavior and in particular, vehicle traffic and parking. It is not my intention to point fingers at any particular league, team, coach, athlete or parent. I only want to share my observations that are in conflict with the Crystal Springs Handbook. The first Crystal Springs Handbook was written in 2003. The rules might have seemed “extreme at times” and some folks might have looked at them more as “guidelines” – this is no longer the case. The handbook has been re-written and is now the requirements of an organization and not of a single individual. Given what I experienced during League Week, it is evident that the paradigm us coaches and athletes have towards Crystal Springs needs to be ... adjusted. Below are my findings...

BVAL (Monday-raining)

- Two races (VG & VB)
- 300 athletes
- 70 minutes of racing (12:30-1:40)
- 150-200 spectators (300 by neighbor count; 1.00 spectator to athlete ratio)
- zero buses, cars parked from Leigh to Soho on Hallmark
- 4 cars on course (at Start area)
- 1 Belmont PD
- Another small League could share this day for Finals

SCVAL (Tuesday): It should be noted that even though garbage pickup is on Monday, neighbors that live on cul-de-sacs are leaving their garbage cans out all week to discourage parking in front of their homes.

- Eight races (VB-VG-JVB-JVG-F/S two leagues)
- **629 athletes (largest of the week)**
- 2:50 of racing (1:45-4:35)
- 200-225 spectators (200 by neighbor; 0.32 ratio)
- 12 buses, 62 cars – parked from Leigh (and down Leigh & around corner) to Soho
- 4 cars on course
- 1 Belmont PD

WCAL (Wednesday)

- Seven races (VB-VG-FrB-SoB-FSG-JVB-JVG)
- 594 athletes
- 2:50 of racing (2:00-4:50)
- 200 at start, 350-375 spectators by the Varsity races (400 by neighbor; 0.67 ratio)
- 16 buses, cars parked 200m past Leigh to Comstock and side streets
- 5 cars on course
- 1 Belmont PD

PSAL (Thursday)

- Three races (VB-JVB-VG&JVG combined)
- 239 athletes

- 95 minutes racing (3:00-4:35)
- 100-125 spectators (150 by neighbor; 0.63 ratio)
- zero buses, cars parked from Leigh to Soho on Hallmark
- 5 cars on course
- 1 Belmont PD
- League could share date with BVAL

WBAL (Friday)

- Four races (VB-VG-JVB-JVG)
- 267 athletes
- 2:10 of racing (2:30-4:40)
- 125-150 spectators (310 by neighbor; 1.16 ratio)
- 4 buses, cars parked from Leigh to Soho on Halmark
- 4 cars on course
- 1 Belmont PD

PAL (Saturday)

- Six races (VB-VG-FSB-FSG-OpenB-OpenG)
- 525 athletes
- 2:50 of racing (10:00-12:50)
- 250-300 spectators at ALL times (855 by neighbor; 1.63 ratio)
- 4 buses, cars parked from end of Hallmark to past Comstock and ½ mile radius on all side streets
- **14 cars on course**
- 3 Belmont PD
- Cars driving 35-40MPH in a 30MPH zone (should be 25MPH IMO)
- One week before CCS

CCS Finals (following Saturday) – I arrived at 9:00 for a 10:00 meet “Go” time. Two Belmont police officers were already there directing traffic. Four buses were already parked. The first two races were the D5 races, the smallest fields of the day. Hallmark Dr was already full to the end and almost down to Comstock – it was only going to get worse. By 10:30, cars were parked on the side streets and required a ¾ mile hike into the course. Cars on Hallmark Dr were past Comstock. There were numerous cars whose parking would have failed a DMV test (pictures attached). I talked with one neighbor who didn’t mind the activity but did complain about cars blocking his driveway. Numerous neighbors put out garbage cans and cones to ensure their driveways would be accessible. Cars parked on curves making it difficult for walkers to cross intersections.

At my 12:30 sweep of the neighborhood still showed a ¾ mile hike but some spots on the side streets had opened up and were just waiting for an incoming car to fill the spot. The mailman said that the last two Saturdays made it very difficult for him to deliver the mail. The disabled parking area in front of Hallmark Park was full, and not with disabled placards. The double parking at this location was at it’s worse for the day – unbelievable. Athletes dashing across the street, cars going in the other lane in order to get around the double parked cars that were dropping off athletes. This is an accident waiting to happen.

If an accident should happen, you can bet the course will be in jeopardy. Spectators totaled 2990 according to a neighbor which is a 3.23 spectator to athlete ratio.

See a 2019 video of Hallmark Dr at CCS Finals: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntdXGBJIg_k

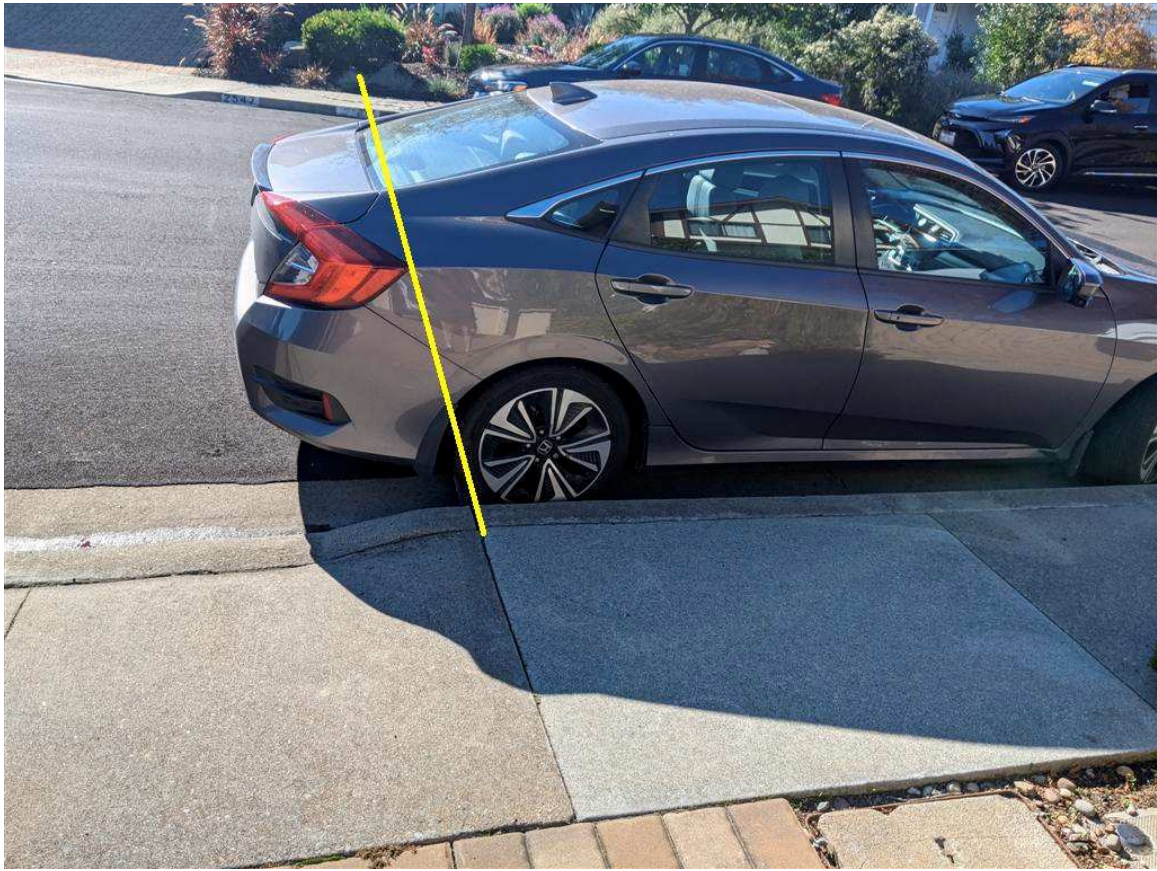
As I see it, the events where cars took over the neighborhood were WCAL, PAL & CCS (I'm sure Serra Invite was also congested).

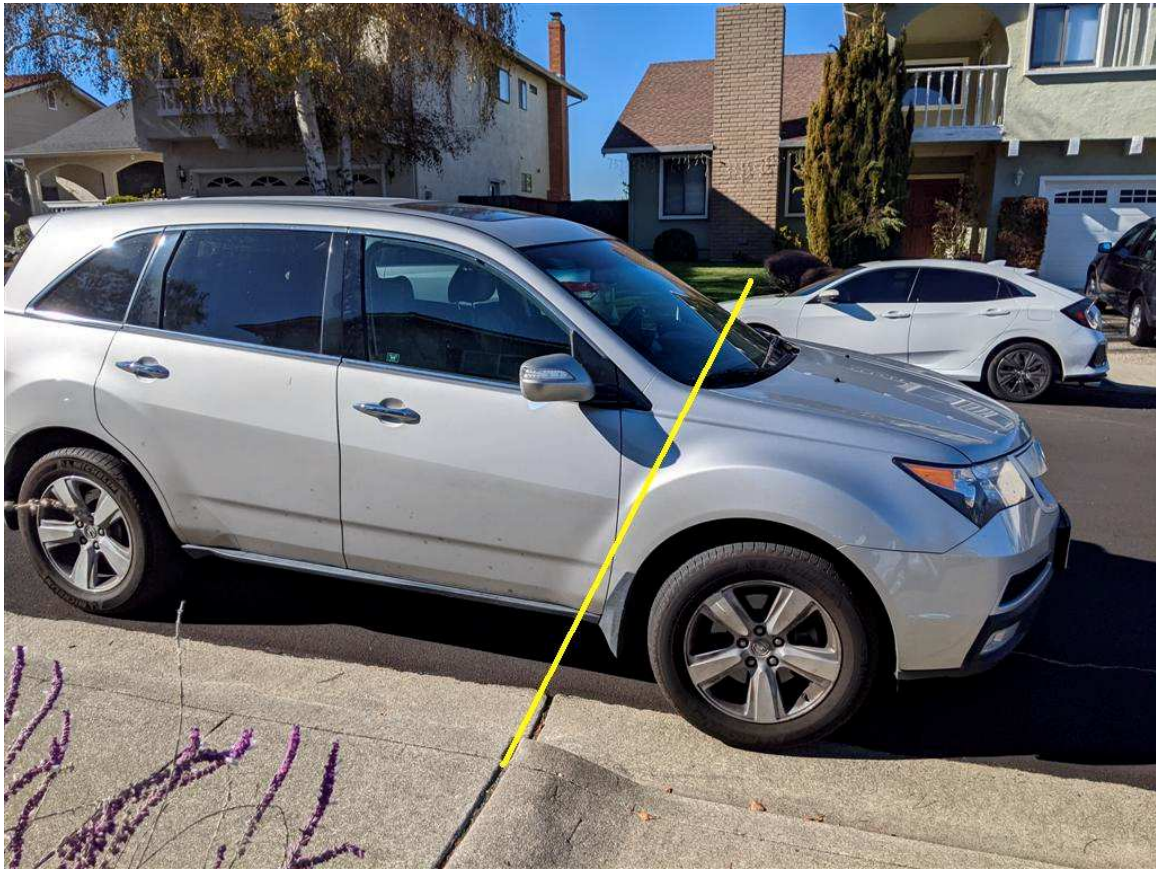
Even though SCVAL had the most runners at their League Finals, they had the lowest spectator/runner ratio so very few cars were at the meet.

CCS was the most congested. 99.5% of autos park legally. The .5% are the ones that are making the BHCIA unhappy.

We have to show the neighborhood that we are trying to be better stewards to the course and neighborhood. That is the paradigm shift I'm talking about, it's not our course, it's everyone's course.







Three cars parked INSIDE Hallmark Park – I do not believe this to be legal.

Ideas:

Move the “Disabled Parking” area to just beyond Hallmark Park and allow drop-offs to happen right in front of the Park (since people are doing this anyway). This will be a tough habit to break.

Have an adult for every meet be assigned to monitor traffic in front of Hallmark Park **OR pay for an additional Belmont Police officer(s)**. No 3-point turns on Hallmark after a drop-off. No unloading of tents, coolers, etc in front of Hallmark Park (30 seconds to unload athletes then move on). They can always unload/drop-off further up the road with no issues.

Buses **MUST** go to the last house on the right to unload.

Stagger bus arrival if possible so 4-5 buses don't all show up at the same time (SCVAL & WCAL only have this issue).

Use the entrance at St James and Water Dog trail (.67 mile from the start) for spectators and Hallmark ONLY for coaches & athletes (for large events).

Have Varsity run first so spectators are more likely to leave with their athletes when the race is over.

Have League Finals be only on the weekdays while the neighborhood is at work. Or have PAL a week earlier so that the neighborhood is not impacted two Saturdays in a row.

Consider starting 30 minutes earlier and doing the awards during other races so when the last finisher is in, teams clear the course. This could be difficult since school will be starting an hour later starting in 2022 (more missed class time).

All athletes **MUST** stay inside of the Crystal Springs Course area. No loitering in Hallmark Park, no warming up or down on the neighborhood streets.

Pick up garbage on both the course and the neighborhood as you're leaving. A little Good Will can go a long way.

Define who is responsible for communication on Crystal Springs to all organizations.

Finally, everyone read the Crystal Springs handbook and believe what it says.

There are maybe a dozen folks in the neighborhood that would like to see XC races stop after 50 years of growth. The last 20 years have seen the biggest amount of growth and the last 10 have really been wearing these handful of folks down where they are just tired of the course. We, as a running community, have not kept them in the loop with us - to talk about the growth, where it's going and will it ever stop. This was also an issue back in 1982ish but the number of neighbors that were unhappy back then numbered about 75 (read <http://lynbrooksports.prepcaltrack.com/ATHLETICS/XC/crybook.htm> Appendix J and scroll down to articles in the 1980's – there are two articles).