Girls on the Run
Heart & Sole
STRIDE
Coach Manual
PART 1: WELCOME

Welcome to Girls on the Run & STRIDE! Volunteers are the heart of the program – we couldn’t do it without you! This manual is meant to support both new and returning volunteer coaches.

This is just a snapshot! You have many resources out there –
- Coach Playbook
- Facebook Group
- Weekly Emails from HQ
- Your Parents and other Coaches
- The staff at GOTR/STRIDE – we are here to help!

CONTENTS

PART 1 Welcome
PART 2 Site Logistics
PART 3 Understanding Registration
PART 4 Who do I contact?
PART 5 Program Policies and Procedures – a snapshot

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PART 2: SITE LOGISTICS

Key points to remember...

Steps to follow each season

1. Fill out a site application
2. Recruit coaches & have ALL coaches register online (it’s free & it’s important!)
3. New coaches attend training
4. Market the program to your program site
5. Start the program and meet for 10 amazing weeks
6. Celebrate in style at the end of the season 5K
7. REPEAT

How to have a fantastic season

1. Plan ahead
2. Keep an eye on deadlines
3. Communicate with parents
4. Check your email for weekly updates!
5. Don’t be shy to reach out to HQ for assistance
6. Prepare for lessons
7. HAVE FUN!

Group Size, Practice Length & Number of Coaches

GOTR & STRIDE
Minimum – 8 students / maximum 20
- 2 coaches minimum for up to 15 participants
- 3 coaches minimum for 16-20 participants

Feel overwhelmed by 20 kids? That’s OK – we’re here to help! Consider recruiting additional coaches and add a second “team” OR talk to HQ about limiting your team size to 18, 15 or even 12 participants.

60 minutes is the minimum practice time
75 minutes is ideal – allowing adequate time for the lesson as well as the workout.
90 minutes is great for larger groups or especially chatty girl/energetic boys.

Heart & Sole
Minimum – 8 students / maximum 15
- 2 coaches minimum

Girls on the Run International says 12 is the ideal number of girls in the Heart & Sole Program.

90 minutes is the minimum time requirement for Heart & Sole
Marketing/Team Recruitment

We provide marketing materials (poster, handouts, yard sign) for the program. These are requested with the site application. We also email all past participants to let them know about program sites. A well-defined recruitment plan should be outlined and coordinated with the school (back to school night, newsletter, etc.) Additional resources: Letter templates available for both online and paper registration teams at nckidsrun.org

Coaching Roles:

Head Coach/Site Liaison
- Prefer to be connected with the school (i.e. a teacher or parent)
- Link between site, coaches and county coordinator or GOTR/STRIDE Director
- Attend GOTR/STRIDE coach training
- Manage marketing and registration
- Must be female for GOTR (STRIDE can be male or female)
- Manage coaching "staff"
- Prepare and lead lessons
- Commit to two practices a week unless sharing head coach duties
- Attend 5k Celebration at the end of season
- Help recruit running buddies for participants in need or become one yourself
- Encourage parents, teachers, and other staff to run 5k race

Assistant Coach
- Assist with lesson instruction and planning of program events and celebrations
- Commit to one or two practices a week
- Attend GOTR/STRIDE coach training
- Assistant coach can be male or female for both GOTR and STRIDE
- Attend 5k Celebration at the end of season
- Help recruit running buddies for participants in need or become one yourself

Practice Partners
- Want to be involved but can’t commit to regularly attend practice
- Run with the girls/boys and provide encouragement at practice and on race day

Running Buddies
- During the 5k race each girl and boy participating is required to have a running buddy who is 16 years or older if assigned by parent or 18 years or older if assigned by coach. GOTR girls must have a female running buddy unless assigned by her parent.
- Running buddies may begin running with the girl/boy prior to the race day attending the GOTR/STRIDE afterschool meetings.
- Each running buddy is required to have a background check if assigned by coach, school or the YMCA (The Wilmington Family YMCA will administer this). Background check is not required if assigned by the parent.

At least one coach needs to be CPR & First Aid certified and on-site each time the girls/boys meet.

Families, teachers and administrators are welcome to attend the lessons and assist the coaches, offer encouragement, participate in games and run with the girls. Often families help with snack, planning the mock 5k, the community service project and end of season celebration.
PART 3: UNDERSTANDING REGISTRATION

Your team has a choice of online registration or paper registration. There are pros and cons of each.

Online registration
Pros
• You can view who has registered for your team
• You do not need to collect money
• We send you a roster when complete
• Since parents enter the information, fewer data entry mistakes by GOTR/STRIDE staff
Cons
• Hard cut off date for registrations
• May be challenging for some families – access to computer/internet/credit/debit card

Paper registration
Pros
• Coaches can oversee the registration process
• Easier for families who do not have access to the internet
• Application available in Spanish
Cons
• Coaches have to collect money
• More admin time for the coaches
• Timely data entry process for GOTR staff

Whichever registration process is chosen, the whole team must oblige. No paper registrations will be accepted from a team that has chosen online registration.

Steps for online registration teams-
Step 1: Site Application- (Site application needs to be submitted each season (even if you are a repeating site)
Step 2: Start marketing the program at your approved site with parent handouts from the YMCA. Update to fit your school/site and county due dates
Step 3: Registration opens online
Step 4: Registration closes- an excel roster of your team will be sent the following day
Step 5: Season starts!!!

Steps for paper registration teams-
Step 1: Site Application- (Site application needs to be submitted each season (even if you are a repeating site)
Step 2:Start marketing the program at your approved site with parent handouts from the YMCA. Update to fit your school/site and county due dates
Step 3: Coach collects:
• registration/health forms
• payments
• financial assistance documentation
• complete roster
Step 4: Turn all forms and payments to the Wilmington Family YMCA by county season due date.
Step 5: Season starts!!!!
PART 4: WHO DO I CONTACT?

Mailing Address:
Attn: GOTR/STRIDE
Wilmington Family YMCA
2710 Market Street
Wilmington, NC 28403

Physical Address:
Wilmington Family YMCA Admin Offices
3825 Market Street
Wilmington NC 28403

Fax: 910-251-2509
Attn: GOTR/STRIDE

Aileen Sutton
GOTR/STRIDE Council Director
Aileen.Sutton@WilmingtonFamilyYMCA.org
910-251-9622 Ext 266
Counts: New Hanover and Sampson Counties
Race Director
William H Craig Race for Life 5K
OrthoWilmington 5K
Coastal Carolina Run Series

Volunteer management (recruitment, training, background checks)
Running Buddy management, recruitment and questions
Media/Public Relations
New Balance Shoe Certificates
Policy and Procedures (such as accident report forms)
Funding and Grants

Joseph Carey
Onslow, Carteret and Jones County Coordinator & Couch to 5K Coach
Joseph.Carey@WilmingtonFamilyYMCA.org / Joseph.Carey@onslow.k12.nc.us
Race Director
The Physical Therapy Clinic Merry Fitness 5K
Marine Chevy Shuffle 5K

Onslow, Jones, Carteret County:
Supply delivery
Site visits and site recruitment
Coach recruitment & appreciation

Kate Gentle
Brunswick and Columbus County Coordinator & Couch to 5K Coach
Kate.Gentle@WilmingtonFamilyYMCA.org
Race Director
NaberDodge.com 5K
Rotary Clubs of Brunswick County 5K Turkey Trot

Brunswick & Columbus County:
Supply delivery
Site visits and site recruitment
Coach recruitment & appreciation

Tai Munn
Pender & Duplin County Assistant
Tatiana.Munn@WilmingtonFamilyYMCA.org

Brunswick & Columbus County:
Supply delivery, Site visits and site recruitment, Coach recruitment & appreciation

Christine Newcomb
Program Assistant
Christine.Newcomb@WilmingtonFamilyYMCA.org
Changes in Roster / Roster troubleshooting
Supply boxes/bags
Tshirts & Water Bottles
1. **Accident/Incident Reports**: Coaches are asked to complete an Accident/Incident Report in the event that a girl is injured and required First Aid attention becomes ill during a practice or whose behavior disrupts practices or is hurtful to any member of her team. Forms are to be completed the day of the incident and signed by the parent. Please mail or fax the form to the Wilmington Family YMCA the following day, sent attention to GOTR/STRIDE. Or, can be given to GOTR/STRIDE staff directly the following day.

2. **Behavior Incidents**: For any incident that causes a disruption, including but not limited to non-cooperation as a team member, disrespect, refusal to participate, negative talk, physical boundary breaking, and disregard of safety rules, please follow these steps:
   1. Immediately stop the behavior in a respectful manner and provide positive redirection.
   2. Calmly pull the child aside and talk with the participant about their behavior. Clearly state your expectations for changes in their behavior and ask for a commitment from the girl or boy to live by values of GOTR and STRIDE
   3. Respectfully inform the parent of your conversation upon dismissal. Use Incident Report Form.
   4. If the same child is continually disruptive, coaches are encouraged to contact the Council Director who will provide support and resources to help correct the problem.
   5. If the behavior is not resolved the child may be asked to leave the program.

3. **Additional Adults/Children at Practices**: Practices are reserved for GOTR trained coaches and participants. Parents, teachers, students, friends, and other observers can disrupt practice and keep participants from fully engaging in the session’s activities. Coaches must find childcare arrangements for their own children during practice times. Parents and teachers are invited to participate in the Mock 5k at mid-season, but should otherwise be off-site during practice. Occasionally the GOTR/STRIDE staff, Board Members, Site Contacts, or Program Volunteers may visit your program to provide support and encouragement for your team.

4. **Altering the Curriculum**: GOTR International and the Brandywine Valley YMCA governs our curriculum use, therefore coaches may not alter nor eliminate any part of a lesson’s content based upon their personal perception of what is or is not appropriate. Length or intensity of lessons may be slightly altered to accommodate the team’s energy level or because of weather during practice. Lesson materials found in your program bin may slightly differ than what was listed in the curriculum in an effort to be more environmentally friendly.

5. **Attendance**: GOTR and STRIDE asks that the coaches keep attendance for each practice. Please notify the Council Director within the first week if you find any errors to your program roster. If a participant does not show up during the first week of practice or has missed more than 3 practices, please contact the Council Director. Coaches are also encouraged to directly communicate with parents about consistent absences in an effort to build positive relationships with our families.

6. **Transportation**: Coaches are not allowed to transport a participant home or to any GOTR/STRIDE related event unless given written permission by a parent. The GOTR office highly discourages this practice.

7. **Practice Locations**: Each site is provided with an indoor and outdoor practice location. Please conduct practices in these spaces only. This ensures parents, site contacts, and the GOTR/STRIDE staff is able to locate your team in case of emergency. Please also maintain a consistent drop off and pick up location throughout the season.
8. **Pick Up**: Coaches are asked to supervise dismissal, ensuring each girl has been picked up by an authorized adult. Coaches are encouraged to introduce themselves to parents and caregivers and share brief information on the day’s activities. We ask that two coaches remain on site until all girls have been picked up. If a parent is more than 5 minutes late, coaches should remind parents of the expected dismissal time. Coaches should use the incident report form to contact the Council Director if there are consistent problems with late pick up.

9. **Practice Days and Times**: The GOTR/STRIDE season covers 10—12 weeks (coaches will be notified of how many weeks before each spring or fall session starts). Program days and times are not to be changed over the course of the season. Coaches may not cancel practice due to weather or changes in schedules. Practices are only cancelled when your site location is closed due to inclement weather or holidays.

10. **Appropriate Attire**: Participants are asked to come to practice prepared to be active. Encourage your participants to wear comfortable clothing and appropriate footwear. Clogs, flip-flops, and crocs are considered unsafe, therefore, boys or girls wearing these types of shoes are allowed to walk or watch during practice. Bare feet are prohibited. New Balance has supplied our council with a limited number of free shoe certificates for girls in need of financial assistance. If the Coach identifies a girl in her group that may need financial assistance for a new pair of running shoes, please contact the Council Director coordinator to see if there is an opportunity to receive assistance for shoes.

11. **Snacks**: GOTR/STRIDE does not provide snacks for practices. Girls are welcome to bring their own snacks, but they must be eaten before or after practice time. Coaches should not provide snacks.

12. **Supervision**: Participants should be supervised at all times. Please ensure a coach accompanies girls needing to use the restroom or leave the group for any reason. At no time should two participants be alone where they cannot be observed by others. This policy must be strictly adhered to for the safety of both participants and coaches.

13. **Inclement Weather**: GOTR is a “rain or shine” program. Practice is only cancelled due to inclement weather if the site location has determined to close. Coaches are encouraged to use the outdoor space as often as possible. This includes cooler days and during rain showers. Practice should be held indoors during thunderstorms or when the Heat Advisory is Orange or above.

14. **Electronics**: Participants should refrain from bringing cell phones and portable electronics to practice. Coaches are encouraged to collect any electronics at the start of practice and return them to the boys and girls as they are dismissed.

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**Coach Policies**

1. **Be a model to our mission**: Coaches serve as mentors and positive role models and are truly the face and mouthpiece of Girls on the Run and STRIDE and the Wilmington Family YMCA. We expect coaches to live and promote the values and missions of GOTR/STRIDE/YCA through their words, actions, leadership, commitment level, and interaction with all members of the community.

2. **Coach Attendance and Commitment**: Coaches commit to attending every practice during the 10-week season. To ensure proper supervision and meet national guidelines, we require 2 coaches to be onsite at every practice. Additionally, coaches commit to complete coach training, CPR and First Aid certification, along with background check and volunteer documentation. Coaches will also be expected to attend the coach meeting and the end of season 5k.

3. **Preparedness**: Coaches are expected to work as a team to ensure excellence in the delivery of all lessons. All activities and materials should be reviewed and prepared in advance of the day’s practice.
Coaches should arrive to their site locations 10 minutes prior to the start of practice to meet their girls, set up activities, and begin the session promptly at the designated start time.

4. **Participation**: Coaches are expected to be fully engaged in the lesson activities. Each coach should take an active role during each lesson (i.e.: set up, facilitation, participation). At least one coach should be participating in the “Work Out” activity during each lesson. If the girls are moving, a coach should be moving with them!

5. **Non-Compete Clause**: During coach training all coaches will complete Non-Compete documentation.

6. **Performance and Program Evaluation**: The Girls on the Run curriculum is only as good the coaches who facilitate it—therefore we expect it to be amazing! The GOTR/STRIDE staff will provide you with support, resources, and any help you might need throughout the season to ensure success. Site visits, phone calls, and emails are all used as ways to communicate and ensure quality and support. In return, we ask for your feedback and support in evaluating our program. In the event we find a coach struggling to meet the expectations set forth in these policies, we reserve the right to ask for her resignation from the program. Mediation will be used to resolve every situation that is brought to our attention.

7. **Cause for Termination**: Arrest for drug-related activities, child abuse/neglect, or drinking and driving is grounds for immediate dismissal from Girls on the Run and STRIDE program.

8. **Appropriate Attire**: Coaches are expected to participate in all activities with the participants. Therefore, they should be dressed accordingly. Model appropriate work out wear for your participants by dressing to suit the weather and level of activity.

9. **Acceptance of gifts**: Coaches are welcome to accept thank you gifts from parents, but should refrain from accepting cash. Cash gifts should be returned or encouraged to be used as a donation to Girls on the Run and STRIDE of Coastal Carolina.

10. **Supplies for the Program**: All program supplies and curriculum are property of Girls on the Run and STRIDE of Coastal Carolina. 90% of the materials provided in program bins are reused season to season. Coaches are expected to care for materials and return bins to the office in the manner in which they were given to you. Please do not write in the Program Curriculum Books.

**Communication Policies**

1. **Communication with GOTR/STRIDE Staff**: Staff is on hand to help and support coaches or parents at any time. We encourage coaches or parents to contact our office or a staff member’s cell phone with any questions, concerns or ideas. A GOTR/STRIDE staff member will respond to the communication within 24 hours of receipt—if this does not happen, try and resend the correspondence or call directly as technology can fail from time to time. In turn, coaches are asked to respond to all emails and/or phone calls from the designated Program Coordinator within 48 hours of receiving the communication.

2. **Communication with Parents and Participants**: As the direct contact to our parents and participants, coaches are expected to communicate routine and important details about lessons, events, and activities. Please take the time to get to know and communicate with the girls and parents. We encourage coaches to email parents on a regular basis to share pictures or stories from your team, as well as important details on upcoming events or to reiterate program policies.
3. **Coach Communication Resources:** Information will be provided in numerous formats to keep coaches apprised of key dates, upcoming events, and provide updates as necessary. Weekly emails, a Facebook Group and website are key resources.

**Crisis Management Protocol**
In the event of a serious accident or emergency while coaching a session, the following protocol must be followed:

1. Assess the condition of the victim immediately.
   a. Designate someone to call 911, the victim’s parents, and a GOTR/STRIDE contact
   b. If unconscious, check for breathing and pulse
   c. If not breathing, provide rescue breathing and CPR
   d. If a back injury can not be ruled out, do not move the victim and provide inline support for the head and neck

2. Stabilize the situation
   - Isolate the victim.
   - Ensure supervision of the group.
   - Keep the victim and the participants calm.

3. One coach or GOTR/STRIDE staff member should accompany the victim to the hospital. A GOTR/STRIDE staff member will meet you at the hospital if unable to accompany the victim.

4. Document the incident on the Incident/Accident form including specific details on what occurred.

5. The GOTR/STRIDE office will contact the coaches and families of the participants within 24 hours of the incident to inform them of the details of the situation. Girls on the Run and STRIDE of Coastal Carolina asks that you maintain the confidentiality of the victim by not sharing details of the accident with anyone outside of the program.