

Awards and Scholarships

Lovejoy Cross Country

This document lists and describes the awards and scholarships given out annually to Lovejoy harriers, typically at the end-of-season banquet.

Awards

The following awards are given to both a girl and a boy each season. More than one boy or girl can receive the award.

- **Newcomer of the Year** – Best performance by a first year LHS runner (not necessarily a freshman). Statistically based as determined by the coaches.
- **Most Improved** – Best year over year improvement. Statistically based as determined by the coaches.
- **Leopards Servant Award** – For a team manager who has selflessly dedicates seasons of effort to help with equipment, recording times, running meets, and many other duties. First introduced in the Fall of 2024 to honor Dana Colston.
- **Running Leopard** – Voted on by teammates, these are the runners that embody the ideal Lovejoy runner and represent what Lovejoy cross country is all about. They work harder than anyone else – high achievers – and excel and compete at all times. They are also good teammates who help in a variety of non-running ways: clean up camp and the bus, help at MS meets, promote the culture – whatever is needed.
- **Leopard Teammate Award** – A coach award to a runner or runners who best demonstrate what it means to be a selfless teammate and who specifically put the team's interest above their own. First awarded in the Fall of 2024 to Talia Orshalick and Kaylee Martin.
- **Most Valuable** – Self-explanatory. Determined by the coaches based on a variety of factors, particularly performance.
- **Most Inspirational** – Voted on by teammates, these runners consistently show a commitment and positive attitude toward the program and a love of running that inspires the rest of the team. They make others want to be better runners.
- **Jason Abernathy / Kailey Littlefield**– Awarded to athletes who put everything they have into the program yet are not the fastest or most talented and therefore do not (typically) win any of the other awards. Nevertheless, their contributions are unmistakable and universally recognized by the team.

The two athletes who historically exemplified these traits are Kelsey Rea (LHS 2011) and Jason Abernathy (LHS 2017). Determined by the coaches. First awarded for the 2018 season. Starting in 2021, the girls award is renamed every year for the girl who won it the previous year. The 2021 award is named the Ashlyn Carty Award, the 2022 award is named the Dinah Thadikonda award, the 2023 award is named the Malia Bowling award, and the 2024 award is named the Kailey Littlefield Award,

Scholarships

- **Booster Club Scholarships** – The booster club awards several \$500 scholarships to graduating harriers. Athletes must submit applications, recommendations, grades, etc. The judging is weighted as follows: 50% on contribution to the XC program, 30% on involvement in the school and community, and 20% on grades.
- **Christensen Family Legacy Scholarship** – The scholarship honors members of the Christensen family and their contributions to the sport of Cross Country. In particular, the scholarship honors the late Coach Bob Christensen who coached XC in Kansas and was a prime mover in the spread of the Steeplechase event at the high school level. The scholarship also honors and thanks our own Coach Greg K Christensen, Bob's younger brother, who fundamentally created Lovejoy XC and Track & Field, and evolved them both over the school's first 14 years. The scholarship is awarded to a senior selected by the coaches. First awarded for the 2019 season.

Starting with the 2023-2024 academic year, the Christensen Family Legacy Scholarship will be awarded after Track & Field season and Lovejoy's T&F athletes will be eligible for the scholarship. Also, Coach Emeritus Greg Christensen will personally select the recipient.