



*Training Our Youth to go the Distance*

## 23-24 Season Participant Guide

**We Run Our Community's Kids (WeROCK)** is a nonprofit, community service organization that provides an after-school marathon training program for Middle and High School students located near the Orange County, California area. **WeROCK** is registered with the IRS as Student Runners or Orange County a Public Charity under Section 501(c)3 and all donations made are tax deductible to the full extent of the law\*. Tax ID #80-0209885. Currently operating under the DBA WeROCK.

This *Participant Guide* is provided so that student participants and their parents, coaches and adult volunteers may obtain the most effective and enjoyable experience from the **WeROCK** program. It contains important information about the program's guidelines and requirements, as well as the conduct and level of commitment that are expected from these individuals while participating in the program.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Based on the idea that life is like a Marathon, the mission of **WeROCK** is to teach our participants the important life skills of goal setting, self-reliance, discipline and self-confidence through the design and delivery of instructional programs focused on the proper training for the sport of endurance running, as well as the completion of several long-distance runs, up to and including a 26.2 mile Marathon.

**WeROCK** is committed to providing:

- Education and ongoing exposure to the most up-to-date health, nutrition, and physical fitness information available, via the latest in medical research.
- Training for our participants, their parents, coaches, and volunteers to ensure that our student runners carry these life lessons with them into and throughout adulthood.
- Support for our teams by involving the families and community members of the participants in the training, mentoring and motivation of our runners.
- Encouragement to empower our community's youth to accomplish goals well beyond their own initial personal expectations.

The intent of the **WeROCK** program is not to see how fast or how far a participant can run, but rather to teach our student runners how to set their own personal goals, devise a plan to reach those goals, follow the steps toward achieving the goals, and accomplish the task. Although most participants train for a 26.2 Marathon, **WeROCK** is a non-competitive program and participants may elect, after discussion with their parents or family physicians, to set a goal of running a distance shorter than a full marathon.

Training for marathons and other endurance runs requires significant planning, personal discipline, and perseverance. Participation in the **WeROCK** program will help to improve not only the physical and mental fitness of our runners but also teach them to set and achieve positive goals, develop a greater sense of personal responsibility, and become healthier, more productive citizens both now and into their adult lives. The benefits that a participant can expect to receive from the **WeROCK** program are directly dependent upon the amount of effort and discipline that the runners exercise in following the training regimen and the guidelines in this handbook.

## **MEDICAL SUPERVISION IS NOT PROVIDED**

The **WeROCK** Board of Directors is comprised of experts in the fields of public education, traditional medicine, medical research, sports fitness & youth training, and in the delivery of youth-oriented and other non-profit programs. These professionals supervise the design and delivery of the training program, however, neither **WeROCK** as an organization, nor any of the members of its Board as individuals, provides any medical services to its participants. All participants **must** receive their medical care and supervision directly from their own personal physician. Program participants are also required to have a medical evaluation performed by a licensed physician prior to participating in the program. An original **WeROCK Physical Screening Form**, signed by the participant's licensed medical doctor, must be submitted no later than October 13, 2023, for Session 1A/1B or February 9, 2024, for Session 2 in order to remain in the program. Runners without a *Physical Screening Form* on file after these dates will not be allowed to participate in any practices and/or races until the form is submitted.

## **QUALIFYING FOR THE PROGRAM**

The **WeROCK** program is open to all Middle and High School students that can attend practice on one of our designated practice sites. Runners must be enrolled in grades 6th-12th, "10 to 19 years old", on a non-restrictive basis and without regard to race, creed, sexual orientation, religious belief, physical capacity, or nationality. While the program promotes a team atmosphere to provide support and encouragement to the participants, there are no try-outs to qualify for the program and all results are measured exclusively on an individual basis, without the requirement for any minimum ranking to remain in the program. While we are confident that most participants will be able to complete a full marathon by following the **WeROCK** training program, it is understood that all participants are expected to work according to their own personal abilities and to set their own personal goals.

**For the safety of our student runners, all participants should enter the program with the following minimum criteria:**

**Basic navigation:** They must be able to follow basic navigational directions, such as:

*Run down the hill, turn right at the bottom, cross over the bridge, turn left at the tunnel, come back up the second hill.* Additionally, students should have the ability to safely cross a city street independently. They will be expected to follow the rules of the road.

**Independence:** At any given time during practice, your student could be alone on a known course, without a coach or teammate in direct view. They need to be able to independently get themselves to the end of the run by following course descriptions and/or markers.

**Pacing:** To be considered "ready and capable" of completing a full marathon, all participants must demonstrate their ability to complete all races at no more than a 16-minute per mile pace (roughly equivalent to an average, brisk walking pace). To achieve this pace, weekday practices should remain at no more than 15-minute per mile. Weekend practices are to always be completed at a 16-minute per mile pace. Participants will also be expected to complete an official **WeROCK 20-mile Qualifying Run** at a 16-minute per mile or faster pace to be cleared to run a Full Marathon. For those students who cannot meet these requirements, **WeROCK**, at its sole discretion, will determine the race distance the runner will be cleared to participate with the group in their finale event. This could be a Half Marathon, 10K or 5K.

If a runner struggles to meet the minimum pacing requirements, team coaches and WeROCK staff will work with the runner to increase their pace and may develop a personal training plan to support the runner. However, beginning in week #3 of their training and notwithstanding temporary injury/illness supported by a doctor's note, if the minimum pacing requirements are not met in 7 out of 10 sessions (practices or races), the runner no longer qualify to participate in the WeROCK program. At the point of disqualification, the runner may continue under a 4-week probation period if a parent/guardian accompanies the runner during every session (practice and/or race). At the end of the probation period, the runner must demonstrate the ability to independently meet the minimum pacing criteria at each of the remaining sessions (practice and/or race) to be reinstated and maintain eligibility.

**If the participant is unable to complete the above listed tasks independently and safely, then a parent or 1-on-1 aid, provided by the parent, would be required to run/walk with the student for the duration of the program.**

## **PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

WeROCK participants are required to adhere to the following guidelines. Students who fail to follow any of the guidelines listed below will be dropped from the program, without a refund of any payments already made.

### **1. Be dedicated to your training program**

Commitment to your training plan is a critical factor in gaining success. WeROCK team members are expected to follow the training program, as it has been designed, to avoid injury. To become properly prepared for the completion of a marathon, participants should attempt to attend all practices and complete all mileage listed on the training calendar. Runners who miss practices must make up the mileage on their own and report the mileage to their coach. Participants must show up to practice and races on time and prepared to run with water, nutrition, the proper equipment, and a positive attitude.

### **2. Don't cheat**

When you cheat, you only cheat yourself. WeROCK is a non-competitive program, and all participants need to be honest with themselves and their coaches about how far they are capable of running. "Cutting the course" is never allowed. If you have concerns about the distance you are being asked to run, please speak with your coach rather than taking shortcut.

### **3. Eat a balanced diet**

Eating a balanced diet including protein, fruits and vegetables, as well as avoiding sugar during the season, are also a required part of the WeROCK training plan. Breakfast is a very important part of a successful long-distance run. Runners are REQUIRED to eat breakfast before all morning runs and races.

### **4. Behave yourself at all times**

The behavior of the student-runners who participate in the WeROCK program is a direct reflection on the reputation of the program itself and on the students who participate in it. As such, the guiding principle for all WeROCK runners is RESPECT. WeROCK subscribes to the "golden rule" of treating others the way you expect to be treated, and all runners must have the strength of character to behave responsibly in order to be allowed to represent the organization.

## **Respect takes on many forms:**

### **Respect for Adults**

WeROCK team members are expected to always show respect toward adults, whether participating in a sanctioned program activity or not. This respect includes following all rules and instructions given by the coaches and refraining from arguing or talking back. Respect must also be extended to your teachers, parents, and all other adults within the community, at all times.

### **Respect for Yourself**

Respecting yourself is an essential component of self-confidence and will play a key role in completing a marathon. We firmly believe that with the proper attitude and discipline, you can and will complete the WeROCK training program and cross a marathon finish line. Being confident, maintaining good grades, getting proper sleep and nutrition, and having high ethical standards are "musts" for WeROCK runners.

### **Respect for your Peers**

Whether or not you recognize it, every person you encounter has value. WeROCK runners are expected to show continued respect toward their teammates, classmates, neighbors, and siblings and may not tease, taunt, criticize, put down or harass any other student, of any school or age, at any place or time. Bullying or fighting will be cause for immediate removal from the program without any refund of fees already paid. WeROCK team members must promote goodwill and always show a positive attitude.

## **Respect for the Community**

Helping to keep our community a desirable and pleasant place in which to live is the duty of every WeROCK team member. Runners must show respect for property including their own equipment and the belongings of others. WeROCK will not tolerate littering, wasting water, causing damage to public or private property, or creating any nuisances in public.

## **5. Use of technology**

Running with music is allowed, however only one earbud can be worn at a time. Beats or other over the ear style headphones are fully prohibited. Carrying a cell phone is encouraged. Phone usage should be limited to emergency phone calls & enabling Strava or the occasional trail picture. Phones should never be used during key instruction times.

## **6. Have proper attire and equipment at all times**

WeROCK participants are required to wear the proper attire and carry the necessary equipment that is appropriate for the activity of long-distance running. If athletes attend after school practice without the appropriate gear, they will receive a strike. On the third strike, the athlete will be suspended from the next scheduled race. The strike count will reset after the race they sat out. H=H2O, W=Watch, U=Uniform, S=Shoes.

### **Proper Equipment includes all the following:**

#### **Shoes**

All WeROCK runners must wear shoes specifically designed for the sport of running. Running in any other type of shoe or sneaker can cause injury, therefore students who show up for practice without running shoes will not be allowed to participate on that day and will need to make up for the miles missed.

#### **Bottoms**

Appropriate running shorts, leggings or run skirt are required when training with the team at all practices. You may not wear jeans, casual wear, or cut-offs to practice or to races. WeROCK recommends that you choose running clothing specifically designed to keep moisture and perspiration away from your body. If you forget to bring your running shorts or tights to practice, expect to sit-out on that day.

#### **Shirts and socks**

Participants may wear either the official WeROCK training shirt or their school PE shirt during afterschool practice runs. If you choose to do so, wearing a specifically designed running jersey to practice is acceptable, however, please do not show up for practice in your school clothes. On weekend practice runs and on race day, the official WeROCK team jersey is REQUIRED. To avoid blisters, socks are always required, and WeROCK recommends moisture-wicking fabrics rather than cotton blends to reduce the possibility of blisters, rashes, and other injuries.

#### **Race-day uniforms**

To present the proper appearance when representing our organization in the community, all runners will be required to wear the official WeROCK uniform to all races. Race-day jerseys will be provided by WeROCK and all team members must wear SOLID BLACK shorts, leggings or a running skirt. White, grey, or silver stripes down the side (no colors) may be accepted if the bulk of the bottoms are solid. Brand logos (such as Nike or Under Armor is OK), however, your race-day bottoms should not represent a school or team. Uniforms must always be kept clean. Additionally, all runners participating in WeROCK sponsored events must have an approved race bib which may not be altered in any fashion and worn on the front of their body.

**Runners not wearing the official WeROCK uniform on race day will not be given their race bib and will not be allowed to participate in the event.**

### **Cold weather gear**

On cold weather days, student runners may wear sweats or warm-ups to practices. Running tights and long-sleeve running jerseys are also permissible. On rainy days, a garbage bag or waterproof poncho is recommended. Basic gloves and a beanie cap are also great additions on those cold mornings.

### **Wrist watches**

WeROCK runners are required to wear, at all practices and races, a basic digital wristwatch with a stopwatch feature. These can be purchased for as little as \$15 at most discount stores such as Target, Wal-Mart and Big Lots. GPS devices may also be used but are not required. All timing devices must be worn on the wrist.

### **Nutrition and Hydration supplies**

Proper nutrition and hydration are necessary components of the sport of running. All WeROCK runners must purchase a reusable water receptacle which allows you to easily carry water and fuel while running. We recommend either a hand-held or belt style water bottle holder. Some participants may also prefer the back-pack version. Regardless of the type chosen, you must bring your hydration pack filled with water and fuel with you to all practices and races to avoid dehydration. WeROCK also recommends the consumption of running fuel every hour during practices and long-distance runs. Participants who show up for practice or races without their own water and running fuel will be sent home.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Parents of WeROCK participants are required to adhere to the following guidelines:**

1. Ensure that their student-runner follows all the expectations listed above
2. Meet all deadlines published on the program calendar
3. Have their student-runner examined and given medical clearance by their family doctor
4. Ensure that their child has the proper shoes, clothing, fuel AND WATER at each and every practice and race.
5. **Mandatory Aid Station Volunteer requirement.**

We would not be able to properly train our athletes or keep them safe without the generous gift of your time!

**We ask that each family volunteer twice, per runner in the program, at a weekend aid station.**

Parents may be asked to perform additional tasks such as driving, hosting a dinner, or assisting as a chaperone at various events. This does not take the place of the aid station requirement.

Please email Rachael Vargas, WeROCK Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@werunockids.org](mailto:volunteer@werunockids.org)

6. Provide or arrange for transportation for their student runner to all practices and races. Due to budgetary limitations, WeROCK will not be able to provide transportation to any of the program events.
7. Pick their child up promptly after practice. Weekend practice pick-up times may vary based on the pace of your runner. Please arrive 15 minutes before their estimated finish time to ensure you are on time.
8. Will not use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs at any WeROCK event where kids are present.

Parents who do not adhere to these guidelines will have their student runners dropped from the program, without a refund of any payments already made.

### **ATTENDANCE & TRAINING SCHEDULE**

A complete practice schedule will be provided to all participants at the beginning of the season and updated monthly. Due to circumstances beyond the control of WeROCK, the schedule is subject to change without advance notice. Regular attendance at all practices and races is necessary to properly prepare for the completion of a marathon.

**Practices will be held, rain or shine, hot or cold, on the following days:**

#### **Weekdays:**

Two to three times per week, after school at your school site (or other nearby location as determined by your coach).

**Weekends:**

On most every Saturday there will be a training run, with the mileage of these weekend runs increasing as the season progresses. Races are generally held on weekends, and some events may take place on Sundays. Actual times, days and locations will be determined by your coach.

**Missed Practices**

In the event that any practices or races are missed, participants must make up their mileage within the week that it is missed and upload the mileage to Strava. Regardless of whether the mileage is run as scheduled or made up, the Coach will have discretion to determine when and if a particular WeROCK participant is ready to undertake any scheduled race including, but not limited to the Marathon. Missing two Saturday practices in a row will automatically put the runner on possible suspension of the next scheduled race.

**Missed Races**

It is unfortunate when a runner is unable to participate in a race due to illness, injury, or life circumstance, however, race shirts, medals and goodie bags will be given ONLY to those runners who actually participate in the event and complete the distance on their own power.

**ALL MILES, AT PRACTICE AND MAKE-UP RUNS ARE EXPECTED TO BE UPLOADED TO STRAVA**

**WHAT'S INCLUDED?**

**3 coach lead practices per week**

**Race entry into the following events (based on your enrollment session):**

October: Aquarium of the Pacific 5K

November: Dino Dash 5K

December: Santa Claus with a Cause 10K or 5K

January: Citrus Heritage Half Marathon, 10K, or 5K

February: Surf City Half Marathon or 5K

March: WeROCK 10K or 32K Qualifying Run

April: Bedrock Trail 15K or 5K (Small group: Marathon or Half)

May: OC Marathon, Half, or 5K

- Race distance is determined by your training program.
- WeROCKers that cannot run on Sunday will be offered a “virtual” alternative the Saturday before the race.
- If the scheduled “in-person” races do not occur, or no longer benefit our training calendar, WeROCK will provide a “virtual” race experience for the runners instead.

**Uniform**

1 short sleeve WeROCK “color of the year” tech training top

1 short sleeve WeROCK orange race day tech top

1 long sleeve WeROCK orange race day tech top

1 WeROCK Gear Bag

**Nutrition clinics, form clinics and ongoing Yoga classes.**

## **PROGRAM COSTS**

The enrollment fee for the 2023-2024 WeROCK training program is as follows:

### **Complete Season – Sessions 1A & 1B: September 12, 2023 to May 11, 2024**

Pay in Full: \$1300.00 (9-month program)

### **Session 1A: September 12, 2023 to February 5, 2024**

Pay in Full: \$750.00 (6-month program)

OR

Payment Plan: \$810.00

\$450.00 Enrollment Fee (Due by first practice)

\$60.00 Month: Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb (Due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)

### **Session 1B – February 6, 2024 to May 11, 2024**

**Must complete Session 1A to qualify for Session 1B**

Pay in Full: \$550.00 (3-month program)

OR

Payment Plan: \$580.00

\$400.00 Enrollment Fee (Due by February 6, 2024)

\$60.00 Month: March/April/May (Due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)

**Runners interested in participating in the Full Marathon must join in Session 1A and continue with Session 1B.**

**Running a full marathon is not a requirement of the program.**

### **Session 2 – January 9, 2024 to May 11, 2024**

Pay in Full: \$700.00 (5-month program)

OR

Payment Plan: \$750.00

\$450.00 Enrollment Fee (Due by first practice)

\$60.00 Month: Jan/Feb/March/April/May (Due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)

**Any runner that joins in Session 2 will automatically be on a Half Marathon training plan.**

**Running a half marathon is not a requirement of the program.**

## **Delinquent Payments**

Payments must be received by the due dates specified above. If any installment payment is not received by the payment due date, all services, including, but not limited to race participation, practices and special events may be withheld by WeROCK until the amount due is paid in full.

## **Registration deadlines**

Session 1A closes on October 13, 2023

Session 1B closes on February 6, 2024

Session 2 closes on February 9, 2024

## **Fundraising**

To help individual runners defray or completely cover the costs of their tuition, WeROCK may plan a variety of fundraising events. Although participating in the actual activity of raising funds is optional, all WeROCK team members and their parents will be asked to assist with the organization and delivery of these fundraising events.

## **Scholarships**

Limited scholarships are available, on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in providing a Scholarship for a runner who cannot afford the program, please let us know.

Individuals who do not have the financial resources available to pay the entire program enrollment fee and/or dues may submit a Scholarship Request Form to ask for a partial Scholarship. Scholarship forms are due by October 13, 2023 for Session 1A and February 6, 2024 for Sessions 1B & 2.

WeROCK is a non-profit, public charity and relies heavily upon donations to deliver its important and life-changing program to its participants. Donations are tax-deductible under IRS rule 501(C)(3)\* and can be made easily on the WeROCK website, Donations are always greatly appreciated.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM**

Once enrolled in the WeROCK program, it is assumed that you will continue participation until the designated end of your session. If you opt to end your session early, a 30-day withdrawal notice must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director. Once the notice is received, a partial refund and/or cancellation of future monthly payments will commence the month following the end of the withdrawal period. Failure to provide a 30-day withdrawal notice will result in additional months to be collected.

## **SEE REFUND POLICY FOR FULL DETAILS**

## **COVID-19 SAFETY**

In the event of an outbreak, WeROCK will continue to follow the CDC, local city, county and State of California guidelines for distancing and safety during our training programs. We will add safety precautions to protect your children as needed based on regulations and risk factors. The collective health and safety of our runners is our top priority. We are asking for your help in keeping your family and our community safe from Covid-19 and other communicable diseases.

## **IF YOU ARE FEELING SICK, PLEASE STAY HOME.**

## **ATTENDANCE BY NON-WEROCK MEMBERS IS PROHIBITED**

WeROCK training runs are designed for WeROCK team members and their parents only. Due to insurance limitations, we cannot take responsibility for other students who have not registered for the program or who do not have the appropriate paperwork on file. Adults are always encouraged to run with the team, both after school and on weekends, however, friends, neighbors and relatives of our participants who are not adults are prohibited from running with the team.

Any parent wishing to run with the team must have a signed Waiver and Release of Liability Form on file, prior to participating. Parents may also take advantage of group discounts and preferred race entrance opportunities by joining the WeROCK team along with their child.

\*Check with your paid tax-preparer regarding your personal tax situation & deduction acceptability.

Student Runners of Orange County

DBA: We Run Our Community's Kids, We Run Orange County's Kids - a 501(c)(3) Tax-exempt organization

Tax ID #80-0209885

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**THIS IS NOT A SCHOOL DISTRICT SPONSORED PROGRAM**