



Hosted

By

MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY

Enos Derbonne Sport Complex

October 30, 2026

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

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Introduction

On behalf of the Southland Conference, we want to thank you for being an important part of the Southland Conference Cross Country Championships.

The Southland Conference, working in conjunction with the member host institution will lead the planning efforts, management and execution of all Conference championships and events. The Conference will oversee all aspects of the championship and its related activities, including facility operations and space allocations, hotel accommodations, media and team operations, hospitality functions, in-venue entertainment, fan and sponsor events, broadcast programming, as well as many other aspects. The Conference will work closely with the host institution to ensure that the championship provides a positive and rewarding experience for student-athletes and fans.

Vision Statement

The Southland Conference shall strive to be the premier Division I Conference by leveraging institutional collaborations to accomplish academic success and athletics excellence.

Mission Statement

The Southland Conference shall achieve the highest level of academic success, including the establishment of policies and procedures that encourage, support, and promote academic accomplishments, including the graduation of its student-athletes; and, to competitively perform in an exemplary manner in all sports, striving for Conference championships in order to participate successfully in NCAA championships.

Core Values

The member institutions of the Southland Conference shall operate intercollegiate athletics programs within a structure of shared core values:

- EXCELLENCE
- STUDENT-ATHLETE FOCUSED
- INTEGRITY
- DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- SPORTSMANSHIP
- FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. Important Dates and Deadlines

9/18/2026	Conference staff to provide draft of the Host Manual to the host institution.
9/24/2026	Conference staff will set up weekly and/or monthly conference calls with championship leads at host institution.
10/1/2026	Draft of Participant Manual due to Conference office.
10/2/2026	Participant Manual distributed to participating schools.
10/8/2026	Anticipated delivery period for Conference shipments (awards and merchandise)
10/27/2026	Pre-Championship Call
10/29/2026	Pre-Championship Practice
10/30/2026	Competition

2. General Administration

2.1. Championship Administration

SLC Staff

Commissioner:

Chris Grant

Email: cgrant@southland.org

Cell: (937) 674-6846

Chief Operating Officer:

Thomas Samuel

Email: tsamuel@southland.org

Cell: (512) 694-2900

Deputy Commissioner for External
Affairs/SWA:

Chelsea Blakely

Email: cblakely@southland.org

Cell: (832) 551-6761

Chief Financial Officer:

Amanda Brooks

Email: abrooks@southland.org

Cell: (214) 218-7523

Assistant Director of Business
Operations:

Jessica Ransom

Email : jransom@southland.org

Cell : (940) 636-9694

Business Operations :

Email: accounting@southland.org

Executive Senior Associate

Commissioner/Championship and Sports
Administration:

Bruce Ludlow

Email: bludlow@southland.org

Cell: (214) 394-7522

Senior Associate Commissioner for
Championships and Sports Administration:

John Williams

Email: jwilliams@southland.org

Cell: (317) 306-5509

Assistant Commissioner for Championships and
Sports Administration:

Kendee Hilliard

Email: khilliard@southland.org

Cell: (254) 733-8596

Director of Communications and Broadcast:
Anthony Goss

Email: agoss@southland.org

Cell: (214) 620-7780

Assistant Commissioner for Compliance and
Student-Athlete Engagement:

Mariah Polk

Email: mpolk@southland.org

Cell: (678) 761-0226

Host Institution

Director of Athletics:

Name: Bridget Martin

Email: bmartin@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-274-2131

Championship Manager:

Name: Matthew Bonnette

Email: wbonnette@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-263-4822

Head Cross Country Coach:

Name: Brendon Gilroy

Email: bgilroy@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-540-8043

Assistant Cross Country Coach:

Name: Alan Foolkes

Email: afoolkes@yahoo.com

Cell: 337-263-6323

Athletic Trainer:

Name: Hunter Martin

Email: hmartin@mcneese.edu

Cell: 985-688-7292

Name: Brandon Deininger (XC/TF)

Email: brde90624@lcmh.com

Cell: 850-619-8219

Sport Administrator:

Name: Matthew Bonnette

Email: wbonnette@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-263-4822

Media Relations:

Name: Matthew Bonnette

Email: wbonnette@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-263-4822

Media Credential Contact:

Name: Matthew Bonnette

Email: wbonnette@mcneese.edu

Cell: 337-263-4822

Host Institution Hotel Contact:

Name: Amanda Reeves

Hampton Inn / Home2Suites

Email: amanda.reeves@hilton.com

Cell:

Timing Company Contact:

Name: Cleon Fowler

Email: cleon@cfpfitiming.com

business@cfpfitiming.com

Cell: 734-645-3815

The host institution shall be responsible for securing enough volunteers to assist in various roles associated with the tournament. At a minimum, in addition to the staff listed in detail in this section, the host institution shall provide the following Cross Country-specific personnel:

- PA Announcer Mychal Word
- Music operator - Mychal Word
- Officials' liaison (can be tournament director) Meet Referee Frank Trammell
- Merchandise seller
- Volunteers – McNeese
- Broadcast Personnel – Jarret LeBlanc / Fisher Hamilton

2.2. Definition of Staff Roles

Administrative Decisions

In all cases, procedures outlined in this document and/or the Conference Operating Code shall take precedence over other guidelines. In the event an administrative point has not been included in this document, the Conference Operating Code or the NCAA Cross Country Rules Book shall serve as the guideline for determination of the final decision.

Championships Administration

Administration and conduct of Southland Conference championships shall be under the control and direction of the Conference Commissioner and Conference Cross Country Administrator, subject to the standards and requirements of the Conference Operating Code.

Games Committee

The Games Committee shall address competitive issues as necessary before and during the event. The Committee shall consist of:

Derek Riedel (UIW)
Brendon Gilroy (McN)
Stefanie Sleakis (Nicholls)
Bryan Jackson (TAMUCC)
Michael Rheams (SLU)

A majority vote of the Games Committee is required for all action regarding administrative decisions. The Conference Cross Country Administrator or an appointed administrator shall vote only in the event of a tie.

Championship Manager

The function of the host championship manager is to ensure that the policies of the Conference are applied. Specific responsibilities may include direction and supervision of facility arrangements, ticket sales, and development of participant information, security, lodging, transportation, promotions, financial administration, and adherence to the policies outlined in the Southland operations manual for hosts.

Participating teams should direct site-specific questions to their championship manager.

Media Director

The host media coordinator ensures that the conference policies regarding media are applied. Responsibilities may include planning and supervision of media work areas, coordination of all news conferences, statistical services, and communications.

2.3. Date and Site

The 2026 Cross Country Championships shall be held on October 30 at Enos Derbonne Sports Complex at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La.

The men's race will consist of a total of 8,000 meters. The women's race will consist of a total of 6,000 meters.

2.4. Meeting Dates and Times

A pre-championship Microsoft Teams meeting shall be held on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 10 a.m. Central.

2.5. Practice Dates and Times

Teams will have an opportunity to practice on the competition course on Thursday, Oct. 29, from 10:00 AM-6:00 PM.

2.6. Declaration Procedure

Cleon Fowler (CFPI Timing) (734-645-3815, cleon@cfpiming.com) will take entries from the DirectAthletics website. It will be the Coach's responsibility to ensure their team is entered into DA correctly (name, classification). Entries will be pulled from DA once Final Declarations have been made and the coaches' meeting has concluded on Tuesday, Oct. 27.

Final declarations will be made at the coaches meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 27. After the coaches meeting, substitutions for individuals may be made only as a result of injury, illness or institutional disqualification. Substitution requests must be submitted to the Championship Director, and the injury or illness confirmed by an certified trainer or physician. The meet referee must be notified of any substitution no later than one hour prior to the beginning of the event.

2.7. Disqualification

Competitors who fail to complete the prescribed course, which is defined by a legal marking system, shall be disqualified.

2.8. Scoring

NCAA rules on scoring shall be enforced during championship competition. The first 5 finishers on a team will be “scorers” (their team scoring points will be added up to get the team’s score). The sixth and seventh finishers will be “displacers” - they get team points and can displace finishers from other teams. The eighth-tenth-place finishers on a team will not get team points, just a time and individual place, and does not affect the team scoring.

Ties in team scoring shall be broken by comparing the place finish of the five scoring members of the tied teams. The team with the majority of winning places shall be awarded the higher place.

2.9. Uniforms

Each institution's athletes shall wear only the university's official equipment (warm-ups, competition equipment) as stated by Conference and NCAA rules. All members of an institution's team shall wear the same color scheme. If an athlete is in violation of this rule, an official shall issue one (1) warning to both the coach and the athlete. If the correction is not made, the athlete in violation will be disqualified by the Meet Referee. All uniforms must include a Southland Conference patch/logo.

2.10. Parking

Charter buses enter the park past the Main Building Wide Stone Parking lot near the finish line. See Diagram.

2.11. Protest and Appeals

Protests relating to matters that develop during the conduct of the Championships (men’s and women’s) should be made immediately, but no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the official results have been posted for the men’s race. Any such protest must be made in writing by the head coach and submitted to the Meet Referee, who will render a final decision.

The Meet Referee and timing system operators shall remain at the Championship site fifteen (15) minutes following the conclusion of results being posted for the men’s race.

2.12. Sportsmanship

Ethical Behavior By Coaches

Members of the coaching profession have certain inherent obligations and responsibilities to the profession, to the student-athletes and to all those with whom they come into contact in the field. Coaches are expected to be role models who conduct themselves with integrity and high ethical standards at all times.

The words and actions of a coach carry tremendous influence, particularly on the young people under his or her direction. It is, thus, imperative that he or she demonstrate and demand high principles of sportsmanship and ethical behavior.

Therefore, coaches must:

1. Always place the safety and welfare of student-athletes above the value of a win and above any personal prestige or glory.

2. Ensure that the coaching staff and all others associated with the program treat the student-athletes under their control with fairness and respect.
3. Remember that they are on public display and that their conduct reflects the image of their respective institutions.
4. Teach their student-athletes strict adherence to the rules and regulations of the sport, the institution and other governing bodies to which they are responsible.
5. Firmly establish with their student-athletes the standards of acceptable conduct.
6. Treat opponents and assigned officials with respect and demand that student athletes do the same, instilling in student-athletes the importance of respect and sportsmanship over winning.
7. Ensure that student-athletes understand that taunting, intimidating and baiting opponents is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated.
8. Monitor their coaching staff and student-athletes to ensure that they do not use profane and vulgar language while representing the institution.
9. Ensure, along with institutional administration, that fans are reminded of the expectations of sportsmanship and respect for officials and opponents and their supporters.

Participant Conduct

The Conference Commissioner may reprimand publicly or privately and/or disqualify a student-athlete, coach and/or a representative of an institution from further participation in a championship for reasons of misconduct. Misconduct shall be defined as any act of dishonesty, unsporting conduct in practice or in competition or breach of law that tends to discredit the championship or intercollegiate athletics.

Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

3. Championship Structure

3.1. Championship Qualification

All 12 member institutions are eligible to compete in the men's and women's championships.

3.2. Inclement Weather Policy

Athletics administrators, coaches, institutional staff members, and officials shall be aware of the proximity of lightning to the playing facility. For all outdoor events, games, and matches, as well as conference championship events, a Lightning Detection System must be present.

3.3. Awards and Awards Presentation

The Conference will present the championship trophy and individual awards at the championship site immediately after the men's race. The PA announcer/emcee shall read an awards script provided by the Conference.

Awards

The Conference awards shall include the following:

1. Team Championship Trophies;
2. Ten (10) All-Conference Medallions;
3. Athlete of the Year Trophies;
4. Freshman of the Year Trophies;
5. Newcomer of the Year Trophies;

6. Coach of the Year Trophies.

Awards Ceremony

The host institution shall prepare an appropriate awards area for presentation of awards at the conclusion of the championship. This should be a centralized area that can accommodate a crowd to view the awards presentation. A sound system will be required for the awards ceremony. The Conference staff shall be responsible for administering the awards program and may request the host personnel to assist with this process.

3.4. Officials

The host, in consultation with the Conference office, is responsible for assigning officials to the championship. All expenses related to officiating will be paid by the Conference. There shall be no extra payments or gifts given to officials by a host institution or outside organization without prior permission of the commissioner.

The Conference will provide an SLC logo shirt/hat for all officials to wear on championship day.

3.5. Hospitality

A hospitality tent will be available for officials and administrators at the championship in the blue tent as indicated on the technical map. Coffee, water, and assorted breakfast items will be available. Water and Gatorade will be available for the athletes at the medical tent located behind the finish line.

4. Team Information

Team Squad Size

Each men's and women's team is limited to ten (10) competitors. The official travel party of each team must be submitted to the Conference office prior to 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26.

4.1. Hotels

Teams

Participating teams are free to utilize Hampton Inn and Home2Suites through Ms. Amanda Reeves. Overflow on your own.

4.2. Participant Gifts

The Conference shall determine uniform student-athlete mementos for all championship events.

5. Sports Medicine Information

5.1. Medical Services

The host institution must provide appropriate and adequate medical and sports medicine services as determined by the Conference. An athletic trainer from the host institution must be present at all championship-related contests. At all championship events, the following medical supplies shall be provided: first aid equipment; tape supplies; ice bag containers; water and drinking cups and access to the host training facility for therapeutic modalities. Paramedics and ambulances shall be on call for the championship.

5.2. Training Room

There is no athletic training room at the course.

An athletic training room will be available for visiting teams at the Athletic Fieldhouse upon request. Please contact Brandon Deininger (850-619-8219) prior to the day of the race. **EMS will be on call during the event.**

5.3. Hospital/Urgent Care and Pharmacy Information

Hospital Information

Lake Charles Memorial Hospital
1701 Oak Park Blvd.
Lake Charles, LA 70601
(337) 494-3000

Urgent Care Clinics
Lake Charles Urgent Care
1905 Country Club Rd.
Lake Charles, LA 70605
(337) 990-8000

Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM- 8:00 PM; Sat-Sun: 9 AM- 5 PM

Access Urgent Care
2825 Country Club Rd. Ste. A
Lake Charles, LA 70605
(337) 444-5867

Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM- 7:00 PM; Sat-Sun: 8:00 AM- 4:00 PM

Pharmacy Information

CVS
4828 Nelson Rd.
Lake Charles, LA 70605
(337) 477-9068
Mon: 10 AM-1:30 pm, 2 PM- 6 PM
Tues-Fri: 8 AM- 1:30 PM; 2 PM- 9 PM
Sat: 9 AM- 1:30 PM, 2 PM- 6 PM
Sun: 10 AM- 1:30 PM, 2 PM- 6 PM

Walgreens
4460 Lake St.
Lake Charles, LA 70605
(337) 478-6042
Mon-Sat: 9 AM- 1:30 PM, 2 PM- 6 PM
Sun: 10 AM- 1:30 PM, 2 PM- 6 PM

5.4. Medical Coverage

CHAMPIONSHIP:	AMBULANCE:	EMT:	PHYSICIAN:	CERTIFIED TRAINER:
Cross Country	On-call	On-call	On call	On-site

5.5. Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Athletics administrators, coaches, institutional staff members, and officials shall be responsible for participating in student-athletes' safety and medical concerns during Conference championships and regular-season competitions.

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation (partial or full) from the Enos Derbonne Sports Complex, the public address announcer will direct the patrons to exit in an orderly fashion to the lobby and/or outside of the building. In the event of a medical emergency requiring medical transport, McNeese Athletic Training has an Emergency Action Plan sent to all participating teams

5.6 Lightning Policy

In the event lightning is detected within 8 miles of Enos Derbonne Sports Complex, all athletes, coaches, officials, staff, and spectators must immediately suspend activities and seek shelter in their vehicles. Activities may resume only after the threat has passed, and clearance has been given by the designated event official or athletic trainer.



Official Travel Party Form

INSTITUTION: _____

Each men's and women's team is limited to ten (10) competitors. The official travel party of each team must be submitted to the Conference office prior to 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26.

List each student-athlete name of your travel party. Denote Freshmen (Fr.) or Newcomer (NC) to indicate eligibility for post-championship awards.

<u>MEN</u> Competing Student-Athlete	Freshman or Newcomer
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	

<u>WOMEN</u> Competing Student-Athlete	Freshman or Newcomer
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	

E-MAIL: BLUDLOW@SOUTHLAND.ORG

Pre-Championship Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 10 A.M. CST via Microsoft Teams.

Meeting Link

Agenda

I. Opening Remarks and Introductions

II. Final Declarations

III. Meet Details

A. Course

B. Schedule –

Thursday – Practice/Inspection 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Friday -- Women's Race 8:30 a.m., Men's Race 9:30 a.m.

C. Sports Medicine

D. Timing and Results

Cleon Fowler – CFPI Timing

E. Officials

Meet Manager: Brendon Gilroy

Meet Referee: Frank Trammel

Starters: Charles Caldarera and Dr. Haile Gilroy

Clerks of Course: AunJelle Lafleur Burton and Shannon Foolkes

Head Course Marshal: Jason Foolkes

Course Marshals: Gerald Simein, Lyle Van horn, Dave Kohrs, Leslie Gurley, Mike Soileau
Steve Richard,

F. Hospitality - TBD

G. Parking – See Attached

IV. Drawing for Box Assignments

V. Protest/Appeals Procedure

VI. Awards Ceremony

A. All-Conference

B. No Runner-Up Team Trophy

C. Other Awards

VII. Participant Gifts

VIII. Bib Numbers

IX. Indoor Championships/Outdoor Championships

Substitution Request Form

Race:

Substitution:

Rationale:

Head Coach/Institution:

Response:

Referee:

Protest Form

Race:

Protest:

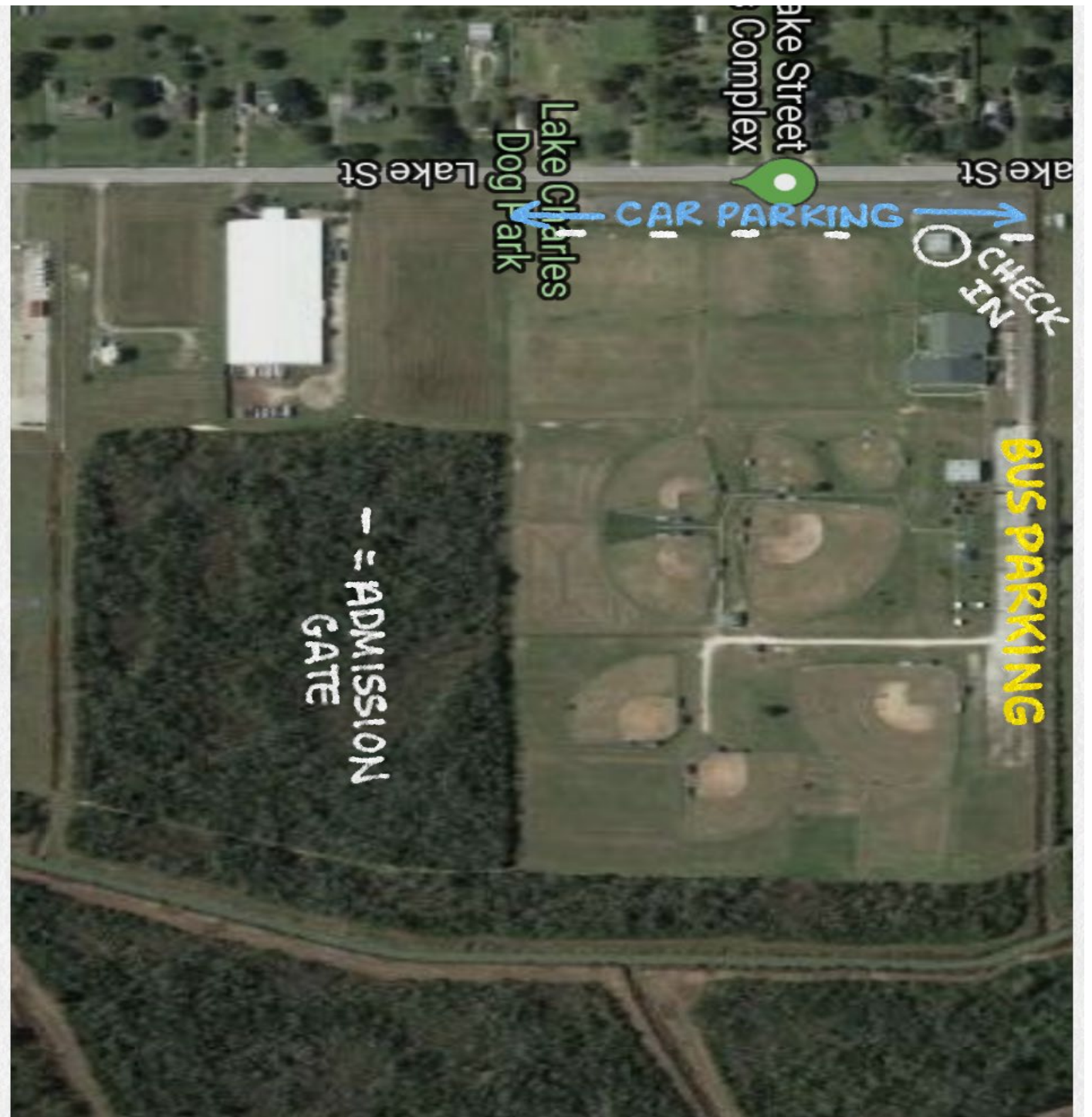
Rationale:

Head Coach/Institution:

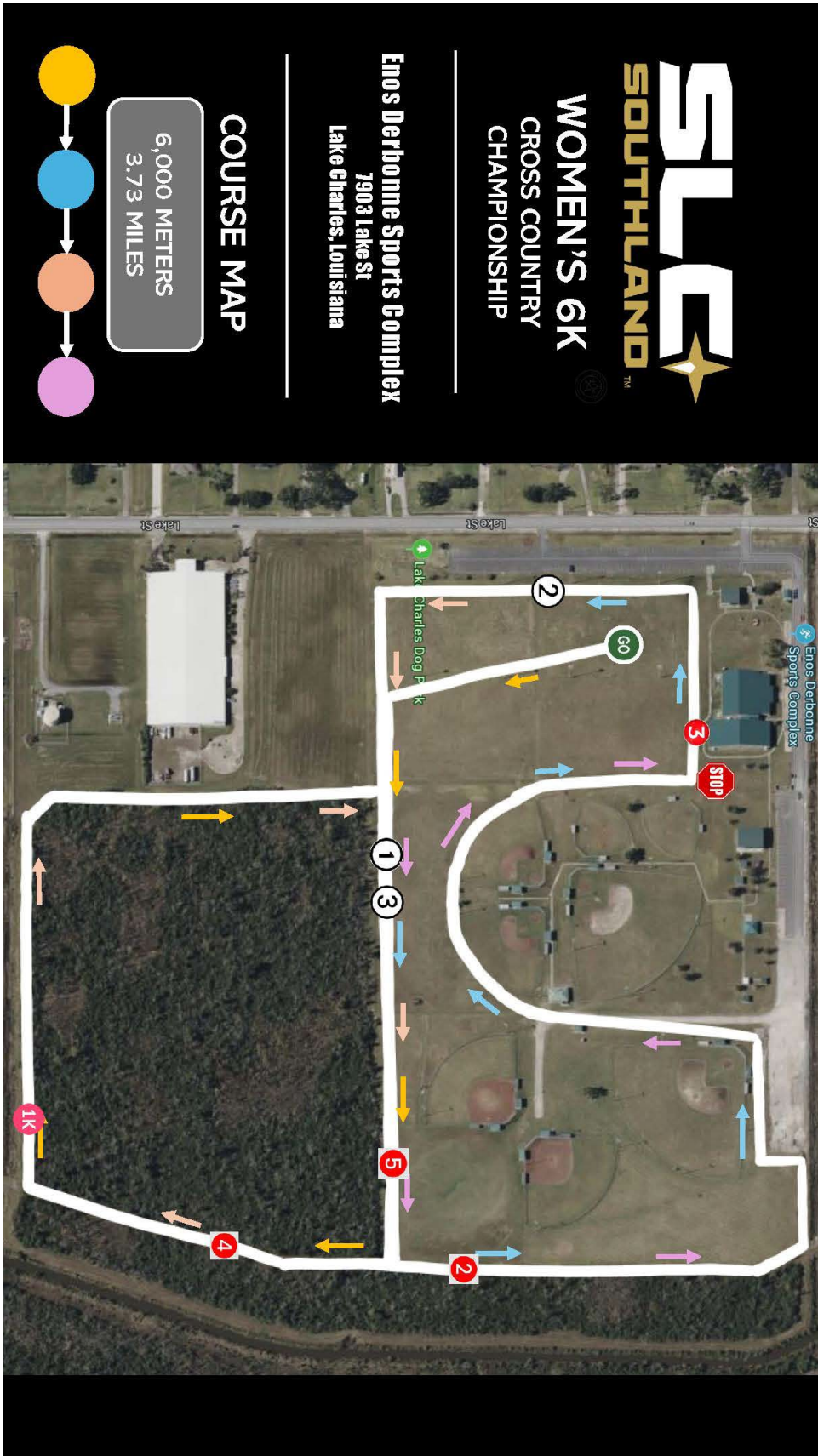
Reply:

Referee:

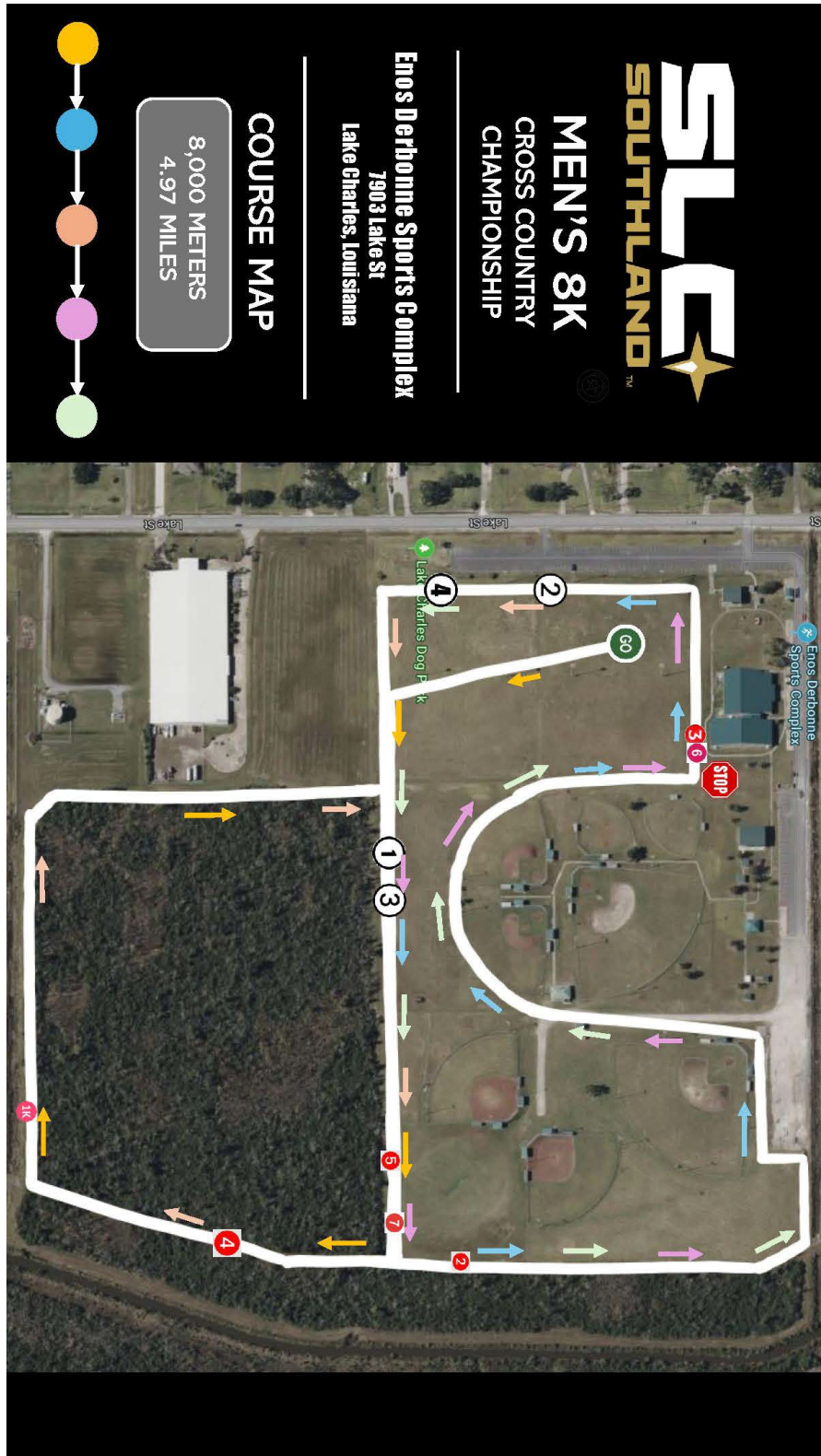
PARKING



Women's 6K Course Map



Men's 8K Course Map





Established 1963

"The Southland Conference serves to unite its members in celebrating academic success, achieving competitive excellence, promoting positive values and developing community relationships within a framework of efficiency, integrity, and personal dignity."

