

BETHANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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OVERVIEW

STATEMENT OF FOUNDATIONS:

The purpose of interscholastic athletics at Bethany Christian School is to provide students with the opportunities for athletic competition consistent with the mission of Bethany Christian School. That is *“to prepare students to become effective servants for the Lord.”*

It is the responsibility of the administration, staff and coaches to provide the Christian leadership and training necessary for our athletic program to achieve these essential foundations.

1. Honor Jesus Christ in all things – this is the most important measure of our success.
2. Christian character defines who we are – in and out of school and the athletic arena. God-honoring behavior, good sportsmanship, and adherence to the Athletic Code are required.
3. Good grades and school citizenship lead the way – successful athletes are first successful students.
4. Selfless attitudes permeate the team – what is best for the team always comes first.
5. We seek to win in accordance with the rules – competing at the highest possible level is the goal while showing proper respect for opponents.
6. We are all in this together – student-athletes, coaches, parents, fans and administrators.
7. Commitment to the team is important – it takes no talent to show up on time and work hard.
8. Athletes and coaches support other athletes and teams in order to build effective teams – we all share Bulldog pride.
9. Athletes work hard and improve in and out of season – commitment does not end when the season ends.
10. Positive attitudes will influence outcomes – play with passion, encourage those around you, cheer with enthusiasm.

HISTORY:

Since its founding, Bethany Christian School has offered its students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular sports. Through the years, soccer, volleyball, basketball, track, and Runners Club have been some of the offerings.

Bethany Christian School sports offerings vary from year to year depending on student interest and coaching availability, but we expect to offer men's soccer and women's volleyball in the fall, and men's and women's basketball in the winter, and women's soccer and track in the spring.

GOVERNANCE OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS:

The interscholastic athletic program is administered by the Athletic Director and the Administrator of the school. The Athletic Director will meet with the school Administrator on a regular basis to discuss the athletic program and any personnel decisions. The school Administrator reports to and receives guidance from the School Board of Bethany Christian School.

ATHLETIC CONFERENCES:

Although Bethany Christian School is not currently a member of any particular athletic conference, should the school decide to join one the BCS Administration and coaches are responsible to adhere to the policies and procedures published annually by the conference. Head coaches will be responsible for following any league policies related to completing and attending rules meetings or classes for their sports. It is the head coach's responsibility to determine that any assistant coaches are following these policies and procedures as well.

COACHING APPOINTMENTS:

Coaching appointments are the responsibility of the school Administrator in consultation with the Athletic Director. Head coaches will make recommendations to the Athletic Director and school Administrator as to the selection of any assistant coaches with the final decision resting with the school Administrator and Athletic Director. Appointments are for a one-year period with evaluation at the conclusion of each season. An evaluation of head coaches will be made by the Athletic Director. Assistant coaches will be evaluated by the head coach and Athletic Director cooperatively.

SUNDAY POLICY:

Bethany Christian School does not sponsor curricular or extra-curricular competitions or allow teams or school-sponsored groups to participate in Sunday competitions or practices. Bethany Christian School athletic facilities are not used on Sundays, unless determined appropriate or necessary. Sunday events and practices are not to interfere with a family's Sunday observance and students may not be required to participate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

On days when school is cancelled due to the weather, there will be no games. However, coaches and the Athletic Director can make the determination if practices may happen.

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORT – CO-CURRICULAR CONFLICTS:

The athletic department recognizes each student's need for a wide range of experiences in his or her education. Faculty members, coaches, and administrators work hard to minimize conflicts between school-sponsored activities. However, it is impossible to avoid all conflicts and students will sometimes be faced with difficult decisions about activities. When conflicts between school events arise, the sponsors, advisors, and coaches will work together, along with the parents and student, to arrive at the best possible solution. Students must also guard themselves from being "over-scheduled" or involved in too many in-school and out-of-school activities.

The general guideline is that competitions or performances take precedent over practices or rehearsals. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved – a basketball game and a different event, for instance – the student along with the parent can decide about which event in which to participate, with no penalty assessed from either teacher or coach.

UNDUE INFLUENCE:

Bethany Christian School adheres to the PHSAA policies regarding the recruitment of athletes and undue influence (Appendix B). No person directly or indirectly associated with the school can offer any special privileges to students because of athletic ability. Academic and athletic scholarships are not available from, nor provided by BCS.

AWARDS:

Bethany Christian School presents certificates to all athletes who complete the season and are in good standing on a team and are recommended by the coach for this honor. Members of the teams are awarded participation certificates. Other awards that may be presented at the annual sports award banquet include Team MVP, Bulldog Award, Defensive Player, and Most Improved.

COACHES

CHARACTERISTICS:

1. The coach is a spiritual mentor and a Christian role model for the athletes they coach, helping the students in their Christian walk by allowing them to develop their God-given gifts, using them to glorify Him.
2. The coach is able to relate to kids, enjoys being around and communicating with middle and high school students, and is willing to invest in the lives of these students – in and out of the athletic arena.
3. The coach has a passion for a love of the sport they coach.
4. The coach has the knowledge and ability to teach the technical skills required and the teamwork is involved in creating an atmosphere to develop the team to play at the highest possible level.
5. The coach conducts him or herself in a professional manner and fosters healthy relationships with athletes, parents, and officials. The coach is expected to be a leader in exhibiting Christian values and responsibility. As a highly visible representative of the school and the community, the coach must accept a special role in demonstrating positive and responsible leadership.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **Faith Formation:** Coach is a spiritual mentor. Faith formation can take a variety of shapes, but it is a coach's responsibility to engage the team in weekly faith formation activities and conversations. It is strongly recommended that every team, at every level, participate in team devotions and a service project within the community.
2. **Parent Meeting:** Coaches are required to hold an informational meeting for the parents at the beginning of the season to address scheduling, expectations, conduct, discipline, and any other areas of interest that the coach deems necessary.
3. **Coaching Appointments:** Head coaches will make recommendations to the Athletic Director or school Administrator as to the selection of any assistant coach with the final decision resting with the Athletic Director and school Administrator. Appointments are for a one-year period with evaluation at the conclusion of each season.
4. **Evaluation:** Evaluation of the head coaches will be made by the Athletic Director. Assistant coaches will be evaluated by the head coach and Athletic Director cooperatively.
5. **Team Selection and Tryouts:** In sports where tryouts are necessary to achieve the desired team size it is imperative that athletes be aware of prior to the tryouts of the criteria being used to select the team. It is recommended that multiple coaches be involved in the evaluation of athletes. Informing athletes as to whether they have made the team should take place in a private area with a person-to-person conversation between the athlete and the coach. Team size varies between sports. Any change in size, either larger or smaller, from the traditional team size should be brought to the attention of the Athletic Director. The advancement of the athletes to a higher-level team than is typical for their grade level should be made with the approval of the parents of the athletes and the individual athletes. If either the parents or the athlete object to the advancement, consultation with the Athletic Director should take place in order to resolve the difference.

6. **Equipment and Uniforms:** The coaching staff will collect any school-issued equipment and uniforms in a timely manner following the completion of the season. Coaches need to hold athletes accountable to return items in good condition. It is imperative to our athletic program that we are the best stewards of all the equipment and uniforms.
7. **Monitoring Academic Progress:** It is required that coaches make every effort to hold their players academically accountable.
8. **Service Project:** It is required that coaches schedule and participate in a service project with their team. They should request permission from the Athletic Director for what project will be done then provide a follow-up report with photos of the athletes participating in the project to the Athletic Director following their event.

SCHEDULES:

The schedule of interscholastic contests is the responsibility of the Athletic Director in conjunction with the head coach. The Athletic Director will contract with opposing schools and hire the officials when required. Scheduling of scrimmages is the responsibility of the coach. The Athletic Director should be notified of scheduled scrimmages. The coach, in consultation with the Athletic Director, schedules practice times. The main office does not routinely keep track of practice times. Coaches are responsible for informing athletes and parents as to the practice schedule.

FUNDRAISING/PURCHASING:

The Athletic Director is responsible for all funds related to the Athletic Department. An annual budget is presented to the school Administrator. Therefore, the Athletic Department is responsible for any fundraising events that take place throughout the season. These fundraising events must get approval from the Athletic Director. Any funds raised will go to the Athletic Department to be used throughout the year.

Purchasing of equipment or any use of Athletic Department funds that may arise prior to, during or after the season should be requested by the coach to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will inform the school Administrator of the request and if the purchase is deemed necessary and the funds are available, the purchase will be made.

ATHLETES

EXPECTATIONS:

By being a participant in a sport at Bethany Christian School, athletes are accepting the expectations for academic performance listed below, and for behavior, which is in the athletic code (Appendix A). As an athlete the behavioral expectations apply during all 12 months of a calendar year.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:

Students involved in extracurricular programs of Bethany Christian School must maintain academic eligibility. Students will be eligible to compete if they maintain a 2.0 GPA and do not have a failing grade in any subject area. During a sports season, a weekly report is submitted by the teachers to the Athletic Director and the academic Principal informing them of any student that is ineligible. If a student does not meet academic eligibility requirements, that student will be placed on academic probation and will not be permitted to practice or play until the next weekly report. During the ineligibility time, students must attend all practices and games, but will not be allowed to participate. They may use the time to work on academic activities. The weeklong ineligibility goes from Monday to Sunday.

PARTICIPATION:

According to the PHSAA any home school student wishing to participate in Athletics for Bethany Christian School must attend a minimum of one (1) of their classes in person on the campus of BCS.

Any athlete that is serving any type of suspension (in-school or out-of-school) will not be eligible to participate in any practice or game. They may observe and support their team from the stands but will not be able to be on the bench.

ATHLETIC PHYSICALS:

Athletes are required to have a current physical examination form on file in the office before they are declared eligible for participation.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT:

Uniforms and equipment provided by Bethany Christian School must be returned to the school at the end of the season. No parent or student will be obligated to purchase extra equipment in order to participate as a member of the team. Players are held financially responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged BCS issued uniform or equipment. The athletic department is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

TRANSPORTATION:

Bethany Christian School provides transportation to scheduled contests when requested by the coach. The coach decides whether athletes are required to ride school transportation to and from contests. Any exception to this requires parental permission.

OUT OF SEASON EXPECTATIONS:

During the school year, athletes are expected to give the in-season sport in which they are participating priority and are not expected to train for another school sport during that time period. Any organized training for another sport during the season in which the athlete is participating (such as an open gym) should be approved by the head coach.

Summer offers an opportunity for players to work on and develop their athletic abilities. Many coaches offer various opportunities for skill and strength development such as lifting workouts, team camps and summer leagues. Athletes are free to attend as many or as few of these opportunities as they wish. However, it should be noted that these opportunities provide the athlete with excellent ways to further develop skills, improve conditioning, bond with other athletes and demonstrate the commitment required for participation on their teams.

Our coaches work together to schedule open gym times and team camps so that multi-sport athletes can be involved in each sport. There may be times when an athlete must choose one activity over another, especially when participating in a summer league. Summer is a time for vacations and other family activities, and we encourage families not to sacrifice these important times. A reasonable amount of down-time is important for the wellness of the body and mind of everyone involved.

DAILY ATTENDANCE:

To participate in any extracurricular practice or event, students must attend school for a minimum of half of the day of the practice or event. Exceptions would include a doctor's appointment, or funeral. Students should clear these absences with the school office prior to missing school. If a student needs to leave school for health or other reasons during the school day, the student must report to the office prior to leaving campus. Before the student is allowed to leave school during the day, for any reason, parents must be aware. If the parent does not know of the student's departure, then the student must remain on campus.

PRACTICES:

Members of a team are expected to be at every scheduled practice unless absent from school or previously arranged with his/her coach.

PLAYING TIME

Athletics at Bethany Christian School are conducted with the goal of producing quality teams. Equitable practice time, although not equal, should be available to all team members. The amount of playing time in contests will vary with the skill level of the individual and the game situation.

PARENTS

Parents are an important part of the athletic program here at Bethany Christian School. The support and encouragement given to coaches and athletes is highly valued and greatly appreciated. Parents, as well as coaches and athletes, represent the school to the community.

PARENT GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON:

1. Be encouraging. Your attitude is highly noticeable and extremely contagious.
2. Encourage your athlete to speak directly with the coach if there is a problem. Empower your athletes to speak up for themselves.
3. Around the house and dinner table, please keep your conversations about the coach and other teammates positive.

COMMUNICATING WITH COACH:

It is appropriate to contact the coach regarding issues of safety, clarifying details of the schedule or team functions. Parents may receive emails or text messages from the coach periodically and are welcome to respond to the coach about the information in those communications.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

If there is an issue a parent wants to discuss with the coach, please respect a 24-hour time frame before following these guidelines. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Player – Coach
2. Parent & Player – Coach
3. Parent & Player – Coach & Athletic Director
4. Parent & Player – School Administrator, Coach, Athletic Director
5. Parent & Player – School Administrator, Coach
Athletic Director, School Board

INSURANCE:

Payment for treatment of athletic injuries is first the responsibility of the parent's insurance.

APPENDIX A

ATHLETIC CODE

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES:

Athletes at Bethany Christian School are highly visible in the school community and in society. Bethany Christian School and our community have high standards and great expectations for the conduct, performance and commitment of our athletes. At BCS, we expect the following:

- The athlete is expected to always exhibit Christian values and behavior. As an BCS student athlete, you are a representative of BCS not only during contests, but also after school hours and throughout the calendar year. Athletes are to realize that actions and attitudes reflect on individuals and on BCS.
- The athlete is expected to maintain top physical condition by eating properly, getting sufficient rest, and observing other good health and fitness habits. As athletes, and in keeping with the student handbook, it is essential to abstain from the use of tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs, anabolic steroids, and other performance enhancing substances.
- The athlete is expected to be committed to team goals. This implies that personal performance is not focused on the individual but is directed toward achieving team goals and team unity.
- The athlete is expected to be loyal to the coach. The quality of athletic experience and success depends on loyalty and a good working relationship between team members and coaches. If a problem between coach and athlete arises, both have the responsibility to work out a solution through good communication.
- The athlete is expected to attend every practice and to give full effort both in practice and in competition. Any exception to attendance at practice and contests must be resolved by the athlete, the athlete's family, and the coach.
- The athlete is expected to accept responsibility for the care and maintenance of all school-issued equipment.

VIOLATIONS OF THE ATHLETIC CODE:

Adherence to the Athletic Code is important for the good of each athlete and the success of the team. It is important to note that the code of conduct is not confined to school time or school functions but reflects an expectation and commitment to an everyday lifestyle in and outside school during all 12 months of a given year. Team members who violate the rules of the Athletic Code are subject to discipline by the coach, Athletic Director or school Administrator.

APPENDIX B

UNDUE INFLUENCE

Recruiting in High School Sports is a Violation of Rules. This letter outlines guidance for parents, students, staff and others who support Factoryville Christian School.

In 2007, the United States Supreme Court issued a rare unanimous decision that state high school athletic association rules should prevent and penalize the recruiting of students into high schools because of athletics. Bethany Christian School has agreed to follow the rules of the Pennsylvania High School Athletic Association (PHSAA) which apply equally to public schools, charter schools and non-public schools. A long-standing rule, Undue Influence involves cooperation and compliance by more than just the athletes and coaching staff. The anti-recruiting rule states that a violation can occur if a person “directly or indirectly associated with the school” encourages or secures the attendance of a student because of athletics. “Directly or indirectly associated with the school” may include but not be limited to parents of players, booster club members, alumni and representatives of non-school athletic programs. Often it is the non-school environment (AAU or youth sports) where inappropriate recruiting rule violations occur and where vigilance is needed.

Parents or others should not attempt to encourage or secure attendance by a student because of sports. They should not attempt to build up the roster by encouraging a good athlete to enroll at one school or another or target the best athletes for enrollment. Athletic recruiting is a violation, whether to a middle school student beginning the 9th grade or a high school student transferring between schools.

Attempting to encourage a student or parent to attend Bethany Christian School because the student is an athlete risks the reputation, our entire program and the future involvement of adults with our high school. Violation of the anti-recruiting rule can result in penalties to the school and athletic program and ineligibility for a coach or a recruited athlete and can also result in a parent, alumnus or supporter being banned from attendance and involvement with the school. We strongly urge all those who support our school to follow the spirit and letter of anti-athletic recruiting rules.

In the present day, schools of all types often market or advertise to either retain or attract students. The anti-athletic recruiting rule must be understood and followed by those who support our school to protect legitimate school-wide efforts to attract students who make their decisions free from athletic recruiting. Decisions about what school to attend would involve many factors, including athletics. But because athletics is based on competition, discussions about sports are only allowed as part of general school presentations. Non-athletic department school administrators and staff deal with admissions and are assigned to provide information to students and parents about our school. People interested in enrollment should be referred to administrators responsible for admissions.

Bethany Christian School follows the rules of the PHSAA. We insist our staff follow these rules in letter and spirit. Anti-recruiting rules require the awareness and adherence of our entire school community to ensure a level playing field in school sports. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this important matter.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

As a player or parent at Factoryville Christian School, I have read the Athletic Handbook and I agree to abide by its rules and regulations.

Player

Date

Parent

Date

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR COACHES

As a coach at Factoryville Christian School, I have read the Athletic Handbook and I agree to abide by its rules and regulations.

Coach

Date

