

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



Athletic Handbook 2011-2012

Member of :
Tennessee Secondary School
Athletic Association (TSSAA)



*Glorifying God,
Pursuing Excellence,
Building Christian Character*

*I can do all things through Christ
which strengthens me. ~ Philippians 4:13*

2011-2012 ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

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*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for men,
for it is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
~ Colossians 3:23*

*“...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
~ 1 Corinthians 10:31*

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict
training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it
to get a crown that will last forever.”
~ 1 Corinthians 9:25*

THE MISSION OF GRACE CHRISTIAN ATHLETICS

In addition to physical development, athletics provides a unique opportunity for students to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Sports also provides an excellent opportunity to minister God's love to the non-Christian community through exemplary attitudes and actions. The Athletic Department at Grace Christian Academy seeks to use the arena of athletic competition to teach each student-athlete the disciplines needed to build Christian character, develop a sense of community, and to foster excellence in education, teamwork, and leadership.

As part of our educational process, Grace Christian Academy's athletics exists for these purposes:

- To develop Christian leaders who glorify God in all they do, preserving His Holy Name and the reputation of Grace Christian Academy.
- To develop a commitment to good sportsmanship and a respect for others.
- To teach student-athletes that pursuing athletic excellence and accompanying awards are appropriate goals for any athlete or team.
- To develop Christian leaders who are dedicated and loyal to God, their school and their team
- To model and teach character qualities of faith, integrity, enthusiasm, intensity, hard-work, perseverance, self-control, sacrifice, discipline;
- To develop servant-leaders how to persevere in the face of adversity and to be gracious in victory or defeat.
- To teach that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the individual athlete takes precedence over any individual or team athletic accomplishment.
- To develop God-given talents and instruct students in the rules, fundamentals, and skills of various individual and team sports.
- To develop a submissive and respectful spirit for authority that God places over us.
- To partner with parents to provide a healthy atmosphere in which student-athletes can apply principles learned in competitive sports to enhance their relationship with God and quality of life.

In summary, our mission is to use athletics as a means of developing student-athletes into young adults who will be equipped to impact their culture and community as a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GCA's COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Our philosophy is to always “do our best as we strive for excellence.” As Christians we are commanded by Scripture always to do our best. As Christ-followers, we are exhorted to give nothing less than our fullest commitment, participation, and effort. We also believe we should strive to become the **best** at what we do. Being the best at anything, whether it be a National Merit Scholar or a state champion in football, is a worthwhile goal of any Christian. We cannot always control whether we win or lose a contest, but we **can** always control whether we prepare and compete like a champion.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CORE VALUES

- **Commitment to Developing Christian Character**
 - Athletic Department to Coaches
 - Coaches to Student-Athletes
 - Student-Athletes to Community
- **Commitment to an Examined Life**
 - GCA Teams to Opposing Team and Fans
 - Athletic Program to Community
- **Preparation of Student-Athletes**
 - Discipline, Commitment, Sacrifice, Perseverance, Teamwork, Maximum Effort, Pride of Ownership
- **Commitment to Stewardship**
 - Financial
 - Safe and Clean Facilities
- **Commitment to Athletic Excellence**

SPORTS PROGRAMS AT GRACE CHRISTIAN

At the present time, the following interscholastic sports are offered at Grace Christian Academy for grades 6-12:

VARSIITY

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cheerleading	Boys Basketball	Baseball
Cross Country (Co-ed)	Girls Basketball	Boys Soccer
Football	Swimming	Girls Softball
Golf (Co-ed)	Wrestling	Tennis (Co-ed)
Girls Soccer		Track & Field (Co-ed)
Girls Volleyball		

Note: Eighth grade athletes may be placed on a Varsity or Junior Varsity roster in some sports.

JUNIOR VARSITY

Football	Boys Basketball
Volleyball	Freshman Basketball

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Cheerleading	Boys Basketball	Boys Baseball
Cross Country (Co-ed)	Girls Basketball	Golf
Football	Wrestling	Boys Soccer
Girls Soccer		Girls Softball
Girls Volleyball		

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FEES

Every student who desires to participate in athletics at GCA is required to pay an athletic participation fee. The fee is due in full before the first contest of the season or the student-athlete will not be permitted to participate. This fee covers the costs associated with the sport, which includes but is not limited to: uniforms, officials, awards, travel, and facility use.

The fees are as follows:

- High School Football—\$200
- All other sports—\$150/sport
- Middle school sports—\$150/sport
- Maximum sport fee assessed per student—\$300
- GCA Coaches receive one sport free per child

LEVEL OF COMPETITION /PLAYING TIME

Varsity

The number of athletes carried on a team's roster is established by a combination of factors, TSSAA guidelines, travel considerations, number of available uniforms, and effective sport management. When a large number of student-athletes desire to try out for a sport at the varsity level, the coaching staff reserves the right to make cuts.

When athletes compete at the Junior Varsity and Varsity level, the philosophy concerning playing differs from that of Middle School. While it is true that our coaches and administrative personnel believe it to be important to broaden the experience of our athletes, and that broadening is enhanced by playing time, it is also an important goal of the Grace Christian Academy athletic program to strive toward excellence. Therefore, no minimum per game playing time provisions or minimum numbers of athletic meets in which athletes must compete are established at the Junior Varsity or Varsity level. Playing time decisions are left up to the individual coaches.

Middle School

At the middle school level, players are in the midst of skill development, so playing time will differ according to the level of competition. Winning is a desired goal of middle school athletics, and coaches will make every effort to play every player. However, this does not mean that every player will play in every game.

The middle school fields "A" and "B" teams in some sports, chosen through tryouts according to ability. Players on "B" teams may experience more playing time for additional skills development. The coach will make decisions regarding when a player plays. Factors that determine playing time at the middle school level are: level of opponent played, closeness of score, player attitude, adherence to team rules, among others. The final decision for playing time rests with the head coach, and parents are expected to display active support of the coach's decision.

PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

In order to remain compliant with TSSAA guidelines, any student-athletes who has **not re-entrusted** or any new student who has not been formally **accepted** and **enrolled** by the Academy may **not** practice with an athletic team or attend team camps.

REQUIRED PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTS

All Grace Christian athletes and their parents will be required to read and sign several documents before their student is cleared to participate or practice in a sport. The purpose of these forms is to insure that all athletes and their parents have considered the level of commitment GCA requires of its athletes. While considering these documents, parents and athletes should discuss all of its facets, potential risks, and level of commitment necessary for the sport.

These are:

- TSSAA Physical and Clearance Forms
- TSSAA Emergency Treatment Form
- Informed Consent Form
- Transportation Permission and Release Form
- TSSAA Eligibility Compliance for Varsity Athletes
- Parent and Student-Athlete Code of Conduct Agreement

Should you have any questions regarding any of the forms, please do not sign them without consulting the Athletic Director.

SPORT PHYSICALS

Any student who desires to participate in athletics at GCA must have a current physical on file with the school (and TSSAA). **Athletes are not permitted to practice or play without a current physical form (AFTER May 1, 2011).** The forms are available online at the school website, on ParentsWeb, and are also available in the athletic and school offices. The physical forms are the TSSAA Pre-participation Medical Evaluation Form and the Emergency Treatment/Parent's Consent Form. The school offers a discounted sports physical each spring for all athletes for any season.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY AND ATHLETICS

Revised Policy as of August 4, 2011

The goal for GCA is to do everything possible to guide students toward academic success and achievement. In addition to the TSSAA standards of eligibility (see page 14), the following GCA guidelines for eligibility shall apply to all students participating in extra-curricular activities.

Students participating in extra-curricular activities must maintain a 2.00 GPA each grading period. Grades will be checked at the mid-point and the end of each grading period. If a student falls below the 2.00 GPA standard at the mid-point of the grading period, the student will be placed

on “watch” for two weeks. During the two-week “watch” period, a student may or may not play/practice/participate at the discretion of the coach or sponsor. Staff members, coaches, club sponsors, and parents will work together to develop a plan to assist the student in raising their GPA. If, after the two-week “watch” period the student is able to achieve the 2.00 GPA standard, he/she will remain eligible for all activities for that grading period. If the student is unable to meet the 2.00 GPA standard, the academic improvement team will continue to work to assist the student, who will become ineligible to participate in any extra-curricular activities until the end of the grading period at which time grades are checked again.

If a student’s GPA is below 2.00 at the end of the grading period, the student will be placed on “watch” for two weeks with the same procedure followed with the “watch” at the mid-point of the grading period. The only exception to this would be the student who has been ineligible the last portion of the preceding grading period. That student would have two weeks of the new grading period to bring his/her GPA up to the 2.00 standard so that he/she could become eligible.

Please note that a student’s GPA at the end of fourth grading period will determine fall eligibility. Summer school work will be taken into consideration. Students who participate in athletics/activities can be deemed ineligible for participation for disciplinary reasons at the discretion of the principal.

INSURANCE

Grace Christian Academy carries a secondary accident insurance policy on all students. Parents or individuals must submit a written request to the Financial Office within 30 days of the school-related accident to be eligible to file a school claim.

EARLY RELEASE

Because of travel, it is sometimes necessary for teams to leave school prior to normal dismissal times. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to arrange with teachers to make up any missed work.

ATTENDANCE

Students must be in school for at least 4 periods (arriving no later than 10:50AM, not leaving before 11:40AM) in order to participate in practices or games that day, unless prior arrangements have been made with the administration.

TRANSPORTATION

The school has a limited number of vans and buses to transport athletes to and from contests. Therefore, parents will be asked to provide transportation to games played in the metropolitan Knoxville area. Should the athletes be dismissed early for a game, the school will do everything possible to arrange transportation for athletes. Coaches will be responsible for reserving vans and buses with the Athletic Office. When those vehicles are taken, the church vans and buses shall be a second line of transportation. A *Transportation Release Form must be signed* and in the school office in order for students to ride transportation, whether provided by a school-chartered company, coach, sponsor, parent or another student driver. Proof of insurance will be required to transport any students should personal vehicles be used in transporting athletes.

Coaches will be responsible for communicating transportation to parents and students. **Coaches and players are expected to keep vans and buses clean before, during, and after each use.**

ATTIRE

Student-athletes are reminded that they are ambassadors of our Lord Jesus Christ and Grace Christian Academy. Therefore, each athlete is expected to dress neatly and appropriately while traveling to and from athletic events. Each coach will determine appropriate dress for the team in conformity with school policy.

UNIFORMS

Team uniforms will be distributed at the beginning of the season. Team coaches are responsible for distributing and collecting team uniforms. It is the responsibility of the player to:

- Take proper care of the uniform.
- Have the uniform ready for games.
- Keep uniform tops tucked in before, during & after practice and games.
- Clean and return uniforms promptly after the season.
- Pay for the cost of any uniform he/she loses.

Any uniform piece that is not returned will result in being billed for the item. Report cards and records will not be released until the account of the student-athlete is cleared.

SPIRIT PACKS

Spirit packs promote team spirit, school spirit and community spirit. The items in a spirit pack help to foster team unity. This unity promotes and encourages individual and team discipline. This unity has a positive impact on the Grace Christian community.

- Parents are responsible for the cost of the items in a spirit pack.
- Students will own and keep all of the attire in a spirit pack.
- The spirit packs are paid for through the Athletic Office.
- Coaches will discuss the specific spirit pack for the team in parent meetings and through correspondence.
- Items are ordered as soon as teams are established.

FACILITIES USE POLICY

The athletic facilities of Grace Christian Academy are intended to meet the physical education and athletic needs of our students and school families. Use of the facilities will be prioritized as follows:

- GCA physical education program
- GCA athletic program
- GCA/GBC extended family (i.e. faculty, staff)
- Outside groups approved by the Athletic Director and/or GCA administration

The following will apply to all facility usage:

1. Physical education classes, including locker rooms, must be supervised by an approved adult at all times.
2. Athletic teams must be supervised by an approved adult at all times.
3. Use of all facilities, other than for physical education classes, will be scheduled by the athletic director.
4. If the facility is used by an outside group, an approved adult must be designated by the athletic director to oversee all activities.
5. Outside groups who use the facilities must provide their own equipment unless prior arrangements have been made to use GCA equipment.
6. Proper shoes must be worn during use of facilities.
7. All outside groups are subject to a rental fee as determined by the school administration and must comply with the school's general use policy.
8. During a sport's "dead period", the facilities will be closed to all GCA athletes affected by that sport's dead period. This applies to all indoor and outdoor facilities.

PICTURES

The athletic director will schedule a picture day during each sport's season. Information about picture day and an opportunity to purchase pictures will be provided to each family.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR HOME EVENTS

(Excludes Playoffs, Regional and State contests)

An admission fee will be charged to all adults and students for all home contests at GCA. Playoff games are subject to TSSAA guidelines and will be published before each playoff contest.

HOME EVENT SUPERVISION

The athletic director will administrate home athletic events or designate a game administrator or GCA staff member to do so in his absence. Basic set-up for home events will be arranged by the athletic director with the assistance of the coach and maintenance staff. The administrator in charge of an event will secure the facility prior to leaving.

CRITICAL SITUATION POLICY

- Professional medical advice will be sought from among spectators.
- The administrator on duty will work with coaches and parents to determine if emergency assistance should be called.
- Emergency assistance will be called if any doubt exists as to the seriousness of the injury.
- The administrator will stay in the vicinity of the injured player and designate others to make necessary calls.
- The administrator will designate an adult to accompany the injured player to the hospital if the player's parents are not in attendance.
- Immediate effort will be made by the administrator to contact the parents of the injured player.
- The administrator will work with the family to coordinate any help they may need to provide for other children or to notify family members.

RULES FOR ALL TEAMS

The following rules shall be followed by all GCA teams. Coaches may supplement these rules. A copy of all team rules must be on file with the athletic director, and written team rules must be provided to each player and to all parents.

1. All players are required to attend all practices and games unless given prior permission to miss by their coach.
2. Missing a practice or game without prior permission may result in removal from the team. Repeated offenses will result in the athlete's removal from the team.
3. Players will make up excused missed practices and games in a way to be determined by each coach. (i.e. sitting out part or all of an upcoming game)
4. Players are to be on time for practices, games and team meetings. Coaches are to penalize tardiness.
5. Players are to attend all end-of-the-year team activities. Players who do not attend may forfeit individual awards.
6. Players must maintain academic and behavior eligibility as outlined in this handbook.
7. Players are to follow team dress standards as established by each coach.
8. Players are responsible for the proper care and return of uniforms. Players will be charged for damaged or lost items.
9. Players who quit after accepting a spot on a team without the approval of the coach and athletic director will not be eligible to participate in that sport during the following season.
10. If a player is required to miss practices or games because of a doctor's instructions, TSSAA rules require a note from the doctor prior to his/her return to participation.
11. If a player needs to get academic help after school at a time which would make him/her late to practice, he/she must notify and get prior permission from the coach.
12. Missing practice because of detentions will result in disciplinary action as determined by each coach.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches

We recognize that coaches at Grace Christian Academy play a significant and vital role in the success our athletic program. As such, they have the responsibility to model Christ-like attitudes, behaviors, and desires for our student-athletes while under pressure themselves. They are participants and teachers at the same time. One of the coach's most pivotal roles is to work with athletes whose character, revealed under pressure, needs to become more Christ-like. In order to be considered an effective coach and role model, our coaches must also be thoroughly knowledgeable in their sport, demonstrate detailed preparation, motivate athletes, make adjustments during competition, and actively give meaning to each situation a team or individual athlete may face. Coaches have great responsibilities, but also great opportunities, to mold young lives for Christ.

All coaches and assistants at Grace Christian Academy will:

- remember that athletics are a part of a student's education and overall development. Academics are always a priority over athletics.
- help each child reach his/her full potential not only as an athlete but also as a child of God.
- remember that the team will reflect and model the coach's own attitude, manner, temper, conduct and behavior. Therefore, they will conduct themselves in a way that brings honor to God, their school, their team, and the community.
- treat the student-athletes with proper respect. Instruction and correction, while demanding, must be overwhelmingly positive.
- never intentionally demean, humiliate or embarrass a student-athlete.
- hold themselves to the same high standard of sportsmanship, respect, preparation, organization, dedication, hard work, self-discipline, sacrifice, and Godly behavior they expect of their student-athletes.

Student-Athletes

The Grace Christian student-athlete is the most visible advertisement for our school, and as such, there is a responsibility that comes with it. As followers of Christ, we want to be a light to those who see us, and our goal should be to draw all people to know Christ and to make Him known.

Therefore, the student-athlete at GCA:

- should represent God, their family, their school, and themselves with honor, proper conduct, good sportsmanship, and a Christian spirit.
- must remember that representing Grace Christian Academy is not only an honor and a responsibility, but a dynamic ministry to those who come to watch him/her compete.
- will establish exemplary standards both on and off the playing field or court.
- must demonstrate respect for all athletes, coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
- must comply fully with the ruling of any official. In no way should a student-athlete demonstrate by voice, action, or gesture, his or her dissatisfaction with an official's decision.
- is expected to exhibit exemplary behavior in the classroom and in other non-athletic activities.
- must maintain a balance between athletics and academics, remembering that academics is the top priority.
- Is expected to demonstrate a commitment to the team by attending all required team practices, games, and meetings.
- must understand that competitive rivalries are encouraged, but that disrespect for opponents is unacceptable.

Parents/Fans/Spectators

Spectators - whether students, staff, family, friends, or visitors - bear an important responsibility to facilitate an atmosphere at games which is conducive to good sportsmanship and honoring to God. Players, parents and fans represent Jesus Christ and Grace Christian Academy to the other teams. People are watching to see if we ARE different. God's people have a responsibility to witness at all times. Athletics is a great platform for impacting the culture for Christ. We must therefore be gracious in victory and defeat and model behavior that exemplifies Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior at all times by adherence to the following guidelines:

- Spectators must observe games from the designated spectators' areas.
- Any action that distracts the coaches, players, or officials from doing their best is not acceptable.
- Any spectator, representing Grace Christian Academy, who violates this standard of behavior, may not be allowed to attend Grace Athletic events. Parents who violate this standard of behavior may forfeit the privilege of their child's participation in

ATTENTION ATHLETES!

DO YOU KNOW THE ELIGIBILITY RULES OF YOUR STATE?

A summary of TSSAA Eligibility Rules is provided for your information. Read these rules carefully and be sure that you understand them. **ALL ATHLETES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING THE TSSAA RULES.**

- A student must earn five (5) credits the preceding school year if less than twenty-four (24) units are required for graduation or six (6) credits the preceding school year if twenty-four (24) or more credits are required for graduation. All credits must be earned by the 1st day of the beginning of the school year.
- A student must be enrolled before the 20th school day of the semester, in regular attendance, and carrying at least five (5) full courses during the present semester.
- A student is permitted eight (8) semesters of eligibility beginning with the ninth grade. Junior division students are permitted four (4) semesters of eligibility beginning with the eighth grade.
- A student shall be ineligible in high school if he or she becomes 19 years of age on or before Aug. 1st or in junior high if he or she becomes 16 years of age on or before Aug. 1st.
- Athletes must live at home with their parents.

- In order for a transfer student with an athletic record to be eligible at another school there must be a bona fide change of residence by the athlete's parents.
- All transfer students must be approved by the Executive Director of TSSAA before participating in any game.
- A student who engages in three (3) or more days of practice - including spring practice - with a high school in which he or she is enrolled shall be ineligible in that sport for twelve (12) months if the student enrolls in another school without a corresponding change in the residence of his or her parents.
- A student whose name is listed on the school eligibility report cannot participate in an independent game or meet until the season has closed in that particular sport. (This does not include golf, tennis or bowling.)
- A registered athlete cannot accept any money for athletic skills in any TSSAA sponsored sport.
- An athlete may accept a medal, trophy, high school letter, sweater, jacket, shirt, blazer or blanket for athletic participation but nothing else of commercial value, and these awards must carry the school's letter or other appropriate award emblem.
- All expenses to an athletic camp where specified instruction is offered must be paid by the athlete or his parents.

- When an athlete is charged tuition to attend a school, it must be paid by the parent or bona fide guardian or other family member.
- Any student repeating the 7th grade after having passed the 7th grade or repeating the 8th grade after passing the 8th grade shall not be eligible to participate in athletics during their 9th grade year.
- A student may not participate in an all-star game unless it is sanctioned by the TSSAA and unless he/she has completed high school eligibility in that sport.

Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association

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