

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

What We Believe

At Berean Academy, we believe athletics serves multiple purposes. First, athletics is fundamentally a product of human culture and should *be enjoyed and bring joy, which points us to God*. Humans are creative beings and should take joy and pleasure in what they create, just as God did in the beginning. As it brings us joy and pleasure, our hearts should be continually thankful towards God for His amazing design. Second, athletics *engages and develops a person holistically, according to God's good design*:

- Physical - exploring how the body works and what it is capable of.
- Emotional - dealing with experiences that bring happiness, disappointment, excitement, intensity, frustration, etc.
- Mental - learning the rules and strategies of the sport and what it takes to play at a high level; develops focus and critical thinking outside and within the moment.
- Social - build friendships and community; understand more about relationships and community in how you relate to yourself, teammates, fans, coaches, authorities, opposing players, etc.
- Character - builds principles and habits such as encouragement, service, good work ethic, commitment, passion, perseverance, responsibility, humility, empathy, respect, obedience, integrity, sharing, teamwork, thankfulness, telling the truth, joy, etc.
- Spiritual - awe and appreciation to God for how He designed us; instills love for God, others, ourselves, and nature as we are personally and communally sanctified through athletic experiences that test our new nature in Christ.

These two main purposes are the focus of interscholastic sports here at Berean Academy, which allows athletics to serve our mission to come alongside Christian families in the process of instilling young adults with the biblical world and life view in all areas of life.

Our Commitment To Excellence

God has created each person with skills and talents, and at BA we are committed to coming alongside students to help them discover and nurture these gifts within all areas of academia and life. As faithful stewards it is our responsibility as thankful recipients to maximize these gifts; nothing less than the pursuit of excellence is a worthy act of worship to God. So not only is the end goal of a perfect season record and a state championship a valid pursuit, but how we pursue that goal is also of great value. Our commitment to excellence could be summed up by the phrase “doing our best as we strive to be the best.”

So how does this affect our views on winning and losing? We define winning not simply with *what the score is* at the end of the game, but *how we played the game* (whether we maximized our abilities, motives, and attitudes). It is possible to win well and win poorly, to lose well and to lose poorly. We have 100% desire to win; we have 100% desire to compete our hardest; we have 100% desire to play at the highest level of sportsmanship and character. Based on this understanding of winning and our desire to be the image of Christ and His ambassadors to opposing schools, it naturally calls for teams to display appropriate demonstrations of honor, humility, and grace in both winning and losing.

Role Model Coaches

Because of our commitment to excellence, coaches at BA become one of the most significant components of our athletic program. They have the responsibility to 1) teach their sport at a high level while motivating students to continually self-improve through consistent discipline. Coaches also have the responsibility to 2) model Christ-like attitudes, behavior, and desires in

all situations the season might bring. They are participants and teachers at the same time, with lots of eyes watching. Lastly, coaches have the responsibility to 3) come alongside athletes whose “head, heart, and hands” need to become more Christ-like. Because coaches are human and are capable of making mistakes too, they may also fail in some areas. An extension of grace to all players by coaches and to all coaches by players and parents is encouraged as we all model Christ to each other.

Our Programs

We believe each individual sport at BA should be developed into a “program.” The head varsity coach and Athletic Director shall help provide a consistent structure and ensure that similar philosophies are implemented at all levels of the program – including JV and junior high programs where applicable. The program should build pride among the participants and support among the student body. Parents should be valued as partners in the process of athletic education. All activities within an individual sports program should reflect the school’s and athletic department’s policies, procedures, and philosophy.

Junior High Sports

Junior High sports are open to all 7th and 8th graders during their 8th period P.E. class. Athletics at this level are seen both as 1) an educational experience and 2) a “development program” for our high school. All students are taught the skills and strategies of the sport, allowing them experiences in practice and games to improve. The “A” team is designated as the most competitive team, while the “B” and “C” teams will play at a less competitive level.

- Fall - volleyball, soccer, boys and girls cross country
- Winter - boys and girls basketball
- Spring - boys and girls track & field

Senior High Sports

The philosophy of the varsity program is to place the best combination of athletes into a game or match situation. This combination of athletes is determined by the coaching staff, based upon their evaluation of their athletes. The philosophy of the junior varsity and freshman level programs is to emphasize the development of skills for each athlete as well as allowing athletes to compete at a competitive level.

Age is not necessarily a determining factor involved when coaches make teams. These decisions are at the discretion of the individual coaches involved with each sport. Coaches will place students on the teams that will enhance the student’s athletic skill with appropriate playing time.

- Fall - volleyball, soccer, boys and girls cross country
- Winter - boys and girls basketball
- Spring - boys and girls track & field, boys golf

The “Warrior Way” Philosophy:

We can summarize our expectations and goals for our students with these three C’s:

- Compete hard (pursuit of excellence: Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:1, Matthew 25:14-30, Proverbs 4:13, Proverbs 14:23)
- while building Character (individual character development and discipleship: James 1:19-20, Philippians 4:8-9, Galatians 5:16, Hebrews 13:18)
- within Community (community and teamwork: Genesis 1:28; 2:18, Ecclesiastes 9-12, Proverbs 27:17, Psalm 133:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- all to the glory of God (motivation of the heart is truly what differentiates the Christian from the rest of the world; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

We believe all BA athletes should strive to be diligent in preparation, relentless in effort, disciplined by nature, respectful in actions, self-controlled with words, humble in spirit, and aggressive in the pursuit of excellence, without regard to the score, opponent, time, referee, etc. As Christian athletes consistently display these characteristics, good things usually happen: teams are successful; players are motivated; fans are supportive and enthusiastic; parents are proud; prospective athletes want to participate, and non-believers may be drawn to Christ.

PARENTS & STUDENTS

This material is presented to you because your son/daughter has indicated a desire to participate in athletics at BA, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete. We feel that you and your son/daughter have committed yourselves to certain responsibilities and obligations. This handbook attempts to acquaint you with those responsibilities and obligations through a well-organized program of athletics. It is the role of the Athletic Department at BA to develop policies, rules, and guidelines that govern the spirit of competition for the school. Parental support is vital to the administration of the athletic program at Berean Academy.

Parent & Fan Expectations

We are blessed to be part of an athletic association (KSHSAA) that desires all schools to maintain a high standard of sportsmanship across their athletics and activities. As a Christian school, this is something we want to take seriously and abide by for two simple reasons: 1) as a new creation in Christ, we should be living lives honoring to God (and not ourselves) because that is what we were created to do and it pleases Him, and 2) we have a responsibility as Christians to represent Christ well to others - our words and actions are our testimony to the world. Therefore, within the passionate excitement of wanting to see our teams do their best and win, I would encourage you not to compromise God's pleasure in seeing His people representing His name well. In fact, because of who we are in Christ, our fans should be the loudest, most passionate, most supportive and excited fans in the stands no matter what is happening. Thank you for joining me in doing all we can to be that energy behind our players and coaches. In an effort to accomplish this, please remember that the coaches' job is to coach, the players' job is to compete with excellence and maximum effort, the fans' job is to encourage their players, and the officials' job is to make calls as best as they see them (officials/people are not perfect and do make mistakes - let's allow room for that; coaches can talk to officials about certain calls; fan commentary is not needed/respectful). In summary, please uphold a high standard of biblical character by following the Golden Rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." *If these standards are being compromised, a parent/fan could be removed from an event by an official or school administrator and be suspended from future athletic events. (This can range from one event to one year).*

Parents, we would ask that if you have a problem that needs to be dealt with, please follow the Matthew 18 Principle as outlined below:

1. Talk to the coach in private, away from a game or practice. Parents may NOT address the coach about a concern after a game or at a practice. Parents should contact the coach to set up a meeting time to address the concern no earlier than 24 hours afterwards.

2. If a parent goes to the Athletic Director or Administration without speaking with the coach first, the parent will be directed back to the coach. The coach will be notified of the meeting and the concern. If the parent does not contact the coach, the coach will contact the parent to address the concern. *Discussion should concentrate on skills and attitudes of your child.*
3. If you are not satisfied with the results, talk with the Athletic Director, who may set up a meeting between the parent, the coach, and the Athletic Director. The student is asked to attend if the situation requires it.
4. If you are still not satisfied, the Athletic Director may set up a meeting with the parent, coach, Athletic Director and High School Principal.

Please remember that a majority of all concerns can be resolved by talking directly to the coach. Please support the BA Athletic Program at all times in word and action with your son or daughter.

Please understand that playing time is at the coach's discretion.

Athlete Expectations

Being a member of a BA athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition of many athletes. Attaining this goal carries with it certain responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of a BA team, you are challenged to uphold this tradition and inherit it as your own.

Our tradition has been established by hard work through consistent discipline, resulting in steady improvement. We desire to win, but only with honor to our Lord, our athletes, our school and our families. When you wear the colors of Berean Academy, and 'Warriors' across your uniform, we assume that you understand our traditions and are willing to accept the responsibilities that go with them.

1. Responsibilities to the Lord: Take joy in exploring and using your gifts and be thankful to God for them! Develop them to the best of your ability, not taking them for granted. You identify with and bear the name of Christ, representing Him and His people; therefore, not only will your performance as a player be assessed by the world, but also your performance as a Christian - both on and off the court/field during the entire year. Represent Him well!
2. Responsibilities to Yourself: The responsibility to broaden yourself and develop strength of character is very important. You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible good from your athletic experiences. Your participation in athletics, extracurricular activities, and academic studies all prepare you holistically for life in middle school, high school, and ultimately being an independent, responsible adult.
3. Responsibilities to Your School: Berean Academy cannot maintain its reputation of being an outstanding school unless you give your best in whatever BA activity you may be involved in. By maximizing your ability, you are contributing to the positive reputation of your school. Like it or not, athletes are looked upon as leaders. The student body, our opponents, the spectators, and other communities judge our school by your attitude, conduct, and effort on and off the court/field, on and off campus.

4. Responsibilities to Others: As a BA athlete, you are responsible to your family, to your teammates, to your coach, to your classmates, and even to your opponents to live up to the training rules, practice to the best of your ability every day, give your all in every game, and win/lose with an attitude of respect. Whether you are a “starter” and play the whole game or a “sub” supporting from the bench, you can “love your neighbor as yourself” as you encourage others and consider them before yourself.

GENERAL POLICIES, RULES, & GUIDELINES

The uniqueness of athletics creates the need for the following rules, which apply to all students, grades 7 – 12, who are members of any athletic team which represents BA.

Eligibility

Academic Grades: A student who receives below a 2.0 grade point average on their three-week or six-week evaluation or on the nine-week report will be deemed ineligible. Ineligible students are exempt from competitions for one-week increments until their GPA improves back over a 2.0. At this point academics become the priority and those ineligible will create an individualized plan for improving their GPA. Administration holds the right to make alterations or exceptions.

Physical Exams: A signed 1) physical examination form, 2) concussion form, and 3) parental consent form must be on file with the main office before a 7th – 12th grade student may practice or participate in an athletic activity or physical education class.

Absences on Game Days: On game day or the day of an extracurricular activity, you must be in attendance for at least four periods (for at least one half of the classes school is in session for that day) in order to be eligible to compete/participate that day. Special circumstances need to be approved by the Athletic Director and/or High School Principal (funerals, doctor appointments, college visits, etc.)

Practices

- Because of the mutual commitment required of all players for a successful team, it is imperative that players be at and on time to all practices.
- Habitual absences or tardies not approved by the coach will result in disciplinary measures at the coach’s discretion. An example of an approved tardy would be an athlete getting academic help. Communicating absences or tardies well in advance respects the coaches’ planning for that week.
- Each coach will make a practice schedule available at the beginning of the season. In consideration of coaches, parents should be available to pick up athletes immediately after practices and games, as students are not permitted to be left unattended in the school building or at the practice area.
- Vacations or college visits by athletes during the season are discouraged. However, in such a case the athlete must communicate with the coach prior to being absent, at the beginning of the season if at all possible.

Day of Competition

- Athletes are encouraged to support other BA teams by attending their games whenever possible.

- All BA athletes should strive to be an excellent example to others as participants and fans by displaying the behavior expected.
- Respect and courtesy should be displayed at all times when visiting schools, restaurants, hotels, etc.
- Students may be asked to bring their own money for food on long or late trips.
- It is often necessary to dismiss athletes early from school to attend away competitions. It is *the responsibility of the student to see their teachers ahead of time* to arrange for assignments, quizzes, and tests to be handed in, explained, or completed.

Transportation

- All athletes must travel to out of town athletic contests in transportation provided by the BA Athletic Department.
- Athletes may ride home from away games with their parents. Parents or older siblings **MUST** sign-out their athlete with the coach's sign-out sheet before leaving the game location.
- Athletes may ride home from away games with a teammate's parents only if permission has been given through direct communication from the athlete's parents to the coach. Examples include a phone call, text, email, signed note, etc.
- Special circumstances for traveling to and from athletic events can be arranged with the AD.
- School vehicles are a privilege, not a right. Keep them clean and neat.
- All regular school bus rules, as explained by the driver or coach, will be followed.
- The Athletic Department is always in need of drivers!! If you would be interested in getting your CDL school bus license, please contact the school office.

Uniforms

- Coaches will assign each player a uniform at the beginning of the season.
- Any players whose assigned uniform is lost or unnecessarily damaged will be charged the replacement cost of the uniform.
- Laundering of the uniform should be done regularly and with proper care. Use cold water and air dry.
- After the last contest of the season, the coach will set up a turn-in deadline. All the uniforms should be returned by that day to the coach (or office if the coach is not a teacher).

Equipment

- All school equipment should be treated with care. If given a responsibility for BA athletic equipment, carry out that responsibility completely. Any loss or damage of school equipment due to neglect, carelessness, or abuse will result in payment for repair or replacement by the person(s) responsible.

Facilities

We are very fortunate to have our facilities for athletics at BA. Many Christian schools struggle to make the best of what little they have, yet we have been blessed with two excellent gymnasium, a weight room, locker rooms, our very own soccer fields, and a track. It is essential that we take great care of our facilities and use them wisely.

- Always leave the area cleaner than when you found it (also applies to away events).
- Be aware of any destructiveness or misuse of property. If you witness abuse of any facilities, encourage the offenders to stop and report it to the proper authorities.
- You are not to be in any other part of the building during practices and games other than the designated athletic area.

- Athletes are to be out of the building fifteen minutes after they enter the locker room following their practice session. The coach is required to stay until all athletes are gone. Make sure your ride is at the practice location at the designated time. Have a place to go (i.e., another athlete's home) if your ride does not come on time.
- Home game nights, no athletes are to be in the gymnasium or practice area without designated supervision.
- Athletes are not to get equipment or supplies without permission from the coach.
- All spiked or cleated shoes must be put on and taken off outside of the building or on the hallway entrance mats.

Discipline

For a serious violation of a school team or school rule, a three-step approach to discipline will be used:

- Step 1 – A personal conference with the coach and/or athletic director.
- Step 2 – A parent conference with the coach, athletic director, and principal.
- Step 3 – Expulsion from the team.

Playing Time

Making a team does not necessarily guarantee playing time or equal playing time. Foundational to playing time is the effort, attendance, participation in practice, teamwork, skills, and attitude of each student. On top of this, the size of roster, close game situations, extreme weather, injuries, key player matchups, strategic positions, and the level of competitive play are a few reasons for changes in playing time from game to game. Some players are subs for one team while a starter for another, thus affecting playing time. *Please understand that playing time is at the coach's discretion.*

Letters and Awards

Although we strive for the incorruptible rather than the perishable, we do like to recognize participation and achievement in our athletic program. At the High School level, each coach recognizes the team's season and individual accomplishments at an awards banquet celebration following the season. This includes the thanking and honoring of the seniors, a presentation of varsity letters, pins, and bars, along with possible certificates and fun awards organized by the coach and players.

Injuries and Illness

- All sports-related injuries must be reported to the coach, who then relays them to the school nurse.
- If an injury requires treatment by a physician, the athlete must obtain a physician's permission (in writing) to return to active status on the team. This is also expected in our concussion protocol. The written permission should be turned in to the school nurse, who will notify the coaches.
- Conditioning is *your* responsibility prior to the start of the season. Prepare yourself so that you can stand the physical stress that practice will put on you.

Insurance (Supplemental):

In the event of a sports-related injury, BA carries student accident insurance on each student that is secondary to the student's primary insurance; therefore parents should file with their personal insurance companies first. Contact the office if you wish to file a claim. Insurance claims must be filed initially within 60 days of the date of injury. Once the claim is filed, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the insurance company with questions and concerns.

CLOSING COMMENT

The athletic administration and coaching staff at Berean Academy want to wish you the very best in your athletic endeavors this year. If we can be of help to you in any way, please let us know. We want athletics to be fun and profitable in your Christian life, and we want sports to help build your love for Christ as you explore, develop, and find joy in how God has created you and His world.