

Christ Church Episcopal School Athletic Department Handbook

Athletic Philosophy

Christ Church Episcopal School believes that all aspects of our students' well-being are important and that many important lessons are taught through an athletic experience. The goal of coaches and teachers is identical: to help young people reach their fullest potential. Coaches are teachers who deal with physical fitness as well as the fundamentals and strategies of sport. We strive to offer our students, who vary in their athletic interest and ability, quality programs that appropriately challenge them to stretch their limits of endurance, and fosters self-discipline, loyalty, self-confidence, leadership, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Coaches are expected to uphold high standards and teach the valuable lessons that are learned from athletic competition.

League Affiliation

Christ Church is a member of the South Carolina High School League

Christ Church encourages a multi-sport experience rather than year-round specialization. The social, emotional, physical, and educational dividends are usually greatest when students have more than one athletic experience and perspective.

Participation

The most visible team in each sport is the varsity. Results of games are printed in the local newspapers and periodically reported in school publications. In the interests of relations with loyal alumni, our parent constituency, and the public, we make every effort to put our best foot forward and play to win within the spirit of amateur athletics and the school's philosophy. In some especially close games, varsity reserves may not get to play or may play only sparingly. Even so, reserves are a highly valuable part of every varsity team because they help the other members of the team prepare and because they provide important encouragement during games.

On the sub-varsity and Middle School levels, coaches are expected to help all players feel they are an integral part of the group or team. Coaches are asked to make a conscientious effort to give everyone an opportunity to play and to communicate with individual players to help them accept and enjoy their roles on teams. However, not every player may play in every game, nor are all team members guaranteed equal playing time. Substitution rules can sometimes keep a coach from getting a player into a game. Coaches may decide not to put a player into a game if the coach believes that would be physically or emotionally harmful to that player. In addition, no Christ Church coach will knowingly put a student in a situation where there is a chance the player will be publicly embarrassed.

The difficulty is that these decisions are judgment calls that must be made by the coach, usually in the midst of the contest. The decisions are based as much as is humanly possible on the coach's experience, his or her knowledge of the student's skills as demonstrated in practice, and what is best for the individual and the group.

Special Situations

Participating on two teams during the same season

It is Christ Church's basic policy not to allow a student to participate in more than one sport in any single season. Reasons behind this policy include the different physical demands of two sports, the stress resultant from a student oversubscribing him or herself, and the difficulty in making a full-time commitment to either sport.

However, we recognize that there may be unusual circumstances in which a student and his or her parents might feel that participation in two sports is appropriate. Should this be the case, the student and his or her parents must make the request in writing to the Athletic Director at least two weeks before the beginning of practice for either sport. The Athletic Director will notify the Head of Upper School who, with the student's advisor, will review the student's progress in all areas, but particularly academically. The Athletic Director and the two coaches involved will also review the proposal. The Athletic Director will notify the student and parents of the decision.

Moving Middle School Students to Varsity Competition

It is the policy of Christ Church that students in grades 10-12 compete on Varsity teams and that seventh, eighth and ninth graders compete on JV and Middle School teams. Occasionally, a situation arises when an Athlete with advanced physical maturity and talent will petition to move up to the varsity. Such a request must be made in writing, and consideration of the request will only be given if Upper School Students will not be displaced from the sport in question. Approval must come from the parents, Athletic Director, Head of Upper School, Head of Middle School, and the coach of that sport. If any one of these people objects, then the student will participate on the JV or Middle School team. On occasion, there may be school-initiated requests to move an Athlete to a varsity team. Most often, such moves will occur if a varsity team is in danger of not being able to field a team. Regardless of the circumstances, any school-initiated move would only take place after going through the appropriate channels: the Coach, the Parents, Athletic Director, and Heads of the Middle or Upper Schools.

Keep In mind that some sports at Christ Church are varsity only and athletes are eligible to participate starting in the 7th Grade. Examples are Cross Country, Golf, Swimming, and Track. [Tennis players compete for spots either on JV or Varsity through a tryout tournament.]

Roles of Athletes, Teams, Spectators, Athletic Directors, Coaches, Head Coaches, and the Trainer

1. Athletes

Each Christ Church athlete is an ambassador of the school. Our athletes' frequency of exposure in interscholastic contests provides opportunities to exhibit qualities of sportsmanship, enthusiasm, and clean play. There is a wide variety of instances in which an athlete's behavior is expected to surpass the norm, including in the classroom, at home contests, on buses, in opponents' communities, and in locker rooms.

Even behavior outside athletic activities reflects on the school, as athletes wear their team jackets and award letters in a variety of settings.

Care of the Athlete

Medical forms must be on file at school before the athlete may begin practice. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Attendance and Athletic Contests

A student who is not at school for his or her first academic commitment without an acceptable excuse (e.g., dentist appointment, funeral, etc.) will not be eligible to participate in a contest that day.

Anti-Drug and Alcohol Rules

The use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs negatively affect the health and athletic performance of an athlete and, by extension, of the entire team. Therefore, the school believes compliance with these rules both on and off school property is very important.

The consequences for an Upper School student's breaking of the training rules are outlined in the Upper School Handbook. In the Middle School, violations will be addressed by the coach, Athletic Director, and Head of the Middle School. Coaches and captains must work to help players make good choices. At preseason meetings, coaches will review the training policy, make clear explanations of the rules, and set the tone of compliance. Captains need to lead by example throughout the season.

Anti-Hazing Policy

Athletics at Christ Church are meant to develop students' sense of cooperation and leadership. For this reason, the school upholds a strict anti-hazing policy. No hazing, taunting, physical or verbal harassment, exacting of unnecessary or disagreeable work or humiliation will be permitted either during pre-season camps or during the season. Any student who is found in violation of this rule will be considered immediately for suspension from the team or expulsion from school.

Schedules, Equipment, and Uniforms

Students meet with their coaches at the beginning of each athletic season. At this time, the coaches outline expectations and goals for the season as well as day-to-day details, such as any equipment the students must provide, and the practice and game schedules. Using the procedures specified by the Athletic Directors, coaches distribute, collect, and inventory uniforms and equipment. The trainer and coach select each player's equipment, making sure all equipment is well-fitted, particularly in the cases of helmets, shoulder pads, and the like. Equipment should be in excellent condition as all equipment is sent to the reconditioner for repair at the end of the previous season. Players supply their own towels. Students are responsible for equipment and uniforms issued to them and are expected to return them clean and in good condition at the end of the season.

Injured Players

If a doctor has indicated that an athlete should suspend activity, the player may not play again until the doctor has written a note clearing the player for activity. In all situations when a doctor is not involved, the school's trainer will have the final say on whether a player is ready to return to action.

Captains

The Athletic Director will not mandate any systematic approach for choosing team captains. Each coach, in discussion with the Athletic Director, should decide how to select the captain or captains for his or her team. Some teams vote for captains; other teams may have a coach-appointed captain. In the Middle School, captains are often rotated. The Athletic Director and coach will decide on a method for selecting captains that will assure equity and sensible, productive outcomes. The method for captain selection is always explained to the team.

Once selected, captains will be called on in a variety of ways to promote team unity, good communication between coaches and players, proper team conduct, team spirit, and school spirit.

Coaches should also expect leadership from all seniors on their teams.

All-Conference and All-State Awards

All-Region selections are made by the head coaches of varsity teams for most Region sports.

All-State selections are made by most coaches associations. It is Christ Church's policy that any team or individual invited to participate in the state tournament will do so with the approval of the Athletic Director, Division Head, and Headmaster.

2. Teams

Team success reflects on the school as a whole. If our teams appear well coached, a trait, which includes, but is not limited to, their ability to win, Christ Church's image is enhanced. Outsiders make a connection between effective instruction on the playing fields and the quality of instruction in our classrooms.

Team Meetings

Each Head Coach must call a team meeting at the beginning of the season to review certain information with his or her team. This information includes practice and game times and dates, holiday schedules, and special events. At this meeting, the Head Coach also discusses training rules, excusal procedures, locker room procedures, the captain's duties, and player responsibilities

Supervision

Coaches must be present at all aspects of practices, games, and locker room activity; team captains cannot supervise any activity, even drills. Head coaches must organize staff and program to promote systematic supervision as injury to an athlete can occur before, during, and after practices and games, as well as in the locker room. It is important that coaches communicate starting and finishing practice times and supervise athletes before, during, and after the activity and until the last player leaves the locker room area.

Locker Room

The Coach assigns lockers in the Upper and Middle School locker rooms. Personal effects and school clothes are stored in locked lockers to insure the protection of personal property. Team spirit, camaraderie, and respect for one another can be enhanced when players and coaches work together and create a positive and secure locker room environment.

Practice Schedules

In general, teams will practice every school day once the practice season starts, unless there is a game. Practices or games outside of tournaments over holidays or on weekends are to be kept to a minimum, particularly at the middle school and JV levels. Practice times are set by the coaches in compliance with the Athletic Director.

Game Schedules

The Athletic Director, and the Head Coach, will put together the most attractive schedules possible for the team. After our league schedule is complete, every effort is made to schedule contests with schools that have the same basic philosophy as Christ Church.

Scrimmages can be arranged by either the Head Coach or the Athletic Director.

Water

Coaches must provide teams with adequate water. Players should take frequent water breaks during the hot weather.

Inclement Weather Practices

At times, inclement weather forces practices inside. Middle School and Upper School coaches should communicate with one another before starting practice. Indoor facilities will be divided, shared, and sometimes rotated to include as many teams as possible. If needed, the Athletic Director will help arrange practice schedules for each team.

Severe Weather Conditions

A coach will remove his or her team from the field immediately if he or she sees lightning rather than waiting for officials to make the call. The trainer and Athletic Director will have the final say on the cancellation of a game or practice. Christ Church will err on the side of safety.

Transportation

Transportation will be provided for all off-campus activities. For insurance, liability, and team reasons, athletes are required to use the school-provided transportation. Players may be driven home only by a parent following the contest, provided the coach has received a note from the parent asking permission to do so. Coaches will check the buses or van to make sure no equipment is forgotten and that there has been no vandalism.

Athletic Awards

Varsity athletes who meet the set criteria for their sport are awarded a varsity certificate for that season. Boys and Girls receive a "C" and a sport pin with their first varsity certificate; a Bar is awarded for each additional letter earned.

3. Spectators (Parents)

It is the hope and expectation of the school that all spectators, including parents, will support the Christ Church teams in a positive manner. Yelling at officials, coaches, and players is inappropriate behavior and will not be tolerated. If an individual continues to act in such a manner, he or she may be asked to leave the contest area. If disruptive behavior continues, a spectator can be asked to stay away from future contests. We encourage parents to drop in on practices from time to time. Parents who would like to attend on a regular basis are advised to check with the Head Coach. Constant attendance can be distracting to the coach, team, and most important, to one's son or daughter.

If a parent has a concern relating to the team, he or she should call the Head Coach, Athletic Director, and appropriate Division Head, in that order.

4. Athletic Director

Christ Church has one athletic director this individual oversees the athletic program with the goal of maximizing each student's enjoyment of and benefits from the athletic experience.

The prime role of the Athletic Director is that of facilitator. By easing coaches' load of administrative detail, the Athletic Director allows each coach to focus his or her time and energy on guiding and motivating the student athletes and teams to achieve their potential. The Athletic Director also provides positive direction to the coaching staff and sets the tone and image of the school's athletic program.

The management tasks of the Athletic Director are incredibly varied and include scheduling contests and practices, setting budgets, supervising and evaluating personnel, coordinating transportation, and controlling facilities.

5. Coaches

Adults need to set an example for their players by being good role models. Each coach acts as an ambassador for Christ Church. A coach's conduct on the sidelines and in dealings with parents, officials, and other school's coaches, fans, and personnel help build a very positive image for Christ Church. The coaches are expected to model good behavior for all participants and fans.

All coaches are asked to be professional, sensitive, and openly supportive of those sports that run simultaneously with theirs. Positive comments about other coaches' players and the nature of the other sport will help build a healthy respectful relationship among "neighbor sports." Attendance at games, even for a few moments, not only demonstrates caring but serves as a model of school spirit for the entire community. This helps promote student support for other teams and helps eliminate internal competition.

It is imperative that all Christ Church coaches support our other athletic teams, by encouraging athletes to play on as many Christ Church sponsored teams as possible. No Christ Church coach is to encourage the year round play of one sport. Coaches assure that school rules for students are followed and inform the Athletic Director and advisor about developments affecting the welfare of students.

Technique

Team coaches are responsible for choosing teaching methods and styles of play and planning their team's practices. Coaches need to teach the fundamentals of their sport and educate their players on how to protect themselves. Therefore, a clear understanding of teaching technique and form in drills and a knowledge of activities that could cause injuries, is vital. Coaches of contact sports teach, in a logical progression, those fundamentals of their sport's more physical aspects to reduce the chance of player injury. Coaches should never put a player in a situation he or she can not handle physically, whether in practice or a game.

Communication About and Support of Academics

The teaching faculty appreciate coaches' support of the students' academic responsibilities. Coaches are asked to remind athletes to check assignments and test schedules before there is an early dismissal for an away game, cooperate with faculty and students for extra help sessions, and be sensitive to practice sessions during exams.

The Athletic Director or coach will communicate approved dismissal and bus times for each away contest to the teaching faculty as soon as possible.

6. Head Coaches

The Head Coach of each sport is responsible for the program at all levels of that sport. Head coaches routinely must produce, and help others produce, effective practice sessions for their teams. This involves planning ahead, securing equipment, supervising the locker rooms before and after practice, enforcing expectations that athletes arrive on time (unless the athlete needs training room attention or has an academic commitment), and dismissing players from practice on time.

Head coaches of fall sports are expected to get all information to each eligible participant and parent prior to the end of school, with a preseason practice and scrimmage schedule. At the opening of each of the three athletic seasons, head coaches must give a list of participants to the Athletic Director to assist in keeping accountability and eligibility records. Head coaches provide the Athletic Director with team rosters with numbers, positions, and all other pertinent information. Head coaches inform assistant coaches of their responsibilities, complete an equipment inventory at the beginning and end of each season, and provide the trainer with the team's schedule for any holiday practices or special events.

7. Trainer

Christ Church has a certified and licensed athletic trainer on duty. Communication between the coach and trainer is key in evaluation, activity limitation, and rehabilitation of our injured athletes. Coaches must report injuries to the trainer and communicate with the trainer about athletes' possible practice and game limitations.

If a doctor has indicated that an athlete should suspend activity, the player may not play again until the doctor has written a note clearing the player for activity. In all situations when a doctor is not involved, the trainer will have the final say on whether a player is ready to return to action.

The trainer cannot dispense drugs such as Tylenol or Advil.

The trainer may only treat a non-Christ Church player if that student has a doctor's prescription or if that player is injured while participating in a Christ Church-sponsored athletic event.

Postponement or cancellation of Games

Only the Athletic Directors have the authority to postpone or cancel games. If a postponement or cancellation seems appropriate, the Athletic Director will consult with the coach. The Athletic Director will see that Christ Church's main office is alerted to a schedule change by 1:30 p.m. at the latest and that athletes are notified as soon as possible. Postponements are made up on the earliest convenient date for both schools.