

TCA Athletics Handbook



Training Young Champions for Christ

Updated July 2021

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WELCOME

Dear Student-Athlete and Parent,

Trinity Christian Academy is committed to training young champions for Christ who are equipped to serve the Lord by being prepared spiritually, academically and physically. The athletic program is a source of enthusiasm and loyalty that enlivens and enriches our academic community. We recognize that the school's obligation to Christ, the parents who entrust their sons and daughters to us, and the community is to provide our students with a level of quality education which leads to academic achievements, contributing to social development which prepares them for meaningful Christian lives and careers.

Our primary goal is to maintain a model Christian athletic program that seeks to glorify God. We also strive to foster the ideals and standards which will enable student athletes to grow spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Trinity promotes the personal growth and character development of our student athletes so they can reach their full potential. By their very nature, athletics inevitably involve character development. For this reason, we must conduct ourselves with utmost integrity and self-control. All of our programs must be consistent with the teachings of the Bible, the policies of the school, and the governing athletic bodies.

We are dedicated to winning in all aspects of competition as individuals, as team members, and as representatives of Christ and Trinity Christian Academy. We clearly understand that the success of any one person is always the result of dedicated effort on the part of many people. Therefore, while we recognize individual performances, we place a greater emphasis on the achievements of the team.

The purpose of this handbook is for Trinity Christian Academy student-athletes and parents to become familiar with the policies and procedures of the Athletic Program. The Student-Athlete and Parent Handbook constitutes an agreement between the school and each student-athlete and parent. By signing the required Statement of Commitment each year, you are agreeing to abide by the policies of the school. The Head of School and the Director of Athletics retain the right to amend this handbook for just cause.

Dedication to excellence should distinguish our effort in every sport in which we compete. Excellence should be reflected in the conduct of all our teams, the performances of all our teams, the fiscal soundness of our program, and the condition of our facilities. We will always strive to give our all which will realize our best possibilities. I look forward to serving as your Athletic Director. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Go Lions!!

Sincerely,

Dexter Williams

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WHO WE ARE

Mission

Trinity Christian Academy Athletics exists to glorify God through athletic programming that is Biblically based, developing Christ-like character, while honoring God through excellence in athletic competition.

Philosophy

Christian athletics is a ministry. When athletics are seen from the Christian perspective, winning has a broader definition and our athletes have a greater purpose. We want our coaches and athletes to be used by God in the lives of those they meet. TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY athletics always aim to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as our Lord opens doors for active ministry. *“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...”* (Matthew 20:26, 28)

Christian athletics is an arena for teaching the principles of God’s Word. Athletics is an opportunity to practice God’s principles. Examples of these principles are controlling the feelings that arise in competition, working together as members of the body of Christ, winning from God’s perspective rather than a person’s, being submissive to authority, and demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit during stressful situations. It’s our hope that our athletes are controlled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and produce Christ-like actions so that others may see Jesus through them.

Christian athletics is an arena used for teaching the importance of winning from God’s perspective.

Scripture encourages striving hard for the goal, to be successful and to win the prize. *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.* (1 Corinthians 9:24) Christ expects us to give a total effort in all that we do, and therefore, is not satisfied with anything less than our best in a practice session, a game, or in the classroom. *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) Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christian athletes learn to cherish eternal rewards as a treasure of great price. They learn that the most treasured reward often does not show up on the scoreboard, but in the lives of those who have developed a deeper desire for the things of Christ and in those whose lives were touched by the Christian athlete. Ultimately, winning is defined as *pleasing the Lord with our attitudes and actions.* This only begins when the athlete develops a desire to please the Lord rather than people. *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.* (Colossians 3:23) We want our athletes to catch the vision that our Lord attends every athletic event and is our primary audience.

Athletic Core Values

1. To glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31)
2. To emulate Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:1)
3. To develop Christian character (Luke 2:52)
4. To demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship (II Timothy 2:5)
5. To strive for God-honoring excellence in athletics (Colossians 3:23)

Athletic Values

- **Eternal perspective** - Each coach strives to see the lives of athletes, both team members and competitors, changed by encountering the Truth of Jesus Christ. Coaches are expected to actively mentor their team members through their instruction and example.
- **Excellence** - By aspiring to do and be their very best, participants realize radical growth, please God, and inspire others through their commitment and achievement.
- **Responsibility and integrity** - Coaches, staff members, and athletes will be known for doing what is right and keeping their word, even when it is not convenient. They will also be known for their reliability, following through on their commitments.
- **Servant-leadership** - Service to others is the greatest good. Serving is the most effective and influential form of leadership.
- **Sportsmanship** - The outcome of a competition is not merely measured by a win or a loss but in how the contest was waged and the sport itself was played. Coaches and athletes strive to demonstrate respect at all times.
- **Teamwork** - By working together, individuals increase their potential for success. Members of a team promote high levels of achievement by providing accountability and encouraging optimal performance.

MEMBERSHIP

Trinity Christian Academy is a Division II West Region Class A athletic school, and is a full member of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA).

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Trinity Christian Academy values a broad based curriculum that exposes students to a variety of experiences. We offer two or three levels with each sport. Most sports, depending on the number of players in the program, will have JV, and Varsity level teams.

Varsity Teams

Stressed are Athletic Opportunity, Advanced Skills, Sportsmanship, Tactics & Strategies of the Game, Academics, and Intensity. At the varsity level, winning takes on a greater focus and not all players will play in every game.

JV Teams

With appropriate instruction and interscholastic competition, JV level teams will be provided with a variety of athletic opportunities that will challenge and motivate each student to do his/her best and possibly further his/her interest at the next level. Stressed are Fundamentals, Tactics & Strategies of the Game, Sportsmanship, Teamwork, and Cooperation. On JV Teams, provided there are no disciplinary or attendance problems, each student-athlete should be provided the opportunity to play in all games; however, playing time is determined by the coach.

High School Sports

Fall - Cheer, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Girls Soccer, Volleyball

Winter - Basketball, Cheer, Volleyball (MS)

Spring - Baseball, Boys Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track & Field

Middle School Sports

Fall - Cheer, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Girls Soccer, Softball

Winter - Basketball, Cheer, Volleyball

Spring - Baseball, Boys Soccer, Golf, Tennis, Track & Field

BOOSTER CLUB

The Booster Club is a parent non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the Trinity Christian Academy athletics community by providing financial support, promoting an increased attitude of school spirit and helping each student-athlete reach his/her highest potential. In addition, the Booster Club desires to be a positive public relations agency to our community and to promote a spirit of cooperation and unity between parents, students, coaches, teachers, and administrators. Responsibilities include: planning development events, praying for all of the student-athletes and their families, and financially supporting the athletics program at Trinity Christian Academy.

STUDENT-ATHLETE, PARENT, & COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

Preseason Parent Meeting

Head Coaches will hold a parent meeting prior to the first practice date. During this time each Head Coach will share his/her transformational purpose statement, clearly communicate student-athlete expectations, and impart his/her vision for the program. This meeting is an important opportunity for you to hear and get to know the coach's heart for their program, as well as know how you can play a vital role in supporting your student-athlete.

Required Forms for Participation

In order to participate in athletics at Trinity Christian Academy, each student-athlete must have a current physical on file, as well as signatures from both the student-athlete and parent on the following forms:

- Updated Medical & Demographic Information
- Consent for Athletic Participation & Medical Care
- Student-athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Statement
- Athlete/Parent/Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Statement
- PPE History Form -
- PPE Physical Examination Form
- Electronic Signature Agreement
- Student Transportation Consent for Athletic Events

The Director of Athletics will ensure that all forms have been signed and submitted for each student-athlete on each team's roster through the DragonFly App.

Communication

As athletic administrators, coaches, parents and student-athletes, being an excellent communicator is critical. We are asking for consistent and ongoing communication throughout the season. Please be proactive in making Head Coaches and/or Athletic Administrators aware of any potential conflicts or issues (educational, physical, mental, or emotional) that may arise or are ongoing that would distract you from being fully committed to your team. As an Athletic Department, email will be checked on a daily basis.

Social Media

Student-Athletes are responsible for information contained in written or electronic transmissions (e.g. email, texting) and any information posted on a public domain (e.g. internet, chat room, blogs, personal web pages, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.). Inappropriate or embarrassing information or pictures should not be posted in any public domain. Student-Athletes are not precluded from participation in such online social networks; however, you serve as representatives of your team and Trinity Christian Academy. Any student-athlete who posts information that is derogatory, threatening, disrespectful, or bullying towards peers, coaches, opponents, teachers, administrators, and other community members or that is demonstrating/insinuating acts of drug/alcohol use, sexually inappropriateness, or any other inappropriate actions will be held to the same standards as if acting in person. The consequences could include suspension or dismissal from the team and suspension from school, or legal ramifications.

Media

Coaches and their athletic teams may have opportunities to build positive public relations, not only in physical appearance, language, and coaching/playing style, but also with the media. Often a reporter will speak to a student-athlete after a game to get quotes for an article, feature story, or sports column.

- Be positive at all times.
- If a comment cannot be made in an upbeat or positive manner, then the comment should be left unsaid.
- Never criticize or demean a coach, player, opponent, official, or opponent's school to a member of the media.
- Remember, often what is said to a reporter is misquoted when printed, so please use caution.

Conflict

To provide consistency and clarity, the following protocol must be followed when there is any discrepancy in regards to communication or issues regarding player/coach, parent/coach, or player-parent/coach relationships. It is the goal of the Athletic Department to assist our student-athletes in taking responsibility to address issues in an appropriate and civil manner. The following communication policy and guidelines have been established to effectively resolve most issues. The following chain of communication must be followed whenever a question or issue arises involving athletics at Trinity Christian Academy:

24 Hour Rule

Parents and players are to wait 24 hours after a game or incident in practice to address concerns or a coach's decision.

- First Conversation: Athlete to Coach
- Second Conversation: Parent to Coach
- Third Conversation: Athlete & Parent to Athletic Administration/Principal · Fourth Conversation: Athlete & Parent to Head of School

Policing Against Hazing & Initiations

The Athletic Department believes that hazing demeans those who participate incompatible with the Gospel imperative that guides our school and its Athletic Program. Hazing and initiations are strictly prohibited whether or not the person has consented to participate in any hazing for any reason.

The School and Athletic Department are firmly committed to vigilant enforcement of this policy and will promptly and thoroughly investigate any allegation of hazing and initiation. Should a violation be found, the student-athlete(s) involved will face disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion. Student-athletes who are directly (participant) or indirectly (knowledgeable bystander) involved will be treated with equal regard in these matters. The Athletic Administration along with the respective Head Coach of the specified team, Principal and Head of School and will conduct a timely, fair, and impartial investigation into the pertinent incident of hazing and initiation.

Dress Code, Changing for Practice, Practice Gear

As representatives of Trinity Christian Academy, student-athletes are to dress in an appropriate manner for practice, travel to and after games or other events. You may wear team uniforms, team warm-ups, team shirts, attire conforming to the school dress code, or clothing as designated by the Head Coach.

Student-Athletes must use designated locker rooms to change from school uniforms into game day uniforms or practice gear. All student-athletes are to dress in appropriate **modest** athletic clothing. Student-Athletes are not allowed to wear jewelry, including body piercings, during practices or games. Student-Athletes are NOT permitted to participate in a sports bra only.

Student-Athletes should avoid wearing clothing that displays the names of inappropriate slogans and advertisements. Ideally, Trinity Christian Academy student-athletes will wear purple, white, black, or gray colors.

Equipment and Uniforms

Athletic uniforms are the property of Trinity Christian Academy and must be returned at the end of the season. Student-Athletes must pay for any lost or damaged equipment or uniforms. Coaches may require team members to purchase team apparel items, practice clothing bearing the school name and sport. Team apparel are non-budgeted items paid for and kept by the student-athlete.

Transportation

Trinity Christian Academy may provide transportation for student-athletes to school-sponsored athletic events designated by the head coach. Students may drive to games, matches, or meets within a 20-mile radius only when transportation IS NOT provided by the school. In such cases, the school is not liable for the actions of the driver. Parents will be notified when transportation will not be provided by the school. For games, matches, or meets outside a 20-mile radius, parents, coaches, and staff have been generous in providing transportation assistance.

All volunteer drivers are adults and have completed and returned to the athletic office a volunteer driver form with copies of their driver's license and current vehicle insurance card. Volunteer drivers certify that they have adequate insurance, a valid license, and will only transport the number of students in accordance with the manufacturer's rated seating capacity for the vehicle. Students will not be allowed to transport other students (unless they are siblings) to school-sponsored activities.

TCA requires volunteer drivers to have the following minimum amount of liability insurance: (1) \$100,000 liability per person for bodily injury; (2) \$300,000 liability per incident for bodily injury for all vehicle occupants; (3) \$100,000 liability for property damage. Each volunteer driver must consent for TCA to conduct a motor vehicle report as a supplement for this volunteer Driver information form. A new volunteer driver information form must be completed each school year. This policy helps to reduce the liability of the school and volunteer drivers by allowing TCA to be proactive in the selection of adult drivers.

Student-Athletes are expected to behave properly on buses/vans to and from school-sponsored athletic events. Student-Athletes whose conduct is unacceptable will be temporarily, or permanently, prohibited from riding team transportation. In some cases, student-athletes may also be prohibited from participating in a game or practice. Offensive or repeated inappropriate behavior may cause removal from a team.

Early Dismissal

Student-Athletes are responsible for all work missed due to early dismissals for athletic contests. When a student-athlete knows he/she will miss a class for athletic reasons, it is strongly recommended that class and homework be obtained in advance. It is a priority for the Athletic Department to minimize the academic disruption caused by early dismissals and to leave student-athletes in class as late as possible, without distracting them from athletic preparation.

Use of Locker Room, Field House, and Other Facilities

The athletic facilities at Trinity Christian Academy should be used appropriately at all times and under the supervision or direction of the Athletic Department and/or coaching staff. Only the locker room should be used for changing and getting ready for practice and games. Student-Athletes are expected to act appropriately at all times in the locker room and respect each other and each other's privacy and personal property. The use of the field house, athletic fields, and courts will be under the direction and supervision of the Athletic Department and/or coaching staff. Coaches are responsible for staying with student-athletes after practices and games until all have been picked up.

Relations with Officials

As a representative of Trinity Christian Academy, coaches are to display character and discipline towards officials. Under no circumstances should a Trinity Christian Academy coach or student-athlete berate or criticize an official. Officials agree to and follow a strict code of ethics and they are a very necessary part of the game. While you may not agree with all of their calls, do not harass or taunt them. The officials are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators /coaches / student-athletes removed.

Conduct Student-Athletes

As members of athletic teams, student-athletes are high-profile representatives of Trinity Christian Academy. Student-Athletes are expected to act in an appropriate manner. The following behaviors are inappropriate and will not be tolerated: fighting, profanity, use of or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, unsportsmanlike conduct, rude or disrespectful behavior on and off the field/court, taunting opponents or officials, destruction of property, obscene gestures, derogatory or degrading comments. Student-Athletes who exhibit any of the above behaviors or any other inappropriate behavior could be suspended from athletics competition pending further investigation. The Athletic Director, the Head Coach, and the Upper School Principal will determine the length of the suspension.

Parents and Spectators

Being a parent of a high school student-athlete can be a great experience. Parental participation and support is very important to their student-athletes, our high school, and the community. Everyone associated with an athletic event plays an important role in seeing that standards of sportsmanship are upheld. Parents and spectators are reminded that their sportsmanship and behavior reflect upon the reputation of Trinity Christian Academy. To make this experience the most rewarding for all concerned, the following are expectations for being a supportive TCA Parent.

- Be Positive – Do not let playing time dictate your student-athlete’s success or happiness. Celebrate the fact that he/she is part of the team. It is especially important to remain positive when things are not going well for your student-athlete or their team.
- Effective Communication – To promote effective and enhanced communication with the Athletic Department, please adhere to the communications policy stated within this handbook. All questions or concerns in regards to the day-to-day operations of the department or any of its athletic teams should be addressed to the Director of Athletics.
- Be Supportive of the Coaching Staff – Nothing can injure teamwork faster than student-athletes doubting the capabilities of their coaches. The coaches are doing their best at all times to be proper role models, as well as teachers of the game. If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the Head Coach or the Director of Athletics.
- Winning and Losing – It shall be our coaching staff’s goal to pursue excellence in the school’s athletic program, through motivating student-athletes to achieve to the best of their ability in all things, while honoring Christ with their talents. Winning can be a natural and enjoyable outgrowth of this attitude. Everyone enjoys a well-played victory, but a ‘winning is everything’ philosophy will not be the controlling force of our athletic program.
- Expectations – Having lofty expectations for your student-athlete is a normal and healthy goal. In striving for these expectations, we must also be realistic. Not everyone can receive a college athletic scholarship. Remember, athletics is only a vehicle for the college process, not the primary reason to go to college!

While attending Athletic Events

- Demonstrate good sportsmanship
- Respect, cooperate and respond enthusiastically to cheerleaders.
- Diplomatically censor fellow spectators who display negative behavior.
- Cheer for your team and not against the opponents – Matthew 7:15-20.
- Coaches and/or on-site administrators who observe inappropriate behavior from our parents and spectators will address it personally and inform the Director of Athletics of such behavior. Inappropriate conduct may result in being removed from the venue and subject to further disciplinary action.

Music

Training Young Champions for Christ requires focused intentionality in the lives of our students, and fixing our thoughts on what is “true and honorable and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable” (Phil 4:8 NLT). As a result, our music choices for all school events should serve only to help us accomplish that vision. Athletics gives us a platform to make a positive impact in the lives of students and families within the Trinity and Jackson communities who attend and support our athletic teams. In addition, we will host several visiting teams who do not identify themselves with Christ but recognize that our institution does. In light of our desire to represent Christ with excellence and accomplish our mission, the following guidelines will be used when preparing music for practices, pre-games, warm-ups, walk-ups and between halves/innings, etc.

- Head Coaches and Team Captains only may submit a list of songs to an Athletic Administrator two weeks notice. A max number of 10 songs per request.
- Printed lyrics or a web link for every song must be included. Even if you are only including instrumental music you must still include the lyrics.
- Pursue those music choices which both inspire our teams and fans and equip our students to live out Philippians 4:8 in their lives.
- No music with any sexual or drug innuendos will be approved.
- No music with expletive/inappropriate language or bleeped words will be approved.
- No music that has been edited to take out expletive/inappropriate words or innuendos will be approved.
- Only TCA Athletics iPad Minis will be used to play music. No personal devices may be used.

GENERAL STUDENT-ATHLETE PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

In order to participate in athletic practices or games at Trinity Christian Academy, the student-athlete must adhere to the following:

Student Handbook Policies

All students must adhere to all school policies as stipulated in the Student Handbook. This applies to all student-athletes participating in practices, games, and while being transported to and from practices and games. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

Daily Attendance

All student-athletes are expected to be in attendance during the regular school day to be eligible to participate in the athletic activities for that day. **For a student-athlete to be considered eligible for practice or competition they MUST be in school for half of the school day (3 hours).** If an administrator grants an excused absence in advance for a pre-scheduled activity, or an unforeseen emergency, the student may participate on that day.

Academic Eligibility for Sports

The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) sets specific standards for academic eligibility for participation in athletic activities. In addition, the TSSAA allows districts and nonpublic schools to adopt more stringent requirements for academic eligibility than the minimum requirements established by the TSSAA. Trinity Christian Academy's academic eligibility for athletic activities includes both quarter and semester grades. A marking period extends from the date the report card with the failure is issued until the report card for the next marking period is issued.

According to TSSAA Article II: To be eligible, student-athletes shall be regularly enrolled, in regular attendance, and carrying at least six full courses or the equivalent.

To be eligible to participate in athletic contests during any school year, all credits must be earned by the first day of the beginning of the school year. Academic eligibility for a student-athlete is based on the requirements of the school the student-athlete was attending at the conclusion of the previous school year. A student-athlete, who is performing unsatisfactorily, may be placed on academic probation.

All student-athletes are required to maintain a passing average in all subjects. If a student-athlete has a failing grade he/she will be put on probation for 2 weeks. During this probation period the student-athlete may practice with the respective team, but cannot participate in any athletic competition.

At the end of the probationary period an administrator will recommend one of two things: 1) that the probation be lifted; 2) that the probation be extended. The Principal may make a student-athlete ineligible for practice or games at any time if he/she feels it is in the best academic interest of the student-athlete. The Principal will communicate his/her decision to the parents and Athletic Department. Trinity Christian Academy strictly adheres to TSSAA rules regarding eligibility.

Dual Enrollment Courses

Students enrolled in a dual enrollment or online college course will have their grades reviewed by Administration on an individual basis.

Quitting a Team

Student-athletes, who "quit" a team after the first official contest of the season, will **not** be permitted to participate on another team during that season of play. Trinity Christian Academy Administration reserves the right to review all situations and reserves the right to allow or not to allow the student-athlete to compete in the next season/year. Leaving a team does not relieve the student-athlete from his/her financial obligations nor does it release him/her from the liability for returning issued equipment.

Athletic Fee

This one-time flat fee of \$100 per athlete (\$250 max per family) has been in place for several years and helps offset athletic costs associated with our annual maintenance of facilities, transportation, and the athletic operation budget. In fact, all TCA athletic programs have expenses incurred by the parents. TCA is a small school in which each program has an individualized budget. Each program is not self-sufficient to cover coaching stipends, equipment needs, as well as expenses that go along with our facilities. We have to rely on fundraising and parental support to supplement each of our many programs. Athletic fees are common with schools that are similar to us. We must not unnecessarily raise overall tuition to support athletics. It is only fair for those who benefit directly to assist with the costs of our tremendous athletic program.

This one time fee will be deducted from your FACTS account during the following months

Fall Sports - October

Winter Sports - February

Spring Sports - April

If your tuition is already paid in full for the year, you will receive a bill for your student's athletic fee.

NCAA Eligibility Center

If you are a prospective student-athlete at the NCAA Division I, II, III college or university level, you have certain responsibilities to complete before you may participate. Information concerning your registration and what documents need to be submitted can be found in *The Guide for College Bound Student-Athletes* on the NCAA website; www.ncaa.org. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to begin this process and request items from the school as needed. It is recommended that you begin this process during or after your freshman year.

Prospective and New Student Athletic Participation and Practice Policy

Only fully enrolled students may practice with any athletic team. Being admitted to TCA does not constitute enrollment. Enrollment must be verified in writing through the Admissions Director prior to allowing any student to practice any TCA sport at any time of the year. Parent and/or student communication does not verify enrollment. Each coach must have emailed verification of full enrollment from Admissions prior to allowing any student to practice or participate in any TCA sport.