



WARRIOR

ATHLETIC MANUAL

2025-2026

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WARRIOR ATHLETICS

Philosophy

An Athletic program in a Christian School exists to guide the young people involved in a better understanding of their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many circumstances arise in the preparation for and during athletic competitions that offer opportunities for God's principles to be applied in the lives of the athletes. A goal of the Christian school athletic program is to seize these opportunities. Dedicated coaches help young people relate the victories and defeats, the hard work, and teamwork to their daily walk with the Lord.

Col. 3:23-24 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

This verse states the philosophy of athletics for Bracken Christian School, in that everything we do within the athletic department will be done unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Our staff, athletes, fans, and parents are to glorify the name of Jesus Christ through their words, attitudes, and actions, both on and off the field or court. We must provide opportunities of Christian encouragement and discipline for our students through our athletic programs. All policies and procedures that are brought out by the athletic department are done so with the intent of teaching and instilling Christ-like qualities in the students for them to put into use in their daily lives.

Offered Sports

The following sports will be offered when coaches and facilities are available.

- Girls Middle School (6th-8th)

Cheerleading
Volleyball
Cross Country
Basketball
Track and Field
Tennis

Girls High School (9th-12th)

Cheerleading
Volleyball
Cross Country
Basketball
Track and Field
Golf
Tennis

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Boys Middle School (6th-8th)</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Boys High School (9th-12th)</u>
Cross Country	Cross Country
Football	Football
Basketball	Basketball
Track and Field	Track and Field
Baseball	Golf
Tennis	Baseball
	Tennis

Athletic Fees

Athletic fees are required to help pay a portion of the cost of equipment, uniforms, referees, and other expenses of the athletic department. Athletic fees are charged on a per sport basis.

Note: All Athletic Fees are non-refundable once a student is selected and assigned to a team, regardless if they have played or participated in an actual contest.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Athletic Associations

- Middle School – Middle school teams participate in the Independent Schools Athletic League, or ISAL. This league governs and regulates our team sports for our middle school program.
- High School – High school is a member of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools or T.A.P.S. This organization sets all of the rules, regulations, schedules, and events of our high school athletic program.

Team Selection

- Middle School
 - Our desire is for all middle school students who wish to try out for a team to have the opportunity.

- We have structured our middle school athletic classes in such a way as to maximize the number of opportunities for our students in these grades.
 - Considering our limited space and available coaches it may sometimes be necessary to limit the number of athletes on a team, or to make what is commonly known as “cuts”.
 - Making cuts is a last resort measure for any of our teams, especially in the middle school program. However, they are sometimes needed in order to maintain a manageable number of players for our limited staff and facilities to accommodate.
- High School
 - High school teams are obviously more competitive and thus more selective, than middle school teams.
 - Each varsity coach at the high school level is allowed to set their team roster at whatever size they wish to keep.
 - Many factors go into the selection of a team, and each coach weighs every possibility very heavily before making any decision.
 - Any cuts made by a coach must first be shown to the Athletic Director before any announcement can be made.
 - If enough interest is present, a junior varsity team may be formed to facilitate the extra players who do not make the varsity team.
 - It is the coaches’ decision as to which players make the varsity team and which will play on the junior varsity team. The only rule regarding who plays on each team is that a senior cannot play on a junior varsity team.
 - Players may play on both teams if it is necessary to do so in order to form the junior varsity team. However, a player who starts for the varsity team may not play for the junior varsity team on the same day. Players who play on both teams are limited in the total number of games they can play during the season (see TAPPS).

Quitting A Team

It is our goal to teach all of our students Christ-like attributes in everything that we do at Bracken Christian School. We feel that responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and honoring commitments, are all attributes that we wish to instill in our athletes. We also believe that students and parents need to realize that participating on an athletic team, whether in middle school or high school, is going to require some effort and sacrifice of time and resources. When a student decides that they want to play on a team and begins a season they are making a commitment to that team.

If after the season begins the athlete decides that they wish to quit the team, they need to realize that they are hurting the team by not honoring the commitment that they made when the season began. We feel that a student needs to take seriously the decision to play for a team, and if they make that choice then they need to do everything in their power to honor their decision.

At the beginning of the school year as well as the beginning of every new sport season, athletes are given by the coach of each team several forms that need to be filled out prior to the first game. One of these forms is the ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION CONTRACT. In that contract, both the student and the parent agree to make every effort to fulfill their commitment to any team they try-out for during the course of the school year. Except in the case of a very few exceptions, failure to fulfill the commitment (which in this case is finishing the season in good standing) may result in the athlete losing all athletic eligibility at Bracken Christian School for one calendar year. For example, if a student starts and then quits a spring sport, they will remain ineligible until that specific sport starts again the following year. All Athletic Fees are still owed and considered non-refundable in the event someone quits a team once they are selected and have participated on that team. This rule may seem harsh, however, we feel that if a student cannot keep a commitment as simple as playing on a sports team, then how will they be able to honor larger commitments later on in life.

Playing Time

All coaches understand that it is in their own best interest to get each player as much game time experience as possible. However, if a coach keeps a large number

of players or has a team with a wide range of skill levels, then promising playing time to every athlete in every game may not be in the best interest of the team. Playing time is determined by the coach and is based on many factors. Participating on a team and more specifically playing in games, should never be viewed as a right, but rather as a privilege.

Practices

- Middle School
 - Most, but not all, team practices for the middle school are held during their P.E. period. Coaches may call additional practices if necessary due to the limited amount of practice time during the P.E. period.
 - If additional practices are called the coach will give sufficient notice to athletes and parents before the practice.
 - Based on gym or facility limitations practices may also be held prior to school for certain sports.
- High School
 - All team practices for high school are held either before or after school hours.
 - Most practices are after school beginning around 3:30 and last anywhere from 1-3 hours in length.
 - If gym availability or coaching schedules warrant it, some practices may be later in the day (i.e. 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.), before school, or on Saturday.
 - These are all possibilities that both students and parents need to consider before they commit to playing for a team.

Eligibility

As an Athletic Department, we understand that athletics serves a vital role in the education process only when it is kept in the proper perspective of the school's overall objectives. Athletic success is meaningless if it is not paired with academic success. For that reason, we at Bracken Christian School follow a strict eligibility policy to ensure a strong academic base for all of our student-athletes.

If an athlete's average falls below a 69 during a nine-week period in any course the following actions will be taken:

After three weeks	Progress Report Warning
After six weeks	Ineligible until next grade check
End of quarter	Ineligible until next grade check

The school follows a quarterly grading system for all students. All student grades will be checked every three weeks to check for any class average below 70. During the three-week period of ineligibility, the athlete may continue to practice with the team. However, they may not participate in any games or competitions. If after any period of ineligibility, the student has brought their average back up to 70 or above in all classes they will be removed from ineligibility and will be allowed to play with the team. Semester averages do not play a part in determining athletic eligibility.

Students who have incomplete work, due to any excused absences, will have their eligibility status based on whatever amount of work is completed at the end of the grading period. The overall grade for that period will reflect all completed work done to that date. If the completed work is at a passing average then the student will be eligible for the next three-week period. If the completed work is not at a passing average then the student will become ineligible until all incomplete work is made up, and the average is above passing.

Athlete Conduct

As an athlete at Bracken Christian School students need to realize that they are continually representing their team, their school, and most importantly their Savior, Jesus Christ. The way that players conduct themselves in all settings, whether it be on the court, on the field, in the classroom, or even on their own away from school, sends a message to others of how the rest of the team, the school, or other Christians must normally act. With that type of responsibility, we place a high value on monitoring the conduct of our athletes to where they understand the importance of carrying themselves in a Christ-like way.

If a coach, teacher, or administrator notices an athlete acting in a way not becoming a positive example to others then that person will report the act to the coach and/or the Athletic Director for whatever disciplinary actions are warranted. Punishments may range from a verbal warning to expulsion from the team, depending on the severity of the action. If any suspension or expulsion from the team is viewed as being needed, then the Administrator, Principal, or Dean of Students will be notified if any action is announced.

Student-athletes playing status in both M.S. and H.S. can and will also be affected by any demerits that the student receives during school. We feel that participating in athletics is a privilege, not a right, and that with that privilege comes a certain amount of responsibility. The beginning of that responsibility is that we expect our student-athletes to be positive examples of proper conduct, attitude, and responsibility in the classroom. Excessive demerits can and will affect an athlete's individual game and possibly overall season eligibility on their respective team(s).

Practice & Game Participation

Participation in all practices and competitions is expected and required for all athletes. This may sound odd to some. However, there always seem to be those who feel that these are both optional events. Any absence from practice that is either not cleared with the head coach prior to practice or not due to a sudden illness or emergency involving them or an immediate family member is considered unexcused and will result in a minimum one-game suspension from the next regularly scheduled game or match. The only excuses for missing a game or competition would be either if the athlete were sick or if there were some form of family emergency that needed immediate attention. Missing a game or match for any unexcused reason will also result in a consequence determined by the team coach. If an athlete is also a cheerleader, she will be required to participate in her athletic games/tournaments over cheering at a game.

As a department of the school, we realize the final authority of the parent regarding their children. However, I hope that parents realize that by circumventing the authority that they have given us to help educate their children that they can often do more damage than good. By using the threat of limiting participation in athletics

as a punishment tool at home, undermines the efforts of the coach in teaching valuable lessons to their team. It is our request that parents not arbitrarily use athletics as a convenient form of punishment for issues that take place outside of school.

School Attendance

Athletes must be in school for at least half (4 class periods) of the school day in order to be eligible to participate in athletic competition that same day. The only exception is if a student misses more than half of the day for any school-sponsored activities, such as a field trip or a service project. Missing more than half a day for any non-school sponsored event is not considered excused and may cause an athlete to miss that day's game.

Students who miss school due to a school sponsored event are responsible to turn in any homework that will be due while they are gone before they leave for the event. Homework not turned in before the class they are missing will be counted as a late homework and will receive a zero. Upon their return to school, students need to find immediately out what homework they missed while they were gone and make arrangements with the teacher as to the day that that work will be due. Athletes may not receive extended time on the due dates of work assigned while they are absent from a class for an athletic event. Any tests missed must be taken before the absence or completed by the end of the next day in order for the student to receive full credit.

P.E. Equivalency Credit

High School students must earn 1.0 credit in P.E. to meet the state and BCS graduation requirements. These credits can be earned by participation in P.E. class during 8th grade or by participation in TWO full seasons of any HS sport. **The completion of two HS sports will earn the student their full 1.0 credits of P.E. and meet all state and BCS graduation requirements.** A student not completing a full season of an eligible sport will not earn credit and will be required to complete the required P.E. class.

Uniform Responsibilities

All uniforms and equipment that we have are viewed as gifts from God, and we ask those who are issued these items to view them the same way. Uniforms are one of our largest expenditures as an athletic department, and so it is important that we try to maximize the life of these items. With that in mind, we ask that athletes and parents use the following guidelines when cleaning and caring for uniforms that they are issued.

- Wash separately
- Wash in cold water
- Line dry – DO NOT TUMBLE DRY!!
- No alterations without permission from the Athletic Director.

Uniforms become the responsibility of the athlete as soon as they are issued until the time they are returned. Any damage that is done during this period, other than normal wear and tear, is the responsibility of the athlete and will be billed to them accordingly. Any lost items will be billed to the athlete at full replacement value.

Traveling

We will always try to utilize school vehicles for any and all games, practices, or other needed team travel. There are occasions in which either all of the school vehicles are booked for other activities, or qualified drivers are not available for specific vehicles. In those cases, it is the responsibility of the athlete and their family to arrange transportation to and from athletic events. We require all athletes to have on file with the athletic office a TRANSPORTATION FORM, which states how students will be getting to and from games, as well as state who the student has permission to ride with other than a parent or guardian. This form needs to be turned in to the athletic office prior to the first game of the season.

If a team is traveling out of town, then the school will arrange all transportation and housing for the team. Itineraries will be sent to families in advance to notify them how they will be traveling, where they will be staying, and how long the trip will be. Students may be charged a travel fee for such trips. That fee will be based on the cost of the trip and the number of students participating. If a team arrives back at

Bracken past midnight, they are excused from the first period the following day and do not need to report to school until second period.

Appropriate dress codes for athletes on either road trips or away games are set by the coach of that sport and will follow the non-uniform casual dress guidelines for the school. In any case, athletes need to be aware that they are representing their team, their school, and most importantly their Savior Jesus Christ in the way that they act and the way that they dress. Any inappropriate clothing will not be accepted.

Lettering & Individual Honors

- High School athletes only may “letter” in a sport
- To “letter” means they have participated in the competition at a significant level on the varsity team.
- Simply being on a varsity team does not assure an athlete of lettering in that sport.
- Lettering requirements are determined differently from sport to sport and are set by the coach.
- The actual letters which the student receives are paid for and furnished by the athletic department.
- Patches for either individual or team accomplishments are additional and need to be paid for by the student. An order form will be available either after the season or later in the school year notifying the athlete of what they have earned which will include ordering information for the student and their family.

Grievance Procedure

As an athletic department, we try to run and organize our events in a manner that will allow all of those involved to receive the greatest possible enjoyment and benefit from. However, we realize that in organizing a department that is as large as our athletic department, that from time to time certain problems, conflicts, and concerns will arise. It is for that reason that we feel it is important to state upfront our position in handling these situations.

Matthew 18: 15–18 is our Biblical reference for handling such issues. If any parent, athlete, coach, teacher, or administrator has a concern over an issue, they have a Biblical responsibility to go first to the person(s) that they have the concern about or with. It is our desire that any problems can then be cleared up, and those involved can move on. If, however, this does not resolve the issue, then and only then, should the issue be brought to the attention of another person. The level of authority at Bracken Christian School is:

- Teacher or Coach
- Principal or Athletic Director
- Head of School
- School Board

HEALTH & SAFETY

Pre-Season Forms

For the safety of our athletes, the following forms must be received by the athletic office before an athlete may compete in the first game of the season.

- Transportation Form
- Athletic Participation Contract
- Medical History & Physical Examination Form
- Athletic Insurance Information Form
- Steroid Policy Agreement

Packets with all of these forms may be picked up in the main office. They are also available on the school website on the athletic department page. These forms are transferable from sport to sport. Only one of each form needs to be completed per child per year. These documents must be on file in the athletic office for a student to be placed on any team.

Physical Examinations

Bracken Christian School requires all Middle School and High School students who wish to participate in any athletic competition to have a current (within 9 months of

the beginning of the selected activity) and complete physical examination that clears them to participate in that activity.

Sports Medicine Philosophy

Bracken Christian School contracts a licensed athletic trainer to assist the student-athletes, coaches, and parents to evaluate, treat, and make informed decisions regarding injuries and illness as they affect participation in athletic activity.

Pain and disability are as unique as the individual afflicted. Functional ability is the cornerstone of determining injury severity. Though there are a few hallmark injuries and conditions that are life-altering (i.e. concussion, internal/organ injury), the athlete's ability to demonstrate physical and sports-specific movements/stress without evidence of disability is the best determiner to return to activity. Significant limping, favoring or attempting to physically modify sports-specific movement should be deemed a disqualifier to return to activity.

At any time the athlete, parent, coach or athletic trainer doubts the safety of the athlete the athlete should be withheld from participation until the condition improves or resolves.

Any condition that warrants being withheld from any or all of one activity, should be the equivalent status is ALL OTHER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES, to include club sports and "play". For example, an athlete who is unable to run full-speed in basketball and participate in conditioning activities, should not be seen running around the courtyard.

Concussion Guidelines

The athletic trainer, coaches, and other sports officials are trained to identify the signs and symptoms of a concussion. However, athletes should be encouraged to speak up for themselves or others if signs or symptoms are present.

If an athlete exhibits any signs, symptoms, or behaviors that are suspicious of a concussion during activity, the athlete must be removed from play and not be allowed to return to play until they are evaluated and cleared by a healthcare

provider. If an athletic trainer or other concussion-evaluation-trained healthcare provider is present an assessment can be made to determine the presence of a concussion. However, in the absence of a healthcare provider the mantra, "When in doubt, sit them out" should be adhered to.

Parents are encouraged to go to the CDC website, Heads Up! to educate themselves on concussions. <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/highschoolsports/parents.html>

Any athlete who appears to have a concussion must be assessed by a physician; preferably a physician who is experienced in sports head injuries. Written documentation from that physician AND completion of the concussion protocol will be required to return to activity.

The Bracken Christian School Concussion Management Guidelines and Protocols is available upon request.

Injury & Illness Reporting

The head coach or athletic trainer should be notified as soon as possible of any injury or health concerns that either limit or prevent an athlete from participating in any aspect of the sports activity (practice, conditioning, game/match), or an illness which is contagious. Early reporting will help minimize further injury, and ensure thorough communication between all coaches, the athlete and parents, and the school nurse (if necessary for classroom accommodations).

The athletic trainer is intermittently accessible during the school day for injury evaluation and may be contacted by phone or text for consultation. In the event the athletic trainer is not available, the coach will determine the functional ability of the athlete prior to practice or competition. Parents and coaches will be notified of the athletic trainer's assessment and recommendations to return to activity.

If a condition thought to be minor (or wasn't perceived during activity) worsens overnight/weekend, or an injury occurs outside of Bracken Christian School's sanctioned activity the family is encouraged to contact the athletic trainer for consultation.

Return to Activity

Minor injuries often resolve in a few days, with a normal return to activity in one to two days; however, return to activity is contingent on the ability to demonstrate functional ability. The athletic trainer will work with the coach to ensure the athlete is ready for return.

In the event the injury/health concern is evaluated by a physician or other medical provider, written clearance to return to activity must be submitted to the head coach or athletic trainer prior to further participation. The written clearance must include a return to play/clearance date and be signed by the provider. The note must also include an injury/illness diagnosis and recommendations if the athlete is to participate with exceptions, modifications, or any other contingency.

Athletes with concussions or concussion symptoms must have a written clearance to return to activity, however, the return to activity is to begin the concussion protocol, not to resume sports activities. The prescribed concussion protocol **MUST** be successfully completed and documented by the athletic trainer (or a medically-trained member of the concussion oversight team) prior to any competition.

BRACKEN BACKERS

The Bracken Backers is an organization within the athletic department made up primarily of parents that provide additional help and support in the running of the overall athletic program. Anyone wishing to join and serve on the Bracken Backers can contact the school office for more information.

All parents of athletes will be asked to help serve the athletic department at some point during their child's season. This service will be coordinated by the Bracken Backers leadership.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that this manual has addressed and answered many if not all of your questions about our athletic department. If at any point you have any other questions that are still not answered or are unclear, then please feel free to contact us for a meeting.

Thank you for entrusting your children to us, and we look forward to the privilege and responsibility of serving you and your family.