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Gethsemane Lutheran School Athletics Handbook

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information on Gethsemane's athletics program for current (and prospective) Gethsemane parents and students.

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Philosophy

Christian education seeks to prepare youth for a commitment to God, to equip them for a complete life in Christ. The aim of the Gethsemane Athletic Program is to provide physical, and sporting opportunities for a student's spiritual, physical, emotional, and social growth. The student's athletic experiences will provide opportunities for a personal testimony of Christ with the athlete's spiritual, and physical gifts. It is the responsibility of the athletic director, coaches, teachers and parents to collaborate together to assist a student in expressing this Christian witness. The Gethsemane Athletic Program encompasses the curricular and extra curricular areas of physical education and development for the whole student.

Specifically, Gethsemane students and athletes,

- Glorify Jesus Christ in all that is done on and off the playing court/field/class.
- Invite a firmer and more personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Discover and develop their God-given talents and abilities.
- Cooperate with and assist parents, coaches, teachers, and instructors in learning and using a Christian attitude toward playing and competing.
- Improve his/her overall physical condition and specific athletic skills.
- Have a positive athletic experience in order to encourage a lifelong enjoyment of sports and recreational activities.

The purpose of this handbook is to address all items and issues related to the extra curricular program of Gethsemane Lutheran School.

Introduction

Gethsemane is a member of the Denver Area Lutheran Schools (DALs) League. Athletic directors from each member school meet throughout the year to schedule games and discuss policy. The safety of the athletes and a focus on Christ are the two main objectives of the DALs.

Gethsemane's athletic teams are divided into two classifications: Junior Varsity and Varsity. Because there are differences in age and skill development, these groupings have different approaches and standards:

Junior Varsity: The goal of the Junior Varsity program is to provide instruction of the basic skills of each sport. Playing time should be close to equal for all members of the team during the season, but may not be equal each game. Any students meeting the proper grade level and eligibility requirements may participate. There are no cuts from the team at this level.

Varsity: The Varsity program is more advanced and competitive. Athletes should go beyond the Junior Varsity level by practicing on their own during the off-season and/or attending camps. Playing time won't be equal for every member of the team. Athletes **MUST** earn play time. Team size will determine whether try-outs are necessary.

Sports Offered

Fall Sports: Volleyball (girls, grades 4-8)
Soccer (boys, grades 4-8)

Winter Sports: Boy's Basketball (grades 4-8)
Girl's Basketball (grades 4-8)

Spring Sports: Track (boys & girls, grades 4-8)

3rd Graders may be allowed to participate if needed

The formation of any athletic team at Gethsemane is dependent upon adequate student interest, the availability of other teams in the league, and the availability of coaches.

What Is A Christian Athlete?

The sports teams of the Gethsemane Athletic Program represent our school and church wherever their games are held. Spectators will often form an opinion about our school based on the behavior of our athletes. Therefore, every athlete should make a serious effort to display proper Christian behavior.

Following are some guidelines:

1. **PLAY AS A TEAM.** The athlete should realize his/her importance to the team. **DO NOT** complain about playing time or appear upset while on the bench. **DO** cheer for the players on the floor/field, and be ready to go in at any time.
2. **RESPECT OTHERS.** The athlete should treat the coaches and each other with respect. **DO NOT** criticize a coach's decision or tease your teammates. **DO** thank your teammate for a good play, an assist, or a good effort.
3. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** God has given each of us a wonderful body to preserve. **The athlete's body is his/her most important piece of athletic equipment.** The athlete should eat properly, get plenty of sleep every night, and stay mentally focused during practices and games.
4. **ACADEMICS FIRST.** Each athlete represents our school in an extra-curricular activity. This is only possible if the academic obligation is upheld. Athletics are an important part of the educational system. However, athletics takes place outside of the classroom. The completion of homework should be a priority to be completed accurately and as soon as possible. **DO NOT** put off homework until late at night or the next morning. **DO** complete homework right away to leave more time for rest.
5. **LISTEN TO THE COACH.** While the coach is giving instructions during a practice or event, the athletes should be silent and let the coach present instructions. When the coach is finished the athletes may ask questions (IF time allows).
6. **BE POLITE.** The athlete should be courteous and friendly to spectators, officials, and other athletes before, during, and after games. **DO NOT** taunt other players or complain to officials. **DO** make friends and show that Christ is in your heart.
7. **GIVE 100%.** The athlete should make every effort to carry out the coach's instructions in practices and games. He/she should realize that this is the way to increase strength, endurance, and skill in order to help the team as much as possible.

8. **DISPLAY GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.** The athlete should follow all rules of the game. The coach is the only one who should communicate with the officials. **DO NOT** argue with officials or show any form of unkindness toward the other team. **DO** acknowledge exceptional play and thank the other team for playing.
9. **ACCEPT THE OUTCOME.** We will do our very best (give 100%) to win every game, within the rules. When the game is over, it is over. We genuinely congratulate the other team and move on.
10. **MAKE FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES.** The athlete should realize that members of other teams might become classmates and teammates in high school. Remember that they are part of God's family just as you are. One of them may become your best friend later in life!

Athletic Eligibility Policy

In general, any student in grades 4-8 is eligible to participate in the athletic program at Gethsemane. The grade level depends on the sport offered. It is important that participation by a student in extra-curricular athletics does not interfere with the student's academic and Christian character development. Eligibility will be determined by success in the following areas:

1.0 Grades:

Students must retain an acceptable grade average in all subjects. Generally this grade average is a C. However, the athletic department and staff have the flexibility to deal with each student/athlete on an individual basis. If an athlete is deemed ineligible, the parents may file an appeal to the athletic director. Communication is the key. Therefore, the staff, athletic director, and coaches will communicate regularly regarding a student's athletic eligibility status.

2.0 Daily Ineligibility:

Removing a student from daily eligibility is strongly discouraged. However, each student/athlete will be dealt with on an individual basis.

2.1 Daily assignments:

Students/athletes are expected to complete assignments daily. The classroom teacher and the athletic director will determine if penalties need to be assessed to the student/athlete who does not complete daily assignments.

2.2 Classroom Conduct:

Students are expected to follow the school's and teacher's classroom policies and procedures. Failure to do so may result in loss of practice time, game time, or might result in expulsion from the team. The teacher and athletic director will consult regarding continued behavioral problems.

2.3 Absences:

An athlete absent from school for a full day **is not** eligible to participate in any school sponsored sports activities for that day. Exceptions: Absence due to a funeral or a doctor's appointment (bring slip). No exceptions for vacations, quality time with parents, etc.

3.0 Behavior:

Repeated behavior problems throughout the year may persuade the athletic director, upon consultation with the principal, to remove an athlete permanently from their current team and/or subsequent team sports.

4.0 Suspensions:

Student athletes who are suspended from school are ineligible for practices and games during the suspension **and also the first game** after returning from the suspension.

5.0 Physicals:

All students must have a medical physical before participating in the athletic program at Gethsemane. A new physical is required each year. Liability prevents students from even **practicing** without a physical. Physical forms must be kept on file.

6.0 Fees and Commitment Form:

For each season, an athlete must pay the participation fee to the athletic director. In addition each student will pay a uniform rental fee which will be refunded when the uniform is returned. Each athlete must also turn in a signed commitment form to the athletic director. A student may not participate until all are turned in.

7.0 Non-Gethsemane Athletes:

Students who do not attend Gethsemane may be allowed to participate on Gethsemane's sport's teams. These athletes will be considered on a case by case basis and must adhere to the same athletic rules/policies of our students.

8.0 Age Limit:

Students cannot be older than 15 years of age before September 1 of the current school year to compete in extracurricular athletics.

Guidelines for Coaches

1. Coaches are chosen by the athletic director and are under his/her supervision.
2. Coaches are responsible for setting practice schedules with the assistance of the Athletic Director.
3. It is the Athletic Director's responsibility to assign and record uniforms at the beginning of the season and collect clean uniforms at the end of the season. The athletic director will schedule a day after the last game of the season to collect clean uniforms.
4. The coach's duties include but are not limited to:
 - a. Teaching the correct, up-to-date skills needed to perform in a particular sport.
 - b. Giving every child on the team an opportunity to participate in the practices and games according to their effort and cooperation.
 - c. Encouraging the young athletes to strive to do their very best.
5. Coaches will make sure they have given the athletic director written requests for needed practice and game equipment. The coach is responsible for properly putting away equipment used in the game/practice.
6. Coaches will be responsible for the First Aid Kit at each event. The athletic director will make sure First Aid Kits are stocked appropriately. Coaches should contact the athletic director if needed materials are missing.
7. Coaches are NOT TO LEAVE until ALL players have been picked up from the practice or game session. Parents will be requested to pick up their child within 15 minutes of the scheduled end of the practice. The coach will inform the athletic director of any problems due to consistently late pick-ups. Parents may be assessed a fee for continuous late pick up.
8. Coaches are responsible for maintaining a Christ-like atmosphere among the team during all practices and games. This includes discouraging inappropriate behavior and administering appropriate consequences. Athletes who display inappropriate behavior during a game will be removed and made aware of their inappropriate acts before returning to active play.
9. Coaches are encouraged to have a buddy coach during practice for supervision and accountability.
10. Coaches will submit to background searches based on the administration's needs and requirements.

Guidelines for Parents

Your child has the potential to become a good athlete. Listed below are some suggestions that will enable your child to work toward this goal.

1. Make sure your child knows that win or lose, you love him/her. Let your child know that you appreciate his/her efforts and although you might be disappointed with his/her performance, it does not change your love and respect for them.
2. Try to be completely honest with yourself about your child's athletic capabilities, competitive spirit, level of skill, and practice habits.
3. Please help your child to understand that his/her athletic participation is secondary to academic obligations. Please assist them in making responsible choices that involve academic and family priorities.
4. Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition, to "be out there trying", to be constantly working to improve his/her skills, to take the physical bumps and come back for more. Avoid telling them that winning doesn't count, because it does and they know it. Help them develop a healthy competitive attitude, a "feel" for competing, an attitude for trying hard, and a desire to have a good time with their teammates. (When it's over it's over NO complaints).
5. Don't compete with your child's coach. A coach may become a hero to them for a while, someone that can do no wrong. You may find that hard to take. Your child may find that he/she becomes disenchanted with the coach. Don't side with your child against the coach! Talk to him/her about the importance of learning how to handle the problems and how to react to criticism. Help him/her understand the necessity for discipline, rules, and commitment. **(TALK TO THE COACH)**.
6. Allow 24 hours to pass before discussing your feelings about a game or practice with the coach. This allows time for reflection and calming of emotions.
7. Don't compare your child with other players on the team. If your child has a tendency to resent the treatment he/she gets from the coach, if your child is jealous of the approval other players get, share with them your approval/disapproval of his/her actions. Be honest with your child about his/her capabilities as a player. If you are overly protective, you will perpetuate the problem. **(TALK TO THE COACH)**.
8. Teach your child the meaning of successful competition. Everyone is fearful of failure or making mistakes. Competition is not the absence of mistakes, but being successful with mistakes. The greatest athlete is the one who learns from their mistakes and doesn't try to cover them.

9. PLAY TO THE GLORY OF GOD!! Help your child understand the meaning of this saying. “We work hard in practice and during the game for the chance to give God glory through our play. It is our gift to God, our way of saying thank you for the many talents and gifts which He has given to us.” We should always strive to do our best. What a joy to play that way! **JESUS WAS THE GREATEST TEACHER/COACH!**

10. In all situations follow the example, given to us by Christ, in Matthew 18.

1. Your child speaks to the coach first
2. If the problem is not resolved, you as the parent, speak to the coach
3. If the problem is still not resolved, speak to the athletic director

Transportation

1. Parents are needed to provide transportation to and from all away games and meets.
2. Parents driving for interscholastic events should not stop for refreshments along the way to or from the game. This is in effect when a parent is driving other students besides his/her own children after a game or any time from school to a game. (There are times we may stop, as a team, for refreshments).
3. An athlete may ride home from the game with his/her parents, provided that he/she informs the coach and the parent he/she drove with from the school.
4. Parents are asked to pick up their children from practices no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled end of practice. Parents who wish to pick up their children after an away game are requested to arrive BEFORE the end of the game. Dropping off children, leaving, and coming back to pick up children is NOT permitted.

**Gethsemane Lutheran School
Athletic Permission Form**

Student's Name _____ Parent's Name _____
 Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Available Sports

Check off the sport you give permission to your child to participate in this school year. Information will be forwarded to the family in the areas indicated prior to the season.

Fall Sports:

- _____ Volleyball, Junior Varsity (girls' grades 4-6)
- _____ Volleyball, Varsity (girls' grades 4-7)
- _____ Soccer, Varsity (boys grades 4-7)

Winter Sports:

- _____ Basketball, Junior Varsity (boys' grades 4-6)
- _____ Basketball, Varsity (boys' grades 4-7)
- _____ Girls' Basketball, Junior Varsity (grades 4-6)
- _____ Girls' Basketball, Varsity (grades 4-7)

Spring Sports:

- _____ Track (boys and girls grades 4-7)

* **Read the statements below and sign/date all the items for participation.** *

1. **Physical Exam Form:** My son/daughter has a valid physical form on file with the athletic director.
 _____ Parent _____ Date

2. **Insurance:** My son/daughter is adequately covered with medical insurance by a home/work school insurance plan.
 _____ Parent _____ Date

3. **Emergency Medical Authorization:** Permission is hereby granted to the attending physician to proceed with any medical or minor surgical treatment, x-ray examinations and immunizations for the above named athlete. In the event of serious illness, the need for major surgery or significant accidental injury, I understand that an attempt will be made by the attending physician to contact me in the most expeditious way possible. If said physician is not able to communicate with me, the treatment necessary for the best interest of the above named student may be given. In the event that an emergency arises during a practice or game session, the coach, athletic director, or person(s) trained in CPR/First Aid may apply the necessary first aid treatment to the athlete immediately until proper personnel can assist.
 _____ Parent _____ Date

4. **Medical History:** Wear Contacts: _____yes _____no Asthma: _____yes (inhaler:_____)
 Diabetes: _____yes _____no
 Neck/head injuries? _____yes _____no Operations: _____
 Special Physical considerations? _____

5. **Warning of Potential Injury:** We are aware that participation in sports may be a dangerous activity involving many risks or injury.
 _____ Parent _____ Date

Commitment

Team Participation requires commitment. It requires commitment from parents as well as student-athletes. Signing this commitment letter lets the coaches know they have your support and cooperation.

Student

I will show true team spirit and sportsmanship. That means I will attend ALL practices and games. I will always try to give 100% effort and cooperation and will use my skills to the best of my ability. I will have all my classroom responsibilities completed and will maintain a C (70%) or better grade average. By doing all this I will be a shining example of a true Christian athlete.

Parent

I will make sure my child attends ALL practices and games. If illness or unforeseen circumstances arise, I will notify the school office. I am aware that a student must attend at least a 1/2 day of school in order to participate on that afternoon. I will not pull my child off of the team without first speaking with the coach or Athletic Director. I understand that it is my responsibility to arrange for transportation to games. I will make arrangements to have my athlete picked up no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled end of practice/game.

I, the undersigned, give permission for _____ to play on the Gethsemane _____ team. I understand that the athlete will demonstrate Christian principles and sportsmanship at all times on the field of play, in school, and in the community. Failure to do so will be grounds for dismissal from the team. I understand that the athlete will remain eligible by meeting the prescribed requirements for eligibility set forth in the athletic handbook. I have read the athletic handbook and agree to adhere to the regulations and guidelines therein.

Athlete's signature _____

Parent's signature _____

Participation Fee: There will be a fee charged for each sport in which a student participates. This fee will help to offset equipment, gym/field rentals, and officials.

Amount received: \$ _____ Date _____ Ck. _____ Cash _____

EACH STUDENT WILL BE CHARGED A REFUNDABLE \$50 UNIFORM RENTAL FEE AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR SEASON. THIS FEE WILL BE REFUNDED WHEN THE UNIFORM IS RETURNED.

All athletes should turn in a physical form, permission form, commitment form, permission to participate in school-related activities form, and uniform fee in order to attend practices/games (see Eligibility in handbook). NO PRACTICES UNTIL THESE FOUR ITEMS ARE GIVEN TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR. PLEASE RETURN TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S MAILBOX