

**HANDBOOK FOR  
CHRISTIAN ATHLETES**



## **A Christian Philosophy of Athletics**

*"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" Luke 2:52.*

Athletics in the Christian school exist to provide an atmosphere in which the Christian athlete may develop Christ-like character by applying sound biblical principles to physical competition. The athlete will achieve spiritual and physical development by submission to the control of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, Christian growth should be observable in the lives of participants and spectators alike.

Sumter Christian School is committed to the spiritual development of the whole person. Every part of the student's being is included in God's plan for his life. Competing with one's peers on an interscholastic level provides an important opportunity for growth, both spiritually and physically. The desire to win is a legitimate aspect of any athletic endeavor, because winning indicates a high level of self-discipline and accomplishment. It is a fruit of effort; but it is not the only reward, nor the most important one. The highest goal for any believer is to glorify Christ! The athlete who has maximized his athletic potential, done his best, and given all glory to Christ, will have a more gratifying relationship with Him and a more fully developed ability to serve Him effectively.

It is not the intention of Sumter Christian School to offer interscholastic athletics to provide a launching pad for an athletic career. Education cannot be subordinated to athletics. Sports should be only an adjunct to consistent, quality classroom instruction. To make athletic competition an end in itself runs contrary to a sound philosophy of Christian education and, indeed, to properly conceived secular education.

From a positive perspective, athletic competition provides fellowship opportunities with players, coaches, and fans from other schools. If that fellowship is overshadowed by rivalry, the competition becomes counterproductive and displeasing to the Lord. The competition also displays to spectators and officials the "all things have become new" principle (II Corinthians 5:17) in the athlete's personal deportment. If that testimony is not rendered faithfully, the competition has again become displeasing to the Lord. Coaches must insist on the prominence of these two elements, and they must model their importance to the young people.

## **WISDOM: INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"* Proverbs 19:10a.

Christian athletics provides an opportunity for the development of Christlike mental processes and responses through Godly teaching, coaching, and fellowship. Since athletes are emulated by the student body, they must meet high standards. They must realize that academics take precedence over athletics.

### **Academic requirements**

Grades are checked during each sport for athletic eligibility. The first quarter grades determine eligibility for winter sports, the second quarter grades determine eligibility for spring sports, and the fourth quarter grades determine eligibility for fall sports. The following requirements must be met, or the student is ineligible for practice or games.

1. A 70 average or above for all academic courses (Band, P.E., Teacher's Aid, etc. are not included) during the eligibility period
2. No more than one failure in any of the core academic subjects, regardless of the overall average (failing Bible disqualifies a student).

## **STATURE: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

All athletic endeavor, whether Christian or secular, will involve physically demanding exercise. This, of course, will improve one's physical conditioning. In order to derive the greatest benefit from participating in sports, the following general guidelines are established.

### **Practice expectations**

These expectations are designed to produce a desire on the student's part to be loyal to the team and to develop the essential Christian character traits of punctuality and responsibility.

1. Students who are present at school are expected to attend practice.
2. Students are expected to be on time for practices.
3. Practices are usually not scheduled on Wednesdays. Players are encouraged to be regular in attending mid-week prayer services. If practices are scheduled for Wednesdays, they will end by 5:00.
4. Athletes who work must schedule their jobs around practices and games.

### **Practice commitment**

Commitment to the team is a "prized quality" which means physical presence at all practices. Like parents, the coaching staff teaches the true definition of commitment as being an agreement or pledge. As a team member, the obligation of commitment is a worthy and desirable goal. Coaches are entrusted with setting the example for our athletes by being at each practice. Likewise, we ask our student athletes to take on this same obligation towards making our sports program a creditable endeavor.

### **Game expectations**

Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled games unless they are too sick to play. Students who are absent from school on a game day without just cause may not play in the game. Conflicting events during the season should be resolved with the coach. Missing a game without the coach's consent will result in either a suspension from one or more games or dismissal from the team. Players should check the schedule before the season begins to see if there are

potential conflicts and not wait until after the season has begun to consult the coach.

### **Diet**

It is essential that all athletes build a regular, well-balanced diet into their daily routine. Special foods or meals may be required from time to time on game days.

### **Physical examination**

A physical examination by a licensed physician must be on file prior to the first practice for each student who participates in interscholastic athletic competition. The physical exam is valid for one year from the date of the examination. The medical history form is carried to all game sites and is provided to the hospital in case of an emergency.

### **Injuries**

It is inevitable that some injuries occur during athletic competition. The trainer or coach seeks to treat each injury according to his best judgment, or he may choose to refer the player to a medical facility for examination. Players should report any injury to the coach immediately, since playing or practicing while injured may aggravate the condition. Certain injuries may require a doctor's release before the student can return to practice or games. Parents must sign the emergency treatment release and provide the policy number of the student's medical insurance carrier.

### **Equipment**

In order to get the best results from effort expended, it is necessary to use the best affordable equipment. SCS will purchase proper equipment for the various sports. Players are to treat all such items with care. In some sports, players provide some of their own equipment. Each coach will inform team members of the details.

### **Uniforms**

The athletic director and principal approve the choice of SCS uniforms. Uniforms remain the property of the school and may not be worn at any time not specifically authorized by the coach. Uniforms must be cleaned and returned before the subsequent grade report can be released.

All clothing items that players wear must be approved by SCS. The administration strives to provide the best uniforms possible in a manner that uses the Lord's money wisely.

Uniformity as a team can only be accomplished as each individual player conforms to team policy. Our school colors are red, white, and blue. Under certain conditions black or gray may be allowed.

The following guidelines will help promote team uniformity:

- All players wear the same color socks.
- Sweatbands must be solid colors (red, white, or navy).
- Spandex shorts must be the same color as the uniform shorts.
- Baseball and softball caps must be SCS issued caps.
- All clothing is to be worn as intended when manufactured (caps worn frontward, sleeves not rolled or pushed up, etc.).

Practice dress:

- No team uniform dress is required currently but may be required later if necessary to help promote team unity.
- Shorts for female athletes must be at least to the top of the knee.
- Tank tops are not permitted for girls.
- Message-bearing shirts must be in agreement with SCS policies.

The administration of SCS reserves the right to modify these guidelines at any time with or without prior notice.

### **Travel**

All players are expected to ride to and from games with the teams. Permission may be granted to ride home from the game with a parent or other adult if written or verbal permission is given to the coach.

### **FAVOR WITH GOD: SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

*“Walk in the Spirit”* Galatians 5:16.

*"Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth"*  
Colossians 3:2.

The power that lies in a consistent, daily walk with the Lord cannot be overestimated, and should not be underestimated. Athletes must learn to depend on the Lord, not simply on physical prowess. A consistent testimony towards fellow students, teachers, coaches, opponents, and officials is absolutely essential to success as a Christian athlete. To compromise this testimony in a fit of anger, rage, or bad attitude, is to forfeit one's ability to function as a spiritual leader on the team or at school. The following standards are requirements and indicators of a proper spiritual attitude.

### **Personal standards**

1. Regular prayer and Bible study in private.
2. Attention and interest in chapel and Bible class.
3. Regular church attendance.
4. Cheerfully complying with hair and dress regulations.
5. Participation in team devotions and prayer.
6. Proper relationships with parents, teachers, and coaches.
7. Proper relationships with teammates and opponents.
8. A pre-determined commitment to please the Lord in all things.

### **General ethical standards**

1. It is unchristian to boo, scream, or do anything else to unfairly distract or hinder an opponent.
2. Accepting the official's call is the only proper response. Only the captain may ask for an explanation of the call, and this only in case of questions regarding rules, not judgment calls.
3. Cheating is totally unacceptable.
4. Sports should be played according to the written rules.
5. Speaking ill of other schools, coaches, players, cheerleaders, facilities, or officials is not tolerated.

### **FAVOR WITH MAN: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

*"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"* Proverbs 16:7.

As this verse indicates, if the athlete is right with God, he will also be right with man. He needs to be aware of this responsibility to

relate properly to his parents, his pastor, his coach, his teachers, his schoolmates, the opponents, to name but a few of the more obvious relationships.

### **Conduct requirements**

1. If a student receives 50 or more demerits during the eligibility period, he is ineligible for the entire season. If a student accumulates an additional 25 demerits for serious offenses during any part of the year, he will be ineligible for the remainder of the year from any athletic participation.
2. Each student athlete and the parents must agree to and sign a behavioral expectation contract.
3. No serious infraction of Christian conduct expectations which, in the judgment of the coach and principal, makes the student an undesirable representative of SCS
4. Regular church attendance
5. Good Christian testimony

### **Dress requirements**

Players are expected to abide by the guidelines set by the coach in each sport. Sharp dress promotes sharp thinking and sharp performance. As a minimum, athletes must meet the school dress code. Players may wear the following clothing to and from the game:

- Tops: school dress code, SCS P.E. shirt, SCS "Bear" shirts, wind suit jacket, uniform top/team shirt
- Bottoms: school dress code, wind suit pants, uniform bottom

Coats and sweaters that are acceptable for school dress may be worn also. Jeans and non-SCS sweat clothes are not acceptable. Shirts must be tucked in at all times (except while on the bus). Caps, if worn, must be worn the traditional way (not backwards). Statisticians, managers, and students who attend away games are to abide by the same dress code as players.



## **EXPECTATIONS FOR TEAM TRAVEL**

### **Before the season**

- Get in good physical shape and work on individual skills.
- Turn in the following forms to the office: Athletic Contract, Verification of Insurance, Physical Exam, and SCACS Liability Waiver form.
- Pay the athletic fee (assessed on the parents FACTS account).

### **Before the game**

- Be sure your parents know when to pick you up at school.
- Let teachers know when you are leaving.
- You are responsible for homework and tests for any classes you miss.
- Locate books and other belongings for pickup after the game.

### **On the bus**

- Use the restroom before leaving school.
- Stay seated while the bus is moving.
- Keep all body parts inside the bus.
- Keep all food, drink, gum, etc., outside the bus.
- Avoid opening or spraying perfume, cologne, hair spray, etc.
- Keep the emergency exit clear at all times.
- Electronic devices may be used at the discretion of the coach but must not distract the driver.

### **At the game**

- Wait for the coach to instruct you to leave the bus.
- Make positive comments about the other team and the facilities.
- If not playing in the game, then watch and cheer for the team.
- Show respect for the officials.
- Pick up trash before leaving the facility.

### At the restaurant

- Students leave the bus from front to back. All girls should place their orders before the boys begin placing their orders.
- Walk through the parking lot, watching for cars.
- Eat only at restaurant(s) selected by the administration or coaches.
- Show common courtesy to other guests in the restaurant.
- Seek to order standard items to keep lines moving.
- Confine yourself to areas designed for adults.
- Make conversation cheerful and subdued.
- Clean the area before leaving.
- Use the restroom before departure.
- Stay in the restaurant until an adult returns to the bus.

### At school

- Close all bus windows and take all articles off the bus.
- Remove cleats before entering the buildings.
- Keep halls and restrooms presentable. The custodian already cleaned.
- All students need to be picked up immediately upon return from the game. Students who stay longer than 15 minutes after return will be charged \$10 (which will be given to the person that must stay later). Non-players will also be banned from traveling with the team.

NOTE: Disregard for these guidelines may result in your not being permitted to travel to one or more away games.

**STRIVE TO REPRESENT THE LORD AND SCS IN THE VERY BEST MANNER POSSIBLE.**

### Awards

An Awards Program will be held at the end of each school year. Students who attend must wear school dress code. Gum is not allowed. Athletes who play a varsity sport receive letters at the discretion of the coach and athletic director. A pin is given for each sport (not each year) the athlete plays. Trophies are issued as follows: each JV sport presents a Coach's award and an MVP award; each varsity sport presents a Coach's award and two MVP

awards (usually one for offense and one for defense). Certificates are presented for a variety of recognitions. The Stephanie Powell Academic-Athletic Award is presented to the high school student-athlete with the highest GPA. Usually, a student must play at least two sports to qualify.

### **Parental responsibilities**

Before the season begins, parents should read this handbook and complete the appropriate forms. Filling out medical history and medical release forms carefully is most important. Paying fees promptly saves the student from having to be reminded that the bill is outstanding. Players may not play until the fees are paid.

After the season begins, parents need to insure proper diet and adequate sleep for team members. Self-discipline in study habits becomes vital during the season in order to maintain the highest possible level of academic performance.

Parents visiting host schools should always conduct themselves in a respectful manner. If a parent interacts with a host school representative, and the representative requests identifying information, they should make them aware of who they are and the student athlete they are there to observe. Each school is interested in maintaining a level of safety for everyone in attendance.

Parents should attend games when possible. They should plan to pick students up promptly at the end of practices, and according to the published schedule for return times for away games. Coaches may not leave any student unattended, so they may not leave until the last student has been picked up.

Parents should support the coach and his decisions in conversation with young people. If there is a legitimate concern, it should be addressed directly to the coach.

At games, parents should cheer positively for SCS, but not against the opponent. Remember that the administration teaches students that interscholastic competition is primarily for fellowship and testimony, not for beating an opponent. Booing and other such unchristian conduct is not allowed. The calls of the officials represent God's authority for the contest. Parents who complain about officiating are in fact undermining their own God-given authority in the home.

## **Summary Statement**

The administration of SCS reserves the right to modify any of these guidelines at any time with or without prior notice.