

KCS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

The ministry of the Keswick Christian School Athletic Department is to instill and develop Godly character, a clear Christian testimony, a commitment to excellence and a cooperative spirit on and off the playing field, while instructing in the skills and strategies involved in the athletic arena.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To show that Christ permeates every area of our life and use athletics to worship Him, develop a relationship with him and become more like Him.
2. To display a clear Christian testimony to our athletes, as well as to the athletes, coaches, officials and spectators with whom we compete and to promote a positive display of sportsmanship towards all.
3. To develop Christian character qualities such as dependability, boldness, diligence, responsibility, determination, confidence, obedience, endurance, love and humility, through the disciplines of practice and athletic competition.
4. To commit to a level of excellence through:
 - a. Hiring quality coaches
 - b. Continued education through coaches clinics and classes
 - c. Quality equipment and facilities
 - d. Involvement with county and state associations
 - e. Challenging athletes every day physically, mentally and spiritually
5. To aid athletes who desire to participate at the collegiate level in athletics through:
 - a. Contacting coaches of prospective colleges
 - b. Creating a video of the athlete
 - c. Providing game schedules and reference letters to interested colleges
6. To instill a cooperative spirit of teamwork that an athlete will use during athletic competition, as well as throughout his/her daily life.
7. To provide the fundamental skills and strategies needed to develop a firm foundation for each individual player within the team scheme and teach them how to look ahead and think strategically.
8. To give each athlete an opportunity to be a personal role model to our elementary students through coaching in our elementary athletic leagues.
9. To provide an atmosphere of fun at all of our home events.

ADMINISTERING THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Academics are the first priority at Keswick Christian School and all other activities are based around the academic calendar. The athletic program complements the academics and is considered to be an integral part of the total educational process at KCS. Athletics provide opportunities to enhance, develop and put into practice many of the things learned in the academic arena.

The Athletic Director will oversee all aspects of the athletic department, communicating and working closely with the Upper School Principal and Headmaster.

The Varsity head coach will be the head of that particular sport. All JH and JV coaches will work closely with the head coach to develop a program of continuity.

Each head coach will be responsible for their team and any assistants that help them.

Parents and volunteers are an invaluable part of the functioning of the athletic department to help fill the many important roles needed to run our events. We would like all parents to be involved in areas that they would like to be a part of the athletic department team. All families of athletes are expected to work in the concession stand during games in which their son/daughter are not participating.

The athletic program will function under the guidelines of the Florida High School Athletic Association with which we are full members of. Our Conference affiliation is the Bay Conference and is made up of 8 private schools from Pinellas and Hillsborough County.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

All rules and regulations stated in the Home and School Handbook or the Student Handbook apply at any school-sponsored activity.

ATHLETIC FEES

An annual athletic fee is assessed to anyone who makes one of our interscholastic teams at any level. The amount will appear on the financial statement each year. This fee helps to offset some of the costs of the program in order to maintain and build a quality athletic program with a commitment to excellence at every level.

ATTENDANCE

Participation in athletics involves making a commitment to the team. All athletes are expected to be at all practices and games. Absences need to be communicated to the coach in advance, before the day of the practice or game. Unexcused absences from practices or games will be handled by the head coach according to guidelines announced at the beginning of the season. *Athletes must be in school all day and not more than 20 minutes tardy to participate in an athletic contest, unless the part of the day that was missed was due to a documented appointment.*

Attendance at games/tournaments/practices that occur over holiday periods are required if an athlete is in town, however, if an out of town family vacation is planned, an athlete will be excused and not penalized. These absences need to be made known to the coach as far in advance as possible.

AWARDS

Awards will be given at the banquet at the end of each season. Each player that participates on a varsity team for at least half of the season and finishes the season in good standing will receive the following:

- 1st year – Letter and sport pin
- 2nd year and beyond – bar

Each team, Junior High through Varsity, will also have plaque awards that will be given out at the banquet. Junior High teams will award the Mighty In Spirit Award and the Most Improved Award. The Junior Varsity teams will award the Mighty In Spirit Award, Total Release Award, and Most Improved Award. Varsity teams will present up to 5 Awards.

The Athlete of the Year Award will be presented to the male and female athlete that has best represented KCS athletics throughout the year. This award will be given to a senior at graduation. All of the coaches will nominate and vote on the nominees to determine our recipients.

The Three Sport Award will be presented to any athlete that participates in **3 varsity** sports throughout the year. They must be on varsity for the complete season.

All Conference Awards are presented in each varsity sport through the Bay Conference. The number of selections received depends upon a team or individual's standing in the conference at the conclusion of the regular season. All players selected will receive a certificate and pin. The Bay Conference Scholar Athlete Award is presented to juniors and seniors that have higher than a 3.5 unweighted gpa.

All County, All Suncoast and All State selections are made by the newspaper and media involved with high school sports.

COMMUNICATION

Throughout the course of the school year there will be many opportunities that communication needs to take place concerning schedules, changes, additions, etc. Most communication will take place via email. We will use the email addresses that are on file with the school. If you want any different contact information for us to use, please let us know in the athletic department.

ELIGIBILITY

The Florida High School Activities Association requires an unweighted grade point average of 2.0 to be maintained. For middle school students the 2.0 is required per semester. For high school students the 2.0 is cumulative beginning with the first semester of their 9th grade year. (However, if a student took high school classes in JH then those would also factor in to the cumulative GPA.) If an athlete's GPA falls below a 2.0 at semester break or at the end of the school year, then that athlete is ineligible to participate for the following semester. If the GPA is brought above a 2.0 by the end of the next semester break then the athlete becomes eligible to participate again. During a semester of ineligibility, an athlete may not travel with, dress out, or sit on the bench with the team. They are allowed to practice with the team if both the parents and the coach agree that practice time will not interfere with or hinder their academic studies.

Students must be less than 19 years 9 month old to participate in high school; and 15 years 9 months old to participate in middle school. On the day you reach one of these ages – regardless of when that day is, you become ineligible to participate on that level (unless a team is already in the middle of state series play). This is a bylaw of FHSAA.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The Lord has blessed us with outstanding facilities. We need to be good stewards of what we have and use the facilities and equipment wisely. Always leave the area cleaner than you found it. There will be no toleration of the destruction or misuse of property.

Treat school equipment with care. If your coach gives you responsibility for team equipment, see that your job is carried out completely. The responsible student will pay for loss or damage of school equipment occurring as a result of neglect or carelessness.

Do not take any equipment out of a facility without permission from the coach involved.

All articles left in the locker room will be taken to the lost and found in the storage room for a short period of time. It would be wise to put all of your belongings in your bag and bring it to your practice or game facility rather than leaving anything in the locker room, as these doors are open throughout the day and during practices/games. KCS will not be held responsible for any items left in the locker room.

FORMS

EACH ATHLETE MUST HAVE A PHYSICAL EXAM BEFORE TAKING PART IN ANY TRYOUT OR PRACTICE. The physical is good for 365 days from the date of the examination. This form needs to be on file in the Upper school office. There are forms available in the high school hallway. If a physical form from a doctor's office is used, you still need to fill out one of the FHSAA physical forms for parental consent to participate. The FHSAA also requires consent and release forms to be signed and on file for each year. The physical forms and **consent/release forms** are available in the offices as well as on the KCS website under Athletics Documents and Downloads.

Home School students must have the FHSAA EL7 form filled out and turned in to the office at least one week before practices are to begin.

Parents need to fill out a travel permission form listing those people that their son/daughter would be allowed to travel home with from an athletic contest. Students will only be released to individuals on the list or their parents.

INJURIES

All injuries need to be made known to the coach so that proper aid may be given. The coach will fill out an accident report in the high school office, if necessary, for insurance purposes if a visit to a physician or hospital is required.

Be sure to let the coach know of any allergies or other ailments that require special attention.

Conditioning is an important part of being able to perform at your best. The better conditioned you are at the start of the season, the less chance for injuries due to fatigue. Begin easily and work up to a high level of condition so you will be ready for the start of the season.

MUSIC

Music is a fun ingredient to our home games and events. We would like to have warm-up music and half-time music at all of our games. However, all music that will be played needs to be approved by the Athletic Director in advance.

OFFICIALS AND REFEREES

Officials for all athletic contests are authority figures and their position requires respect. Qualified officials are assigned through the local association for all contests. They are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding the rules and their interpretations. We expect all coaches, players and spectators to treat them positively and to allow them to do their job. They will never be perfect, just as none of us are perfect in the roles that we are performing. They will attempt to do their best, as we all attempt to do our best also. Any communication with the officials needs to be done by the coach.

Players should be polite and respectful to officials while on the playing field/court. Hand the ball to the official; don't just leave it on the floor or just flip it in their general direction. Demeaning facial expressions, comments and/or gestures towards officials will not be tolerated.

OPEN GYMS

Open gyms occur during off-season periods for a particular sport. Coaches will open the facility to allow students to participate in that sport. (Although it is generally called "open gym", this refers to all sports – indoor and outdoor.) These open gym times **are not** mandatory, but are simply a time to allow individuals to improve their skills and have fun participating in a sport.

Open gyms are open to anyone who would like to participate – not just those that participated on interscholastic teams.

Coaches are not allowed to run practices during the off seasons of a sport. They can only open the facility. All open gym times must be coordinated with the Athletic Director.

PARTICIPATION ON CLUB AND AAU TEAMS

Participation on club and AAU teams is becoming more common among athletes today. These teams offer great opportunities to improve a player's skill during the off-season. However, this can also have a negative effect on our total athletic program if players choose to solely specialize in one particular sport. We want athletes to be proud of our school and want to wear as many jerseys as possible throughout their career. Even college coaches want players that have played in multiple sports as it reduces the risk of injury as the total body is more conditioned through the different sports. For example, the volleyball player that solely plays volleyball year round is at a higher risk for shoulder injuries, than the volleyball player that also plays basketball or soccer where the arms/shoulders are used differently.

It is possible to play club and AAU while participating for the KCS athletic teams. Coaches and players can make every effort to work out the schedules for those that are attempting to do both. However, if there is a conflict, the Keswick sport takes priority over the club or AAU sport.

PLAYING TIME

Participation on an athletic team is a privilege and not a right. This is also true in the area of playing time. No player is guaranteed a certain number of minutes or plays. Everyone will participate in each game at the JH level (unless it is a championship game of a tournament, or if there is disciplinary action requiring the loss of playing time). At the high school level every effort will be made to provide playing time for each member of the team during a game, but it is not guaranteed.

Each team will have a wide variety of ability levels represented as well as a variety of commitment levels to the sport. A higher commitment level or love for a sport usually results in a player practicing more on their own skills on their own time, and thus usually presents itself in

improved play and thus increased playing time. There will never be enough playing time to go around to meet everyone's desires, so we will need to trust the coach's discretion. The coach is the one at every practice who sees the big picture and the practice habits, attitudes, and teamwork of each of the players on the team.

PRACTICE TIMES & DAYS

Coaches will develop a practice schedule for the season, which will be available as early as possible (at least by the first practice). No practices of any kind will be allowed on Sundays, Christmas or Thanksgiving. (Practices are allowed during a holiday vacation period, but not on the actual holiday date itself.)

SCHEDULES

All team schedules will be developed and available as early as possible. The fall and winter team sports schedules are available by the end of the previous school year. The spring sports schedules will be available by November 1st.

Schedules are available on the KCS website. The website will always contain the most up to date information, as well as game results.

THIS WEEK IN KESWICK ATHLETICS is a weekly form that will be available in the hallway as well as on the website which will list all of the events for the following week. These will be available by the Friday of the preceding week. This information will contain departure and arrival times, directions, toll money needed, game times and meal money needs for every contest.

SPORTS OFFERED

The following sports are available at KCS:

FALL Season:

Girls Sports

Cross Country – grades 6-12
Volleyball JH – grades 6-8
Volleyball JV
Volleyball Varsity
Swimming
Cheerleading

Boys Sports

Cross Country – grades 6-12
JH Football – grades 6-8
Varsity Football
Swimming

WINTER Season:

Basketball JH – grades 6-8
Basketball JV
Basketball Varsity
Soccer JH – grades 6-8
Soccer Varsity

Basketball JH – grades 6-8
Basketball JV
Basketball Varsity
Soccer JH – grades 6-8
Soccer Varsity

SPRING Season:

Softball JH – grades 6-8

Softball Varsity

Track JH – grades 6-8

Track Varsity

Baseball JH – grades 6-8

Baseball Varsity

Track JH – grades 6-8

Track Varsity

SPORTSMANSHIP

We expect sportsmanship to be displayed by every person associated with the Keswick Christian School athletic department. We are representatives of Christ and we can use this forum to be a witness of Him. Obviously the coaches and athletes are held to high accountability as they are on display during the competition. In addition, we expect our spectators to be encouraging from the sidelines. We want your enthusiasm for the game to reveal itself through cheering for the players and to refrain from negative comments directed towards any player, coach or official.

Let's commit to letting the officials officiate, the coaches to coach, the players play, and the spectators fill the facility with enthusiasm as we all support our team.

SUMMER PRACTICES

Summer practices are allowed for each sport. The rules that apply to open gyms and off season do not apply during the time when school is not in session. This time allows great opportunities for teams to practice, go to team camps, participate in summer leagues, etc. We understand that summer is a time for family vacations and church mission trips, thus no one is penalized for not attending a practice session. The summer provides a time for players to develop their individual and team skills in a less structured environment. We encourage our athletes to participate in summer camps and practices – especially at the varsity level.

SUPERVISION

All athletes using any of the Keswick athletic facilities must be under the direct supervision of a Keswick coach. No workouts, practices or games should be played under any circumstances without a coach present.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided to away games and matches.

If the game/match is at a later time and athletes leave campus after school, they may meet at the game at a specified time if agreed upon by the coach.

If a team leaves during or immediately after school, a student may only drive with written permission from their parents, and no other athletes, other than siblings, may ride with them.

If a parent would like other people to be allowed to give their child a ride home from an away game they must fill out the travel permission form listing ALL people that have permission to transport their child.

TRYOUTS

Tryouts will be held for volleyball, basketball, soccer, softball, and baseball. The tryout sessions will be determined by the coaches and announced at the start of the first practice sessions. This is the toughest time for a coach as it is hard to cut someone who is giving a good effort.

Unfortunately, we can only have a certain number of players on a team. Much prayer, thought and communication goes into our determination of who is selected to be a member of the team. Players will be talked to individually by the coach to inform them of their decision and thoughts concerning what a player could work on to improve.

UNIFORMS

Each individual coach will hand out team uniforms. Please read the washing instructions and keep the uniform in good condition. We use our uniforms for 4 years before replacing thus it is important to take care of them. Any lost or damaged uniforms will need to be paid for by the student.

All uniforms need to be turned in at the conclusion of each season. If an athlete participates in the next season, he/she will not receive their next uniform until the preceding one has been turned in. At the end of the spring season, students will not receive their report cards if uniforms have not been turned in.

WEIGHT TRAINING

Weight training and conditioning is a very important part of the total athletic program at KCS. It is imperative for all of our athletes to be physically strong to help keep their potential for injury at its' lowest possible point. Strength training also provides positive self-esteem and confidence as individuals improve the strength and feel of their bodies. Girls that are involved in strength training will not become big and bulky, instead will become leaner and stronger and gain much in confidence.

Coaches will develop a training program for their team during the season. During the off-season there can be times available for athletes to work out that are not involved in a sport at that time. Coaches will work out strength training plans with the other coaches when athletes participate in multiple sports.