

Harford Christian School

Athletics



Parent Student Handbook

2019-2020

Harford Christian School offers a variety of athletic opportunities for students in grades 6 through 12. The entire athletic schedule, as it becomes available, along with directions to away games, is located on www.harfordchristian.org.

FALL SEASON Begins August 12	WINTER SEASON Begins October 28	SPRING SEASON Begins March 2
Boys Middle School Soccer	Boys Middle School Basketball	Boys Middle School Baseball
Boys Varsity Soccer	Boys JV/Varsity Basketball	Boys Varsity Baseball
Girls Middle School Volleyball	Girls Middle School Basketball	Girls Middle School Soccer
Girls JV/Varsity Volleyball	Girls JV/Varsity Basketball	Girls Varsity Soccer
		Girls Softball

Contact Information

Cheri Lefever, Athletic Director

Office: 410-457-5103 ext. 4505

Cell: 717-669-3915

Email: clefever@harfordchristian.org

<u>Handbook Contents</u>	
Striving Lawfully.....	4-5
Philosophy.....	6
Athletic and Academic Eligibility.....	7
Rules of Conduct for Student Athletes.....	8
Parent-Coach Communication.....	9
Game Postponements and Cancellations.....	10
Forms.....	back of handbook
Player Consent Form	
Physical Examination Form	

STRIVING LAWFULLY

A POSITION PAPER ON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ATHLETICS

“And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned,
except he strive lawfully.” (II Timothy 2:5)

The inspired writers of Scripture leave no doubt that athletics were a part of the context in which they lived. References to boxing, training, wrestling, and running a race confirm that athletics are legitimate in a Christian’s life. Paul acknowledged in I Timothy 4:8 that there is, indeed, profit from bodily exercise. He then reminds believers that bodily exercise, like other areas of life, pales in comparison to godliness. The believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and bodily exercise, properly undertaken, IS an exercise in godliness. Physical conditioning for God’s glory, for health and development as “good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” and not for sensuality or show, is a spiritual exercise.

As the Christian school movement developed in the 20th century, athletic programs became part of most school programs. Those entrusted with the oversight of Christian school athletics have great influence on a highly visible aspect of the ministry. This includes the Christian school administrator, athletic director, and coaching staff. When a school offers intramural or interscholastic athletics participation to its students, it embraces a process that may serve to be a great blessing and useful tool of instruction. Often overlooked and/or neglected, however, are the perils that are ever-present in the realm of athletics.

We reside in a sports-dominated society. Consider how much our conversation, television viewing, radio listening, and reading are related to sports. October focuses attention upon the World Series. From September through February, professional football dominates Sunday afternoons and Monday nights. Have you heard the expression “March Madness,” a time when collegiate basketball consumes most of America’s attention? Every two years, the whole world watches as elite athletes from around the world compete in Summer or Winter Olympics. These examples only begin to reveal the influence of sports and athletics on our culture. Over-emphasis is a continual peril to be avoided.

Another peril of athletics is acceptance of the world’s norm in areas of attitude and behavior. Consider items that have become the norm in modern athletic competition:

Spectators question, criticize and taunt officials, umpires and referees. Taunting and hazing an opponent before, during and after the performance has become part of the sport.

Players transgress established rules and it is deemed acceptable, as long as those officiating the game do not see the infraction or enforce the rule. It is often acceptable for a player to retaliate against an opponent if the opponent engaged first. Abusive body language or speech against a referee is expected if a call is not favorable.

Coaches are expected to “work” the officials in an effort to sway their judgment. Winning is everything, and that end justifies the means. Temper tantrums directed toward officials are deemed not only permissible, but also necessary in certain circumstances.

To various degrees these behaviors and attitudes are accepted within modern sports and athletics. These professional and collegiate models “trickle down” into youth sports programs of all ages.

From this list of "normal" attitudes and behaviors, what can the Christian school administrator, athletic director, or coach accept? If we are to scrutinize our actions and attitudes in the light of biblical principle, the answer should be clear. The Christian cannot accept any of these!

Christian school leaders speak much of testimony and of being light in a dark world. Yet, too often Christian school athletics harms the cause of Christ and is far from being light to a dark world. Lip service is easy, but holding our athletic programs to biblical standards is hard work. Diligence and discernment must characterize those who administer sports programs.

What then is a biblical philosophy of athletics in the Christian school? At the foundational level Christian schools should recognize that sports programs are a means to an end and not an end in itself. Athletics is a tool by which many valuable lessons can be taught. Lessons include self-control in adversity, the value of hard work and practice, sportsmanship regardless of circumstance, consideration of opponents, and respect for authority. These opportunities for learning far exceed the importance of a winning season or league championship. "Athletes first, winning second" should be the mode of operation for every coach, recognizing that each athlete is a multi-faceted individual who needs not only physical development, but spiritual, emotional, social, and mental, as well.

"Humble winning and gracious losing" should characterize the Christian school athletic team at the end of every contest. There is no room for pragmatism (whatever works, use it). Blatant or subtle breaking of rules to gain an advantage over an opponent is not striving lawfully. Officials, referees, and umpires are the designated authority over the athletic contest. Our response to their authority and decisions should look and sound no differently than what a student response should be to a teacher or a child's response should be to a parent. Expressions of criticism and displeasure (verbal or body language) directed toward the officials/referees are expressions of disrespect and insubordination towards authority. Athletic programs must have integrity and principle regarding what is right.

It is essential that adolescent energies be channeled into wholesome recreational development activities. This done "all to the glory of God," has a necessary place in the lives of Christians. Regrettably, the passion of the moment and desire to win often obscure the "big picture." Biblically, the Christian's goal is to glorify God in everything. That primary goal must not then be pre-empted amid the heat of athletic competition.

If a Christian school has an athletic program, it must never become a microcosm of society's norms. It must never bring reproach upon the name of our Savior. Christian school athletics must be characterized by lawful striving in order to be that light to a dark world. There must be a difference!

Philosophy of the Harford Christian School Interscholastic Athletic Program



Harford Christian School recognizes the positive role, importance and value of interscholastic athletics as part of the total educational program. Goals for students who participate in our athletic program include:

- Demonstrating Christ-likeness through participation and conduct
- Learning appropriate behavior when working with others
- Realizing that athletics is a means to an end and not an end itself
- Learning to cooperate with others and control emotions in a competitive context
- Improving physical fitness and having fun!

Additionally, interscholastic athletics provide an opportunity for the entire student body to demonstrate Christ-likeness, school spirit and sportsmanship.

The philosophy of Harford Christian School's interscholastic athletic program is to develop the whole student through educational and competitive experiences in an atmosphere of sportsmanship. Not only should our student athletes develop physically, but they should develop spiritually as well. We believe winning and losing are important only when considered

in the context of how games are played and how students represent God, the school and themselves under the pressure of competition. We expect each of our student athletes to conduct themselves properly at all times.

The academic responsibilities of the student are primary to any athletic responsibilities. Practices and game are scheduled with an effort to avoid as much conflict with the academic class schedule as possible. A balance must be maintained between the demands of a competitive athletic program and a challenging academic schedule.

Along with providing students with athletic opportunities, interscholastic athletics provide academic experiences such as helping students work for and achieve goals and creating self-discipline.

Student athletes are to conduct themselves in accordance with all school policies as representatives of Harford Christian School, and ultimately as representatives of God.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 3:14

Athletic and Academic Eligibility

Physical Exam and Consent Forms

All student athletes must have a physical exam conducted by a licensed physician before participating in athletics. A physical examination form can be downloaded from the HCS website and must be completely filled out and signed by the conducting physician, signed and dated by a parent or legal guardian, and turned into the athletic office before the first practice of the season in which that student is participating. Physical examination forms are valid for one year. Also, a player consent form must be completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian. Player consent forms are valid for one year. Athletes may not participate in any tryout, practice or interscholastic event without an up-to-date physical and player consent form, or a parent note stating that a physical exam has been scheduled.

Years of Participation

Students may participate in the sports program at Harford Christian School for a maximum of four seasons for any one junior varsity and/or varsity sport in grades 9-12 and a maximum of three seasons for any one middle school sport in grades 6-8.

Academic Requirements

For a student to be eligible to participate in athletic activities, a cumulative average of not less than 74% or 1.1 GPA must be maintained. A student failing any major required course is not eligible for athletic participation until the teacher reports a grade average above failing. Averages will be checked at the time of distribution of progress reports and report cards. After being declared ineligible, the student will not be allowed to participate in any athletic event (pending eligibility) until the date of the next report (4 weeks). Grades will not be averaged between these established intervals. In the event of failing a required course, when the teacher reports a passing grade average, the athlete is eligible (assuming cumulative average is not below 74%). Students who fall behind on required work for any teacher may be temporarily or permanently removed from athletic eligibility. A student who finishes a school year with less than 74% grade average on the 4th quarter report card or final year grades (whichever is higher will count), or has failed a major required course is not eligible for fall sports participation until the 1st progress report for the next year's 1st quarter renders her/him eligible.

Example A:

A student athlete is failing Biology I after the 2nd progress report, but has a cumulative grade average above 74%.

*That student athlete is ineligible until Biology teacher reports a passing grade for that quarter.

Example B:

A student athlete has performed poorly for quarters 1-3. He is declared ineligible early in the spring, but is interested in fall sports participation. He works diligently during the 4th quarter. His final grade average for the year is 72%, but his 4th quarter grade average is 77%.

*That student is eligible for fall sports participation for the next fall.

Example C:

A student athlete has a cumulative grade average of 75% but is persistently negligent in meeting senior paper requirements. The teacher is frustrated in the effort to try to get the student to meet the benchmarks but the sting of the senior paper grade has not landed yet.

*That student is removed from the team until he/she has met the project requirements for this teacher. Teacher through administration initiates this.

Example D:

A student athlete was declared ineligible at the end of the 1st quarter because of a failing grade in Physical Science (required course). The teacher has reported that the athlete is off to a great start in quarter 2 with a 95% average 3 weeks in.

*That student must wait until 2nd quarter progress report, due to the fact that his 1st qtr grade for Physical Science was failing.

Behavioral Requirements

Any student on disciplinary probation will not be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics at Harford Christian School.

Quitting a Team

If an athlete quits a team after becoming an official member of that team, participation in another sport during the same season or the following season is not permitted. A committee comprised of the coach, athletic director and principal may make exceptions for sickness, low grades, injury or a family emergency.

Awards

In order to qualify for post-season awards, the athlete must complete the season in good standing and fulfill all team-related requirements. Coaches are responsible for communicating the policy for achievement of these awards.

Non-School Participation

Students may participate in the same sport outside of school during the same season as long as their participation does not conflict with the school team's practice or games.

Rules of Conduct for Student Athletes

Sportsmanship

An important mission of the Harford Christian School interscholastic athletics program is to teach and reinforce values relating to sportsmanship, competition, and fair play. It is expected that athletes, team personnel, parents, and spectators respect this mission by exhibiting appropriate behavior at athletic events. Taunting of opposing players, fans and coaches, or officials will not be tolerated.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Any unsportsmanlike conduct penalties that an athlete receives will be reviewed by a three-person committee (coach, athletic director and principal). The committee will determine whether or not the student will be permitted to continue participating as a member of the team.

After-school Athletic Events

Athletes participating in after-school practices or games must report directly to the coach or staff member who is supervising the activity. In the case that there is a study hall prior to a late practice or game, students must be in the specified area of that study hall, unless the supervising staff member is notified. Athletes may not leave campus without written permission from a parent that is approved by the principal. For late games in which there is no required study hall before the contest, players may leave campus to go home or eat then return to campus at the appropriate time.

Dress code

Athletes must be in the proper Harford Christian School physical education uniform for **all** practices.

After practices or games, if not leaving the school premises immediately, students must either change back into school uniform, change into casual dress code, or put on cover-up apparel such as sweatpants. Cover-ups are also required for bus trips to and from away athletic events.

Dress code for all non-athletic team personnel (managers, book keepers, etc.) is khaki or dress pants and a collared shirt. Team warm-ups are acceptable as decided upon by the coach.

HCS hair and dress code expectations are in effect by the first practice in August.

Bus and Public Behavior

Athletes may have cell phones, but must be kept away unless calling a parent at a time designated by the coach. Cell phone cameras may not be used at any time during school bus trips. Other basic bus rules include remaining in a seat, no excessive noise and horseplay, keeping your area clean, and no communication from inside the bus to outside pedestrians or vehicles.

While eating in a public establishment, the only attention that should come to Harford Christian School athletes is the fact that they are well behaved. Rowdy and noisy behavior is not acceptable. Before leaving a public eating establishment, athletes are responsible for leaving their area clean.

Uniform Responsibilities

Athletes are responsible for the uniforms that are issued to them. At the conclusion of the sports season, uniforms must be returned by the date that the coach specified. If uniforms are damaged because improper care, the athlete will be responsible to pay for the damages.

Transportation

All team members must travel in a Harford Christian School vehicle to and from all athletic events. If approved by the athletic director in advance, students may travel with their own parent or legal guardian at the conclusion of a contest. A written note must be signed by a parent or legal guardian for alternate methods of transportation. **Coaches are required to supervise every player after a game or practice until his/her transportation has arrived. Please be on time!**

Parent-Coach Communication

Congratulations, your child has made the team! Now what?

Accepting a position on a team includes acceptance of interscholastic athletics procedures by both the student and the parent/guardian. Students and parents must recognize that coaches have the authority over who becomes a member of the team, which students play and how much they play, and who is removed from a team. The coaching staff determines coaching strategy.

The coach's responsibility is to communicate the following to parents:

- His/her philosophy of coaching
- What his/her expectations are for your child and the team as a whole
- Locations and times of all practices and events
- Team requirements, such as special equipment, off-season conditioning, uniform care, etc.
- Discipline that results in your child losing the privilege of participation (academic, behavioral, sportsmanship)

The parent's responsibility is to demonstrate the following communication to the coach:

- Any concerns at all be shared directly with the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns related to the coach's philosophy, management and/or expectations.

There may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wish. Discussion

with the coach is encouraged during these times.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coach include: mental or physical treatment of your child, ways to help your child improve, and concerns about your child's behavior or safety.

Topics that are **not appropriate** to discuss with the coach are: playing time, team strategy, play calling and other student athletes.

When a situation requires discussion with a coach:

- Call or ask the coach for a meeting
- Do not approach the coach before a practice or game

If after the conversation, you do not feel a satisfactory resolution was reached, then contact the Athletic Director. Then an appropriate next step can be reached.



Be a great spectator!

Officials and opposing teams alike enjoy participating in sporting contests at Harford Christian School. Please remember to refrain from making derogatory comments about the officiating or about opposing teams and coaches. We appreciate your effort to demonstrate Christ's love to our visitors. Keep up the good work!

Weather Cancellations

If Harford County Schools are closed for the day or dismissed early due to inclement weather, all games, events and practices are cancelled.

If school is not closed or dismissed early because of inclement weather, but an athletic event is cancelled, the decision to cancel or postpone the event is made by the Athletic Director before 1:00 p.m.

For information regarding the status of athletic events, www.harfordchristian.org, or call the school after 1:00 p.m.

Please do not call the school before 1:00 p.m.



Care and Prevention of Sports Injuries

Because there are risks involved in athletic participation, Harford Christian School's coaches place a great deal of emphasis on training and conditioning, injury prevention and safety.

These steps should be taken to insure that student athletes are prepared for practices and games:

- Eat at least three well-balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day. In between meals, eat healthy snacks.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.
- Get at least eight hours of sleep at night.
- Warm-up and stretch before exercising.
- Report all injuries to your coach.
- Always use the proper protective gear and equipment for practices and games.
- Wash your uniform, practice clothing, and protective gear after each use to avoid growth of bacteria and staph infections.

In the event of an injury, Harford Christian is associated with Drayer Physical Therapy Institute which has many locations in the Bel Air/Southern PA area.

Kate Fischer, PT – (443)955-3171



Spectator Behavior Guide

Harford Christian School Athletics

Accepting behavioral norms of the culture without subjecting them to biblical evaluation, is perhaps one of the greatest challenges confronting Christian school athletic programs. At Harford Christian School, coaches are expected to “hold the bar high” for themselves and their athletes in the area of Christian conduct. Demeanor towards opponents and referees, discriminating between lawful/unlawful tactics to gain an advantage, retaliatory fouls, verbal responses, and a host of other competition-related behaviors are items for continual discussion and instruction. While the coach has a significant influence upon player conduct, his ability to implement the same influence upon spectators is greatly diminished. Spectators are, however, a component of the game day context and efforts should be made to educate them regarding their influence and responsibilities. Spectators often set the tone of a contest, which can range from hostile and angry to friendly and supportive, and anything in between. It is worth noting that actions and words of spectators can sometimes incite well-meaning athletes to respond inappropriately on the field. The great difficulty is that spectators typically do not view themselves as “under any authority” while viewing a sporting event. For that reason, this paper is a plea for cooperation and compliance with biblical spectator standards.

The purpose of this paper is to set forth expected behaviors for HCS spectators as related to Harford Christian School athletics. While attempting to be concise, explanations are provided in order to give the rationale behind each point. The *Spectator Behavior Guide* is organized with five words. Note that each point corresponds with the letters of the word “**S-P-O-R-T**.”

Savory

The choice of word here is purposefully biblical. Christ instructed His followers that they were to be a savory salt. He went on to say that if the salt loses its savor, it may as well be thrown in a pathway to be “trodden under foot.” Salt has a purifying and preserving effect upon whatever it comes into contact with. HCS fans should have a purifying effect upon those around them by behaving distinctively Christian. If well-behaved and disciplined athletes can positively stand out in contrast to “normal” player conduct, then well-mannered and self-restrained spectators can have the same effect in the context of game day. Spectators who exhibit the behaviors outlined in this document WILL stand out in contrast to what is natural behavior. Spectator conduct spirals “downward” when opposing fans banter with one another. In other words, poor spectator behavior feeds on poor spectator behavior and only grows worse. In contrast, proper spectator behavior can, and often does, positively impact the environment. That is not to say that behaving positively ALWAYS guarantees that other spectators will follow in step, however, consistent positive spectator behavior typically has a positive influence in the group dynamic of fans. Savory spectator behavior requires diligence and effort and pays big dividends.

Poised

HCS spectator conduct should not be affected by circumstances of the competition. A wise father once stated that a man's character is revealed during adversity. Adversity is not limited to players in competition. Spectator adversity is real. Atrocious officiating happens. HCS players and coaches are capable of making "bad" tactical decisions that affect the outcome of the contest. Players from the opposing team may use unethical tactics in seeking to gain an advantage or to intimidate. Opposing spectators may be rude and obnoxious. All too often these competition realities can turn a well-intentioned and mild group of spectators into an unruly and retaliatory mob. Maintain the higher ground no matter what the circumstances! Mom's emotions are especially vulnerable when her "precious offspring" has been victimized by an opponent or when a referee fails to call a foul committed against her "baby." In the big picture of game day, a spectator losing control over his emotions does not accomplish anything right or productive. Referees are not swayed by an angry mom or dad. Referees are human and capable of making judgment errors. In my years of coaching youth sports, I have rarely, if ever, observed a referee "cave" to a griping or irate parent. More often, the referee may have a mom or dad removed from the game venue for "out-of-control" behavior. Poise is a demonstration an even temperament is what the Bible refers to as meekness, which means strength under control. Poise never allows match circumstances to excuse poor spectator behavior.

Optimistic

HCS spectators should ALWAYS focus on the positive. Finding the "silver lining" in every circumstance, while not easy to do, is appropriate conduct. If a goalkeeper gives up an accidental goal, find a way to encourage that goalkeeper. Don't forget the many good saves that have been made before the "oops." If basketball players are missing lay-ups, they don't need to be verbally reminded that they should have scored on those opportunities. Players know when they "blow it" and don't forget . . . making shots in the heat of a contest is not as easy as it looks. A good speaking rule to follow is this - **if what you are going to say is not positive or constructive . . . DON'T SAY IT!** Examples of positive and/or constructive comments are listed below.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| + | "C'mon guys we need to hustle!" | + | "That's 'ok' keeper, shake it off!" |
| + | "See the pass guys!" | + | "Ladies, watch that off-side line!" |
| + | "Let's win those 50/50 balls!" | + | "Let's play good defense" |

Negative comments listed here line up with their corresponding positive comment above.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| - | "You're not hustling guys!" | - | "Wow . . . keeper you have to make that save!" |
| - | "Quit dribbling and pass the ball!" | - | "Quit with the off-sides!" |
| - | "We are not winning the 50/50 balls!" | - | "C'mon you have to play defense!" |

When it comes to verbal comments, there is always a way to state things positively. During match play, any criticism directed toward athletes needs to fall within the domain of the coach. The fan base needs to be an impetus of OPTIMISTIC cheering. Remember that athletes want to succeed more than you could possibly want them to succeed. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes they fail (just like all of us). Remaining positive, regardless of success/failure, boosts confidence and ultimately enhances success.

Respectful

Parent (Spectator) to Parent (Spectator):

Please follow this rule –**Respond or speak as if every player’s mother were sitting next to you.**

The fact is . . . they may be, and often are, sitting within ear range of your comment or eye range of your body language. I am amazed at how many spectators make negative comments directed at an actual player (by name) and in turn, offend a family member or close friend of the player being criticized. Put yourselves in the shoes of the dad who hears a spectator negatively comment about his

son or daughter missing a shot, or dribbling too much, or lacking skills. This is why **O**ptimism is important! If all your comments and body language are constructive and positive, you should not have to worry about others being offended by what you say or show. It is worth remembering, however, that even a neutral comment directed towards a player may result in being a hurtful comment to another. For instance, Goalkeeper X misses making a save and a parent states to Goalkeeper Y’s (who is on the bench) mother that Goalkeeper Y would have made that save. While being complimentary to Goalkeeper Y and his mother, the comment is hurtful to Goalkeeper X’s mom or friends within hearing range. Respect for every other spectator, regardless of their conduct, is very important.

Parent (Spectator) to Coach:

Coaches tend to have thick skin when it comes to criticism. “Arm-chair” quarterbacks are a “dime a dozen.” Engrained in the cultural norm is the idea that criticizing and second guessing the coach is acceptable conduct. Hey . . . that’s what ESPN is all about! Coaches are not perfect and do not make perfect substitution rotations. Nor do they implement perfect strategies for each game. Don’t forget, however, that the coach is vested with the responsibility of making those decisions and must live with the consequences, while spectator criticism is free, with no consequences to the one doing the criticizing. In other words, if you are not in the coach’s shoes don’t criticize and second guess his decisions. Is that to suggest that coaches should be exempt from all criticism? . . . certainly not. There is a proper time and place to have discourse with a coach . . . that time and place is not in the bleachers surrounded by fans (and maybe his wife).

Parent (Spectator) to Players:

Since the need for positive spectator conduct toward one’s own team members has already been addressed, consider spectator behavior towards opposing players. Remember, the kids in the opposing uniforms are just that . . . “kids.” They are not the enemy. In some instances they may be ill-mannered and mean-spirited, but they are still kids who need to see adults modeling proper behavior. Should spectators cheer when an opposing player receives a technical foul or yellow card? Absolutely not! If the technical foul or card came from unsportsmanlike conduct, that is a time when spectators should sit in sober silence and pray that lessons will be learned from consequences. How easy it is to revel in an opposing team’s failures or earned penalties. Not wanting to be misunderstood, the following clarification is offered. When an ill-mannered and unlawful player or team receives proper justice in the form of penalty, it is acceptable to find satisfaction that misbehavior was met with consequence, but to cheer or become verbal in that instance, is not a proper manifestation of respect. Conversely, excellent play from opponents should be complimented. There is nothing traitorous about complimenting individuals or team play from the opponent. Quality play should be appreciated regardless of the color of uniform. Rather than viewing this as “cheering for the other team,” view it as complimenting the God-given gifts and abilities that are being demonstrated by a player whose body is “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Parent (Spectator) to Officials:

At an early age parents engrain in our children the necessity of respecting authority. Parents instruct them how to respond to adults and to people who are in charge of them. Imagine if a student in a classroom did not agree with how the teacher was teaching and stated out loud “you are not teaching this like it should be taught . . . it should be this way or that way!” Most people would conclude that the student is way “out of bounds” and deserves punishment for disrespect. Suppose in a work environment an employee tells the boss how things should be? Did you hear “there’s the door!”? Why are these examples so easy to agree upon, yet when we consider an example of a coach verbally dissenting with an official or a player expressing disagreement over a call, we excuse these as “just part of the game.” Here, perhaps, is where an unbiblical cultural norm has become most entrenched. Disrespect to authority is disrespect to authority – no matter how you slice it! Forget what professional or college athletes and coaches model as normal behavior. Parents never teach their children that because “everybody’s doing it . . . it’s ok.” We need to be biblically discerning on this matter. God clearly instructs those under an authority to honor and respect that authority. That mandate is not conditional, based upon their quality of performance or godliness. Referees, umpires, and officials are THE AUTHORITY over the game venue. Biblically, we are to honor and respect them as the authority under which we are to submit. There is “no room” for working the officials in a Christian context of spectator conduct. Officials are not exempt from criticism and evaluation, but there are processes in place to accommodate those needs. Criticism and evaluation should not be coming from spectators at a game.

Teachable

Having sports “IQ” contributes to good spectator behavior. Offsides in soccer and offensive charge vs. blocking foul in basketball are some of the most misunderstood rules in athletics. How often do parents question an official’s call of one of these, and in doing so, display ignorance of the rules of the game? Spectators without a knowledge of the sport they are watching should be especially careful to be “slow to speak and quick to listen.” Sports rule books are easily accessible. If you don’t want to take time to read a rulebook, ask people who understand about rules of that particular sport. They can help explain some of the complexities of the sport and its rules. Remember though, that some tournaments and leagues have adopted their own rules variations, and probably for good reasons. As a general rule, the referee has a distinct advantage of being on the field or court and being close to the action, not unlike an umpire calling “balls” and “strikes” behind the plate. The visual perspective from the bleachers is deficient compared to the one on the field or court. A teachable fan is more likely to respond properly to officiating. Educated spectators enhance appropriate fan behavior.

Some reader may conclude “these 5 points are just NOT natural responses.” You are exactly correct! Followers of Jesus Christ should not be responding naturally as the culture does. Followers of Christ respond biblically, with savor, and a brightness that stands in stark contrast to “business as usual!”

Harford Christian School Athletic Participation Form

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

Sports participation is viewed as a means to an end and not an end itself. A vast amount of Biblical truth and application can be communicated to athletes through participation in sports. Strength and discipline in adversity, the value of work ethic, and being a light in a dark world are among some of the many spiritual opportunities.

The well being of each athlete must be prioritized over winning. For many athletes, having fun is more important than winning. We firmly believe that when "athletes first, winning second" is being practiced, the winning will take care of itself.

In order to assure the successful functioning of Harford Christian School Athletics it is necessary to formulate policies and regulations to govern sports participation. Parents should be aware that Harford Christian School sports participation is a privilege.

Please read carefully the conditions of participation. Please complete and sign Section V and return this form to the appropriate coach or the Athletic Director **prior** to your student's taking part in any sport-related activity. We look forward to your child's active participation in our athletic program and an excellent season!

Section I – Guidelines for Participants

For students to be eligible to participate in the Harford Christian School Sports Program they must have on file proof of meeting the following requirements. Requirements are to be met prior to the first practice for any sport.

- A. An up-to-date physical examination by a physician. (Good for one year.)
- B. Parental permission as provided below.

Section II – Academic Requirements

For a student to be eligible to participate in athletic activities, a cumulative average of not less than 74% or 1.1 GPA must be maintained. A student failing any major required course is not eligible for athletic participation until the teacher reports a grade average above failing. Averages will be checked at the time of distribution of progress reports and report cards. After being declared ineligible, the student will not be allowed to participate in any athletic event (pending eligibility) until the date of the next report. Grades will not be averaged between these established intervals. In the event of failing a required course, when the teacher reports a passing grade average, the athlete is eligible (assuming cumulative average is not below 74%). Students who fall behind on required work for any teacher may be temporarily or permanently removed from athletic eligibility. A student who finishes a school year with less than 74% grade average on the 4th quarter report card or final year grades (whichever is higher will count), or has failed a major required course is not eligible for fall sports participation until the 1st progress report for the next year's 1st quarter renders her/him eligible.

Section III – Behavioral Eligibility

- A. Any student who demonstrates behavior problems in school is subject for review by administration and the athletic director to determine eligibility for sports participation.
- B. Any unsportsmanlike or team misconduct in practices or games is cause for lost playing time, game suspension, or removal from the team. The administration, athletic director and coach will determine the severity of the penalty.
- C. Practice and game attendance requirements are at the discretion of the head coach.
- D. Unexcused late arrivals to school may result in loss of sports participation privilege for any athletic activities for that day.
- E. Unexcused absence on the day after a game may result in a one game suspension.

Section IV – Coach/Parents/Participants

- A. Coaches have the authority over who becomes a member of the team, which students play, and who is removed from the team. Coaching strategy is determined by the coaching staff. Accepting a position on a team includes acceptance of these procedures by both the student and the parent/guardian.
- B. Coach, athlete, parent meetings are encouraged to resolve any other issues creating concern or dissatisfaction. Such meetings must be arranged at a mutually acceptable time and place.
- C. Parents and athletes should note that some athletic events may end after 11:00 p.m.

Section V – Agreement

I (we) as parents, understand that Harford Christian School does not have a health/accident insurance program for participants in its athletic program. There is a possibility that a student may suffer injury, including permanent paralysis or death, as a result of participation in athletic activities.

I (we) further understand that Harford Christian School disclaims any financial responsibility for the costs of medical treatment, hospitals, ambulances or paramedics, etc. arising out of or by virtue of an injury to my (our) child while participating in interscholastic competition or preparation therefore.

I (we) acknowledge that before my child can participate in such school-sponsored sports, this consent must be executed by me (us) and filed at the school athletic office along with the results of a physical examination indicating that my child is medically cleared to participate in such school-sponsored activities.

PLEASE PRINT

Student: _____ Insurance Co.: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Grade: _____ Sports Interested in Playing:

I (we) have read and understand the above policies and expectations. I (we) understand that no further warning is required. I (we) understand that administration, athletic director and coach have the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary action for violation of the policies and regulations. By signing below, I (we) give permission for my child to participate in athletics at Harford Christian School and agree to abide by the included policies and expectations and will work with HCS to maintain a high standard of quality for all of the sports programs.

(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

(Student Signature) (Date)

(Home Phone Number) (Mother’s Cell Number) (Father’s Cell Number)

Harford Christian School
A Ministry of
Reformation Bible Church
1736 Whiteford Road
Darlington MD
21034
www.harfordchristian.org



