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This handbook is written to provide a standard of excellence in the area of athletics. In every area of athletics, we desire to portray what it is like to compete with King Jesus as our standard! This involves the various aspects discussed in this manual.

First, we lay the *Biblical foundation and philosophy* for why we compete in athletics at all. This involves the definition and purpose of athletics, competition from a Christian perspective, winning, team play and evangelistic outreach as well as the ultimate purpose for bodily exercise and physical fitness in general and the athletic experience in particular.

Second, we deal with *the role of coaching* in athletics. The definition of a Christian coach, his qualifications and duties, as well as a diary of practices and games, all serve to help highlight this exciting role that a teacher, individual or parent can be involved in conducting. A synopsis of how to apply seven Biblical principles to coaching games and practices is also added to highlight how consistently we can live by the same principles in every area of life.

Third, we lift up *a standard of excellence for the Christian athlete*. This involves the standard of God's law (the Ten Commandments) as well as the general discipline of the team, and the external manifestation of excellence in practices and games. We close out this section with a description of the standards of eligibility for athletic competition as well as participation of games.

Finally, we deal with the necessary practice of *record keeping, statistics*, and our *philosophy of awards*. Areas discussed involve choosing captains, taking statistics in a game and the different kinds of awards given for team athletic competition.

It is our goal to foster an athletic program that *elevates the Lordship of Jesus Christ* and yet remains in its place within the entire scope of Biblical discipleship we call Christian education. Often the idolatry of sports seen in America today creeps into the Christian school and its players as well. We do not wish to be taken away from our ultimate purpose as a school. Athletics must remain as one small area that aids us in fulfilling our goal of preparing students to discipline nations and not become such a major emphasis that it swallows up the academic purpose and other aspects of school life.

## CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

The Bodily Exercise program at **Dayspring Christian Academy**, a requirement for all students, is based upon the belief that our physical condition should be a help in fulfilling the call of God upon our life. Moses and Caleb are good examples of this truth. Each maintained their respective “temples” to such a degree that it qualified them for greater responsibility later in life. Moses was as physically fit particularly in his eyesight, at 120 years of age, as he had been during his young life! (Deuteronomy 34:7) Caleb watched an entire generation die who had rejected God’s call (as a result of the 10 spies), yet he had kept his body in such a physical condition that he was as strong at eighty as he had been at forty, ready to take on a mountain of giants. (Joshua 14:10-12) This physical condition gave both of them a greater ability to fulfill God’s highest call upon their lives.

While we realize that in certain situations God can give supernatural physical strength (such as Elijah outrunning a chariot in 1<sup>st</sup> kings 18:46), this in no way negates the responsibility of bringing our bodies into subjection or discipline. God’s grace in certain situations does not become the rule at the expense of regular consistent discipline. Therefore, a well disciplined program that helps one to take dominion over his physical body is needed and a vital part of a solid Biblical education. Without it, we neglect an important part of discipleship: the body or “temple” the Lord has given to us.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4, verse 8, we read:

*“...For bodily exercise profiteth little: but Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and have that which is to come”*

This Scripture does not diminish the role of bodily exercise, but instead compares its lasting value to godly exercise or godliness. The content of this passage is an exhortation by Paul to Timothy regarding what is needed by leaders in the local church. He is warning Timothy not to get sidetracked from the central focus in life: *godliness after the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The original Greek implies that the word “little” does not refer to little value, but rather limited value or temporal in nature. In other words, bodily exercise will only be profitable in this life, but godliness will profit you in both this life *and* the one to come.

It is certainly implied here that there are two forms of exercise that both profit a believer’s Christian life here on earth, but one takes precedence or priority over the other. We could also state that without the context, vision and goal of godliness or godly exercise (also including the academic discipline or the mind in godly truths), bodily exercise becomes of little profit since its focus is only on this life. Without Christ at the center of any athletic game or program, it is only a matter of time before it will degenerate into a temporal, worldly and selfish pattern. **When the body and its skills are emphasized at the expense of godliness we enter the realm of idolatry.** That is why it is so important the have a clear Christian philosophy of athletics. When our bodies are incorruptible in the next life, we will not need the discipline of bodily exercise at all.

In effect: Godly exercise is the discipline of submitting our soul (mind, will, and emotions) to our spirits (where the Holy Spirit dwells). It is a discipline of forming Godly character within our lives by allowing Christ to manifest his life in and through us. This takes precedence over bodily exercise, and should always direct its focus as well as limiting its scope and influence in our lives. Godly exercise without bodily exercise allows us little outlets. Bodily exercise is actually submitting of our body (coordination of muscles, etc.,) to our soul. This is important. Without this, all the godliness we exhibit in our soul has little expression here on earth. Little impact is made as well, especially through our appearance and ability to endure physically in service to God and man.

Both Godly and bodily exercise, in their proper balance is needed in order for one to be an obedient disciple of Christ with, spirit, soul, and body in good working order. It is precisely this understanding: that bodily exercise is a servant to the godliness formed by Christ in the life of the individual that sets our philosophy apart from the world. The world makes an idol of the physical man, idolizes physical skill and success while the Christian makes a servant of the physical man: seeking to glorify God and his purpose.

### *Why Play Athletics?*

In laying the above foundation regarding our bodily exercise program, we now focus on athletics in particular. Why should a Christian school or a believer become involved in athletic competition? **Many Christians, with great caution, warn that once involved in the realm of athletic games and competition; students, teachers, coaches, and parents will focus more on temporal goals and selfish rewards at the expense of Christian principles and godly character.** A “win at all costs” attitude that is more interested in vainglory and pride might result. This will end up involving the downing of other teams and players, mockery at the authority of officials or simply glorifying rivalries that the Scriptures seems to warn us against causing division in the church rather than the proper edification in the Lord. This will result, some say, when we move from the realm of simple exercise for the service to competitive games that involve the pressure to win.

We must examine the Scripture as to whether God intends to use this area of pressure and competition or whether he categorically forbids it

*“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”*

*Philippines 3:14*

The word press above means, “to scrape” and involve a great deal of pressure. The Christian life is filled with pressure, and though this verse in its context deals with godly exercise and its pressure, this in principle is also true for the discipline of the body. It is a pressure to fulfill the high calling of God. In other words, it is a pressure to win; it is competition against everything that presses against you. One cannot escape competition and pressure in life, for it is a part of God’s plan. In perusing Scriptures, we notice that athletic analogies, specifically competitive athletic analogies, are often used to illustrate the Christian life. Notice some of the following:

### **Athletic Handbook**

*Running:*

*“... Let us run with patience the race that is set before us...” –Hebrews 12:1*

*Wrestling:*

*“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...”-Ephesians 6:12*

*Boxing:*

*Fight the good fight of faith...”-1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:12*

The realm of athletics does indeed differ from general bodily exercise for it adds the distinct element of competitive pressure. Though one is the foundation for the other and one can certainly be in excellent physical condition without ever playing a particular competitive game, there is a certain stamina, courage and character that is only mastered under the intense pressure of athletic competition. The question may still arise, do we need athletic competition as few can get in shape physically with all-around exercises and conditioning that directly relates to our calling? We need a distinctly Biblical philosophy of athletic Competition in order to answer that question.

### *The Purpose of Athletics*

The word athlete comes from “strife”, or “contest”, and means a “*contender for victory*”. This is its first ingredient as we have noted already. It is a pressurized environment where we must contend for victory. Throughout the Scriptures we are exhorted to “win.” We are never exhorted to give up, quit, or to be content to be alive and “survive” in the contest. We are called to win, and though all of us will ultimately win the victory due to Christ, we are also called to win each of the skirmishes in our experiences along the way. The attitudes we bring into the battles we face will determine the kind of life we live here on earth. In order to win, however, it will take Christian character (or temperance and great self-control). The athletic world is a great school that can magnify these battles, teaching us what is necessary in order to handle temporary defeat on our way to ultimate victory. Note the following passage in these regards:

*“Know ye not that they which run in a race earn all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be castaway.”-1st Corinthians 9:24-27*

Other related words help to clarify more ingredients about the distinction of athletics from mere physical fitness. The word sport comes from a word meaning “that which diverts and makes merry; play; game; diversion; Sports generally refers to a game itself. Recreation, a word meaning “refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil,” refers to the physical and mental benefit of exercise. Without this outlet, we often get too intense spiritually and endeavor to live

our lives with no diversion from the main element of our calling. Since we are not God, this often causes “burn-out” in individuals, no matter how dedicated they are in serving the Lord. Athletics gives one recreation and refreshment both mentally and physically within the context of a game with rules and the competitive pressure to win.

That which sets the believer apart from the unbeliever is the fact that our ultimate victory is over sin, self and the devil, which is an eternal prize that far exceeds any material trophy. However, in the contest of life, we can “rest” because of the fact that our forerunner, Christ, has already won. This is why we can balance our lives with diversion in athletics and bodily exercise, and do not have to be always “working” our way toward victory. “Christians fight in victory, not for victory! In athletics we learn to discern the real score within, and we realize that it is possible to lose a game when we win one, or lose one when we win one, depending upon how we handle our own attitudes. **Athletics helps us handle defeat as well as pointing us to the discipline of humility in a victory.** The way this happens is by focusing on the eternal rather than the temporal, and learning to do this in a disciplined way under pressure.

I suppose one of the best summaries of Biblical athletics would be 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:5. Paul is writing to Timothy: giving him several analogies of the Christian life. His first analogy is of a soldier in verses 1-4 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, and then in this particular verse he used the analogy of an athlete. The New American Standard Bible is clearer to the original language when it translates this verse as the following:

*“... If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.”*

Clearly an athlete, like a Christian, is involved in intense competition, and is contending for victory over his flesh and sin nature, the world, and the devil. That which makes the conflict all the more demanding is the absolute obedience required to “play by the rules” a (or Biblical principles) rather than blow up or lose self-control under pressure. This is true in life as well as the athletic contest. Therefore; Christian athletics will teach young people how to be intense contenders, never giving up; and yet doing this under self-control and obedience. These lessons will have far reaching consequences when that same young person is faced with the tests and pressures of life in a world that is set on drawing and tempting one away from the Lord.

### *Competition*

The Christian, though competing against other individuals in a athletic contest, is primarily focusing on the competition within, striving to overcome the old nature and its ways. It is a magnification of Romans 7 or the struggle one has with sin, learning to allow Christ and the Holy Spirit to control one’s nature in the hottest of circumstances. An Athletic contest (and any intense trial or fight for victory) has a way of bringing out the “beast” in us if it is not under control.

In a more positive sense it also has the potential of training us to lay aside the weights which easily beset us so that the race can be run more effectively and so we can stay in the race and endure unto victory, (see Hebrews 12:1-2). This contention for victory, no matter what the

circumstances (or score of a game), is what Paul called "pressing toward the mark" for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ, (Philippines 3:14 again).

Let us remember then, that the world's view of competition and God's are different. The Lord's focus is on internal competition, realizing that the external one will help give him the pressure and conflict necessary to build the kind of Christian character that is intended in all kinds of circumstances. The world's focus of competition is on beating the other team, and is quickly reduced to "winning at all costs" rather than seeing the ultimate goal. The world's focus is always on the temporal while God's is on the eternal. **A distinctively Christian attitude will make all the pressures of the game a blessing rather than a curse.**

### *Winning*

The Biblical view of winning, stated in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:5 (above), is related to faithfulness and obedience, and only secondarily to the outcome of an individual event or game. Not everyone wins every battle in life, but in Christ we will win the ultimate war. Our faithfulness to the Lord (and His word) will be what keeps us winners even when we lose a particular game or battle. As we have seen already, the Bible says in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24-27 that all run in a race, but only one receives the prize, so run that you might obtain it. However, it goes on to say that the real prize is the incorruptible one, and so there is a deeper victory than the actual game itself. The unbeliever, once again, often focuses on the secondary purpose of winning the actual game. By ignoring the real victory, winning the game becomes an idol and a selfish way to bring recognition to yourself, your team, or your school. It causes great temptations to cheat, lose control, or put on a show rather than build discipline regardless of the circumstances or situation.

### *Physical Fitness*

One of the real contentions in an athletics contest is bringing "your body into subjection", as the passage in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9 states it. This is also referred to in Hebrews 12:1-2, and in verse 12. The greatest hindrance to any individual athlete or an athletic team is the individual and team's ability to self-destruct when under pressure. The individual or team that learns to keep their bodies in submission, as well as help each other's weaknesses with the strength and coordination of other players, will learn great lessons and also play consistently well.

Once again, however, the world has a different purpose. The goal of fitness is often for self and vain glory, especially in one's appearance. The Christian however is physically fit for service to God and man. For the world, the body is the idol and the goal, for the Christian it is a servant: to be used for the glory of God. Once again, the focus is completely different.

### *Team Play*

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12, that great passage concerning the body of Christ and how each one has their place, is a beautiful picture of an athletic team. Everyone realizes the contributions of the other and works for the overall edification and of the entire team. Some of the lessons from this passage in relation to athletics are the following:

- Learning to respect the fact that each athlete has talent (verse 4-7):
- Learning to play your position without dominating another (verse 11);

- Learning to sacrifice selfish goals for those of the team (verses 12-14)
- Learning not to envy another talent or position (verses 15-15);
- The team needs each player and what they can contribute (verses 17-21)
- The players who are not starters or regulars are also needed so that we learn to bestow honor on one another rather than pride (verses 22-24)
- The goal is that there would be no divisions on the team, and we would rejoice and suffer with one another's successes and failures (verses 25-47).

The glory of the Lord has been seen more than once through teams who laid down their lives one for another, who "thought "of passing more than shooting"; and preferred one another before themselves. Only the Christian can really experience what it is like to "think more highly of others' after the example of Christ, (see Philippians 2:1-5). This type of team play will bring glory to God, and be a testimony in a world of cutthroat lust for glory and where team play at best is simply another way to get individual recognition.

### *Evangelism*

Through proper attitudes in athletics, a public witness can be made for Christ that many otherwise would not see. As an athlete, players are "on display" before others who watch their every move, facial expression and reaction to situations of intense pressure. Players on both teams can be inspired in Christ as they hustle, have intensity and desire for victory.

In Hebrews 12:1-2, we read that there is a cloud of witnesses watching the race of this life. This undoubtedly refers to the saints who have gone on before (Hebrews 11). However, the analogy can be made in reference to athletic events. Many times it is parents, and older athletes, who lead younger ones to a higher standard through what they have learned in self-denial and restraint. Many referees, fans, and parents can be lead closer to the Lord through the inspiration of those on the playing field or court. Through it all, the winning of souls can be a greater reward than simply winning games.

### *Summary*

In summarizing a Christian philosophy of athletics, note some of the following distinctions between those and a humanistic or non-Christian view of athletics. It is important to see the distinctions, recognizing the attitudes that must be embraced in order to realize and experience the rewards.

<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Humanism</b>
1. Godly exercise takes priority over Bodily exercise and gives it true meaning.	1. Bodily exercise takes priority over Godly exercise for it emphasizes this Life, pleasure and temporal goals.
2. Athletics train an individual to Contend for victory; giving God the Glory in the midst of pressure.	2. Athletic competition emphasizes rivalries and self recognition.
3. Competition is primarily with one's own sinful nature, bringing it under control.	3. Competition focuses on beating one's opponent.
4. Winning is primarily contending for victory over ones carnal nature, And secondarily with the game.	4. Winning is the only thing, it doesn't really matter how you do it.
5. Physical fitness is for the purpose of bringing the body into submission as a servant to Christ.	5. Physical fitness is for appearance sake so I am noticed, serving myself to the fullest.
6. Team play emphasizes personal productivity and sacrifice for the Good of all	6. The success of the team helps each individual to succeed, which is the goal..
7. Evangelism is one of the main goals of athletic competition, so that one's Christian life can be magnified under pressure	7. Athletics has no higher goal than pleasure and self-gratification.

## THE CHRISTIAN COACH

Just as the role of the teacher is absolutely crucial to the success of Christian education and the inspiration of students, so the role of the coach is equally important for the same reasons. The “principle approach” to a Christian education is centered in the pre-supposition that the teacher is the living epistle, “read and known of all men” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:3). The same is true with the coach. The way he responds and actually plays the athletic game will go a long way in teaching a philosophy of athletics based upon the Bible or instead, tearing that philosophy down.

One of the closest verses in the New Testament to athletics is Colossians 3:15. Here the Greek word used for “rule” comes closest in meaning to “an umpire.” Literally, we might say that this verse teaches us that the peace of God will “play the umpire” in our heart. Now, an umpire usually lets us know when we are out of line but he does not direct the game or either team, he simply makes sure both sides play according to the rules. In other words, as long as there is peace (no whistle), keep playing! This is the role of the civil government in our society. The athletic contest is a miniature display of productivity, where both teams and players are held to the same set of rules, but where no umpire or governmental intervention favors either side.

A coach must understand this about an athletic event, and seek to guide and disciple his players to become individually productive, work as a team with others and strictly obey the rules and direction of his leadership. A coach finds himself in a unique position due to the fact that athletic competition is like the free marketplace. Individuals voluntarily desire to enter the discipline and pressure of athletics. He does not have to inspire as much as guide his players into the right expression for their enthusiastic drive and energy!

This is unique in respect to the regular everyday classroom situation faced by most teachers. The classroom requires much inspiration, with some guidance to help steer the enthusiasm generated. In athletics, the students voluntarily desire to play, and they take the initiative as well as pay the sacrifice, so this is excellent soil in which to plant seed. There is a kind of peace and excitement that comes with the opportunity for a student to choose freely to excel in an area not “required” by anyone. However, what we do with this opportunity is extremely important. They may come ready to play, but we must guide them properly in coaching so that the automatic energy they arrive with will be properly channeled through their acquired skill as well as through a disciplined atmosphere of peace. In fact, believe it or not, students will begin to love and desire greater standards of discipline through athletics that will last them their entire lives.

### *Definition of a Christian Coach*

The word coach comes from a root word that means “couch, or bed” and implies a kind of riding vehicle (like the coach of the 1700’s). It would seem that our use of coach, though certainly not in any direct sense related to the above, does indeed imply a kind of relaxed, or “informal” teaching and guiding that differs slightly from the didactic teaching approach. This does not negate authority, by any means, but it simply means that in addition to teaching, and

many times instead of “lectures,” the students are taught during teachable moments as the coach works alongside of the player as a guide and a demonstrator. In teaching, as noted earlier, this is only the secondary responsibility of the teacher, but in coaching this becomes the primary responsibility. We guide and demonstrate by emphasizing the learning element, and teach from time to time, or have “chalk talks” during practice. A good Christian coach will use the opportunity of athletics to disciple a student in patterns of thinking and acting that will have eternal weight and glory. We use the game situation to “practice” acting and controlling our natures in the midst of strife, turmoil and temptations to lose our tempers, disappointments and handling success without pride. It teaches us how to get along with others who may have more or less natural ability than we have, but who are as much a part of the team anyway. It helps us to support those on the front line (starters), as well as to root for those to experience scoring who have never played before. One has said that a Christian will show his true colors in an athletic event. This may not be far from the truth. What we confess and profess, under the crisis if the moment, may betray our true heart!

*Therefore, a Christian coach is a guide who is willing to disciple students in the demonstration of Christian character in athletics as well as teaching eternal values and principles.*

#### *Qualifications Needed for a Good Coach*

A Christian coach must obviously be born again and have a consistent walk with the Lord as well as a desire to disciple students in their walk through the avenue of athletics.

In addition, some other qualifications would include:

- More than superficial knowledge of the athletic event to be coached: preferably having played in the past or present with an organized team;
- A desire as well as an enjoyment of playing the game;
- The ability and willingness to take authority (in some ways like the military) and make decisions, all without regard to pressure from individuals (be they players, parents, or friends) or from the outcome of the game, if necessary, for the sake of principle;
- An intensity of character and drive, as well as an overcoming spirit that will inspire others never to give up and to work for victory internally and externally with great sacrifice;
- Integrity of appearance and self-control in the midst of practices and games where disagreements and trials of all kinds occur.

#### *Duties of the Coach*

- Oversee the spiritual and Biblical application of Christianity in every area of the athletic event at both practices and games;
- Plan both practices and games with a strategy that will weave a demand for physical fitness with a proper preparation for competition;
- Oversee transportation arrangements to and from practices and games;
- Oversee proper record keeping for the entire season;

- Guidance in the selection of a team captain;
- Enforce justice with all standards and policies of the school and athletic program, being careful not defend the blessings of athletics against academic grading standards or make compromises in order to have certain athletes make the team;
- Maintain a proper, professional relationship with all players, fostering respect in the students for all in authority;
- Maintain an atmosphere of discipline, organization, and control at all practices and games, giving a testimony for the Lord.

### *Practices and Games*

In our Christian lives, we all have practices and games. The practice is the daily life we lead in all of its details. The game is when we are tested in the marketplace, “on display” before others. One is more internal, the other more external. Practices and games follow the same pattern God uses in transforming us into His image. The reflection (pondering and musing), creativity (expression), and dominion or application (execution in ministry), that describe the Biblical methodology of teaching can also be applied to athletics. We must prepare the soil, plant the seed, and reap the fruit. To put it another way, there must be adequate planning, disciplined execution, as well as a good review or evaluation. Consider some of the following suggestions in application of the above.

#### *Diary of a Practice*

##### 1. Planning

- Begin with a very brief devotional (one verse) and prayer at the center of the court or field with all players, setting the spiritual tone for the practice;
- Clearly lay out two to four athletic goals you wish to accomplish during the practice and make sure they are understood and why they are necessary;
- Have a “chalk session” or mini-teaching on basic fundamentals and rules of the game or illustrations from its history;
- Supervise disciplined warm-ups or calisthenics, led by a student (or students). (This can be done on a rotation basis to sense which students are respected as leaders.)

##### 2. Execution

- A good set or drills that are designed for key coordination skills necessary and fundamental for playing the game;
- Fitness running of all kinds to help stretch students in getting them into shape for the season;
- Team play, where the rules, drills, and fitness can be used to really practice “putting it all together” in a game situation. Use this time to work on set strategies, play options, as well as combination of players, etc.
- The key areas to develop in athletes are thinking and playing instinctively, and learning to make creative choices in all plays and strategies;

-The maintenance of a team spirit, where all support each other, regardless of who starts the game or plays a certain position.

### 3. Judging and Evaluating

-Orally review the practice's goals toward the end of your time together, and discuss whether or not you reached these goals;

-Discuss individual and team improvement, encourage the players to praise others, etc.

-Prayer and announcements for future events

### *Diary of a Game*

#### 1. Planning

-Before going on the field or floor, a team "huddle" or meeting should be held, discussing a specific spiritual emphasis for the game (again one verse or so), personal and team goals, and prayer where all players lead out in prayer in preparation for the game;

-Be specific about who is starting and why, so encouragement can be given, and re-view fundamentals that must be remembered during the game;

- Disciplined and good-looking warm-ups on the field or playing floor goes a long way in giving a good appearance to others, as well as mentally preparing them to work together in obedience. These warm-ups should be done just prior to playing and before informal, individual, warm-ups. They can include calisthenics and drills.

#### 2. Execution

-As the game begins, analyze strategy and goals with actual achievement, so that you are on top of revisions and adjustments. Remember, you must oversee the game, having foresight, and not get emotionally involved in the moment.

-In subsisting, have a well thought out plan where you recognize the best combination and think ahead toward the end of the game;

-One must remain calm in the midst of a storm. Never complain openly or sarcastically shout a referee's call, or down a player for making a mistake, for this is teaching disrespect to authority. Keep in mind the admonition of going personally to the individual (whoever it might be) and straighten out the matter when everyone's emotions and attitudes are right;

-Never allow complaining or un-organized behavior from those on the sidelines that are on the team. They either are there to support the team and you, or they are not really fulfilling their role.

### 3. Judging or Evaluating

-If you are not able to quickly review the game after the game, then at the next practice an analysis of the game (using the statistic sheet) is in order. Be specific about weaknesses, and transform these into goals for practice:

-Once again, discuss individual achievement and team improvement so that each player can chart his or her progress, as well as be specific in prayer.

#### *Coaching by Principle*

Briefly below are leading areas in the application of biblical principles to coaching an athletic game.

##### 1. God's Principle of Character

-Expect and set standards for excellence in effort, attitude and desire to improve one's skill. Pressure in forming character is very clearly seen in athletics and involves the character of the whole person;

-Constantly emphasize that "hustle" and never giving up are very obvious traits of a team with character that is always stretching to do more than they even thought they could accomplish. This means physically (when the muscles hurt), and mentally. It may also mean scheduling games that are difficult and will teach the team a lesson because of the excellent opposition.

##### 2. God's Principle of Stewardship

-Stress the stewardship of an athletes' appearance in dress, health, and rest. Foolish negligence of stewardship often hinders the results of practices and games;

-Be clear about what you expect players to be a steward of (specific items or materials) by assigning individual players to be responsible for equipment in games and practices;

-One instruction can mean that everything is cleaned up and accounted for in leaving an area as a team due to proper categorization or responsibilities.

##### 3. God's Principle of Government

-Expect instant obedience by voice command and enforce it! Nothing will weaken a team more than un-disciplined behavior during practices and games. Athletics is intense, and requires intense concentration and obedience;

-Expect self-governed behavior and cultivate trust in leaving buildings clean; using 'free' time constructively;

-Be swift in removing players from the pressure of competition when dealing

with any cooperation or obedience problem without wasting the time of the rest of the players through needless lectures.

#### 4. God's Principle of Growth

- Through proper teaching, the seed for improvements will be sown in individual players as they review the rudiments of their game, especially where they are weak;
- As already has been mentioned, preparing the soil, planting the seed, and then reaping the fruit must take place properly for full success;
- Have individual students share specific areas (whether spiritual or athletic) where they have practiced certain fundamentals (seeds), and seen improvement (fruit).

#### 5. God's Principle of Sovereignty

- The spiritual walk a player has with God will definitely effect his playing, especially in the area of attitude and teamwork;
- Attitude is the key, so stress individual student planning, executing, and judging in this area. Have them tell you what they have done wrong during a practice or game;
- Keep in mind that any team represents the Lord and their school, and a proper sense of pride in the school you represent should be present at all times;
- Proper relationships must be guarded between players and the coach so that we can manifest together the nature of Christ and operation of the Holy Spirit.

#### 6. God's Principle of Individuality

- Discern the individual talents and gifts of those on the team, so they can be developed and each can find his proper place on the team;
- Never compare players with each other in a negative way, but only with their own improvement so proper respect for each individual can be maintained;
- Critique players and determine starters on an individual basis of productivity rather than a group basis of equal time.

#### 7. God's Principle of Covenant

- Emphasize the importance sacrificing personal desires for team desires; no team will last as a winner where each man is working for personal glory alone;
- A "team constitution" can be written and signed at the beginning of a season where short, specific goals are listed and a true commitment and covenant is formed;
- It is ever so clear that if individuals do not hold to their commitment everyone suffers. Team spirit, co-operation, etc., can be taught very effectively through the tool of athletics.

## THE CHRISTIAN ATHLETE

### *Embracing God's Law as One's Standard*

God's Law , particularly the Ten Commandments, is the standard by which we all should Endeavor to live the Christian life. This standard is increased in weight due to the coming of Christ and not diminished. Now that Christ lives in our hearts, and we have the ability through Him to fulfill the Law, we ought to desire that our attitudes be pure and we desire to keep God's requirements. Only in this way will we always have a guide for our attitude and actions.

The following is a brief articulation of the Ten Commandments as they relate to athletic competition. Ponder their application and make it your prayer as a Christian athlete to have these worked in your heart through the power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 for the Scriptural base of these commandments. Note also Matthew 22:37-40 for Jesus summary of these ten as loving God (first four) and man ( last six).

1. *"Thou shalt not have no gods before me."*

Thou shalt not play for trophies, awards of self-recognition and fame, but only for the glory of God and advancement of his Kingdom.

2. *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image..."*

Thou shalt not sulk over losing or gloat over winning, making excuses or alibis that remove your personal responsibility.

3. *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord they God in vain."*

Thou shalt not utter any perverse language or in any other way bring dishonor to the name of Christ by your style or conduct of play.

4. *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.'*

Remember the Sabbath day, and that all athletic actions must bow its knee to the priority of worship to God and a day of rest each week.

5. *"Honor thy father and mother..."*

Honor your parents and your home as a priority over athletics, also giving due respect and obedience to those in authority such as coaches and referees.

6. *“Thou shalt not kill.”*

Thou shalt not cultivate rivalries or an attitude of “killing” one’s opponent that stirs up unnecessary anger in competition.

7. *“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*

Thou shalt dress modestly, separating and honoring the opposite sex in play, comments and athletic competition through appearance and ethical behavior.

8. *“Thou shalt not steal.”*

Thou shalt not cheat or take unfair advantage, asking odds that thou are unwilling to give.

9. *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

Thou shalt not lie, but always admit one’s error and give one’s opponent the benefit of the doubt.

10. *“Thou shalt not covet..”*

Thou shalt not covet another player’s talent or position, but always work to improve your own productivity, never giving up.

*Obedience and Discipline*

In addition to the general philosophy that could describe both the coach and athlete in section one, and the standards we voluntarily unite to uphold in relation to God’s Law, there is a Christian discipline that will unify our witness as athletes and clarify what we stand for and against. The most important standard is obedience and a submissive and respectful attitude towards all coaches, opposing players, and the rules of the game as officiated by referees. It is expected that each player will raise this kind of a standard before themselves as an ideal tool for self-discipline and a good witness. The same basic discipline policies of the school are always in effect in the athletic program. Any disrespect in any other moral type of problem will be handled the same way it is dwelt with in a school setting.

*Eligibility for Participation in the Athletic Program*

1. Academic Qualifications

It must be remembered that the Christian school is primarily an extension of the formal training of the mind, delegated from the home; therefore, academic standards

are of higher importance than athletic competition. Our athletic program exists in order to help balance and extend academics, never in place of or in competition of the curriculum. In determining the academic standards necessary for one to compete in athletics, we have taken into consideration all three parts of a student's grade. Since attitude (effort), and conduct relate to character development, and are the standards of the word of God regardless of one's individual talents and abilities; these are the areas in which we place the greatest emphasis for eligibility. Academic achievement (letter grades ) in the various subjects is also very important, and if a child is not achieving above failure a priority should be placed here;

Therefore; the following qualifications have been set down:

- a) **In order to participate in athletics, a student must maintain all effort and conduct grades in the S, S (plus), or O categories. Also, a student must not have any academic grade below a D.**
- b) **The student's eligibility is reviewed weekly and also at trimester report cards and Progress reports). The grading period before the first game will determine eligibility, and at other times during the season where a marking period occurs.**
- c) **Students are expected to attend and participate in each class throughout the entire school day before attending and participating in an athletic practice or game.**
- d) **Legitimate reasons for missing classes during the day will be evaluated by administration.**

## 2. Participation qualifications

Academic eligibility gives the student the potential of playing, but does not insure that student's participation during games. Size of teams is determined ahead of time, and a coach must discern which players to play the most for the sake of the testimony of the team and integrity of play. Therefore, there may be a need for player "cuts (from making the team); also decisions regarding who plays the most games. Productivity is the key to regular play in order to express a Christian philosophy of life rather than one that is based on socialism (who's philosophy would play all athletes the same amount of time regardless of productivity).

- a) **Effort and Desire- A consistent and willing desire to fulfill your potential as an athlete must be demonstrated. Good character shown on and off the court, as well as "hustle" and 100% intensity is the standard here.**

- b) Talent and Skill- How well an athlete has mastered the game is very important. You will either help or hinder the team. Those that play “on the front line” in the Kingdom of God work hard to improve their area of gifting, and it is the same in athletics.
- c) Conduct and Behavior – How serious are you about your witness as an athlete? Respect for teammates, referees, and those in authority will reveal your obedience to basic rules: which is fundamental for a good athlete.

### 3. Dress Standards: Coaches, players, managers & scorekeepers

#### Boys:

Shorts, T-shirts, sweat pants, sneakers;  
no cut-off shirts, or T-shirts with objectionable logos, or jewelry (safety purposes);  
regular school uniform dress before practices.

#### Girls;

Shorts, ( modest), full shirts ( short-sleeve, but no sleeve-less), sweat pants, sneakers; no short-shorts, or tank tops, cut-offs, or shirts with objectionable logos, or jewelry (safety purposes); regular school uniform dress before practices.

### Game Standards

#### Boys:

Regular school athletic uniform (worn to home games)  
High school boys wear dress pants, dress shirt and tie when traveling to other schools for evening games.

#### Girls;

Regular school athletic uniform. (worn to home games)  
High school girls will wear dress slacks and a modest blouse to all away games. Jeans and short skirts are not allowed.

Note: Athletic uniforms adopted by the school will endeavor to be chosen based upon the following criteria:

1. Modesty
2. Styles appropriate for men and women
3. Color and Logo co-ordination for blue and white and DCA Warriors

## TEAM RECORDS, STATISTICS,

### *Equipment Inventory*

Before and after a particular season, care should be taken to note all inventory of equipment and uniforms to insure stewardship, and to make necessary repairs and replacements.

### *Team Roster*

After each grading period, an up-dated player roster needs to be printed so that proper communication to teachers and other teams can be given.

### *Captain(s)*

On the above list, the captain should be designated. Process of selecting a captain is listed below:

The coach discerns which student can give leadership in effort, attitude, talent, skill, conduct and behavior. This individual should provide:

Leadership in the above areas on and off the court,  
and assistance during practices and games to the coach.

Students may submit written suggestions for a captain confidentially, and then the coach and/or the Principal reach a final decision.

### *Schedule and Parent Commitment*

A schedule of all practices and games will be printed before the season begins. Any changes will be communicated in writing, if possible; otherwise, by phone. A sheet explaining the need for parent support will be attached; parents need to be cooperative in helping or a season could be jeopardized. Also, this commitment by the parent involves a one-time permission slip for the player that covers medical and accident insurance.

### *Individual and Total Statistic Sheets*

A stat sheet should be kept on each game, giving various details such as date, time, team, place of play, students who participated, along with other statistics that describe the game itself. This is for the purpose of being able to keep a record of individual student achievement. At the end of a season, a total stat sheet can be compiled for the season. This goes on file in the Principal's office along with all other stat sheets. Sample stat sheets for each individual athletic event are available.

### *Team Constitution*

We may have a ‘team constitution’, written or oral, that students pledge or sign, in order to emphasize the covenant commitment of the season. It can state several goals that emphasize unity and other such details. It may also simply be an agreement with a particular section of this handbook, such as the “Ten Commandments” of athletic competition mentioned earlier.