

**OCONEE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**



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ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Mission of Oconee Christian Academy Athletics:

It is the mission and purpose of the OCA Athletic Department to partner with parents in providing a positive athletic experience for students in a manner that is consistent with biblical truth, using athletic involvement as a tool to teach lessons for life. Additionally, it is our mission:

- To build Christian character and glorify God through competition with other schools and teams.
- To use athletics as a part of developing the total student.
- To develop school spirit and unity.
- To cultivate relationships among participating students and families.
- To be a witness for Christ through our effort and attitude.

OCA encourages students to participate in sports as a way to glorify God. Athletic participation at OCA is a family affair. There should be a mutual understanding between parents, students, coaches, and administrators of the commitment and effort required. Athletic participation at OCA is not a right but a privilege that should be valued and protected.

Athletic Verses:

Humility: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” Philippians 2:3 ESV

Passion: “Do you not know that in a race all runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.” I Corinthians 9:24 ESV

Unity: “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.” Mark 3:24 ESV

Thankfulness: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” I Thessalonians 5:18 ESV

Accountability: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” Galatians 6:1 ESV

OCA is committed to helping our students learn and grow as followers of Jesus Christ. Learning to serve and sacrifice in humility and to develop good work habits will help them grow and develop in character, wisdom, and discernment.

OCA encourages students to participate in whatever sports are in season rather than specializing in one sport for the entire year. Students should discuss athletic participation with parents and coaches before embarking upon the rigorous schedule required for sporting events.

OCA expects parents of student-athletes to serve in all activities sponsored by the Athletic Department including volunteering in the concession stand, at the ticket gate, or wherever volunteers are needed.

League Affiliation – OCA competes through the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools (SCACS). We will compete in our region with other 1A schools and compete for region and state championships.

Athletic Director – The Athletic Director is selected by the Head of School and is approved by the Board of Trustees at OCA. He or she will report directly to the Head of School, giving full reports of the actions and activities of the athletic program. The Athletic Director is responsible for selecting head coaching positions with final approval from the Head of School. The head coach, with final approval from the Athletic Director, will choose an assistant coach. The Athletic Director authorizes the purchase of equipment, uniforms, team apparel, and supervises each sport’s schedule.

Coaches – Coaches are free to set their own rules and conduct their practices and/or workouts in such a fashion that embraces the values of the school, school policies, the Athletic Handbook, and policies of SCACS, and are approved by the Athletic Director. Coaches have the freedom to hold tryouts if necessary. Coaches may remove a player from a team for disciplinary reasons, if necessary, with approval and guidance from the Athletic Director.

I. ELIGIBILITY FOR PRACTICE OR PARTICIPATION:

- **Be enrolled as a student and current on ALL financial obligations to OCA.**

- **Annual Physicals**

To be eligible for practice or participation in athletic contests, a student must have a medical examination by a physician once every 365 days. An OCA Examination Form is available if needed. The Physicians' Sports Physical Forms if properly completed are acceptable. The Sports Physical must be completed and placed on file in the athletic office PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF PRACTICE.

- **Parental Consent**

An Athletic Participation Permission Form must be completed, signed, returned, and on file in the athletic office PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF PRACTICE.

***A boy may not participate on a girls' team for any reason.**

***A girl may not participate on a boys' team for any reason.**

Dress and Hair Requirements

- Girl players may wear uniforms with a minimum 7-inch inseam or long uniform pants (loose fitting). If spandex shorts are worn, they should be worn under the uniform shorts.
- Boys' hair should be cut above the ears, eyebrows, and collar. Boys' and girls' hair must be a natural color.
- No body piercing jewelry may be worn by athletes while participating in any SCACS athletic event (including before, during, or after a game).
- SCACS athletes are not permitted to have visible tattoos while participating in a SCACS athletic event (before, during, or after a game).
- All players and cheerleaders are under the same dress expectations. Other members of the school's entourage, including coaches, statisticians, trainers, etc., shall follow appropriate standards for dress and appearance. SCACS reserves the right to determine appropriate dress and/or appearance standards.

Christian Winners Creed

Before each game the teams, along with the spectators, will quote the Christian Winners Creed or Colossians 3:23 and Philippians 4:19. The Creed says:

“I believe that a true winner always does his best, never to the glory of self but always to the glory of God. With the Lord's help, I will strive to be a true winner today.”

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

The primary purpose of school is EDUCATION. Participation in Athletics is a privilege for those students who are academically eligible.

- A. In order to participate in SCACS athletic activities, a student must be enrolled in and attending the member school in order to participate in that school's athletic program. The student must also meet all other necessary requirements for participation.
- B. Athletes are responsible for all their academic work. Athletic teams will sometimes have to leave school early. It is the athlete's responsibility to turn in and get any assignments for that day. Athletic events can never be used as an excuse for unfinished academic work.
- C. Students must maintain an overall average of 70. Any student who is failing a class (59 and lower) may not participate in any sport. Eligibility is to be declared on the 4th school day after the end of the marking

period. A student shall become eligible or ineligible at 12:01am on the 4th school day after the end of the marking period.

AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

- A. A student is ineligible to participate in athletics if his/her 19th birthday is before July 1, of the present school year.
- B. **Junior Varsity:** In order to participate in junior varsity athletics, a student must not have reached his/her 17th birthday before July 1, of the present school year.
- C. **Junior High:** In order to participate in Junior High athletics, a student must not have reached his/her 16th birthday before July 1, of the present school year.

GRADE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

- A. **Varsity Teams:** Eligible students in grades **7-12** may participate on varsity teams. *No student below 7th grade should play in varsity competition except in golf and cross country.
To address player safety, coaches and parents must carefully evaluate the skill level, maturity level, experience, and physical competitiveness of students below the 10th grade before permitting participation on any varsity teams.
- B. **Junior Varsity Teams:** Eligible students in grades **6-10** may participate on junior varsity teams.
To address player safety, coaches and parents must carefully evaluate the skill level, maturity level, experience, and physical competitiveness of students below the 9th grade before permitting participation on any junior varsity teams.
- C. **Junior High Teams:** Eligible students in grades **6-9** may participate in Junior High team sports. (5th graders will be allowed to participate if more players are needed to field a team.)

AFTERSCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for participation in athletic events, including practices, athletes must be counted as present at school on the day an athletic contest is scheduled. Students must be present a half-day of school to participate in the contest. (3 ½ hours is a half-day for a full day).

PRACTICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY:

OCA Athletics is comprised of TEAM sports that require every player to know his or her responsibilities and perform as part of a TEAM. If one player is not able to practice his or her responsibilities the entire TEAM pays the price. TEAMS develop during practice, not during games. Therefore, on-time attendance at all practices is necessary so each player develops and learns their TEAM responsibilities.

A player must understand that by joining any TEAM program, he or she has made a commitment to develop and help other players develop as part of the TEAM. Making this commitment to the TEAM is understood to take precedence over all other commitments.

PRACTICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Players are required to attend ALL practices, tournaments, and program events. If an event must be missed, prior approval must be obtained from the coach.
2. Players are required to be ON TIME for ALL practices, tournaments, and program events. ON TIME means you are dressed out and ready to begin warming up before the practice begins.
3. If you are LATE or MISS practice, there will be consequences such as running or playing time reduction. If a practice is missed a day before a contest, the player may not be able to START the contest.
4. If tardiness or unexcused absences persist this provides cause for further reduction in playing time or dismissal from the team.

5. Coaches will address excused absences and playing time accordingly. An excused absence could be a serious illness or death in the family or mandatory school events. Players are responsible for communicating with the coach.

II. PLAYING TIME POLICY:

- A. The amount of time an athlete plays is determined by many factors. The head coach determines the playing time of each athlete. All team members have different roles within the team structure and are evaluated accordingly by the coaches.
- B. Middle School and JV teams are competing to win while looking for opportunities to allow for individual success when the situation allows for it during the game.
- C. Varsity teams will have an emphasis on winning and being successful. The coach will choose a starting team for each game and substitute players at the appropriate times.
- D. If a player has difficulty understanding why he or she is not playing, the player should discuss the concern with the coach before or after practice in a respectful manner.

III. QUITTING POLICY:

- A. Once a student is on a team, he or she will not be allowed to quit after the first day of practice without a parental conference with the head coach, unless that athlete suffers from a serious injury or is seriously jeopardizing academic progress.
- B. The Athletic Department reserves the right to refuse participation in another sport if the reason for quitting is deemed inappropriate.

IV. RECRUITING POLICY:

The recruiting or proselytizing of student athletes shall be considered a violation of the spirit and philosophy of the rules and regulations governing SCACS Athletics and considered unsportsmanlike conduct. A student should not be subjected to undue influence or any special inducement by any person or group in an attempt to entice the student to transfer primarily for athletic purposes. Recruitment in this manner shall cause the student to be ineligible upon transfer and shall jeopardize the standing of the school in the Association.

Some examples of undue influence are:

1. *The student is asked by a member of the school faculty, a coach or member of a "booster club" to transfer from one school to another. School personnel cannot make the initial contact.*
2. *Special Privileges given to parents such as employment or financial aid.*
3. *Financial aid for transportation, room, board, or tuition.*
4. *Given Special Privileges given to parents such as employment or financial aid. any consideration not afforded other students. Example: financial assistance cannot be awarded because of the student's participation in a specific sport or sports in general.*

Note: Prior to enrollment a prospective student-athlete may visit a school provided the arrangements for the visit are cleared through the school administration of the school to be visited.

● Homeschool Student Participation

According to SCACS, a homeschool student may participate in OCA Athletics if he or she is enrolled in at least one academic class that meets daily. He or She must pay the tuition and sports fee and abide by the rules and regulations as outlined in the student and athletic handbook.

Additionally:

- Homeschooled students may not be dually enrolled (or dually participating).
- When homeschool students enroll in on-campus courses, he or she must complete the course(s) and continue enrollment to stay eligible for athletic participation.
- Homeschool students who dis-enroll after being enrolled, will not have athletic eligibility.

- Students cannot join and withdraw from classes based on the season. If a student enrolls and plays baseball at the end of the school year, the enrollment must continue throughout the next year for athletic eligibility.

V. PRACTICE RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Practice will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday practices can be held on campus on an as-needed basis but must be dismissed by 5:00 pm. Practice times and duration vary with the sport and are determined by the coach and Athletic Director. On half-days and non-school days, the coaches can hold mandatory practices when it is necessary for team development. No practices or team meetings shall be held on Sundays or holidays without the approval of the Athletic Director.

V. PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT:

Athletes will:

1. Maintain a good reputation at school and within our community.
2. Address coaches and officials with respect.
3. Never criticize the officials or coaches.
4. Address teammates and opponents with respect, questionable language, “slang” words, or “trash talking” will not be tolerated.
5. Develop relationships and good rapport with teammates, coaches, opponents, classmates, and teachers.
6. Develop unity within the team, our school family, and within the Kingdom.
7. Be motivated by the love of God.
8. Be good stewards of all athletic facilities, home and away.
9. Not use illegal drugs, illegal performance-enhancing supplements, tobacco, alcohol, or vapes.
10. Not haze or harass. This is illegal and will result in suspension from athletic participation.
11. Strive for victory in order to glorify God.
12. Commit to excellence.
13. Play and act like a champion.

GUIDELINES FOR A PLAYER DISQUALIFICATION/EJECTION FROM AN ATHLETIC EVENT

First Offense: An official warning and a one-game suspension. If the disqualification is for unsportsmanlike, or flagrant illegal conduct, a \$100 fine. Note: Additional games may be assessed due to the nature of the offense.

Second Offense: A \$200 fine and suspension until an appearance before the Athletic Committee or SCACS staff.

Third Offense: This will result in the termination of eligibility (reinstatement may only be granted by the Athletic Committee and a \$500 fine if reinstated by the Athletic Committee).

Disqualification/Ejection of a Coach: An official warning and a \$250 fine. The Committee could also consider suspension if the incident so warrants.

**Fines will be paid by the offending player or coach*

**Players and Coaches will be required to complete the required return to play protocol as outlined by SCACS*

Spectator Code of Conduct

*OCA is responsible for seeing that our players, coaches, and spectators demonstrate good sportsmanship. We are required to have a designated representative, other than the coach, at all events and will be available if there is a problem.

Fans will:

1. Cheer positively for OCA rather than negatively against the other team.
2. Always be courteous to the officials and will not approach an official at any time.
3. Refrain from trying to disrupt an opponent (ex. Shooting foul shots)
4. Stay off the field or court.
5. Help in any way possible with cleanup after contests.

6. Never approach a coach with grievances before, during, or after a contest. Please set up a time away from contests to discuss any issues with the coach. If it is necessary to address an issue immediately, please find the Athletic Director or Administrative Staff to help handle the situation.

Parent/Coach/Player Relations

1. Love, respect, encourage, and pray for one another.
2. Concerns or questions in most situations can be solved by the coach and player meeting together. The Matthew 18 principles should be followed:
 - a. Meeting with the coach(es) and player.
 - b. Meeting with the coach(es), player, and parents. Set up a meeting to discuss concerns in private. Do not approach coach(es) before or after a contest.
 - c. Meeting with the coach(es), player, parents, and Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will not entertain most concerns unless they have first gone to the coach(es).
3. Parents are expected to be supportive of the coaches and to refrain from sharing negative opinions with others.
4. Parental displays of anger towards team members, coaches, officials, or other teams are unacceptable and may result in their child being removed from participation in athletics at OCA.
5. Parents should NOT coach players from the stands.
6. If a team member, or parent of a team member, organizes support against a coach, that team member will be removed from athletic participation at OCA.

Coach Attire – Coaches must also meet the OCA dress code. Business casual is the dress code for court sports. Field sports should be in accordance with the sports norm. Coaches should dress in appropriate OCA gear.

Travel to Games and Practices

1. Student-athletes must travel to games and practices on the OCA bus, or in students' or parents' vehicles.
2. Athletes may ride with adults or may drive themselves to practices. (If athletes must ride with other athletes a Student-Athlete Travel Waiver must be completed and on file in the athletic office.)
3. Athletes need to ride the OCA bus or with adults to ALL away games, unless approved beforehand. For an athlete to drive themselves or to ride with another athlete, authorization from the Athletic Director will need to be obtained before game day and a signed waiver for the drivers and riders for that particular game must be on file in the athletic office.

School Discipline

1. Athletes receiving a suspension from school will not be allowed to participate in or attend any athletic activity that day.
2. If our athletes and/or coaches display inappropriate behavior, it will be monitored and dealt with at the discretion of the Athletic Director and the Head of School.

Apparel, Uniforms, and Equipment

1. All team-promoting apparel worn by or purchased for OCA athletes must be approved by the Athletic Director.
2. Uniforms must be properly maintained. Any damage or loss of uniforms will be the responsibility of the athlete.
3. Clean uniforms are to be turned in to the coach, office, or Athletic Director within one week of the conclusion of the season. The uniforms are school property and cannot be kept. If uniforms are not turned in, the full replacement cost of a new uniform will be charged to the student's account and progress reports and/or grade reports can be withheld until all uniforms are returned to the school.
4. Uniforms are not to be used for practice or personal use.

Awards/Post-Season Ceremony

1. Awards are used in OCA Athletics to recognize God-given ability and achievement.

2. Ceremonies will be held after each sports season or collectively at the end of the year.
3. Awards are given at the coach and the Athletic Director's discretion.

Lettering in Sports and Letter Jackets

1. Varsity Athletes can letter in OCA sports starting in 8th grade. To earn a letter, athletes must complete the season and compete in at least half of the total number of contests.
2. The purchase of letter jackets is the sole responsibility of the athlete. Jackets can be purchased through Diamond T Sports, VX Digital Printing, or Herff Jones.

Booster Club and Fundraising

- **Admissions/Concessions** (Home Games) – All parents are responsible for working at least one admissions gate and one concession or can work two different games in one area. If a parent has multiple students participating, they are required to work two of each or four in one area.
- **Fundraising Participation** – Proceeds from fundraising efforts of the OCA Booster Club make up the greatest portion of the OCA athletics budget. Without the proceeds, our sports programs would be severely limited. To continue and advance our sports programs, it is a requirement for all athletes to participate in these fundraisers.

OCA'S ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT DEPENDS HEAVILY ON EACH STUDENT-ATHLETE'S FAMILY. PARTICIPATION IN OUR ATHLETIC PROGRAM IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT AND COMES WITH MANY RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT BOTH THE ATHLETE AND THE ATHLETE'S FAMILY FULFILL THE RESPONSIBILITY AS SPECIFIED BY THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT AND EACH TEAM.

*ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING THE OCA ATHLETIC POLICY SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.