



**WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY**

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK
For Middle School and High School Grades

2009-2010
(Revised July/August 2009)

Athletics

IN THIS SECTION

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- Athletic Fees

Westminster Christian Academy Athletes' Handbook

2009-2010

Last Updated: July, 2009

All parents, student-athletes, faculty, staff and coaches must read this document, along with the parent/student handbook. The policies and procedures presented in this Athletic Handbook will be the standards by which we are governed.

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Purpose Statement:

The purpose of athletics at WCA is two-fold: first, as a school, athletic competition is part of the development of young boys and girls and should be done with the same excellence and spiritual emphasis as academics. Second, athletics always provides one opportunity of many for our students to apply their faith in multiple ways. Our desire is always to provide our students with coaches who will expose them to the truth of the gospel as well as train them properly in the sport of their expertise.

At WCA we desire to provide quality coaching, teaching and competitive experiences from a Christian perspective, all designed to prepare and enable each individual student to grow in Christ and strive for excellence by way of athletics.

Middle School:

At the middle school level, our goal is to lay an athletic foundation of a Christian worldview, quality instruction and a fundamental approach to each sport. This instruction is fulfilled through coaching that is marked by our desired dual focus: a mature Christian faith coupled with an excellence in the sport coached.

High School:

At the high school level, our desire is to continue the quality instruction of the middle school. All of our coaches are encouraged to play to win but to do so in a manner which brings glory to our Lord and Savior. What does this mean? It means we field a team that plays hard, fair and aggressive in order to win, but that team does not play, win or lose, in a way that taints the name of our Lord and Savior.

Statement about Club and Travel Teams:

In this effort to field high-quality, competitive teams in all sports, we find it necessary to address athlete participation on Club and Travel teams. It is against AHSAA rules for an athlete to participate in a school sport and a club/travel team of the same sport at the same time. For instance, a student-athlete cannot play WCA basketball and play on a club/travel team at the same time. The student-athlete **may not even participate** in practice for the club/travel team.

When there is a student-athlete participating in a WCA sport and a club/travel team (of a different sport), the WCA sport **MUST** take priority!! Tardiness, as well as absences, will be disciplined accordingly by each coach.

Sportsmanship:

Good sportsmanship is expected of everyone involved in athletics at Westminster. What is good sportsmanship? It means, players, coaches and fans consistently demonstrate an attitude resembling Christ Jesus. Fans from a rival school are welcomed into our home arena with a cooperative spirit; when we play in an opposing arena, we do so in a way that honors our Lord by being good stewards of the facility, playing hard and fair, and winning or losing with the grace of the gospel. **Everyone representing WCA is expected** to treat opposing players and coaches, referees and opposing fans with respect and courtesy at all times.

At Westminster, how we do something is as important as what results from doing it. Our play must be a testimony to the watching world. Our fans and the way we cheer also must be a testimony. We feel so strongly about this that we have developed the Westminster Sportsman's Creed. We ask the entire Westminster community to abide by this creed which states:

The Sportsman's Creed:

- Our school and witness are characterized by our conduct.
- We always appreciate a good play, regardless of the team.
- We never 'boo' or criticize a player, coach or official.
- We are humble in victory, praiseworthy in defeat.
- **CHARACTER, NOT VICTORY, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!**

The 24 Hour Rule:

At Westminster Christian Academy in accordance with who we are in Christ, we ask all parents to wait at least 24 hours before speaking to any coach about matters related to game decisions. We ask parents to abide by the following procedure when questioning any WCA coach:

1. Wait at least 24 hours
2. Call for an appointment
3. If at all possible, meet face-to-face per Matthew 18:15
4. Be respectful and courteous

If the need arises to have a discussion with a coach, the discussion must be limited to your student-athlete. In meeting with any coach, please understand that playing time as well as other student-athletes will never be topics open to discussion. You are the advocate for your student-athlete; conversations outside that realm can result in gossip and rumor, which WCA takes a strong stance against.

Organizational Affiliation:

Westminster Christian Academy is a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). As a member in good standing, we recognize and adhere to its guidelines and we submit to its authority in all athletics at the high school and middle school levels. The AHSAA rules and regulations are outlined in its members' handbook, a copy of which is kept on file by the WCA Athletic Director and also by the upper school principal. WCA is classified in 2008-2009 as a 2A school and competes with other schools of our size in state competition.

Programs Offered:

Interscholastic offerings at WCA are the following:

I. Entire School Year:

Cheerleading

II. Fall Sports:

Football

Volleyball

Cross-country

Swimming

III. Winter Sports:

Basketball

Wrestling

IV. Spring Sports:

Baseball

Golf

Softball (fastpitch)

Soccer

Tennis

Coaches:

A goal of WCA athletics is to provide Christian coaches of integrity who have the highest possible skills in their respective sports. Whenever possible, qualified faculty members are used to fill coaching positions. The varsity head coach in each sport is responsible for the overall program of their sport and supervises the assistant coaches, junior varsity or middle school coaches involved. Coaches are under the supervision of the WCA Athletic Director.

Insurance / Injuries:

I. Insurance:

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide health insurance for their children who are participating in athletics at WCA. Athletes are covered under a catastrophic coverage program through the AHSAA. This coverage has a \$10,000 deductible and a \$2 million ceiling. It is for accidental injury medical expenses only and is only for injuries occurring during participation in interscholastic athletics practices or contests.

II. Injuries:

Each athlete's physical well-being is of prime importance to WCA. Therefore, all injuries should be reported promptly to a student's coach and the Athletic Director.

Eligibility:

AHSAA Rules:

As a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association, WCA follows the eligibility rules as outlined in the AHSAA handbook. Copies of this handbook are kept in the Athletic Director's office and in the Principal's office. Since the AHSAA eligibility rules are extensive and sometimes confusing, we ask parents to first address questions to the WCA Athletic Director (**Please DO NOT call the AHSAA on your own**). These eligibility rules cover a range of subjects, e.g. age, academics, transfers, outside participation, etc. Excerpts from the AHSAA handbook, specifically the academic rules, are printed below.

SECTION 9 - ACADEMIC RULE

Requirements:

- (a) Students entering the 10th, 11th and 12th grades must have passed all core classes during the last two semesters in attendance and summer school, if applicable, at least six new Carnegie units with a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in those six units.
 - (1) Four core curriculum courses must be included in those units passed and an averaged combination of these courses is accepted.)
 - (2) Any student who accumulates more than four units of core courses per year may earn less than the required four core courses during the next school year and be eligible as long as the student remains on track for graduation with his/her class.
- (b) Students entering the 8th and 9th grades must have passed all core classes during the last two semesters in attendance and summer school, if applicable, at least five new subjects with a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in those five subjects.
- (c) Students entering the 7th grade for the first time are eligible.

Guidelines:

1. Eligibility will be determined before the start of each new school year or at the beginning of the second semester. A student who is academically eligible at the beginning of the school year remains eligible for the remainder of the school year as far as grades are concerned. A student who regains eligibility at the beginning of the second semester remains eligible for the remainder of the second semester as far as grades are concerned.

2. Students declared ineligible at the beginning of a school year may regain their eligibility at the end of the first semester (or trimester) by meeting the academic requirements listed above during their last two semesters (or three trimesters) in attendance and summer school, if applicable. The regained eligibility of any student may be determined any time after the end of the first semester (or trimester), but all course requirements used to determine the eligibility must be completed no later than the fifth day of the second semester (or second trimester).
3. Only one unit (or subject) of physical education per year may be counted.
4. A maximum of two units (or subjects) earned in an approved summer school may be counted. If a unit (or subject) is repeated in summer school, the higher numerical grade for that unit (or subject) may be used to compute the composite grade average.
5. An accredited correspondence course may be accepted by a school system but must be completed before Sept. 1.
6. For eligibility purposes, special recitation, extra work, make-up work, tests, review, etc., may not be given for the purpose of making a student eligible.
7. To be eligible, all students (including repeaters and hold-backs) must be enrolled in a specified number of new units at the school they represent.
 - (a) 9th, 10th and 11th graders must be carrying at least six new units (three per semester on a 4x4 block schedule).
 - (b) 12th graders who are on track for graduation with more than the required number of units earned must be carrying at least four new units for the school year (two units per semester on a 4x4 block schedule).
 - (c) 7th and 8th graders must be carrying at least five new subjects.
8. The eligibility of a student who has attended another school during the preceding year must be established by a transcript from the previous school before the student is permitted to participate at the new school.

WCA Athletic Academic Standards:

WCA is a member of the AHSAA and will abide by all AHSAA academic standards regarding athletic eligibility. Our mission statement stipulates that we are to train and educate students with excellence in such a way as to equip each student to be used by God in whatever capacity God chooses. Westminster recognizes our athletes as student-athletes first and foremost and, therefore, our desire is to do all that we can to ensure our student-athletes will excel in the classroom and on the field.

Therefore, Westminster has created the following academic plan for its student-athletes:

1. All student-athletes must meet the academic requirements of the AHSAA rules as stipulated in the AHSAA rule book.
2. At the end of each semester, student-athletes who fail classes will be required to develop an academic plan with the administration in conjunction with their parents.
3. Any student-athlete in need of assistance as determined by the administration who then fails to take part in an academic plan will immediately become academically ineligible and may not take part in the athletic experience at Westminster.
4. Our goal is always our students, but our students need to understand all student-athletes are natural leaders in our school. To wear the name of the school on a uniform representing the school in competition is both an honor and a privilege at Westminster and will be viewed as such.
5. The administration and Athletics Director reserve the right to deviate from any WCA policy if the need arises due to special circumstances and situations.

Attendance Eligibility:

Student-athletes are no different than other students; they must be in class. We deem class time as extremely important in the process of education; therefore, the athletic department is committed to doing all they can to reduce the time our student-athletes miss from class. In that spirit, our student-athletes must do their part in eliminating missed class time. Westminster is committed to enforcing the attendance requirements of the AHSAA.

Full Day Attendance:

All student-athletes, in order to be eligible to play, must be in attendance for at least 4 periods of the day of any athletic contest. We encourage all students to be in attendance for the full day of the contest. If there is an absence or a tardy, student-athletes are subject to the same standards found in the discipline section of the handbook. The administration and Athletic Director reserve the right to deviate from this stipulation as circumstances and situations arise.

Dismissal from a Team:

All Westminster athletes are expected to avoid the use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco products as well as avoid any illegal activities on campus or off campus. Any Westminster athlete choosing to engage in any of the above will forfeit their right and the honor and the privilege of representing Westminster in any sport for one year.

Quitting a Team:

All Westminster athletes are expected to honor their commitment to their teams if they are selected to represent Westminster in any sport. Any Westminster athlete who quits a team before the completion of that season will not be given the privilege of participating in another sport until the completion of the prior sport's season. Any Westminster athlete who quits a team is automatically off the team for the remainder of that season.

Organizational Structure:

The structure for athletics at Westminster is as follows:

WCA Board of Directors

Head of School

Athletic Director

Varsity Head Coach

JV Head Coach

Middle School Head Coach

General Policies:

I. Team Selection:

The makeup of each individual team is at the discretion of the head coach. Middle school teams are made up of only seventh and eighth graders. Junior Varsity teams are typically made up of freshmen and sophomores, and varsity teams are usually made up of freshmen through seniors. Exceptions may be approved by the Athletic Director after consultation with the head coach in each individual sport. Widespread participation is desired, especially at the non-varsity levels, and is encouraged, but team rosters may need to be limited in number in order to be effective.

II. Tryouts:

Tryouts will usually be held in conjunction with AHSAA starting dates found on the AHSAA website. Any interested student who meets the AHSAA and the WCA eligibility requirements may try out. Coaches determine which players will make up a team. There will be a maximum number of players for each team at each level of play.

III. Parent Information:

After a team has been determined, the coach will call a parent meeting to go over logistical matters, expectations and requirements of the athletes and parents in regard to the season at hand. Parents will be given an opportunity to ask the coach and Athletic Director questions, and may be asked to sign a form of agreement covering such things as sportsmanship and commitment to the program.

IV. Playing Time:

Determining how much playing time each player gets is up to the discretion of the coach. However, there are some general goals for which we will always strive. At the middle school level, instruction and active participation is a chief concern, and it is our goal that every athlete participates in every contest unless some type of discipline is involved. This does not imply, however, that every player will receive an identical amount of playing time in every contest. At the junior varsity level, and especially at the varsity level, concepts of competition and role playing within a team setting enter into the equation, and may result in some athletes not playing in some contests. We do, however, strive to use all athletes whenever possible, but, again, this is up to each coach's discretion.

V. Practices:

All athletes are expected to be present and on time to all practices called by the coach during the season of a particular sport. All student-athletes are also expected to stay at practice until dismissed by the coach. Student-athletes should inform the coach in advance when absences are anticipated, and determination of whether the absence is excused or unexcused will be according to the coach's discretion. Wednesday practices will be completed by approximately 5:00 p.m. to allow attendance at mid-week church services. There will be no Sunday practices.

VI. Practices Clothing

Athlete Practice Dress Policy –

Girls should practice in “basketball length” shorts **or** should have spandex (biker shorts) underneath athletic shorts. The spandex should show at least a little so coaches will be able to easily determine if the player is in proper dress. At no time will spandex alone be appropriate. Girls should never roll their shorts or have writing on the back of their shorts. Girls should never practice in tank tops or only sports bras. Sleeveless shirts may be worn as long as the arm hole is small enough to cover under garments. Modesty is our always our goal and our guide. There will always be males around while girls are practicing. That is unavoidable.

Boys should wear shorts to cover their under garments and be of a modest length. Shorts with high splits up the side should not be worn. Boys must always wear a shirt. No “shirts and skins” practices. Boys may wear sleeveless shirts, but the arm holes should not be excessively large. No "A" shirts are permitted unless worn under another shirt. These guidelines will apply to **all WCA athletics.**

Transportation:

I. Practices:

It is the parents' responsibility to arrange for transportation to and from practices. Athletes are expected to be picked up immediately after a practice session. Coaches are required to supervise athletes until they have left the school premises. We will make every effort to provide transportation for practices which are held off campus.

II. Away Games:

A. Games in Madison County:

The school will make every effort to arrange for transportation to and from all away games played by Westminster student-athletes immediately after school. However, games that are played later in

the afternoon or in the evenings are situations where student-athletes are in attendance for the entire school day, then proceed home in much the same way they do during the course of a regular day. In these situations, the student-athletes and their parents assume all responsibility for transportation of their student-athlete to and from these games. We strongly encourage parents to transport their student-athletes if at all possible and strongly discourage student-athletes from driving themselves. The safety of our student-athletes is always paramount in our policy making.

B. Games outside Madison County:

The school will make every effort to provide transportation to and from games played outside of Madison County. Athletes are required to ride with the team to these contests. Exceptions must be authorized by the team coach. Athletes will be allowed to ride home from the game site with their parents, but must sign a WCA release form before departing. Each head coach is responsible for making the form available.

Administrative Requirements:

Athletic Fees:

Athletic fees are required in each sport to help finance the WCA athletic programs. Fees must be paid before a student-athlete can participate in any sport and before receiving any equipment items. The fee schedule is posted on the WCA athletic web site.

Physical Examination:

Each athlete is required to have a physical examination by a licensed medical doctor before participating in any sport at WCA. There must be a physical examination form on file at the school and the examination is valid for one calendar year. These are posted on the web site. Blank forms may also be obtained from the Athletic Department.

Parental Consent Form:

Each athlete must have a medical consent form signed by parents and on file at WCA. These are posted on the web site. Blank forms may also be obtained from the Athletic Department.

Birth Certificate:

Every athlete must have a copy of his birth certificate on file in the athletic office. A photocopy of the student's legal birth certificate will suffice.

Academic/Athletic Form:

Every athlete and a parent/guardian must sign an explanation of the Academic Probation Policy stating they understand the policy.

S.T.A.R. Sportsmanship Certificate:

Every athlete must complete the online S.T.A.R. Sportsmanship program once prior to participation of athletic competition. A copy must be on file in the athletic office.

Sports Supplies Designation:

While participating in sports at WCA, there are certain equipment items the school will supply and personal items to be supplied by the student-athlete. The following is a listing of these items according to the sport. Teams often like to purchase "team" items such as hooded sweat shirts, sweat pants, t-shirts, etc. which may not be necessary for the participation of the sport. We ask these non-essential team items be purchased by the COACH THROUGH WCA WITH THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL. **Parents, who are interested in sport-specific donations, please contact the Athletic Director.**

Sport	Items Supplied by WCA	Personal Items Supplied by the Athlete
Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home & Away Uniform • Practice pants and shirt • Helmet with chin strap • Shoulder & Thigh Pads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleats / Socks • Undershirt for warm & cold weather • Spirit Pack containing shirt and shorts at an approximate cost of \$20
Volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform shorts and top 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spandex shorts to wear under the uniform shorts and during practices • Shoes / Socks / Knee Pads • Appropriate practices clothes – shorts & t-shirts
Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team swim suit • Swim cap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate practices clothes (shorts, t-shirts and swimwear) / Goggles
Cross Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform shorts and top 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running shoes / Socks • Appropriate practices clothes – shorts & t-shirts
Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home & Away uniform shorts and top • Practice jersey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoes / Socks • Appropriate practices clothes – shorts & t-shirts Girls - Spandex shorts to wear under the practices shorts
Football / Basketball Cheerleaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform top and skirt • Dance Pants • Jacket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoes / Socks / Poms / Hair ribbon • Body suit to wear under uniform top • Bloomers/Spandex to wear under practice shorts • Appropriate practices clothes – shorts & t-shirts
Competition Cheerleaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform top and skirt • Dance Pants • Jacket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit Pack containing shirt and shorts at an approximate cost of \$20 • Shoes / Socks / Poms / Hair ribbon • Body suit to wear under uniform top • Bloomers/Spandex to wear under practice shorts • Appropriate practices clothes – shorts & t-shirts
Varsity / Middle School Soccer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home & Away uniform • Jacket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleats / Socks / Toboggans / Shin guards • Long sleeved shirt to wear under uniform • Girls – Spandex shorts to wear under practice shorts and some uniform shorts • Appropriate practice clothes – sweat pants, sweat shirt, short, t- shirt
Varsity /JV / Middle School Baseball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform pants and top • Jacket or Hooded Sweatshirt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleats / Socks / Glove • Long sleeved shirt to wear under uniform • Short sleeved shirt to wear under the uniform • Baseball cap to be purchased as a team • Appropriate practice clothes – sweat pants, sweat shirt, short, t- shirt
Varsity Softball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform pants and top • Jacket or sweat shirt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleats / Socks / Glove • Long sleeved shirt to wear under uniform • Practice clothes – sweat pants & shirt, short, t- shirt • Spandex shorts to wear under practice shorts and some uniform shorts
Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf shirt for competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pants /Golf clubs / balls / tees / shoes
Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform top and skort • Tennis balls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis racket • Appropriate practice clothes – sweat pants, sweat shirt, short, t- shirt