

Greenwood Christian Academy



Athletic Handbook

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Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission

To pursue academic, spiritual, and extra-curricular excellence in a Christ-centered community through participation in interscholastic athletics and contests .

Vision Statement

We see an athletic program where coaches mentor athletes and model to them the characteristics of Christian men and women in the world while competing at the highest level to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. *1 Corinthians 9:25*

Core Values

Respect - We are committed to teaching and modeling respect for God, His Word, His creation, and others so that students will come to salvation in Jesus Christ and treat their fellow citizens and the world with dignity and honor. *Romans 12:10, 13:1-2*

Integrity - We are committed to teaching and modeling honesty, truthfulness, and Biblical morality so that students can be trustworthy, valued, and contribute positively to society. *Psalms 106:3, II Corinthians 8:21*

Compassion - We are committed to teaching and modeling compassion so that students can effectively share the gospel, minister to those in need, and consider others as more important than themselves. *Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:3*

Excellence - We are committed to teaching and modeling the pursuit of excellence in all things for the glory of God. *I Corinthians 10:31*

Athletics Program General Information

Athletics Philosophy

Athletics and extracurricular activities are essential for Greenwood Christian Academy. Each activity aims to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ in every aspect of a student's life. At Greenwood Christian, we believe that our athletes should look different and easily be distinguished and set apart from the competition. This should be demonstrated through the character and actions of each individual involved in the activity, from administration to coach to athlete or participant. Participation in these activities provides a great platform to apply and practice living out what they are being equipped with in Christian Education to impact their world for Christ now and into the future. We believe that as GCA students, we are to be a light in the fallen world. **Matthew 5:13-16**

Athletics Objectives

1. **Integrity**: Honoring God with Christ-like behavior in all areas of life (Proverbs 11:3).
2. **Respect**: If you expect respect, be the first to show it (Philippians 2:3).
3. **Servant Leadership**: Servant leaders are "servants first" – they focus on the needs of others, especially their team members, before considering their own (Mark 10:43-45).
4. **Teamwork**: Willingness to put your individual goals behind the team's goals (Romans 14:19).
5. **Performance**: Develop student-athletes who are playing to glorify and honor God and develop discipline and self-controlled attitudes (Colossians 3: 23-24).

“Do you know that in a race, all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown of laurel that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly, I do not fight like a man shadowboxing. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

GCA Athletic Program Facts

- Mascot: Cougars
- Colors: Navy, Gray, and White
- Affiliations: Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA)
- Class: 1A
- District: 3
- HS Conference: Indiana Crossroads Conference



Athletic Department Contacts

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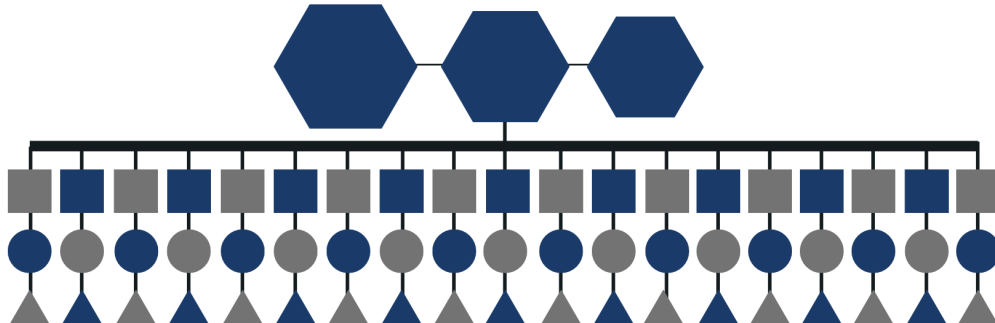
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Varsity Coach Contacts

- Archery - Lee Bigelow - archery@gcak12.org
- Baseball - Ryan Hurley - baseball@gcak12.org
- Basketball - Boys - Tony Adranga- boysbasketball@gcak12.org
- Basketball - Girls - Grant Prewitt- girlsbasketball@gcak12.org
- Bowling - Heather Spurgeon- bowling@gcak12.org
- Cheer - Brooke Wall - cheer@gcak12.org
- Cross Country - Matt Pierce - crosscountry@gcak12.org
- Football - Andre Dobson - football@gcak12.org
- Golf Boys - Gary Hamilton - boysgolf@gcak12.org
- Golf Girls - Jon Robinson - girlsgolf@gcak12.org
- Soccer - Boys - Kefil Tonouewa - boyssoccer@gcak12.org
- Soccer - Girls - Riley Smith - girlssoccer@gcak12.org
- Softball - Jessica Wagler - softball@gcak12.org
- Tennis Girls - Jennie Jackson/Julie Kirby - girlstennis@gcak12.org
- Track & Field - Andre Dobson - track@gcak12.org
- Volleyball - Boys - Gary Oertel - boysvolleyball@gcak12.org
- Volleyball - Girls - Delanie Skelton - volleyball@gcak12.org

Athletic Department Flow: In communication with the administration, The athletic director, assistant athletic director and athletic coordinator, will serve as a coach and leader over all programs. Primary communication will be with Varsity coaches. Varsity coaches will each be the head of their program, and communication will flow through them to sub-varsity and middle school.



Levels of Competition

• Varsity Athletics

- Greenwood Christian Academy competes in boys' and girls' sports as a member of the **Indiana Crossroads Conference** and competes in the Johnson County Tournament Series.
- Varsity sports are the highest level of high school competition. This level is typically for junior and senior athletes but is not limited to them. Freshmen and sophomore athletes who display appropriate skill and maturity to compete may be considered for this level.
- The purpose of varsity teams is to continue to develop character on and off the competition surface, to teach Christ-centered values, to master fundamentals of the game as well as strategy, and to compete for athletic championships in ways that bring honor and glory to God.
- Wins and losses are bigger than just the final score but also include how we handle ourselves through winning and losing.
- Full participation in practice is part of this level, but participation in competition is at the coach's discretion.

• Sub-Varsity Athletics

- Greenwood Christian Academy competes in sub-varsity sports as a member of the Indiana Crossroads Conference.
- Sub-varsity sports are part of the athletic program designed to prepare athletes for varsity competition. This level is typically for, but not limited to, freshmen and sophomore athletes.
- The purpose of these teams is to continue to introduce and develop game-specific skills, preparing athletes for the varsity level. This level is further designed to teach teamwork and develop the Christian character expected of Greenwood Christian Athletes.
- Wins and losses are not the focus, but improvement, sportsmanship, and preparing for varsity competition.
- Full participation in practice is part of this level. Participation in the competition is not guaranteed and is at the coach's discretion, with guidance from the varsity head coach.

• Middle School Athletics

- **Greenwood Christian Academy competes in middle school sports as an independent and participates in the Johnson County MS Tournament Series.**
- Middle School sports are part of the athletic program designed to introduce and prepare athletes for high school competition. This level is typically for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. In some circumstances, 5th grade is included.
- The purpose of these teams is to introduce different games and ideas, expose athletes to sports they may be interested in, and begin to develop game-specific skills, preparing them for high school. They are further designed to teach aspects of teamwork and the Christian character expected of Greenwood Christian Athletes.
- Wins and losses are not the focus, but rather an improvement, sportsmanship, and player development.
- Full participation in practice and competition is a guaranteed part of this level. However, this does not mean that equal playing time is a guarantee.

• Club Sports and Activities

- Greenwood Christian Academy competes in Bowling, Cheerleading, Archery, and eSports. The clubs and activities are not recognized by the IHSAA but are supported and valued by Greenwood Christian Academy.

- Club Sports and activities at GCA are designed to provide extra-curricular opportunities for students who may not otherwise be interested in IHSAA sports. Many of these activities compete in interscholastic competitions. The promise of these activities is very similar to that of a varsity IHSAA-sponsored sport. As such, members of Club Sports and Activities will have the opportunity to earn varsity letters and chevrons.
- Furthermore, the school will recognize team success and celebrate as much as other athletic teams. Upon winning conference championships, sectionals, or the equivalent, Club Sports and Activities will have a banner in a designated spot. Banners will mirror IHSAA team banners, only they will be in the opposite color scheme.

Athletic Fees

All middle school athletes will be charged a \$150 athletic fee per sport to participate on a team at GCA. High school students will be charged \$200 per sport. Football players will have a \$300 athletic fee. Athletic fees will be applied to the student's FACTS account after completing the first authorized contest of the season. Students who quit a team after competing in a regular season contest will be charged the full athletic fee. Exceptions will only be made in extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

Forms

- Every middle and high school student-athlete at GCA must create an account in FinalForms. Several forms must be updated each year, including an athletic handbook signature page, a concussion release form, a transportation release form, and medical history and consent forms. Please log in to your FinalForms account each year to complete and sign your athletic paperwork. Student-athletes in grades 5-12 must also log in and sign athletic forms each year. No student will be allowed to try out until all forms have been completed. <https://greenwoodchristian-in.finalforms.com/>
- Every Greenwood Christian Academy high school student-athlete must have a completed physical form on file in the school athletic office before trying out for, conditioning, or practicing with any GCA team. All high school sports physicals will expire on July 15th each year, regardless of when the previous physical was performed. All pages of the physical form must be completed and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), a licensed physician (including license number), and the athlete. For the physicals to be valid, they can be no older than April 1 preceding the athletic season. Physicals can be uploaded to a student's FinalForms account, or a copy can be turned in to the athletic office.
- Middle school sports physicals will also expire on July 15th, beginning in the summer of 2025. Middle school students must have a sports physical on file before practicing or competing with a team.

Uniforms

All uniforms and equipment provided by Greenwood Christian Academy remain the property of Greenwood Christian Academy. Student-athletes must take appropriate care of assigned uniforms/equipment. All uniforms and equipment will be returned to the coach and athletic department on the first Tuesday following the last scheduled contest of the season. Teams will meet after school in the team room to turn in their uniforms. Unless prior arrangements are made with the Athletic Director/Department, the student's FACTS account will be charged the cost of any uniform not turned in or that is destroyed at this time.

Returned uniforms are to be washed and dried upon return. Uniforms returned with excessive damage will be subject to a replacement cost at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

**Uniforms are only worn during games, not to school, PE class, Spirit days, practices, or other times.

Cut Policy

GCA values the ideal of maximum participation, but the nature of interscholastic sports makes it necessary to limit squad size in many sports. When student participation exceeds available roster positions, cuts will be necessary. Any cuts to a roster will be made with the head coach's supervision and approved by the Athletic Director. **Please note: Even if your child makes the team, this does not qualify him or her for playing time.** In limited situations (i.e., a newly enrolled student), additions to a roster can be made at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director.

Starting a Season Late

A student may start a season late if the reasons are acceptable to the coach and Athletic Director. However, the coach must evaluate the student, and a uniform must be available before he/she may be added to the team. No one will be cut to make room for the student, and the student must practice at least eight days before participating in an athletic contest. The full athletic fee will be charged for any student joining a team during the season. No student will be permitted to start the season after 25% of the scheduled contests have been played by the team.

No Quitting Policy

Quitting a team is strongly discouraged. Suppose any student-athlete quits a team after being selected as a member of that team. In that case, that student-athlete is prohibited from trying out, playing, or participating in any limited contact practices or workouts for another Greenwood Christian Academy team during the same season, unless approved by the Athletic Director. Any student who quits a team after competing in a regular season contest will be charged the full athletic fee for the sport. Exceptions will only be made in extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

Hazing Policy:

Any involvement in hazing activities is prohibited and will result in suspending all active and passive participants pending investigation by the Principal and Athletic Director.

"Hazing" means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student to be initiated into, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, or athletic team whose members are, or include, other students.

See the official IHSA hazing policy for a more detailed definition of this policy.

Multiple Sport Policy:

In general, it is highly recommended that student-athletes compete in only one sport per season. However, participation in more than one is allowed under the following criteria:

- Desire to participate stems from the student-athlete - not a coach.
- Parent support in the decision.
- One sport is selected as primary and takes precedence over the other.
 - Exceptions can be made in advance for playoff considerations.
- Coaches work out and agree to a plan.
- Athletic Director Approval.

For participation in multi sports the approval form must be completed before the season.

[Multi-Sport Application](#)

Electronic Social Media Information

The use of electronic social media information resources in GCA athletics shall be used to improve and support communication between athletes, coaches, and other employees of Greenwood Christian Academy, parents, and community members.

The use of such social media sites shall be consistent with GCA's purposes and goals. Users of the internet must conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, moral, and polite manner. All social media users must abide by all local, state, and federal laws. The internet social media user accepts the responsibility of adhering to the high standards of conduct and the terms and conditions outlined in all parts of this policy and that stated in the Student Handbook.

The GCA student-athlete should be concerned with any behavior that might embarrass themselves, their families, their teams, and/or Greenwood Christian Academy. GCA Athletics shall not tolerate the malicious behavior of social networking, which will result in disciplinary action. Such malicious uses include but are not limited to

1. Any activity that is immoral or contrary to the high moral standards that must be maintained in an athletic (or educational) setting.
2. Accessing or transmitting immoral, obscene, pornographic, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, defaming, harassing, bullying, threatening, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate images or information or receiving such information from others utilizing e-mail, instant messages, and material posted on Web pages or Web logs ("blogs").
3. Any derogatory language or remarks about teammates or coaches; other GCA student-athletes or coaches; athletics administrators or officials; GCA faculty or staff; or GCA students.
4. Any demeaning statements about or threats to any party.
5. Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.

Student-athletes must recognize the power of public media domains and the potentially negative image they can portray about student-athletes, coaches, the athletics program, and the school. The GCA athlete needs to be aware of the consequences and exercise appropriate caution if they choose to participate in **ANY** social networking.

As a student-athlete participating in sports at GCA, you represent the school and are always in the public eye. Please remember the above guidelines as you participate on social networking websites.

The Athletic Department/Administration at Greenwood Christian Academy reserves the right to monitor and review all online material. The GCA Administration will have the final say on what is deemed reasonable and what is not.

The student-athlete may face disciplinary action and/or dismissal for violation of team, athletic department, and Greenwood Christian Academy policies.

Athletic Representation

GCA Athletes should always positively represent GCA and our Lord Jesus Christ - before, after, and during school hours. More importantly, we must represent Christ well while away from school.

- **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE** - GCA athletes should dress in a respectable way that remains within the team's dress code and expectations.
 - The school Dress Code is in effect during travel, representing the school.
 - Boys should not play or practice without a shirt on at all times.
 - Girls should not play or practice without a shirt on at all times. (A sports bra is not a shirt and, therefore, should be covered.)
 - Any uniform (game or practice) that is deemed appropriate for play or practice but does not meet the school dress code must be covered anytime the athlete is not in the gym or on the field.
- **ACTIONS AND SPEECH** - GCA Athletes should use positive language that builds up others. This includes on and off the field of competition. Swearing in no way builds others up. We should not speak negatively about our opponents or their school, students, or fans.
- **RESPECT AND CARE** - GCA athletes will care for school property and the property of our opponents. In short, we will leave things better than we found them.

Game Transportation

GCA will look to provide transportation to each contest via school bus or minibus. The transportation director will assign appropriate transportation (if available) and determine whether it is drop-only or roundtrip.

- **REQUIREMENTS** - All athletes must use provided transportation to athletic contests unless permission is given by the administration with parental approval in advance. Athletes who do not need a ride back from a contest may leave with a parent or other person designated by the parent, either verbally or in writing.
- **ONE-WAY - AKA "Drop-Only"** Bus will drop athletes off at the competition site, but athletes will be responsible for finding their own way home. This is typical for shorter trips.
- **TWO-WAY** - Bus or other vehicles will transport athletes and remain at the contest to provide transportation back to GCA. This is typical for longer trips.
- **PERSONAL VEHICLES** - When permitted due to varying circumstances, athletes may be allowed to use their personal vehicles. However, at no time should two or more athletes ride in the same vehicle unless it is driven by a parent with the permission of the additional athlete's parents. Siblings are the exception to this rule.

Facilities and Equipment

GCA is blessed with four full-size athletic courts, a weight room, an indoor turf field, and several outdoor courts and fields. GCA coaches and athletes should be good stewards of the facilities and equipment we have been blessed with.

- Athletes must respect athletic equipment by taking care of it as if it were their own or even better.
- After use, all equipment should be returned to its proper designated storage place.
- No cleats are to be worn inside any building. Cleats are to be put on, removed outside, and carried in hand into the building.
- Unless a coach or bus driver has approved, no athletes are permitted in the school vehicles.
- Under no circumstances are students allowed to drive school vehicles.
- No students are allowed in the gym or locker rooms except during designated school activities unless a staff member is present.
- Students are not allowed in the weight room without adult supervision.
- No signs will be put on the walls, doors, bleachers, or equipment unless the Athletic Director or Principal approves.
- When visiting another school, all school facilities should be left in better condition than they were found.

Assumption of Risk

Although Greenwood Christian Academy desires to provide all students a safe and enjoyable time, accidents can still happen. Parents must understand that there are risks/dangers involved with participation in any athletic contest or practice and its associated activities. Considering their children being allowed to participate in the events, they must assume responsibility for reasonable risks associated with travel and activities. Parents must agree to hold harmless Greenwood Christian Academy, its affiliated organizations, employees, agents, and representatives, including volunteers and other drivers, from any and all claims arising from their children's participation. Parental assumption of risk does not apply to claims of intentional (criminal) misconduct or gross negligence by the School, its employees, or volunteers.

Fundraising/Donations

The Athletic Department will budget to supply the needs for all programs each year. This would be done in close collaboration with head coaches and include the following items:

- Uniforms (replaced on a rotating schedule)
- Field rentals and leases
- Tournament fees (including offseason)
- Fees for officials
- Necessary competition equipment (game balls, starting blocks for track, catcher gear for baseball, football pads and helmets for football, etc.)
- Senior banners
- Senior athlete gifts (set amount allowed/provided but then allow junior parents or teammates to personalize the gifts for their own teams)
- Warmups (if needed)
- Game Day wear (if needed)
- Practice Jerseys (if needed)
- Media Day photo shoot

Seasonal Fundraisers will replace individual team fundraisers; funds go to the overall Athletic Department to compensate for planned budget shortcomings to cover needs. **Coaches** will support a **single seasonal combined fundraiser** and not conduct team-only fundraisers.

Policy on Competing Against Transgender Athletes

(created December 2024)

I. Introduction of the Issue

A. The GCA Policy on competing against transgender athletes considers these components:

- Student Safety in Athletic Events
- Current IHSAA Policy & Indiana Law Regarding Transgender Athletes
- GCA's Statement of Faith Regarding Gender Identity
- GCA's Mission, Vision, and Core Values

B. Taken together, these components must produce a biblical policy and course of action when faced with a transgender athlete that aligns with GCA's Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

C. The biblical foundation this policy will attempt to build on and balance is found in **1 Corinthians 16: 13-14** "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love." This pair of verses illustrates that Christ-followers can stand firm in the faith and also do all things in love.

II. Considerations Regarding the Creation of Policy

A. Student Safety in Athletic Events

The physical safety of GCA students is a high priority. If the GCA Athletic Director or head coach feels at any time that GCA athletes are in physical danger, they can and should remove them from that situation immediately. Parents may also make the choice to remove their student from an athletic competition if they do not feel that the situation is safe. The Athletic Director, coach, or parents should do so discreetly, respectfully, and compassionately.

B. IHSAA Policy & Indiana Law Regarding Transgender Athletes

"It is a tenant of the IHSAA that, except as permitted by rules 9-9 and 9-10 [regarding girls playing on boys teams when no girl sport exists at the school, such as football or baseball], a student may only participate in interscholastic competition as a member of a single-gender Athletic Team when the Gender of the Athletic Team matches the student's Birth Gender ("Participation Component"). A student may, however, apply for a Waiver of the Participation Component and then participate on a single-gender Athletic Team whose Gender does not match the student's Birth Gender." (Taken from [IHSAA by-laws](#); Rules 9-9 and 9-10 can be found on p. 42 in the document/p. 55 of the PDF)

If a school believes that an opposing athlete competes on a single-gender team that does not match their birth gender, the IHSAA advises the school principal

to reach out to the opposing school principal to confirm the gender, as principals sign off on the eligibility of all athletes.

[Indiana House Bill 1041](#), passed in May 2022, renders it illegal for a transgender student to participate in single-gender sports that do not align with that student's birth gender. This would apply to both IHSAA athletes as well as middle school-aged athletics, which lack a governing body akin to the IHSAA.

C. GCA's Statement of Faith Regarding Gender Identity

The GCA [Statement of Faith](#) is clear on issues of gender identity:

- *"We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Genesis 1:26-27)."*

D. GCA's Mission, Vision, and Core Values

- GCA's **Mission** is to pursue excellence in a Christ-centered community. GCA's **Vision** is to equip students to be servant leaders, relevant in the world, pursuing God's purpose for their lives.
- GCA's Core Values: We are committed to teaching and modeling **respect** for God, His Word, His creation, and others so that students will come to salvation in Jesus Christ and treat their fellow citizens and the world with dignity and honor (Romans 12:10, 13:1-2). We are committed to teaching and modeling **integrity**, truthfulness, and Biblical morality so that students can be trustworthy, valued, and contribute positively to society (Psalm 106:3, II Cor 8:21). We are committed to teaching and modeling **compassion** so that students can effectively share the gospel, minister to those in need, and consider others as more important than themselves (Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:3). We are committed to teaching and modeling the pursuit of **excellence** in all things for the glory of God (I Cor 10:31).

III. Course of Action

In light of all the above information and considerations, GCA's policy regarding teams that might have transgender athletes will be as follows.

A. Step 1: Continue to Schedule Non-Christian Schools

Competing against both public and private school teams is desirable. In addition to the higher level of competition that public schools often offer, competing in secular postseason tournaments, making our athletes eligible for secular awards, and presenting opportunities to witness to the secular world are desirable outcomes. Overall, this maintains our mission and core value of **excellence**.

B. Step 2: Rely on IHSAA Policy Enforcement of Gender Identity Restrictions

Ideally, IHSAA policy prevents a transgender athlete from competing against our students in a single-gender sport. In most cases, this should be sufficient. *In case Step 2 fails, regardless of the reason, GCA leadership, staff, coaches, players, and families would follow Step 3 (below).*

C. Step 3: Live Out the Gospel

Christ-followers are commanded to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4). As applied to athletics, this should be a simple course of action that lives out our core values, bears witness to the Gospel of grace, and seeks justice when appropriate.

- a. **Speak Truth:** GCA coaches, athletes, and families will speak the truth regarding gender identity via our policy only. GCA has taken a clear public stance about the source of true gender identity and will hold to that belief by not allowing students to enroll or stay enrolled at GCA who attempt to live otherwise. This belief is readily available on our public website in our statement of faith and is lived out daily in our halls and via our admissions policy and maintains our spiritual **integrity**.
- b. **Show Love:** GCA coaches, athletes, and families will love our neighbors and show **compassion** towards all athletes via our actions on the court and field, doing what is necessary whenever possible in order to witness to them the love of Christ (1 Cor 9:19-23). It is not appropriate for GCA athletes or families to approach an opposing team's AD, coaching staff, players, or fans and attempt to address this issue. This should be left to the Athletic Director, Principal, and/or Coach to handle. *(see III.C.d below)*
- c. **Bear Witness:** GCA's Vision is to prepare our students to be **relevant in the world**. If GCA staff, coaches, athletes, and families are pursuing lives as Christ-followers, we are only going to become more and more out of step with the culture around us. We will show **respect** to our opposition regardless of the circumstances.
- d. **Seek Justice:** GCA will follow IHSAA suggested processes in the case of a **known and confirmed** violation of the transgender athlete policy *(see II.B above)*. The GCA High School Principal will only report such a violation if there is **clear proof** that an athlete is in violation of the rule. Acceptable forms of proof would be limited to an admission by the player, coaching staff, or athletic director of the violation. Great care should be taken before pursuing this route, as this is an accusation of cheating against an opposing school and its staff.
 - i. If a GCA Athletic Director or coach has clear proof *(see II.B above)* that a transgender violation is going to occur before the GCA team arrives at an athletic competition, the GCA AD may call the

- opposing AD and decline to compete in the event, since this is a clear violation of IHSA rules. This should be done in the most careful and compassionate manner possible, with the focus being on the rule violation and not the transgender athlete.
- ii. Once a GCA team has arrived at a competition, if a GCA Athletic Director or coach has clear proof (*see II.B above*) that a transgender violation is going to occur, the competition should go on in order to avoid shaming the transgender athlete, assuming there is no safety issue in doing so. The GCA Athletic Department will follow up with the opposing school's Athletic Department after the competition and report the violation to the IHSA if it is a high school event. If it is a middle school event, the GCA Athletic Department will consider not scheduling the violating school in the future.

Eligibility

Academic Eligibility

On week three and all subsequent weeks of each quarter, we will run a report of all students with grades below 63%. Any student-athlete found to have a D- or F will begin the following internal process:

- The 1st-week name appears on the report: Warning (Yellow)
 - Coaches and parents were notified
 - Students can participate in all practices and games
- 2nd consecutive week name appears on the report: Intervention step A (Orange)
 - Coaches and parents notified - coach may mandate sitting out of practice to work on homework
 - Students can participate in all practices and games
- 3rd consecutive week name appears on the report: Intervention step B (Red)
 - Coaches notified
 - Student may use practice time to complete missing assignments and/or study
 - Students may not participate in games
 - These restrictions will continue until the grade rises above failing.
- If the student improves the grade above 63% at any point in the process, they will become fully eligible and can resume regular practice and game participation. The above process will begin again until the quarter ends.
- Student-athletes will become academically ineligible (IHSAA/external) to participate in athletics if they have a D- or F (below 63%) at the end of a quarter or a semester.
 - A failing quarter grade will result in ineligibility for the following quarter.
 - A failing semester grade will result in ineligibility for the following semester.
 - Students will become eligible again on the next certification date, assuming they no longer have a failing grade.

Disciplinary Eligibility: All GCA student-athletes must remain in good standing and follow the student and athletic handbooks. The purpose of any discipline at GCA is to correct and restore, as in Hebrews 12:6.

- **TEAM DISCIPLINE** - The coach (not players or team captains) will administer this, and may result in ineligibility from contests per the individual team rules and expectations.
- **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE** - Discipline issued by the school for violations from the student handbook takes precedence over athletic endeavors, including practice and competition.
 - Detentions must be served before attending practice
 - Students suspended from school are not permitted to practice or compete during the time they are suspended
 - Drug or Alcohol related offenses shall result in the following.
 - 1st offense - 25% of the season
 - 2nd offense - removal from the team

Attendance Eligibility

All GCA student-athletes will be expected to be at school on time for the entire school day to participate in practice or competition. Some **Pre-Excused** exclusions may apply.

- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES** - Any student-athlete with an unexcused absence during the day will be unable to participate that day. This includes but is not limited to skipping class, unexcused late arrival, and leaving campus without permission
- **UNEXCUSED TARDIES** - Any student-athlete with an unexcused tardy during the day will be unable to participate that day. This includes but is not limited to arriving late to school, missing one or more scheduled blocks, or leaving campus early.
- **EXCUSED ABSENCES** - In certain circumstances, a student may have an excused absence and still be eligible to compete. In these circumstances, they must be approved and still be at school for the maximum part of the day possible. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Sickness - Doctor's note - If you are too sick for school, you are too sick to participate
 - Medical/Dental Appointment - pre-arranged
 - Family Emergency/Death/Funeral
 - School Related/College Visit
 - Extenuating circumstances with administrative approval

Medical Eligibility

Per IHSAA Regulations, all GCA student-athletes must have all required forms on file with the athletic department and maintain a proper level of medical well-being to remain eligible. These forms are located in your FinalForms account.

- **IHSAA PHYSICAL FORM** - All athletes must have passed a physical and have a current (dated after April 1, 2023) signed copy, including the consent form on file in the athletic office, to be eligible to participate. The consent form is now located in your FinalForms account.
- **CONCUSSION EDUCATION FORM** - This form (in your FinalForms account) must also be on file with the athletic department before participating.
- **MEDICAL WELLNESS** - GCA Employs a full-time certified athletic trainer (ATC) through Franciscan Health Sports Medicine. **All** injuries should be directed to that trainer. The ATC will then recommend the coach and parents for the course of action relative to the injury. The ATC will determine whether medical eligibility has been met. At times, the ATC may determine that an athlete is ineligible and will provide the course of action needed to return to eligibility.
- **CONCUSSIONS** - It is mandatory for all athletes who sustain a concussion to complete the **Return to Play protocol with the Athletic Trainer** before returning to athletic participation, even if a physician clearance note has been received before the protocol has been completed. All diagnosed concussions require the IHSAA Return to Activity form.
- **CLEARANCE NOTES** - Any athlete whom a healthcare professional has seen for an injury that may affect participation must submit a form of documentation to the athletic trainer before returning to their sport (physician's note, healthcare professional standing orders, visit note, etc.).

Athletic Program Expectations

Expectations for student-athletes:

As a Greenwood Christian athlete, you represent the Lord Jesus Christ, GCA, your team, and your family. Participation is more than just during competition; it is also in practice, the classroom, and life.

- **COACHABILITY** — The GCA athlete will be coachable and willing to accept constructive criticism. He/she will look to improve and be willing to submit to the leadership and expertise of the coach.
- **COMPETITIVENESS**—The GCA athlete will sacrifice the time and energy to prepare for and compete wholeheartedly through fair play.
- **COMMITMENT**—The GCA athlete will recognize the need to place others ahead of self to achieve team concepts. He/she must be willing to make sacrifices to be conditioned through training for his/her sport.
- **DESIRE TO IMPROVE**—The GCA athlete will have an ardent desire to improve and a willingness to concentrate on developing skills for each sport.
- **RESPECTFULNESS**—The GCA athlete will demonstrate love and respect for self, teammates, and opponents, even amid competition, appreciating his/her God-given talents and abilities. This respect is also demonstrated toward game officials and other authority figures.
- **INTEGRITY**—The GCA athlete will compete as hard as he/she can (as unto the Lord) per the rules to bring out the best in his/her team and opponents. He/she will maintain this commitment despite stressful circumstances and practice and play as though Jesus Christ is the only audience.

Expectations for parents:

As a Greenwood Christian Academy parent, you represent the Lord Jesus Christ, GCA, your child's team, and your child. There are eyes on you, and it's your chance for others to see Christ through you.

- **SUPPORT** rules and policies set forth by the IHSA, ICC Conference, School, and Athletic handbooks.
- **ENCOURAGE** your child to be the best representative of the Lord, the school, their team, and their family.
- **UNDERSTAND** your child's strengths and limitations.
- **MODEL SPORTSMANSHIP** and be an example for your child and others by positively supporting the team, all players, coaches, and officials and refraining from negative comments.
- **TEACH** your child by being an example to them and showing respect for opponents, school authorities, and game officials, even during tough times or adverse decisions.
- **EMPOWER** your child to advocate for themselves. Support and encourage them to have difficult conversations with coaches, teammates, or administration when dealing with controversy. (See Communication)

The administrative team at Greenwood Christian Academy reserves the right to dismiss parents and community members from contests if they do not represent GCA positively.

Expectations for Coaches:

As a GCA coach, you represent the Lord Jesus Christ, GCA, your team, and your family. You will set the tone for athletes and parents.

- **DISCIPLESHIP** — We expect coaches to be leaders who guide their athletes in their spiritual walk and disciple them along the way.
- **RAPPORT** — Coaches must be able to develop a good rapport with players, the student body, the faculty, administration, officials, fellow coaches, and parents.
- **COOPERATION** — Coaches must work hand-in-hand with the Athletic Director, the Principal, and other coaches.
- **DISCIPLINE** — Coaches represent their program both home and away and hold players to the same measure.
- **LEADERSHIP** — Coaches should model, in all ways, what it means to be a follower of Christ. They must show enthusiasm, honesty, and a love for the game and team.
- **INTEGRITY** — Coaches should conduct themselves in a Godly manner when coaching and in their everyday lives.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** — Coaches must report all suspected or known instances that directly affect our students' health, safety, or well-being to the appropriate authority.
- **PROFESSIONALISM** — Coaches should always represent the Lord and GCA in a manner consistent with our school and its mission. They should be learners in their sport and handle themselves in all situations with humility and respect.

Communication Expectations

- **Communication from Coaches**

- **RULES/EXPECTATIONS** - Each coach will communicate what he/she expects from players as part of the team - behavior expectations, commitment expectations, and more. Coaches will also relay how to earn a varsity letter and any other pertinent team information, if applicable. See the next page for more information.
- **SCHEDULES** - Including location and time of all practices and games. Eventlink - gcak12athletics.org
- **INJURY UPDATES** - Communication concerning injuries that happen during practice or competition need to be reported and communicated to the athletic trainer as well as families and administration as needed.
- **DISCIPLINARY ACTION** - Any discipline administered by the team.
- **WEEKLY UPDATES** - Eventlink -Season and schedule updates.

- **Program/Team-Specific Expectations**

- Each coach is required to provide written, team-specific expectations to athletic administration, parents, and student-athletes prior to the first contest of each season. This will outline behavioral expectations, commitment expectations, and disciplinary action for not meeting expectations.
- Parents and student-athletes must agree to these expectations in order to participate in a given sport. If a commitment expectation cannot be met, it is the family's responsibility to communicate that to the coach in advance. The coach may use their discretion in those situations.
- All team-specific expectations will be posted under the MORE tab on the team's page at gcacougarsathletics.com and linked in this handbook

- **Family Communications**
 - Families must clearly communicate with coaches concerning their child's health or inability to practice or compete. Also, when questions arise, they must be shared in an orderly way.
 - **ILLNESS OR APPOINTMENT** - immediately inform the coach or athletic office if your child is injured or will miss a practice or contest.
 - **CONCERNS** - PLEASE WAIT AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE ADDRESSING ISSUES OF FRUSTRATION AFTER GAMES.
- **CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION:**
 - Player must self-advocate with coach directly
 - If not resolved, parent may contact coach
 - If not resolved, parent may contact varsity coach
 - If not resolved, parent may contact Athletic Director
- **APPROPRIATE CONCERNS** - Concerns about mental or physical treatment of an athlete, behavioral concerns or ways to bring athletic, academic, or spiritual improvement are appropriate concerns. It is always okay to ask a coach what an athlete needs to do to improve and be considered for more opportunities.
- **INAPPROPRIATE** - Playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other students/athletes are inappropriate items to discuss with the coach.
- **Matthew 18** Sets the pattern for this form of communication.

Team Dress

Student-athletes are ambassadors of the school and, perhaps more than any other GCA student, project the school's image; therefore, the dress of all athletes is to be tasteful, modest, neat, and exemplary of Christian ideals. Each coach, principal, and athletic director will agree on the dress of the athlete before a contest (i.e., during the school day and en route to the contest), during the contest, and after the competition has been completed. Compliance of all athletes is expected, and the GCA school dress code must be followed.

Attendance

Attendance at Practices and Games

Each member of a GCA athletic team, including team managers, must assume the responsibilities associated with such a position. The athlete/manager has committed to the team and the school. This commitment includes regular attendance at practices and athletic contests.

When an athlete misses a practice, the Middle School/High School Principal or Athletic Director will determine if the absence(s) is excused or unexcused. If work or extra-curricular activities conflict with team responsibilities, the athlete must meet with the coach, and the coach will determine appropriate attendances/absences as long as all IHSAA Rules and Regulations are followed. School teams must take priority over club teams, travel teams, or any other team outside of the school and must meet IHSAA requirements.

When in-season athletic team practices occur on school vacation days, the athletes and managers are expected to be in attendance. However, choosing not to attend these practices will carry the consequences associated with the IHSAA attendance policy. Summer and off-season activities are strongly encouraged but cannot be required by coaches.

Absence from Mandatory Practice Sessions or Athletic Contests will be handled in the following manner:

Excused absence:

no action (but must follow IHSAA Rules and Regulations)

Unexcused absence:

1st offense: Conference with coach and discipline of athlete at coach's discretion

2nd offense: Suspension from the next athletic contest

3RD offense: Dismissal from team and loss of athletic awards

Team managers should meet with the head coach before the beginning of the season to agree upon the regularity of attendance at practices and games. A breach of the established agreement will result in the same disciplinary actions outlined above.

Attendance at School:

A student-athlete must attend school for at least ½ (minimum of 2 of the 4 class blocks) of the instructional time of the school day to participate in a practice or game that same day.

1. Students who are absent for part of the school day while attending a medical appointment and who bring a note from the doctor confirming the visit will be allowed to participate in the practice or athletic contest on that day.
2. The Principal and Athletic Director may grant a student-athlete permission to participate because of extenuating circumstances.
3. Any absence that would be categorized as unexcused will render a student-athlete unable to participate in the day's athletic events (practice or athletic contest).
4. Student-athletes must be in attendance at school the day after an athletic event unless a viable (the excuse "I was too tired" is NOT an excused absence) excuse notice, signed by the parents, is given to the office. If any student-athlete receives an unexcused absence for this reason, he/she will be ineligible for the next game day.

5. Students properly certified to participate in inter-school athletic activities, who are absent from school for eight consecutive days due to illness or injury, or who are physically unable to practice for eight consecutive days due to illness or injury must present to their principal and athletic director a statement from a physician holding an unlimited license to practice medicine that they are again physically fit to participate in inter-school athletics and must meet the IHSAA required number of practices to participate in another contest.
6. Suspensions - If the student-athlete is suspended from school (in-school or out of school) for any reason, he/she is ineligible from practice and athletic competition for the duration of the suspension. The Middle School/High School Principal and the Athletic Director will determine the duration. The Principal and Athletic Director reserve the right to extend the athletic suspension beyond the duration of the school suspension.

Athletic Awards

Letters and Awards: GCA awards a varsity letter for all varsity sports. For a student-athlete to receive a varsity letter, the following requirements must be met:

- Underclassman (9th and 10th Grade)
 - The individual must have played in 50% of the quarters, halves, sets, innings, meets, or matches for the said varsity sport. For individual sports they must be a scoring member.
- Upperclassmen (11th and 12th Grade)
 - The individual must remain an active member of the team in good standing throughout the course of the season. (Attend and actively participate in all practices and required team functions). There is no minimum requirement for playing time.
- The athlete must be included on the postseason roster.
- Chevrons will be given for any varsity accomplishment after the first letter earned.

Each athletic team will hold an end-of-season celebration following the seasonal awards night hosted by the athletic department. Coaches will choose deserving athletes from each team to receive the following awards: MVP, Cougar Award, and Most Improved.

Academic All-State Awards: Each team's coach nominates these student-athletes through their specific Coaches Association of Indiana. Award requirements will vary based on sport. Each coach is required to nominate all eligible students for this award.

Patches Awarded: Patches are awarded based on accomplishments - Individual or Team, and at the discretion of the Athletic Department

1st Team

- All Conference
- All County
- All Region
- All State

Academic All-State

Qualifier (Regional or State)

Sectional, Regional or State Champions

End-of-Year Athletic Awards

At the end of each school year, the athletic department will present the following awards:

- Male Athlete of the Year
- Female Athlete of the Year
- Sue Tameling Memorial Scholarship (determined by committee)

Banner Policies

- Senior Banners
 - All senior banners will be displayed in the High School gym. Due to safety concerns, no banners will be displayed outside for prolonged periods of time.
 - Senior banners will all be 2ft x 3ft to fit into the existing structures.
 - All seniors will use banners provided by Inter-State Photography to assure uniformity and equity.
 - The Athletic Director must approve any exception to these guidelines.
- Advertising Banners
 - All advertising will be digital (TV's and Digital Program)
 - Exceptions will be at the discretion of Advancement and the Athletic Department)
- Athletic Banners
 - IHSAA varsity teams will receive a permanent banner upon their first win of a sectional or conference championship.
 - Banners hung on the main gym wall are limited to team accomplishments. Individual accolades will be acknowledged with a plaque or trophy to be displayed in the trophy case.
- Club Banners
 - HS Club teams will receive a permanent banner upon their first win of a sectional, conference championship, or the equivalent for that club.
 - Banners will be of school colors, opposite the IHSAA team banner colors.
 - Banners will be hung in a separate area of the main gym.
 - Banners hung on the main gym wall are limited to team accomplishments.

Important Dates

IHSAA Season Start Dates

- Golf - Girls - August 1, 2025
- Football - August 4, 2025
- Soccer - Boys - August 4, 2025
- Soccer - Girls - August 4, 2025
- Volleyball - August 4, 2025
- Cross Country - August 4, 2025
- Basketball - Girls - October 20, 2025
- Basketball - Boys - November 10, 2025
- Track and Field - February 16, 2026
- Softball - March 9, 2026

- Tennis- Girls- March 16, 2026
- Baseball - March 16, 2026
- Golf - Boys - March 16, 2026
- Volleyball - Boys - March 9, 2026

Please see the school website and/or Eventlink for all athletic schedules. Subscribing to the game and practice calendars in Eventlink for your student's sport will allow you to receive updates when last-minute changes need to be made. To create an account in Eventlink, go to eventlink.com, select Greenwood Christian Academy, and subscribe to all calendars that are relevant to your family.

Middle school sports will loosely follow the IHSAA start dates. Tryouts for middle school sports will not be scheduled before the above dates. Practices, however, could start earlier.

Senior Nights

Seniors and their parents will be recognized at one of that's sports final scheduled home contests each season. This will typically be either the last or second to last home contest. Other arrangements will be made if we cannot host during a team's season. For senior nights each senior/family will be provided with a 2ft X 4ft table with a navy blue table cloth to decorate as you see fit. Senior banners will be displayed near each athlete's table or in the gym.

- Golf - Girls - September 18th, 2025
- Football - September 26th, 2025
- Soccer - Boys - October 2nd, 2025
- Soccer - Girls - September 25th, 2025
- Volleyball - October 7th, 2025
- Cross Country - TBD
- Basketball - Girls - January 15th, 2026
- Basketball - Boys - February 25th, 2026
- Archery - February 20th, 2026
- Bowling - TBD
- Track and Field - TBD
- Softball - TBD
- Tennis- Girls- TBD
- Baseball - TBD
- Golf - Boys - TBD
- Volleyball - Boys - TBD

Awards Nights

The seasonal awards nights will be held individually by each team.

Picture Days

- All Sports Senior Banner - August 8, 2025
- HS Fall Team Pictures - August 20, 2025
- MS Fall Team Pictures - August 27, 2025
- HS Winter Team Pictures - January 7, 2026
- MS Winter Team Pictures - January 14, 2026
- HS Spring Team Pictures - April 8, 2026
- MS Spring Team Pictures - April 15, 2026

2025-2026 Limited Contact Program Dates



Limited Contact Program: (During the School Year-Out of Season) is a program in which the use of the School's gymnasium, playing field or other school facilities is open only to students who attend the School, or a Feeder School of the School sponsoring the program, is open to all such students and participation is on a voluntary basis. Member Schools have autonomy in determining the structure of their Limited Contact Period, provided that Student-athletes who participate in Limited Contact Program sessions may do so only at a maximum of Three (3) times per week for a maximum of Two (2) hours per session, and Member Schools do not exceed its maximum number of limited contact sessions per sport.

Sport	Fall Season	Winter Season	Spring Season
Girls Golf		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Boys Tennis		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Cross Country		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Soccer		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Football		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Unified Flag Football		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Girls Volleyball		December 8 - February 7 Max 18	April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Girls Basketball	September 1 - October 18 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Boys Basketball	September 1 - November 8 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Girls Swimming & Diving	September 1 - October 25 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Boys Swimming & Diving	September 1 - November 8 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Girls Wrestling	September 1 - October 18 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Boys Wrestling	September 1 - November 1 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Gymnastics	September 1 - November 15 Max 16		April 6 - May 16 Max 12
Track & Field	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - February 14 Max 26	
Boys Volleyball	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 7 Max 26	
Girls Tennis	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 14 Max 26	
Boys Golf	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 14 Max 26	
Softball	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 7 Max 26	
Baseball	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 14 Max 26	
Unified Track & Field	September 1 - October 18 Max 14	December 8 - March 7 Max 26	

krosati/onedrive/calendar 4/25