

UPPER SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

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VISION & MISSION

Vision

DC Athletics focuses on the complete individual as we strive to provide premier, comprehensive, and life impacting experiences for our student- athletes through athletics.

To achieve this, DC commits to:

- Maintaining a Christian-centered, highly qualified coaching staff.
- Providing lower and middle school feeder systems for varsity programs.
- Providing quality facilities for all programs to produce optimum playing and training experiences.
- Offering high-quality performance training programs led by a qualified strength coach.
- Continually pursuing excellence as a means of worship to the Lord and striving for championships in our league, district, and state.
- Cultivating multi-sport student-athletes.
- Teaching life lessons through our athletic programs.

Mission

Developing Christ-like character through the pursuit of competitive greatness.

Competitive greatness demands commitment, places team before self, and accepts reality, yet it pursues daily improvement for the glory of God.

VALUES & MOTTO

Values

- Honoring God
- Developing Christ-Like Character
- Pursuing Excellence

Motto

Everyday Excellence | Championship Character



PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Varsity

The varsity athletic program seeks to refine each player's athletic skills as individuals while building the overall capability of the team as a whole. The overarching goal is to build and shape the best possible team for competition while at the same time helping each participant build on their gifts / abilities. Each player must learn how to shape and improve their skills through hard and focused effort.

Team milestones and successes are the priority at this level.

Junior Varsity

The junior varsity program seeks to develop individual skills as a priority over team specific milestones and goals. The primary focus of junior varsity is to prepare its players to ultimately play at the varsity level. Typically, junior varsity players are in 9-11th grade and while there are no restrictions for having a 12th grader play at the junior varsity level, it is discouraged. A 12th grade JV player effectively takes a spot away from a developing, younger player and this does not promote the health of the upper school program.

Care is taken to ensure that substitutions are carried out in a manner that will benefit the individual as well as the team; however, despite the developmental nature of junior varsity, there still may be occasions when some players do not participate in a contest.

PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Freshman

Typically, DC does not sponsor freshman level teams. However, if a freshman level team were to be formed and a student participates on a freshman level team, he or she must only play at the freshman level. Once a student-athlete plays at the JV/V level, they relinquish the right to return to playing at the freshman level.



AFFILIATIONS

National Federation of State High School Associations

Each season the NFHS prints a rulebook for all the sanctioned sports for our school. The rulebook is intended to promote and preserve the sound traditions of the sport and minimize the risk to participants. This is a model interpretation of the rules of the game.

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)

DC is a member of the PIAA, specifically District I. DC coaches must be well informed of the rules and regulations set by the state pertaining to his or her sport. Before the start of each season, head coaches will attend a local rules interpretation meeting and visit the NFHS website for new rules and points of emphasis.

Bicentennial Athletic League (BAL)

The Bicentennial Athletic League was established in 1975 to create competition among schools of comparable size and to determine a champion. The BAL has its own constitution, policies, and moreover it sets its own schedules. DC is one of 16 schools that compete in the league.

ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB

Believing that Christ-centered school sports can positively influence a student-athlete's character, the DC Athletic Boosters exists to support the Athletic Department by promoting and encouraging our student-athletes to Honor God, Develop Character, and Pursue Excellence. As volunteers, Boosters provide team and individual recognition, fundraising, seasonal events, and school spirit opportunities.



ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Age

To be eligible to participate in grades 10 through 12, you must not have reached your 19th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year. Where you will participate only in grades 7 and 8, you may not have reached your 15th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year.

Your athletic eligibility extends only until you have reached the end of your fourth consecutive year (8th consecutive semester or the equivalent) beyond the eighth grade. Therefore, if you repeat a grade after eighth, you will be ineligible as a senior.

Additionally, you may participate in (a) a maximum of six seasons in each sport during grades seven through twelve, (b) a maximum of four seasons in each sport during grades nine through twelve, and (c) a maximum of three seasons in each sport during grades seven through nine.

Academics

A student-athlete becomes academically ineligible for competition if he or she is failing two or more courses. Academic probation is reviewed and determined every week, first on Monday morning and then again on Wednesday morning. Ineligible student-athletes and their parents will be contacted by the Upper School Office and an administrator. Ineligibility lasts until grades are brought up to a satisfactory level and reinstatement is approved by the Upper School Office.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Behavioral

A student who is involved in athletics is expected to maintain high standards of behavior on and off the field of competition. The Honor Committee will review all matters of behavior that do not comply with the guidelines set forth in the Student/Parent Handbook.

Coaches, the Athletic Director, and the US Honor Committee will work together to ensure that support and accountability are helping student-athletes grow and mature in all areas of school life.

Student-athletes who are removed from a team for academic or behavioral reasons will not be recognized at athletic assemblies or awards events.

Dual Athletic Participation

Parents and student-athletes should understand what commitment to a team entails. After joining the team, each student-athlete is responsible to fulfill this commitment by attending all team practices, contests, and required team functions. However, there may be times when the Athletic Director and coaches from different teams will allow student-athletes to participate in two sports during the same season. Both coaches and the Athletic Director must agree upon this dual commitment.



ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Sports Physicals

Students are required to obtain medical physicals for participation during the current school year. Physicals must be obtained prior to participation in athletics, including preseason activity. The PIAA physical form must be used and uploaded to Magnus Health.

Only one physical is required per school year regardless of the number of sports in which a student participates. A student must obtain his or her physical no earlier than May 1 in order to adhere to PIAA requirements. The Athletic Director or his/her designee will approve/reject physicals and notify families and coaches about athletes' statuses. **Between seasons, student-athletes who intend to participate in a subsequent sport must submit a PIAA recertification form (Section 7).**

Minimum Number of Practices

For the health and safety of student-athletes, each team member must practice a minimum of ten (10) times (only one per day is counted) prior to the first contest. If a player is transitioning from one season to the next within the same school year, that player must practice a minimum of five (5) times, if deemed necessary by the Athletic Trainer.

Captains

The coaching staff of each team will be allowed their own discretion in determining how captains are named. Some coaches use captains as an extension of the coaching staff, while other coaches use captains to only relay information and attend the pre-game meetings with the officials.

Team captains should have high-character, a greater sense of responsibility, a higher level of commitment, and should be service-minded.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Alumni

Practice: No alumni or adult visitors may participate in an in-season practice. Alumni may visit practices and address the team under the direct supervision of the head coach. School employees may participate in drills according to PIAA rules and regulations. No person, post-graduate or adult, may participate in football drills.

Game Day: Alumni are always welcome back on campus and are especially welcome at sporting events. DC Athletics asks that alumni and parents respect the designated team area (sideline, dugout, bench area) during play. Alumni are encouraged to visit with coaches and players briefly before and after the game, but are prohibited from sitting with the team and coaching staff during the competition.



COMMITMENT

Attendance

Before joining a team, parents and student-athletes should understand what commitment to a team entails. After joining the team, each student-athlete is responsible to fulfill this commitment by attending all team practices, contests, and required team functions.

The Athletic Department works with the Upper School Office to limit conflicts between athletic commitments and other DC-related school functions. If you foresee a conflict, please communicate these situations to your coach as early as possible. Unexcused absences will be addressed by the head coach.

Each team member must be in attendance at school on the day of a contest in order to participate that day. The student-athlete must sign in at the office and be in school by 11:00 am. In special circumstances, a student-athlete with an excused absence may be allowed to participate in an athletic contest if he or she has obtained prior approval from the Upper School Office.

Quitting a Team

Quitting a team is not an acceptable outcome in DC's athletic programs, and we believe it is harmful to both the individual and the team. Any student-athlete who quits his or her team in-season without a justifiable reason (and without consulting with the head coach and Athletic Director) will not be eligible to participate on any other team in the same season (I Cor. 9:24-27, II Timothy 4: 7-8).

COMMITMENT

AP Courses & Exams

The College Board sets the date and time for each exam, as well as all policies for administration, including the circumstances under which a late exam may be taken.

AP exams are hosted at an offsite facility, and transportation is not guaranteed by the school.

Students are permitted to be absent from school for 24 hours prior to each exam. Monday exams do NOT qualify for a study day. Those who have an afternoon test may be dismissed before lunch on the previous school day.

Students must attend all extracurricular practices and contests, even during their allotted 24-hour study period.

COMMUNICATION

dccs.org and thedcknights.com

The athletics page on the DC website is the landing page and includes DC's coaching staff, individual and team accomplishments, facilities, other information, and a link to thedcknights.com website. Thedcknights.com website is the primary location for people to find information concerning DC Athletics. The website includes schedules, rosters, and announcements. Each calendar item contains even more details (dismissal, departure, and address) when users click the event. This website has the capacity to send its users alerts via email or text.

Email and sportsYou

The Athletic Department staff will disseminate important information about upcoming special events, updates, etc through email. Coaches are required to email weekly updates to their teams in addition to communicating changes directly to athletes and parents.

Coaches will use the sportsYou app to send notifications on schedules and updates, communicate reminders, post polls, post pictures, etc.

Social Media

Instagram users may follow @thedcknights and view images that promote, capture, or celebrate coaches and student-athletes.

TRANSPORTATION AND FACILITIES

Practices and Home Events

Transportation will be provided to and from home games that are held at off-campus locations. Transportation will also be provided for practices held off-campus, however, each student-athlete will need to be promptly picked up at that off-campus site at the end of practice. Parents should plan on picking up their student-athletes promptly at the end of games or practices. In situations where a parent is late arriving, please communicate with your team's coach via phone / text/ email, if possible. Coaches will wait with any student-athlete who hasn't been picked up until his or her ride arrives.

Away Events

Transportation will be provided for all student-athletes to and from away games by bus or van (unless it is necessary for parents to pick up at an off-site location within a reasonable distance from one of DC's campuses.) Student-athletes are required to ride to games with their teams using the provided transportation. If parents would like to take their student-athlete home after an away event, they may do so after informing the coach. If a parent would like another parent to take his or her student-athlete home from an away event, the former parent must communicate this arrangement to the coach.

Student Transportation

Students who drive to school can obtain permission to drive to practices when that practice is taking place at a location other than the DC Upper Campus. A Student Transportation Permission Form must be submitted in Magnus Health and signed by the student-athlete's parent to obtain approval to drive. No other students are allowed to ride to practice in the car with the approved driver.

UNIFORM POLICY & ATHLETIC GEAR

Uniform Policy

Students are responsible for their uniforms, warm-ups, and any other uniform-related items. Therefore, a replacement cost will be assessed if these items are not returned or are damaged in any way. Uniforms may cost up to \$200 or more, a cost that will be applied to a student's school bill. Uniforms should be returned to the head coach at the end of that specific sports season at a time designated by the head coach.

If a uniform is not returned to a coach on the designated date, the responsibility for the uniform will be transferred to the Athletic Office. The Athletic Office staff will then send the uniform charge to the Business Office. **Student-athletes may not drop off uniforms at the Upper School Office or the Athletic Office until the uniform has gone to billing.** After 30 days, athletics staff will order the replacement uniform to make sure it is present for the start of the season the following year and a refund of the lost uniform fee is no longer possible.

Athletic Gear

Each team will be tasked with opening a team store with a designated approved vendor at the start of each athletic season. Items available on that team store will include mandatory purchase items as dictated by that team's coach and other branded DC gear. Additional information will be provided by each coach the summer prior to the start of the season.

CODE OF CONDUCT

PARENTS

DC values the role that each of our parents play in supporting their student-athletes and by extension, our teams. DC's parents are the best and finest of our teams' supporters.

The following is the standard by which we expect DC's parent supporters to operate:

- Parents are expected to partner with school staff and coaches to speak and act as representatives of the Lord and DC. We are living testimonies of our faith and beliefs through our actions and words. It is expected that players, coaches, and officials be treated in a way consistent with how the Lord informs us to treat others.
- Parents are expected to support not only their children but also the team as a whole.
- Parents should not be verbally abusive to any person at a contest.
- Gossiping and backbiting highly discouraged. Those actions go against Biblical principals and are contrary to what the Lord teaches in his Word. Parents are encouraged to deal with concerns and conflicts directly with the person involved before sharing their concerns with others.
- Parents are expected to help their children learn dependability, promptness, and accountability by helping them to be aware of the practice and contest schedule. Give them ownership and help them to be responsible for their own actions.
- Parents are asked to allow DC's coaches to coach their children. During contests, please refrain from giving instruction to student-athletes.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Social Media

DC Athletics recognizes the influence and popularity of social media among our students, teams, and families. DC has specific language and guidelines related to the use of social media in the Student-Parent Handbook. There are also very specific social media guidelines and expectations as laid out by the Bicentennial Athletic League, in which almost all of our teams compete. Here are some basic guidelines that should be followed by our student-athletes and their families:

- DC's student-athletes who use social media represent the Lord, DC, their team, our league, and their families. Every student-athlete should consider this while using social media outlets.
- Consider social media communications as public at all times even if created with private intentions. If student-athletes are going to use social media in any form, consider any communication may be read by anyone at any time. Nothing shared through social media should ever be considered private.
- Use social media to promote your team and DC in a positive light and with a general feeling of pride. Avoid negative commentary online.
- Remember the ethical restrictions that apply to any form of public speech also apply to social media. It is inappropriate to communicate specifics about teammates, opponents, game situations, and so on using any form of social media.
- Posts on any of the social media outlets that are derogatory, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate should be reported to the your coach or the Athletic Director immediately.
- Under no circumstances should student-athletes get involved in back and forth negative communications over social media. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.
- Remember that many forms of direct electronic communication can be made public without the knowledge of the original message creator.
- Be mindful that social media sites are monitored by prospective colleges and employers.
- Be very sparing in the sharing of personal information, including photos.

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

Why Performance Training

1 Timothy 4:8 says, “physical training is of some value, but Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and life to come.” At Delaware County Christian School, we offer performance training that aims to give value to the students as they train their bodies and give even more value as they train for godliness. Our program offers a balanced athletic development program, including training for speed development, greater strength, as well as conditioning/fitness. To properly steward our bodies and train for Godliness, we strive to meet three program-wide goals:

1. Equip Students for Stewardship of the Body: We work to ensure that all students, athlete or not, leave this program equipped with both the knowledge and the confidence needed to steward their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Our aim is to inspire lifelong engagement with physical fitness as a way to glorify God and care for the gifts He has given us.

2. Athletic and Spiritual Growth: Through performance training, our athletes grow not only in their athletic abilities but also in their spiritual maturity. The team presence in the weight room helps them to grow as people who can overcome challenges, be in community and work together, and lean on their relationship with God in difficult circumstances. We emphasize the development of Christ-like character in every aspect of training, encouraging our students to pursue excellence with integrity, humility, and perseverance.

3. Injury Prevention and Holistic Health: We acknowledge that regular ongoing strength and conditioning is one of the best ways to reduce the likelihood of injury and ensure a healthy season. Our approach to training includes an emphasis on the holistic health of our students—physical, mental, and spiritual—so they are prepared to serve and honor God in all areas of their lives.

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

What do we do at Performance Training?

In-Season Teams and Athletes:

- The goal is for all athletes on all teams to train two times per week for at least 35 minutes, which is considered an optimal amount of time for student-athletes.
- Workouts focus on maintaining speed, strength, and power, which not only supports athletic performance but also allows students to honor God with their physical gifts.
- We also emphasize injury prevention by strengthening the muscles and movement patterns of athletes, aligning with the biblical principle of caring for the body as God's creation.

Off-Season Athletes and Non-Athletes

- We ensure there is at least one afternoon per week from 3:00 to 4:00 pm when performance training is available to all students, regardless of athletic participation. This inclusive approach encourages everyone to honor God through physical stewardship.
- Workouts are structured to be adaptable and beneficial to all, regardless of athletic ability. This reflects God's invitation to follow Him with our whole selves and his desire for us to grow no matter what our lives look like at the moment.
- At each of our well-rounded workout sessions, athletes will spend time training in the areas of speed/power, strength, conditioning, and muscular development, all while being reminded of the importance of character, discipline, and dedication in their spiritual walk.

Got Questions?

If you have any questions or would like to talk about how to make performance training work for you, feel free to email Coach Robert at rherrick@dccs.org or call at 610-353-6522 extension 2418.

SPORTS MEDICINE

A certified athletic trainer (LAT/ATC) is a healthcare professional who works to enhance athletic performance. Athletic trainers work to provide excellent medical care to all athletes. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis and intervention of emergency, acute and chronic medical conditions. Athletic trainers work under the direction of physicians, and require a state licensure and certification. Certified athletic trainers are trained in the prevention, recognition, management and rehabilitation of injuries that result from athletic activity.

At Delaware County Christian School, the LAT/ATC is responsible for the medical care of all student-athletes. The LAT/ ATC is trained to evaluate injuries, develop treatment plans, and initiate rehabilitation programs so that all student-athletes are able to compete at the safest, most optimum level. An LAT/ATC will be available at the school each day from 11:00 am until all practices/games have concluded for the day. In the event of an injury, the LAT/ATC will evaluate and treat the injured student-athlete. If a student-athlete should sustain an injury, the LAT/ATC is also trained to design and implement specific rehabilitation programs so that student-athletes can return to activity in the safest, most efficient way possible.

WHEN A STUDENT-ATHLETE IS INJURED

A student-athlete who is injured should see the ATC as soon as possible to obtain an accurate assessment of the injury. The LAT/ATC will outline a treatment program (stretching, therapeutic exercises, etc.) that can be used to specifically target the injury and initiate healing. The LAT/ATC will also communicate with the coaching staff and parents with regards to the severity of the injury, treatment plan, and expected return-to-play date. The LAT/ATC will communicate with the student-athlete and coaching staff on a daily basis for re-evaluation of symptoms.

SPORTS MEDICINE

RETURN TO PLAY

In order for a student-athlete to return to activity following an injury, he or she must be able to pass a series of sport specific functional tests without any pain or limitation related to the injury. Some examples of functional tests include the following: jogging, sprinting, cutting, jumping, throwing, defensive slides, karaoke drills, ball dribbling, etc. If a student-athlete is under the care of a physician for a sports-related injury, a clearance note from the doctor must be given to the ATC before the student-athlete returns to activity.

CONCUSSIONS

A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Athletes at your age are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussions. Once considered little more than a minor "ding" on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death or short- and/or long-term changes in brain function.

If a sports official removes you from a contest because you have exhibited signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, and/or balance problems) you may not return to participating in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and/or contests until cleared by a licensed physician of medicine or osteopathic medicine who is sufficiently familiar with current concussion management.

Every student-athlete participating in a contact sport is required to take an impact test prior to the first contest. A student-athlete who sustains a concussion will be required to take the impact test 24-48 hours following the head injury. After the test is taken and reviewed, a thorough evaluation of all signs and symptoms associated with the head injury will take place.

SPORTS MEDICINE

The ATC will then communicate with the coaching staff and parents regarding the treatment protocol that will be followed.



ATHLETIC AWARDS

The Knight Award

The Knight Award is given to one or two student-athletes on each team at the end of the season. The award is given to an individual who exemplifies what it means to be a DC Knight. This person shows great leadership, positive Christian character, and commitment to the team. This award is intended to recognize individuals who embody the DC Athletic Department's core values and mission.

Scholar-Athlete Award

This award is given to one senior male and one senior female student-athlete who not only shows great athletic talent in his or her sport but also illustrates great academic achievement in the classroom. The criteria for this award are below.

- The student-athlete must be a senior.
- The student-athlete must have participated in a sport at DC for at least two years.
- The student-athlete must have received league, district, or state recognition in his or her sport.
- The student-athlete must have at least a 3.6 cumulative grade point average.



ATHLETIC AWARDS

George Husmann Award

This recognition is a leadership/sportsmanship award given to one junior or senior male or female student-athlete who has participated, to some degree, in DC athletic programs. This award was initiated by the Chester County Officials Association in 1983 in honor of George Husmann, DC's first athletic director. Criteria for this award include:

- The student-athlete shall have demonstrated an ability to set a leadership tone for his or her team through all-around good sportsmanship.
- The student-athlete must have shown a consistent, respectful spirit while striving to show great leadership and achieve the goals set by the coach or coaching staff.
- The student-athlete displays a respectful attitude toward his or her teammates and sets a high tone of commitment to them in a way that is in line with the vision for the team and DC as a whole.
- The student-athlete will have demonstrated a courteous and respectful spirit toward officials.
- The student-athlete displays a respectful attitude toward his or her teammates and sets a high tone of commitment to them in a way that is in line with the vision for the team and DC as a whole.
- The student-athlete will have been named captain of his or her team.
- The student-athlete will have received the Knight Award during one of his or her seasons.



ATHLETIC AWARDS

Anne Berke and Carl Bowen Awards

These special awards are given in honor of Anne Berke, DC's first P.E. instructor/girls athletic coach, and in memory of Carl Bowen (Class of '73). Recipients of these awards must be a senior boy/girl who are outstanding DC student-athletes and meet the following additional criteria:

- The student-athlete must have been enrolled at DC for the past two years.
- The student-athlete must have received recognition such as The Knight Award, League MVP, Player of the Year, All-District, All-State, etc.
- The student-athlete must have participated in a varsity sport at DC for two years.
- The student-athlete should be an industrious player.
- The student-athlete should be a team player.
- The student-athlete must demonstrate a positive Christian character in an athletic setting, in the classroom, and in the community.
- The student-athlete must demonstrate growth in his or her Christian walk in one's athletic career.

