

MIDDLE 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

Values

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

Motto

Everyday Excellence | Championship Character



PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Our middle school athletic programs are designed to develop student-athletes to play at the upper school level while teaching life lessons through sports. This is accomplished through encouraging participation, skill development, and working to develop Christ-like character as part of an athletic team.

We encourage all students in our middle school to participate on one or more of our athletic teams. We desire to impact our student-athletes to grow in their physical development, skill development, and their Christ-like character.

Our coaches will provide all middle school student-athletes with opportunities to develop a greater knowledge of their sport and improve their skill level. Every coach at DC desires to impact student-athletes through teachable moments and mentoring relationships. Being a part of a team and experiencing the ups and downs of a season can lead to moments of growth in every student-athlete. Our coaches will work to exemplify Christ through their behavior, attitude, and love for their student athletes.

PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Middle School Teams

Student-athletes will be placed on A and B teams based on the coaching staff's assessment of them during the first practices of the season. A program could have an A, B, or C team. For example, the middle school boys basketball program has an A, B, and C level team. Cuts for all teams may be necessary depending on the number of students who try out for a team in order to maintain a healthy roster. Some sports will only have an "A" team depending on the interest level of students for that respective sport. We desire every student-athlete to have a meaningful sports experience through practice time and playing time in contests. "A" teams will be structured to compete at a high level and to help the more mature student-athlete become well rounded to be prepared to play at the high school level. "B" teams will provide basic skill development along with meaningful playing experiences to continue to help student-athletes grow in their knowledge and love for their sport and as a teammate. As a general rule, playing time at the "B" level is distributed more evenly. The "C" team will serve as an introduction to a sport and will provide basic skill development along with meaningful playing experiences to help student-athletes grow in their knowledge and love for their sport and as a teammate. No 8th graders will be permitted to play on a "C" team as an 8th grade player will effectively take a spot away from a developing, younger player, and this does not promote the health of the program beyond 8th grade in the upper school level as we see our programs from a 6th through 12th grade perspective. Playing time at the "C" level will be distributed more evenly.

AFFILIATIONS

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. For Middle School, DC is a member of the BAL in the following sports: boys and girls soccer, field hockey, boys and girls basketball, softball, and baseball.

NFL Flag Football

NFL FLAG is the official Flag Football program of the NFL. Our flag football team is a part of the Marple Newtown NFL Flag Football League. This partnership offers our student-athletes a sustainable opportunity to compete in a well-organized league that emphasizes skill development, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

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

Academics and Behavior

A student-athlete's eligibility is determined by the middle school administration and is based on grades and behavior. Grades are assessed on Fridays to determine eligibility for the following week. Any student failing two major subjects or more will be ineligible for athletic contests for one week. In the event that a student-athlete may become ineligible, administrators will send a preliminary email to the student-athlete and his or her parents to provide the student-athlete with an opportunity to rectify grades over the weekend. Final grades are reviewed on Monday at which time a final eligibility determination is made. If a student-athlete is ineligible, the Middle School Office will notify the student-athlete, parents, and the Athletic Office, and the student-athlete will be ineligible for the duration of the week. After the second week of ineligibility, the student-athlete may be removed from the team by the Athletic Director (in consultation with the middle school administration and head coach).

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).

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Minimum Number of Practices

For the health and safety of student-athletes, each team member must practice a minimum of five (5) 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.

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 Middle 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 Middle School Office.

Practices and Competition

Practices are held after school 4-5 days per week (Monday through Friday) and can occur anytime between 3:15 and 5:00 pm. Events will usually start at 3:30 and 4:00 pm with A teams typically playing first followed by our B teams. Saturday contests are rare for sports other than flag football, unless it is for a special occasion such as a tournament or meet (e.g., cross country, track & field).

COMMITMENT

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).

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.

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 transitioned 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.

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.