

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

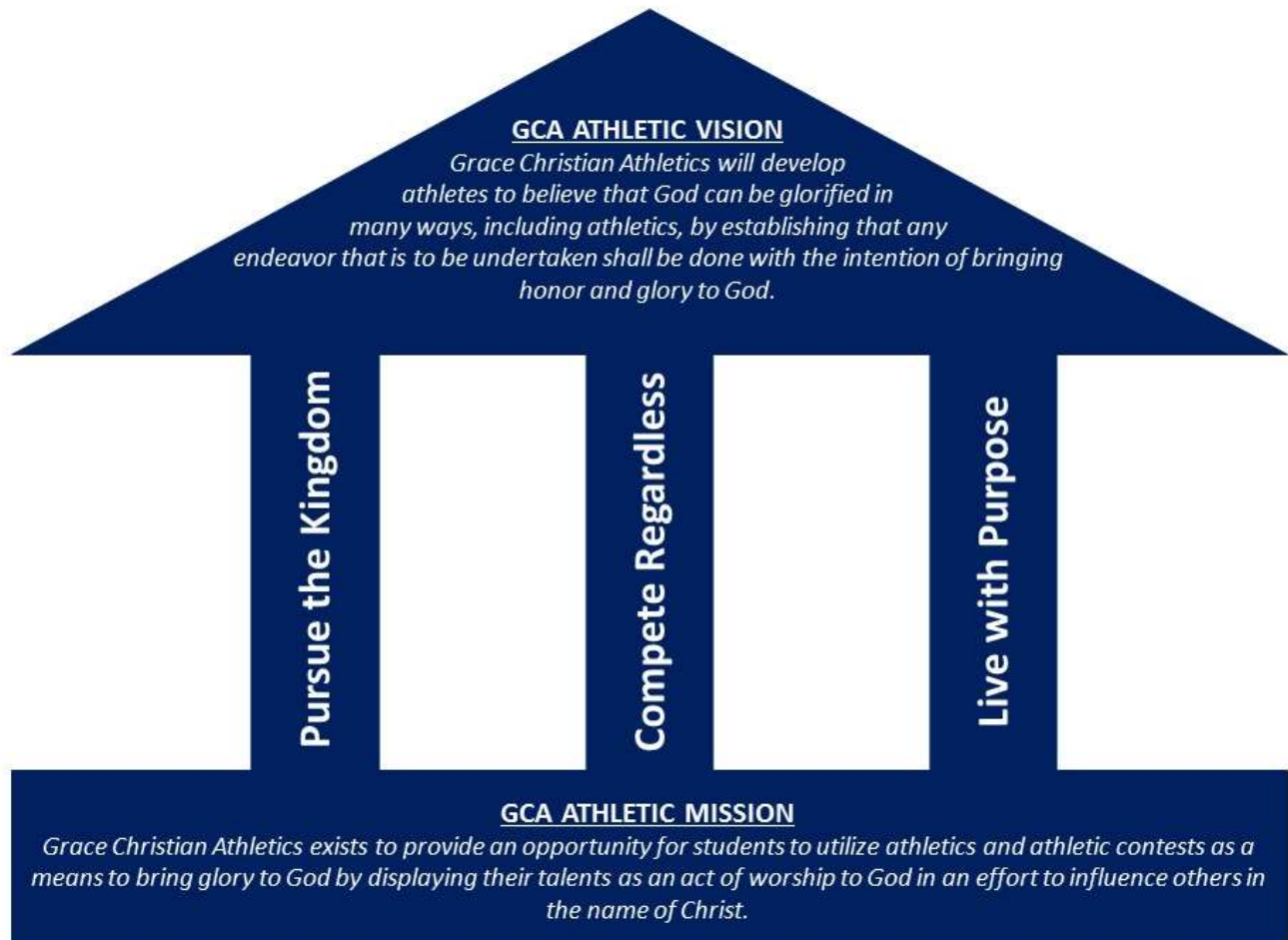


ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2017-2018

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ATHLETIC POLICY MANUAL

**“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
Colossians 3:17**



Pursue the Kingdom (Matthew 6:33)

- “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”
 - We are to seek the things of God over the things of the world
 - We are to do the right things (Galatians 6:9)
 - We are to submit to authority (Titus 3:1-3)
 - Coaches: Administration, Conference Guidelines, IHSA Guidelines, Handbook Guidelines, Game Officials, Assistant Coaches to Head Coaches, lower level coaches to higher level coaches
 - Players – Coaches, Game Officials, Administration, Teachers (Matthew 10:24)
 - We are to participate in sports with a Christian Worldview

Christian Worldview	Sports Worldview
<i>Sports are a gift from God</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love for games • Thrill of competition • Sense of community 	<i>Sports can become a God in and of themselves</i>
<i>Sports are God created</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of mind • Development of body • Development of spirit 	<i>Sports are meant for competition and physical activity only</i>
<i>Opportunity to put faith into practice</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize God-given gifts for the glory of God 	<i>Self-indulgent behavior</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring glory to self
<i>God intended purposes for competition</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playful Antagonism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Growth ○ Friendship ○ Enjoyment • Maximize Effort 	<i>Win at all costs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hatred for Opponent
<i>Opportunity to witness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize abilities and character 	<i>Opportunity to achieve fame</i>
<i>Training is an opportunity to maximize God-given physical talents</i>	<i>Training to achieve the esteem of others and/or self-harming training</i>
<i>Sports are a part of God’s sovereignty</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God cares about our attitude, effort and intent behind competing and how we exhibit each of these characteristics, win or lose 	<i>Personal desire for success</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning is the only thing and the outcome is all that matters
<i>Self-governance of the rules of the game</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-accountability 	<i>Seeking advantage in the game</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official manipulation
<i>Utilizing sports to grow faith</i>	<i>Utilizing competition and practice with the only intent to win the game</i>
<i>Utilizing sport to display grit and grace</i>	<i>Being obsessed with the sport</i>

Compete Regardless (Colossians 3:17)

- “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
 - Competition gives us the opportunity to display our best for the Lord
 - We should live this way in all areas of life (academic, spiritual, relational, practice)
 - Control the Controllable
 - Focus on effort, attitude and intentionality
 - We must play every minute of every game in the same manner, to the best of our abilities.
 - The score, the opponent, the number of fans, and the officials should have no impact on our ability to compete at our highest level. WE CANNOT CONTROL THESE FACTORS.
 - We can control our effort, attitude and intentions behind what we do
 - Focus on us, not them (Proverbs 16:3)
 - When we compete, we must have an understanding of the opponent (to have a game plan)
 - Our primary focus should be on our effort, our attitude and our intentionality in regards to maximizing the usage of our abilities to bring glory and honor to the Lord
 - Our focus should not be on external factors that include our feelings for the other team, what the score of the game last year was, who the officials are
 - Focus on the self in regards to the contribution to the team
 - An individual team member needs to focus on what gift they bring to the team that contributes to the overall success of the team
 - What role does an individual play on the team? Starter, back-up, role player, encourager?

Live with Purpose (Ephesians 2:10)

- “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
 - Sport and Competition provide us an opportunity to worship God through the display of our abilities.
 - Coaches have been called to the position they are in because they are capable of:
 - Having a relationship development plan (Matthew 22:37-38/Proverbs 22:6)
 - Coaches have a plan and are intentional about developing relationships with their players.
 - Having a program development plan (Colossians 3:23)
 - Upper level coaches have developed a program for fundamentals and schemes that lower levels should work to execute
 - This development is necessary in order to maximize the potential of all our athletes at each level in the process.
 - Having a fundamental and schematic development plan for each practice (Titus 2:7-8)
 - Coaches have a plan for developing the fundamentals of their athletes commensurate with the level that they coach based on the program development plan
 - Elementary Teams – Aimed at player development through fundamentals. The concept of competition is introduced. Basic schemes will be introduced.
 - Junior High – Continuation of player development aimed at preparing the athlete for high school competition. In addition to the fundamental instruction introduced in elementary sports, junior high sports will also aim to begin the development of schematic and competitive aspects of the athlete.
 - High School – Utilizing the skills taught at the previous levels, the high school level will be aimed at maximizing the potential that each athlete possesses. High school athletes will be asked to perform fundamental and schematic aspects of the sport at the highest level possible.
 - Players have been blessed with talents, gifts and abilities that are unique to them. These players are called to work to maximize their effort, attitude and intentionality in the development of these abilities under the guidance of their coach (Luke 6:40).
 - In order to accomplish this, athletes must be committed to working toward bettering their abilities (Exodus 18).
 - This does not mean that they cannot have other interests
 - This does mean that a commitment must be established to a limited number of particular interests at any given time
 - If an athlete cannot be committed to his or her sport s/he is limiting his or her ability to maximize his or her potential in that sport while at the same time hindering the ability of his or her teammates to experience success on the field/court.
 - The same can be said of the athlete’s conflicting interest. If the athlete has other commitments that are unable to be balanced with athletic commitments, he or she is limiting his or her ability to maximize the effort, attitude and intentionality given to these other commitments.
 - Based on this rationale, if an athlete commits to a sport, they must remain committed through that sport season for his or her own benefit and the benefit of the team
 - The sport must be a priority that is second only to God, family and health commitments.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

School Board

Administrator

Athletic Director

Coaches

Student Athlete/Parents

II. ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OFFERED

The Athletic Department offers several athletic teams for the junior high and high school students dependent upon interested student athletes and available coaches. Elementary school participation and training is also sponsored. Currently, the following programs are provided for our student athletes:

- A. Elementary (grades 5-6):
 - 1. Volleyball (girls) Fall Season
 - 2. Basketball (girls and boys) Winter Season
 - 3. Cheerleading (girls) Winter Season

- B. Junior High (grades 7-8):
 - 1. Volleyball (girls) Fall Season
 - 2. Soccer (co-ed) Fall Season
 - 3. Basketball (girls and boys) Winter Season
 - 4. Cheerleading (girls) Winter Season

- C. High School (grades 9-12):
 - 1. Volleyball (girls) Fall Season
 - 2. Soccer (co-ed) Fall Season
 - 3. Basketball (girls and boys) Winter Season
 - 4. Softball (girls) Spring Season
 - 5. Baseball (boys) Spring Season

III. ELIGIBILITY

The athletic department at Grace Christian Academy aims to support the academic culture at the school. For this reason, the student-athletes that participate in athletics at Grace will be monitored to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

- A. **'Fs'**. A grade of 'F' on a weekly progress report = no play. This means that if an 'F' is received at quarter time the athlete will be ineligible for that week. This would be applicable at quarter and semester time. One 'F' at quarter would mean the student would be ineligible until the next progress report that indicates no 'Fs' (could be the first week of the next quarter). One 'F' at semester time would mean the student would be ineligible until the first progress report without an 'F' (could be the first week of the next semester).
- B. **"Non-satisfactory grades."** A non-satisfactory grade is defined as any grade below a C-. A student will be deemed ineligible if he or she receives two non-satisfactory grades on a progress report or report card. This means that if a student has two non-satisfactory grades on a weekly grade report he or she will be ineligible for that week. This rule holds true for quarter grades. The result is that a student achieving two non-satisfactory grades at quarter time would be ineligible until a progress report shows all passing grades (could be the first week of the quarter).
 - a. **Note:** J-Term will be monitored and will count toward a student being able to recover his or her eligibility. After the 1st week of J-Term, if the student has all passing grades, he or she will be deemed eligible.
 - b. **Note:** The Illinois High School Association states that "a student becoming scholastically ineligible by the weekly eligibility check must remain ineligible for the full calendar week before possibly becoming eligible again."
 - c. **Note:** If a student athlete receives an Incomplete on the quarterly report card and fails to complete the work within the allotted time period, it is considered the same as an F.
- C. **Semester Rule:** an athlete will be deemed ineligible, and will be placed on probation for the first four weeks of the next semester if they receive two 'Fs' on their semester report card or if their previous semester's grade point average is below a 2.0.
 - a. **Note:** The four-week period for spring semester will include J-Term. This means that a student receiving two 'Fs' at semester, or possessing a grade average below 2.0, will be ineligible through J-Term and the first 2 weeks of third quarter.
- D. Any student being deemed ineligible will be required to attend study hall with Miss Gross after school each day. This study hall will take place from 3:00 – 3:30. If the student-athlete attends this study hall, and his or her practice takes place after the study hall, the student-athlete will be allowed to attend his or her sport team's practice. If the student does not attend the study hall, they will not be allowed to practice.
- E. The Athletic Director checks all student grades every Monday morning through Renweb. Grade checks are not taken in the middle of the week.
- F. The student-athlete has to be given opportunity to improve his or her tatus in order to regain his or her eligibility. This means that if during the week of ineligibility there are no new grades entered for the student, the student will be allowed to compete the week following his or her ineligibility penalty. Once new grades have been entered, the student-athlete's eligibility will be reevaluated.

- G. Christian conduct and character are important elements of the GCA athletic department. Excessive detentions will result in probation and/or suspension of the student athlete at the discretion of the Administration.
- H. The above policies also apply to any transfer student entering GCA. When determining athletic eligibility, the quarterly grades at the previous school is considered and averaged to determine the athletic eligibility of the transfer student.
- I. The Academy's Administrator and Athletic Director have the right to exercise discretion in regards to any of these eligibility rules. These individuals may work with the student and teacher(s) involved in an eligibility situation to determine if enforcing the above rules is the appropriate course of action. This discretion could be necessary in situations such as, but not limited to, a student receiving a low first grade in a class, resulting in a failing or non-satisfactory grade on an early progress report.
- J. Ineligible players are not allowed to dress or sit on the bench with the team.

IV. MEDICAL QUALIFICATION

No student athlete is allowed to participate in practice or games until the Parental Permission Form, Physical, Athletic Fee and Parent and Student Responsibility Forms are returned.

In order to ensure our student athletes are physically capable to participate in our athletic programs, each student athlete must submit an annual physical examination.

- A. Certification is required within the last calendar year. A copy must be signed and on file in the school office before the first practice for any sport. Fall sport student athletes who are new to GCA are given a two-week grace period. This requirement is monitored by the athletic department. The required forms are available in the school office or on the GCA website.
- B. Coaches will receive a copy of the Emergency Permission Form for each student athlete and have it available at all practices and games.

V. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is an integral part of the student athlete's academic responsibility. Therefore, all student athletes are expected to have a good school attendance record.

A student who is not in attendance for more than half of the day (4+ classes) the day of a contest will not be eligible to compete in that day's contest. Exceptions: College visits, school sponsored activities, family emergency (hospitalization/death) or other circumstances approved at the discretion of the Academy's Athletic Director and/or Administrator.

- A. Student-athletes are expected to be in class the entire day to participate in practice/games. Exceptions are made for doctor's appointments or a family emergency. Student-athletes are also expected to be in class the entire day following a game unless the student athlete is ill, has a doctor's appointment, or has a family emergency.
- B. All class assignments are due as scheduled for the student athletes on the day of the game and the day following the game. It is recommended that all assignments are submitted before leaving campus for classes missed due to early dismissal. Tests and quizzes scheduled during early dismissal are administered at the discretion of the individual teacher.
- C. An excused or unexcused absence is determined by the front office and school administration.

VI. PRACTICE/GAME ATTENDANCE

Practice is very important to an athletic team. This is the time when the team develops unity, teamwork, skills, game strategies, and self-discipline. It is expected that the student athlete will place a high priority on practice time.

- A. Each coach will develop a practice schedule for the season that is coordinated with the Athletic Director, understanding that changes are expected. Practices will begin and end promptly at the scheduled time.
- B. Whenever there is a practice/game, student athletes are expected to attend unless they have permission from their coach to be absent. Excused absences from practice/games are granted for personal illness, death in the family, or special family/church occasions. The absence will be excused by the coach and should be communicated with the coach in order to be excused.
- C. Practices/games missed for work and outside functions are not encouraged. These events, although valuable, are not excused if it conflicts with the athletic schedule without approval from the coach.
- D. Student athletes must attend the entire practice/game. Early dismissals are not permitted, unless approved prior to the practice/game by the coach.
- E. Practice and/or game misses may result in the reduction of playing time. The coach has authority to make these decisions.
- F. Excessive unexcused absence may result in dismissal from the team. The coach's attendance records will stand as the final authority when computing absences. The coach will communicate excessive absences to the Athletic Director. Together they will communicate with the athlete and parent the dismissal from the team and the reason for the dismissal.

- G. Required practices are held on school days only. Fall sports begin in August, two full weeks before school begins; winter sports on November 1; and spring sports begin after the varsity basketball seasons are over. Saturday practices are permitted with approval from the Athletic Director. Vacation day practices (i.e. Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Spring Break) are to be attended if the student athlete is in town. Every effort should be made to participate in games during vacation days. Absence from vacation day practices must be communicated with the coach. The coach has the authority to make playing time decisions based on vacation day practice misses.
- H. Injured student athletes who cannot physically participate are expected to attend all practices and games to support their team. Practice exceptions are for physical therapy or other medical related appointments. During all games, injured athletes will sit on the bench with the team.
- I. Any student athlete that will not attend a practice or game due to an excused absence must *personally* notify the coach as far in advance as possible. If the coach does not work at GCA, please notify the Athletic Director.

VII. CONDUCT AND DRESS

The student-athlete is in a strategic position to give others a picture of our school. That responsibility is not to be taken lightly. Student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen – on and off the field or court. The student-athlete is expected to be a testimony of Jesus Christ by their actions and words. Additionally, student-athletes should take pride in their personal appearance, understanding that their appearance is a reflection of Jesus Christ and GCA.

- A. If any student-athlete willfully damages the property of GCA or that of any opposing school, that student-athlete is liable for the damage and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- B. Student-athletes will show proper respect for their teammates, coaches, officials, and fans at all times.
 - a. Taunting or disrespect toward opposing players, coaches, fans, or referees is not tolerated.
- C. As a minimum, the student athlete will adhere to the GCA dress code at all home and away games as defined in the student handbook. Student athletes arriving from other athletic events (games or practice) are permitted to remain without having to change clothes.
- D. Individual coaches may set special standards for game days or special situations (such as tournaments) with the approval from the Athletic Director.
- E. No jewelry (which includes visible body piercing objects) shall be worn in any sport, practice, or games.

VIII. SPORTSMANSHIP CODE

As in all areas of athletics, it is expected that our student athletes and fans conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner. Our faculty and administration are committed to promoting a high level of sportsmanship in such a way that avoids belittling others. Uncompromising respect for referees and officials is the standard. A focus to win is best tempered by an attitude of mutual respect. It is understood that watching any GCA athletic contest is a privilege and not a right. The following guidelines will be adhered to during all athletic competitions:

- A. Be reverent during prayer and the national anthem.
- B. Cheer for our team and not against anyone. Do not “boo” or make degrading remarks to anyone (i.e. opposing players, opposing fans, referees). Be positive! Do not question the abilities of a player on our own team and/or the decisions made by a coach. If you have a question about what a coach is doing, approach the coach and ask your question in a manner to provide clarification. Questioning a coach regarding starting line-ups and/or schematic decisions are not appropriate.
- C. Coaches are the only individuals that are to communicate with game officials. Parents, players and fans are to refrain from making comments to officials.
- D. Avoid anything that tends toward destructiveness or misuse of property, such as beating on the sides of the gym or banging on the bleachers.
- E. Inappropriate and disruptive noises should not be made during games.
- F. Remain off the playing floor or field, including before the contest begins, during halftimes or other breaks in the action, and after the contest is over.
- G. Abuse of any of these spectator guidelines may result in removal from the premises.

IX. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Participation in athletics is an honor and a privilege as our student athletes are a public example to other students. Violation of the guidelines in this manual will result in disciplinary action (i.e. game suspension or team dismissal). Together, the athletic director, administration, and head coach have the authority to remove an athlete from any team when necessary.

- A. Technical Fouls/Cautions/Ejections. Any athlete receiving a conduct technical foul, unsportsmanlike caution (yellow/red card), or a verbal caution will result in a discussion with the head coach as deemed necessary. Any student athlete receiving a red card or technical in two consecutive games is immediately removed from that game/match and the following game/match. Any additional conduct fouls/cautions will result in a meeting with the coach, the student athlete, the parents, and the Athletic Director for further disciplinary actions.
- B. Any student athlete receiving two detentions in a semester (other than for tardies) will be deemed ineligible for the next contest his or her team competes. Each subsequent detention after the second detention will result in the student being deemed ineligible for the appropriate number of contests. Excessive detentions will result in a meeting with the coach, the student-athlete, the parents, and the athletic director for further disciplinary actions.
- C. An individual leaving a squad without the coach's permission or because of athletic rules violation forfeits all awards and may not participate on any other athletic team that same sport season.
- D. Any conduct on a team sanctioned trip or during a team sanctioned event that compromises the integrity of the athletic department or the school can result in dismissal from the athletic team and may result in removal from athletics at Grace.

X. UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, AND FEES

Good stewardship is important as we take care of what has been provided for us. Therefore, all equipment must be handled with respect.

- A. Uniforms are used for games only. They are not to be worn except for a game for which they have been specified. This means that student athletes are not to wear in PE class, or for any other occasion without permission from the Athletic Director. Coaches who would like for their teams to wear uniforms to school may allow their teams to do so.
- B. Uniforms are the property of GCA and are to be returned clean at the completion of every athletic season. In the event a uniform is not returned or is damaged, the student athlete must pay the replacement cost.
- C. Equipment is issued and used only in the way intended for that particular sport. (Example: volleyballs are not soccer balls.) Coaches are responsible for the care of their equipment.

XI. PLAYING TIME POLICY

At the high school level, there are no playing time requirements. Parents and student athletes should understand that at this level, playing time is determined by skill level. It is implicitly understood that attitude, commitment, and work ethic are major components to be considered as well. At the middle school level, we observe the following guidelines: *Grades 5 and 6*) equal playing time for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the contest with the final $\frac{1}{4}$ left to coach's discretion; *Grades 7 and 8*) no playing time requirements, although special efforts should be made to create opportunities for some playing time.

XII. TOURNAMENTS

Grace teams have the opportunity to participate in tournaments that sometimes require an overnight stay. Student athletes are responsible for the cost of accommodations and their meals. Student athletes are expected to adhere to all school codes of conduct while on these trips.

XIII. ATHLETIC INSURANCE POLICY

GCA does not assume any financial liability for injuries received while students are participating on an athletic team. Athletes should have some form of insurance as a result.

XIV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Games are often cancelled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.

- A. Authority to cancel games: The athletic director makes the final decision of cancellation regarding games.
- B. Authority to cancel practices: The team head coach will make the final decision regarding canceling practice.
- C. Announcement: During school hours, information is passed to the classrooms. Additionally, the cancellation will be posted on the GCA website and/or a parent alert will be sent to notify parents.

XV. TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

- A. Best efforts will be made to provide school transportation for all student athletes to games.
- B. When transportation is provided, all student athletes must ride in school provided transportation to away games. The student athlete may return home with a parent provided the parent signs for the athlete to ride home with them on the appropriate form.
- C. Transportation plans for games will be announced to the student-athletes. If parent transportation is necessary, this information will be communicated in advance.

XVI. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Awards are important in a person's life and we recognize our student athletes for their God-given ability and achievement and as a means of motivation. God has promised awards for Christians who excel in areas of Christian life.

A. Athletic Awards

- a. Varsity letters are earned by reaching the following goals:

- Volleyball Play at least half of the games.
- Soccer Play at least half of the halves.
- Basketball Play at least half of the quarters.
- Softball/Baseball Play at least half of the innings.
- Cheerleading Cheer the entire season.

- b. To earn a high school letter, a student athlete must participate in one sport for one year. If a player "letters" the player will receive a letter "G" with the appropriate pin (ball of the sport played) and a bar. Each year after that, when that same player "letters" again, they will receive another "bar" pin for the same sport. Any student having outstanding debts for equipment or uniforms (lost or stolen) will not receive an award until all debts are paid. Student-athletes unable to complete a season due to injury, illness or other such circumstances may earn an award if the coach feels it is justified.
- c. A Certificate of Participation is given to all elementary and JH student athletes.
- d. One student athlete from each GCA team (EL, JH, JV, and Varsity) will receive an award recognizing Christian character (The Crusader Award). To be eligible for this award, the student athlete must be a full-time student at GCA. Coaches will award up to three additional trophies at the discretion of the Athletic Director, based upon overall statistics and contribution to the team.
- e. Student athletes who play at the varsity level in at least three sports in a school year are eligible for the Triple Letter Award, if they meet the individual team letter requirements.
- f. The top senior athlete is chosen for the Dallas Washer Award by the Athletic Director and Administration.
- g. Homeschool student athletes are eligible to be a captain or co-captain during their second consecutive year as a team member.

B. Scholar-Athlete Awards

- a. The scholar-athlete Awards are presented to high school athletes who earn the award through a point total combining participation in athletics through the third quarter. Student-athletes must participate in at least two sports and have at least a 90% average, with no failing grades to qualify as a Scholar Athlete. These awards will be given at the end of the school year. Levels of acknowledgement are:

Scholar Athlete of the Year	(1 girl and 1 boy chosen out of the top 4)
MVP Scholar Athletes	(90-100 points)
1 st Team Scholar Athletes	(80-89 points)
2 nd Team Scholar Athletes	(70-79 points)

Point System for Scholar Athlete Award, 100 points maximum:
(Scholarship – 70 points; Athletics – 30 points)

Grade Point Distribution Scale:

100 -70 pts.
99 – 68 pts.
98 – 66 pts.
97 – 64 pts.
96 – 62 pts.
95 – 60 pts.
94 – 58 pts.
93 – 56 pts.
92 – 54 pts.
91 – 52 pts.
90 – 50 pts.

Athletic Points:

Two sports – 20 pts.
Three sports – 25 pts.
Four+ sports – 30 pts.

C. Sport Awards Dates/Sport Award Banquet

- a. Each individual sport team will conduct an individual award ceremony at the conclusion of that sport season. This ceremony will be set-up by the sport coach in conjunction with the athletic director.

XVII. HOMESCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

Grace Christian Academy does allow Homeschool Students to participate in the athletic program. An application and guidelines are in place to regulate their participation. This information is in the school office.

XVIII. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Any time parents or student athletes have problems, they are directed to attempt to work them out with the source. If no solution is accomplished, the problem should go to the next level progressively until it is solved. For example, a problem with an assistant coach should be directed to that coach first. If further assistance is needed, it should be directed to the head coach at that level, followed progressively by the varsity coach, the athletic director, the administration, and the school board.

XIX. CHANGES

ALL CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNDER THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND/OR SCHOOL BOARD.