

# Prairie Christian Academy Athletics Handbook

For Coaches, Players and  
Parents



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# **PRAIRIE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY SABRES ATHLETICS HANDBOOK**

## **I. Introduction**

The Prairie Christian Academy Athletics Handbook is a reference guide for coaches, student-athletes and parents concerning the policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Prairie Christian Academy.

The coach of an athletic team reports to the Athletics Director and is primarily responsible for the compliance by his/her squad members to the rules, regulations, and policies governing athletics at Prairie Christian Academy. The Athletics Director will administer these rules and regulations as they relate to inter-squad and inter-coach relationships.

Sound reasoning, good judgment, and adherence to the school's core values will be the standard by which situations outside these stated rules and regulations are determined and evaluated. Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation. Thus, competition in PCA school athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to uphold standards established for the school athletic program. This privilege may be revoked if the athlete fails or refuses to comply with the expectation.

## **II. Philosophy**

The Athletics Department is an integral part of the total educational process of Prairie Christian Academy. Being involved in athletics provides students with opportunities to learn skills, good sportsmanship, leadership and the ideals of fair play and ethical behavior that are necessary for competition and cooperation in our society and Christian life. It also provides our students with unique opportunities to learn self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and develop loyalty to the community, the school and the team. Prairie Christian Academy encourages all students to participate in athletics by offering a well-rounded program of interscholastic athletics for young men and women.

## **III. Mission**

The mission of the Athletics program is to build Christian character in our students by developing their athletic skills, discipline, team work and excellence in performance.

Prairie Christian Academy Athletics Program should provide a variety of experiences to enhance the development of positive student habits and attitudes that will prepare students to think and act Christianly as adults in a democratic society.

Athletics should function as an integral part of the total educational program. It should offer opportunities to serve the institution, to assist in the development of positive

relationships and good will, Christian Character, to promote self-realization, all-around growth, and good citizenship qualities.

### **PCA Athletics Provide**

- An opportunity for students to pursue their God given talents and abilities.
- A “showcase” representing our school within the community and the province.
- A program with which students can identify and support as part of their school
- A program in which students can experience team spirit and accomplishment.

#### Focus of the program

- To encourage students to be good stewards of their talents and abilities; that whatever we do, we do it well as unto the glory of God (excellence in character and performance).
- To provide our athletes the opportunity to compete in a healthy and controlled environment with structure and discipline—working from a Christ-Centered perspective.
- To learn the principles of sacrifice, hard work, commitment, self-denial and unity in spirit and purpose for the accomplishment of something bigger than self.
- To teach students that they are AMBASSADORS for our school, our community, and most importantly, living testimonies of the grace of God.
- To help students learn how to transfer lessons that they may learn in athletics to situations they may face later in life.
- To develop the full potential of the team; this based in individual development.

The key to accomplishment within the program is to

- Stretch athletes beyond their present levels
- Root out self and ego
- Develop a mentality of serving one another

## **IV. Athlete and Parents Roles, Expectations, Policies and Information**

### **General Expectations**

- Relationships should be built on the Christian model.
- The TEAM comes first. You find no “I” in the word “Team.”
- Commitment to represent oneself, the team, and the school in a positive light at practices, and games through good sportsmanship and wholehearted effort.
- Winning is important, but ultimate measure of a player’s involvement is:
  - The character development of the individual
  - The spirit and unity of the team
  - The depth of relationships between the players, and between the players and coach.
  - The reputation gained by the team in the school and the community.
  - All players are expected to abide by the general rules given in the Student Handbook including behavioral expectations and academic policies.

**Our Christian witness is more important than winning. Our Christian witness must never be compromised for the sake of winning!**

### **Realities of PCA Athletics**

- It is a privilege to be a member of the team.
- Membership must be earned (based on character and ability).
- Individuals will have to compete with fellow members for positions and responsibilities.
- It is anticipated that individuals make a positive contribution to the team.
- More gifted athletes will play more dominant roles.
- The team operates on an apprenticeship model (i.e. younger and/or inexperienced players need to be groomed and learn from more seasoned players).
- Goals for the team are set by the coach after the talent base of the athletes has been assessed.
- The role that individual athletes have on the team will vary from year to year and sport to sport.
- Individual needs will be addressed within the context of the team structure, organization, and assignment of leadership roles.
- We wish to compete at the appropriate level in leagues and tournaments.
- All athletes have equal value and worth as individuals created in the image of God. Therefore, we do not equate their role on a team as having special status (there is no room for selfish pride in these talents and abilities).

### **Commitment**

In order to be successful, a student-athlete must place the highest priority on health, academics and training. All team members are valuable, and each team needs to know that it can count on its members to be there. Often this means sacrificing social life, family trips and other events, which come in conflict with the rigors of training and competition. Learning how to make wise choices is one of the most valuable life lessons an athlete takes from a good athletic program.

### **Team Relationships**

- Respect fellow athletes as persons of worth and value in the sight of God. There is no distinction between players on a team in terms of age and grade. We are all members of the same team with the same goals. The following rules will help us to meet these goals:
  - Be willing to put personal interest aside for the benefit of the team. Accept your role on the team as assigned.
  - Be willing to give your best effort each time you play regardless of how you feel.
  - Accept team members and work hard at encouraging them.
  - Respect opponents.
  - Be a good sport. Cheer all good plays, whether you are winning or losing.
  - Control your temper (do not “mouth off” to officials, opposing players, or coaches).
  - Persist in difficult situations.

### **Player -- Player Relationships**

- Never criticize, nag or razz a teammate.
- Suppress jealousy, envy, egotism and selfishness.
- Think... the best thing anyone can say about me is that I am a TEAM PLAYER.

### **Player – Coach Relationships**

- You will never learn all there is to know about any sport, so accept the corrections and instruction given as an opportunity to learn more about the game.
- Listen carefully to instructions, then ask questions if you don't understand.
- Never take corrections, comments, criticism or instruction personally! Corrections are given to bring about improvement.
- If you are never corrected, you are either perfect or you're beyond all hope!
- Be willing to obey the coach, the rules of the team, and the rules of the sport.

### **Athletics Code of Conduct**

PCA has a duty to ensure that their athletics program impart important life skills and promote the development of Christian character. At all practices and athletic contests, coaches, players and parents are expected to emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.

- Be prompt to practices and games.
- Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity.
- Be respectful of others - No profanity, obscene cheers or gestures, negative signs, artificial noise makers, offensive remarks of a sexual nature, trash talking, taunting, boastful celebrations or other actions that would demean individuals or the sport.
- Treat game officials with respect – no complaining about calls during or after an athletic event.
- Exercise self-control – no fighting or excessive displays of anger or frustration
- Promote a healthy life-style encouraging good nutrition and rest.
- Be open-minded, willing to listen and learn.
- Encourage team work on and off the field.
- Honor the spirit and letter of rules of the sport – avoid improper gamesmanship techniques that violate the highest traditions of sportsmanship.
- Positive cheering only. Spectators should not shout coaching comments – leave coaching to the coaches.

### **Game and Contest Conduct**

Players, coaches and/or fans may be ejected from a contest for inappropriate behavior. For persistent violations of the code of conduct, parents and/or fans may be asked by the coach or AD not to attend future contests.

Parents and players are encouraged to address concerns about code of conduct violations through the conflict resolution process outlined below. Conduct violations may be brought to the attention of the Athletics Director and Principal immediately.

### **Squad Selection**

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to see as many students participate in the athletic program as possible, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without unbalancing the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations of the most effective squad size for any particular sport.

### **Squad Reduction Policies**

Choosing members of an athletic team is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those squads. Prior to trying out, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

- Extent of try-out period
- Criteria used to select the team
- Number to be selected
- Practice commitment if they make the team
- Game commitments

### **Attendance the Day Before and After a School Contest**

Students are expected to attend all classes on the day of a contest and the next school day following the contest. To be eligible to participate in the contest of the day, the athlete must be present at least the afternoon of the day of the contest, unless the student has been excluded from school attendance for such reasons as doctor's appointment, field trip, college visitation, driver's test or such reasons other than illness. The purpose of this clause is to keep a student from participating when he/she is ill.

### **Attendance at Practices and Team Meetings**

Team members are expected to be present at all practices, team meetings, contests, and special occasions unless excused by the head coach.

### **Schedule Conflicts with Other School Commitments**

Athletes may request to miss a practice or game in order to participate in another academic or extra-curricular school activity such as music performance. Athletes must recognize that missed practices or games may result in reduced playing time in future contests.

### **Care of School Equipment**

The athlete is responsible for all equipment issued to him/her. Lost, stolen or damaged equipment must be paid for by the athlete or their parents.



## **Uniforms and Equipment**

Athletes are issued uniforms and equipment for each team. All athletes will be expected to hand in their uniform to the coach immediately after the final game of the season. A student will be charged for the replacement cost of uniforms.

## **Eligibility**

- **Academic**

Students must be in good academic standing in their courses to be eligible to participate on Sabres teams. Incomplete work or being behind in a class is unacceptable. We want to encourage students to do their absolute best in the classroom as well as the court.

- **Blended students**

Blended students need to be taking 50% regular school classes to be eligible to play on a Sabres teams. Special considerations can be made if there is a lack of athletes with in a particular team or in unusual situations.

## **The 24/48 RULE**

If you are concerned about a sport-related issue that requires you to speak directly with a coach, we ask that you wait at least 24 hours after the triggering event. But then deal with the issue at hand in the next 48 hours or forever drop it. Please make an appointment with the coach/coaches and in a civilized manner approach and solve the issue at hand. Cooler heads are inevitably more productive. PCA coaches will be willing to chat with parents at the conclusion of games, but cannot address emergency issues at that time.

## **Conflict Resolution**

- **First Step:** Student Athlete contacts coach – The student athlete should present the conflict/issue to the coach as soon as possible. It is always best for students to become their own advocates. It is expected that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this first meeting.
- **Second Step:** Parent contacts coach – If needed, a parent may contact the coach directly – but not just before, during or just after a practice or game. A parent should e-mail or call the coach to set up an appropriate time to discuss the issue.
- **Third Step:** Contacting the Athletic Director -- If a satisfactory solution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student and/or parent should contact the Athletic Director. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If needed, a meeting may be scheduled involving all concerned parties in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. The AD will respond to student athletes and parents in a timely manner as to the disposition of their concerns.
- **Fourth Step:** Contacting the Principal -- If there is still not a satisfactory resolution, the student or parent may contact the high school Principal. The Athletic Director

should be informed that this contact is going to be made. While there can be no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

- **Retribution** - Students and parents must be confident that the voicing of an opinion or concern, using the proper forum and method, is not only free from penalty or retribution, but also is strongly encouraged. The Athletic Director and coaches are committed to insuring that after a student or parent raises an issue or concern, there shall be no "retribution" in any form within the Athletic Department at Prairie Christian Academy.

### **Seasons of Play**

- **Fall** – Cross Country, Volleyball, Golf  
Tryouts begin second day of school  
Season ends mid-November
- **Winter** – Basketball  
Tryouts begin once volleyball is done in that age category.  
Season ends mid-March
- **Spring** – Badminton, Track & Field  
Season begins March and ends in June

### **Estimated Time Commitment for Each Level**

#### **Junior Sabres**

This is for elementary students in grades 4-6 in various sports  
Season: Weekly throughout the year

#### **Jr. B Teams:**

*Season Length:* 3 Months

*Practices:* 1 to 2 times per week no more than 2 hours and are scheduled right after school

*League games:* 1 to 2 times per week during the week

*Tournaments:* 1 to 2 tournaments, usually not overnight

*Team Selection:* Generally we do not make cuts at this level, unless the numbers are too large to be manageable and making more than one team is not possible. We will do our best to offer players that don't make the main team the opportunity to practice (at no cost) with the team to develop their skills

#### **Jr. A Teams:**

*Season Length:* 3-4 Months

*Practices:* 2 to 3 times per week no more than 2 hours

*League games:* 1 to 2 times per week during the week

*Tournaments:* 3 to 4 tournaments including 1 to 2 overnight tournaments where possible

*Team Selection:* Generally we do not make cuts at this level, unless the numbers are too large to be manageable and making more than one team is not possible. We will do our

best to offer players that don't make the main team the opportunity to practice (at no cost) with the team to develop their skills

**Sr. and J.V. Teams:**

*Season Length:* 3-4 Months

*Practices:* 2 to 3 times per week no more than 2 hours and are scheduled evenings or mornings

*League games:* 1 to 2 times per week during the week

*Tournaments:* 4-5 tournaments which include Regional, Zone and Provincials/no limit on overnight tournaments

*Team Selection:* If there are more players that try-out than there are spots available, the coach(es) will need to make cuts. Younger players that are cut may have the opportunity to practice (at no cost) with the team to develop their skills.

**Games and Tournament Schedules**

The AD schedules all league games and tournaments for each team. Coaches in consultation with the AD may elect to add tournaments and scrimmages depending on the sport for additional games. All game schedules will be available on the PCA Athletics webpage, which may be accessed through the PCA website.

**Team Meeting**

Immediately following team selection, coaches meet with all student-athletes to discuss the following:

- Safety requirements/rules/policies
- School Transportation policy
- Coaching philosophy including factors that affect playing time
- Sportsmanship
- Team rules and expectations, including schedule of practices and games
- Importance of parents' role in supporting their student athlete
- How to communicate with coach regarding appropriate questions or concerns
- Prohibitions on hazing of fellow athletes, and consequences of such behavior
- Pledge letter (appendix 2)

**Team Break Downs**

PCA's Athletics Program consists of Sr. Varsity team (12/11/10), Jr. Varsity team (11/10/9), Jr. High A team (Grade 9/8/7) and Jr. High B team (Grade 8/7/6). The coaches of Varsity, JV, and Jr. High teams work together to build skills and develop players to compete successfully at all levels.

**Playing Time**

We understand playing time can be a very touchy subject in school sports. For our junior A teams, in the first half of the season, coaches will strive to give each athlete similar playing time. Following that the coach will use their discretion in assigning playing time. On our senior high teams, we will strive to see everyone on the court but participation on the senior team does not guarantee playing time. It will be up to the coach's discretion to assign playing time to athletes. We want everyone to strive to find their value in Christ, not in sports. We emphasize that all are equal in value, some will vary in responsibility. We desire that all our athletes have a great experience and we will try to make that

happen but the athlete must have that attitude of submitting to the coach, desiring what is best for the team over their personal desires, and putting the team first in their attitude.

### **Parent Information Sessions about PCA Athletics**

The Principal and Athletic Director will hold two information sessions for student athletes and parents to review and outline the policies of the athletic department, including philosophy, coaching, sportsmanship and commitment.

Fall – DATE TBD in September

Winter – DATE TBD in December

### **Participation Fee**

Families are required to contribute to each team, each season, as this Participation Fee is necessary to maintain the sports program. Financial assistance may be available for families that find the fees challenging. These families should contact the principal to discuss the situation. The Participation Fee helps to cover cost of officials and game costs. In addition, the PCA Sabres Banquet fundraising also helps to pay some costs, which allows us to keep our team fees as low as possible. All overnight tournament hotel costs are covered by the athletes or parents, with the exception of provincial tournaments if a team qualifies.

Jr. High B Volleyball - \$60

Jr. High A Volleyball - \$120

Sr. High JV Volleyball - \$125

Sr. High V Volleyball - \$150

Jr. High B Basketball - \$60

Jr. High A Basketball - \$120

Sr. High JV Basketball - \$125

Sr. High V Basketball - \$150

Curling - \$50

Jr. High Badminton - \$20

Sr. High Badminton - \$20

Jr. High Track & Field - \$10

Sr. High Track & Field - \$20

Cross Country – \$15

Golf – \$40

All sports will hold pre-season meetings to inform students about tryouts and expectations. These meetings will be publicized through school media and social media.

### **Pictures**

Team pictures are taken in the morning before school if possible. Announcements will be made for what day they will be taken.

- Fall sports are done in the September or October
- Winter Sports are done in the December or January

## **Transportation**

All team members are expected to ride with the team to and from contests unless parents drive their own children. The PCA school vehicles are arranged for Sr. High and Jr. High teams when there is an available driver and vehicle. All drivers of the PCA vehicles are required to be over 25 year of age and have the proper paperwork filed with the school office. In addition, the PCA bus requires a Class 4 license with S endorsement. For emergencies only and ONLY with prior approval from the school administration and parents, students may drive their own cars. Students are not permitted to ride with a student driver (the only exception would be siblings, and then only under certain circumstances and only with prior knowledge and approval of the principal). With prior permission from school administration and the coach, parents may drive their child and other teammates to and from a contest BUT these **parents must fill out the proper insurance forms located at the school office to be eligible to drive teams to away games or to pick up students from an away game.**

## **Fundraising**

Parents have helped raise money through a variety of activities including, PCA concessions for, basketball, volleyball, badminton, participation in the highway clean-up program, and PCA gear sales (T-Shirts, caps etc.), If you and your team decide you want to raise funds for uniforms or other purposes, be sure to discuss it with the AD and Principal. It must be cleared with the Principal before you do it. Players may only be asked to engage in fundraising activities after they have been selected to a team.

## **Parent Participation/Team Parent**

Parents are encouraged to support their athletes, go to games, serve as team parents, help out in the concession stands, coordinate fund raising efforts such as Sabres Athletics Banquet and Fundraiser, highway clean-up, PCA gear sales and other events.

## **Injury Information**

Coaches carry the league permission forms for all players at all practices and contests so please make sure you have filled in the contact section of the form. If an accident or injury occurs, the coach submits a written accident report to the Athletic Director within 24 hours. If the injury is serious the coach will call 911, and the parent. The coach will stay with the student until help is secured. Coaches should treat any acknowledged condition in the confidential manner with which the information is related by the parent or guardian. If an athlete misses practice on the request of a physician, the athlete should have a note of clearance before returning to practice.

## **Reporting an Injury**

All injuries which occur while participating in athletics should be reported to the coach. If the injury requires medical attention by a doctor or treatment centre, it will be necessary to have an **injury report form completed**. Once athletes are treated by a physician, the athlete must obtain the doctor's permission to return to the activity.

## **Awards**

Awards will be given as specified by the school award program and at the appropriate recognition activity as determined by the school administration. All participants are expected at these programs, just the same as they would be expected at a practice or team meeting.

### **Award Breakdown**

- Team Awards (each team coach will select award winners from his or her team)
  - Most Valuable Player
  - Christian Character Award
  - Most Improved Player
- Individual Athletics Awards
  - Jr. High Male and Female Athlete of the year
  - Sr. High Male and Female Athlete of the year
- Individual Christian Leadership Award
  - Jr. High Male and Female
  - Sr. High Male and Female

## **Grooming and Dress Policy**

A member of an athletic team is expected to be well groomed. "He/She shows up best who shows off least." Appearance, expression and actions always influence people's opinions of athletes, the team and the school. Members of a squad have made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of athletes in this community.

*The following grooming and dress rules will be adhered to by team members:*

An athlete shall dress presentably at all times, on trips, or at assemblies or banquets

Only uniforms issued by the athletic department will be worn in competition.

On sporting event trips where we have access to a pool, girls will be asked to not wear a bikini. If they do not have a one piece bathing suit, they will be asked to wear a dark colored t shirt over top the bikini.

## **V. General Information**

### **Hazing**

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person. Hazing is strictly prohibited by the ASAA, Golden Hills School Division and Prairie Christian Academy.

### **Athletics Training**

Athletic training can increase athletic performance and prevent injury. Any student that is in grade 7 to 12 can train. Talk to the schools Physical education teachers or Athletics Director for information and suggestion on how to do the exercises properly and what is best for the individual. No one should attempt to train without expert direction.

### **Coaching Evaluations**

Coaching evaluation should only be done by the players. This is to aid in the coaches own personal development as a coach. Athletics Director will give feed back to the coach when necessary.

### **Off Season Practices**

Coaches will clearly explain to student athletes the benefits of off-season conditioning. Coaches may provide information about recommended pre-season practices and conditioning activities. Pre-season activity is voluntary. No athlete currently competing on a PCA team may participate in pre-season activities for a subsequent season. Recorded attendance at scheduled pre-season conditioning is not a requirement for team selection. However, coaches may articulate the expected level of conditioning and skill development for team selection.

### **Club Sports**

Many athletes and coaches are involved with club sports. PCA teams are independent from all club sports. Participation in club sports is not a criterion for playing on a PCA team. We support athletes that choose to participate in club sports, however, participation of outside club sports teams is not an excuse for missing PCA team practices or games

### **Athletics Shoe Suggestions**

With so many different types of shoes it is difficult to know what is best for the sport you are playing. This guide will hopefully help your decision of what is best. Also, consult with your child's coaches or the Athletics Director if you are still unsure.

Athletics Shoes are broken down into a number of different categories:

Running Shoes: Designed for running in a forward direction. Have an elevated heel and good arch support, but no lateral movement support. These shoes are not good for court sports, but are good for track and field and cross country.

Skate Shoes: Designed for skateboarding, BMX, Mountain biking or casual wear. There are a lot of different models none of which are designed for court sports. They mark the floor and cause stress issues in knees, shins and ankles.

Court Shoes: Designed for lateral, backward and forward movements. Best option for basketball, volleyball, and badminton. There are a lot of different models to choose from. Just be careful that you get the right ones. There are a lot of models that look like court shoes but are not. They are designed for casual wear. Ask the sales person what is the best option for the sport you are playing. But be careful they will try to sell you the most expensive models.

Indoor Soccer Shoes: Deigned for turf, hard surfaces and ball control. Not designed for jumping sports.

Cross Trainers: Designed for training specifically. Can be used for court but not ideal.

## **Recruiting**

Coaches recruiting athletes is not allowed by the ASAA. Encouraging students to come to PCA for athletic reasons is not acceptable. ([www.asaa.ab.ca](http://www.asaa.ab.ca))

## **VI. ASAA, Zone and League Information**

### **Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA)**

- **Prairie Christian Academy** is a member in good standing of the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association, which is recognized by the Ministry of Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture as the authorized provincial sports governing body for supervision and control of the interscholastic athletic activities of all schools in the province.
- **The purpose of this organization** is to promote, develop, direct and regulate amateur interscholastic athletic relationships between member schools and to stimulate fair play, friendly rivalry and good sportsmanship among contestants, schools and communities throughout each zone and province.
- **As a member** of the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA), schools agree to abide by all of the provincial by-laws and policies, rules and regulations, with special emphasis placed on those governing eligibility, age limitation, enrollment and attendance, scholarship, residence, transfers, recruiting, amateurism, and the conduct, character and discipline of athletes.
- **The official publication** of the ASAA shall be the Policy Handbook which shall serve as the instrument for annual communication and Bylaw or Policy updates between the provincial association and its member schools.

ASAA – [www.asaa.ca](http://www.asaa.ca)

South Central Zone - [www.sczone.ca](http://www.sczone.ca)