

Florida Christian School Athletics Handbook



2023-2024

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Our mission is to develop well rounded students through excellent academics and extracurricular activities, while seeking to win the lost to Christ and equip Christians with the skills and the knowledge to change the world for Christ.

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The Florida Christian Athletics website www.floridachristian.org/athletics contains links to calendars, downloadable forms, directions and more. Follow us on Instagram @FCSPatriot_Athletics.

Introduction

Welcome to Patriot Athletics! Our Athletic Department is honored to be able to serve our families. We thank you for allowing your student-athlete to participate in our athletic program. Our Athletic Department is committed to honoring the Lord in a positive Christian atmosphere where our students work with coaches who have a passion for striving to be the best! We follow the scripture teaching where Paul wrote, “Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord (Colossians 3:23). Patriot Athletics operates in conjunction with our school mission, and we believe that interscholastic athletics is an extension of the classroom experience at Florida Christian School. The purpose of this handbook is to provide each of our families with information pertinent to the upcoming sports season. We share these items with you so that you may familiarize yourself with our Athletic Department expectations, policies, and procedures. It is truly our hope that each parent would be encouraged to know that our coaches and staff will diligently pursue a safe, competitive, and Christ-like environment for your student-athlete. Go Patriots!

Philosophy of Christian Athletics

Florida Christian’s approach to athletics comes directly from the school’s MVP’s – mission, vision, and core principals along with our philosophy of Christian education. The athletic department strives to instill positive Christ-like character qualities that are expressed openly through the medium of athletics. It exists for the purpose of developing physical, personal, and spiritual skills of the student-athlete that will have lifelong benefits. Coaches are committed to building eternal values in their athletes and therefore stress attitudes and actions in relation to God’s Word. The major purpose is to cause athletes to think, speak, and act like Jesus Christ. Coaches strive to develop the spiritual part of the athlete so that the Holy Spirit is in control and directing the mind and body (I Thessalonians 5:23). In providing opportunities for interscholastic competition, the athletic department seeks to support the overall mission of the school, and to promote the biblical ideal that everything should be done to glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31). In the context of athletic activity, the student is exposed to many spiritual concepts including the importance of self-discipline (I Corinthians 9:27), respect for others (Ephesians 4:32), proper use of God-given abilities (Matthew 25:14-30), striving for excellence (Colossians 3:23), time management (Ephesians 5:16) and submission to authority (Romans 13:2).

Athletic Department Staff

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Administrative Supervision

All varsity contests on campus will be supervised by an FCS administrator who is responsible for maintaining a safe and organized environment. Sub-varsity contests might at times be overseen by coaches. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Oversee gate and concession operations
- Resolving facility issues
- Crowd control
- Public Address

Programs Offered

Fall Sports

Boys - Cross Country, Football, Golf

Girls – Sideline Cheer, Cross Country, Indoor Volleyball

Winter Sports

Boys - Basketball, Soccer, Wrestling

Girls - Basketball, Soccer, Wrestling, Competition Cheer

Spring Sports

Boys - Baseball, Lacrosse, Track & Field

Girls - Softball, Tennis, Track & Field, Beach Volleyball

Affiliations

The middle school football team is a member of the [Tri-County Middle School Football League](#). The remainder of the middle school programs are members of the South Florida Middle School Conference (SFMSC). The high school is a member of the [Florida High School Athletic Association \(FHSAA\)](#). Florida Christian School will strictly adhere to the policies and regulations set forth in the FHSAA handbook.

Academics

Athletic competition is a privilege at FCS. Athletes are students first and foremost. Coaches will work with teachers to help student-athletes be successful in the classroom. If a student has a scheduled after-school help class, the student will not be penalized for being late to practice provided the student-athlete communicates directly with the coaching staff. Students participating in athletics should anticipate the demands on their time and plan accordingly. Student-athletes should be present and prepared for class regardless of game and practice schedules.

Academic Eligibility

The FHSAA has mandated that student-athletes must meet the academics listed below to continue athletic participation. GPAs are calculated at the end of each semester. Students who do not meet the academic requirements below will be ineligible for participation for at least one semester and for each subsequent semester until the GPA requirement is met.

High School: Student-Athletes in grades 9-12 must maintain a Cumulative Unweighted Grade Point Average of 2.0. Florida Christian's report cards post a weighted GPA. To calculate an unweighted GPA, use the following point values for all high school courses taken: A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0.

Middle School: Middle School student athletes in grades 6-8 must maintain a semester GPA of 2.0 or better on an unweighted scale. To calculate a semester GPA, use the number values above for each class taken in the semester. Additionally, the athletic department will generate bi-weekly academic reports for the coaching staff. Middle school student-athletes that fall below a 70 in any class will not be permitted to leave school early for contests until they raise their grade. This policy is in place to help train student-

athletes to manage their time and develop positive study habits that will benefit them as they enter high school.

Attendance

School Attendance: Students must be present at school to participate in that day's practice or game or present Friday, if the participation is for a weekend tournament or contest. To be counted present for the day a student must be in school at least 4 class periods otherwise, he/she will be considered absent and will be unable to participate in that day's extracurricular activities. Exceptions: Note from medical / dental appointments, funerals, etc. (cosmetic appointments not included) or Early dismissal for approved school activities (field trips, athletic events, etc.)

Athletic Attendance: Student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and games. Those who sustain an injury are still a member of the team and should attend all team activities unless they are undergoing treatment. Every effort should be made to eliminate potential causes for missing team activities, including medical or dental appointments; family vacations; or school disciplinary action. FCS athletics must take precedence over any other outside groups, such as travel ball or AAU teams. If an athlete anticipates missing a practice or a game, prior notice should be given to the coach. Excessive absences could result in removal from the team.

Clearance to Participate

Before athletic activity of any kind, all student-athletes must be cleared for participation by the Athletic Department. To begin the clearance process, visit www.athleticclearance.com. All documents, waivers and permissions are submitted electronically. The documents required for traditional student athletes are as follows:

1. FHSAA [EL2 - Preparticipation Physical Evaluation](#)
2. FHSAA EL3 - Waiver of liability (E-Signatures)
3. FCS Student and Parent Sportsmanship Agreement - (E-Signatures)
4. NFHS Certificate of Completion for [Concussion in Sports](#), [Heat Illness](#) and [Sudden Cardiac Arrest](#) Video Tutorials
5. [FHSAA GA4](#) - Affidavit of Compliance with FHSAA Policy on Athletic Recruiting
*Required for all student-athletes who begin attending FCS after the start of 9th Grade.

Coaches Responsibilities:

- Coaching at FCS is an integral part of the ministry.
- Coaches should be proficient in their sport.
- Coaches are contract employees of the school. Therefore, the coaches will, at all times, carry out all school policies and standards of behavior for faculty and students set forth by the administration.
- Coaching contracts are offered on a seasonal (fall, winter or spring) basis. Completion of a contract is based upon all compliance with the following:

Forms

The following list of forms must be turned in by the date stated on the Athletic Calendar:

Initial & Final Rosters:	Asst. Athletic Director
Award & Letter Winners:	Asst. Athletic Director
Season Summary:	Asst. Athletic Director
Uniform Inventory	Asst. Athletic Director
Report Ejections & Disqualifications:	Athletic Director
End of Year Evaluations/Conference:	Athletic Director



Game Day Management

Secure a scorekeeper/statistician for each game

Secure a scoreboard operator for each game

Secure an announcer for each game

Assist with set up and tear down for games

Incidents and Injuries

All incidents and injuries must be reported to the Athletic Director and the Athletic Trainer. The athletic trainer will fill out the accident/injury report with input from the coaching staff.

Reporting Information

Scores must be reported to the website manager Ricardo.macias@floridachristian.org , morning announcements, max preps, and the Miami Herald immediately following the conclusion of each contest.

Equipment and Uniforms

All equipment used by FCS athletic teams is the property of the school. At the beginning of each season, the coach will be given an inventory of the equipment and uniforms checked out to him/her. The care of the equipment is the responsibility of the coach. After each practice and game, a careful check should be made to make sure that all equipment is accounted for. The equipment should be locked and secured at FCS or go home with the coach. No equipment should be checked out to students for personal or home use. At the end of the season equipment should be returned within one week of the final game to the Athletic Director. All Head Coaches of every sport will communicate with student-athletes and parents a date, time, and location for clean uniforms to be collected. Uniforms are not under any circumstances to be returned to the front office, athletics office or PE locker room, but should be returned on collection day.

Middle School

Middle school student-athletes are to be supervised at all times. If a late practice is scheduled, coaches need to supervise student-athletes starting after school until practice starts. Additionally, if practice is cut shorter than the practice time communicated to parents, then coaches will need to supervise student-athletes until the end of the set practice. Otherwise, middle school student-athletes not picked up from school will need to attend Patriot Place from 3:15 PM - 6:00 PM on days when they do not have a practice or a game.

Sportsmanship

Any coach ejected from a game or issued a technical foul, flag, or red card is subject to disciplinary action or possible dismissal. Ejected parties will be responsible for paying any fines. Coaches may make inquiries of a game official, during the appropriate time, on a rule or game administrative procedure.

Communication

Communication Parents Should Expect From Their Child's Coach

- Philosophy of the coach
- Professing believer in Jesus Christ
- Expectations the coach has for the student-athlete and team
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements will be announced during the pre-season parent/player meeting (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, tournaments, volunteer needs, expenses, etc.)
- Procedures if an athlete is injured during practice/contest

Communication Coaches Should Expect From Parents

- Parents' commitment to be an agent of unity and community, not one of division or gossip
- Notification, well in advance, of any schedule conflicts
- Medical or physical limitations of their child

As children become involved in the athletics programs, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way athletes or their parents wish. At that time, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Matters to Discuss with Coaches

- The treatment of the student-athlete: spiritually, relationally, and emotionally
- Concerns about the student-athlete's behavior

It is very difficult for parents to accept their child's not playing as much as they may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all athletes involved.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Other student athletes

There are some situations that may require a conference between the coach and parents. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

- Parents should contact the coach to request a meeting.
- Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.
- Waiting 24 hours to pass allows all parties time to reflect and pray.

Conflict Resolution:

- Parents will first encourage their student-athlete to speak to their coach when there are concerns about playing time, their role on the team, or other issues regarding the team.
- Parents who are not in agreement with the coach will first set up a scheduled appointment to meet with the coach before sharing their grievance or concerns with the administration. Note: Unscheduled meetings with coaches to discuss playing time or coaching strategy, especially at the end of a contest are strictly prohibited.
- Parents who have first met with a coach and feel their concerns have not been resolved may only then set up an appointment with one of the Athletic Directors to seek resolution.
- Only after meeting with the Athletic Director, may a parent seek further resolution with the Principal or Head of School where a final resolution to their concerns will be decided.
- Parents who do not specifically adhere to the resolution protocol may forfeit their student-athlete's ability to continue participation in the athletic program.

*For matters of conflict involving two teammates or parents, but not related to FCS athletics, families should seek resolution together. FCS will not involve itself in conflicts unrelated to school activities.

Conduct

The highest goal of student-athlete conduct is for each person to "do all to God's glory." Principles of conduct are based on clear Biblical mandates and organizational preferences (standards outlined in the [Parent-Student Handbook](#)). Student-athletes are expected to treat their authority with respect and honor all students within the school environment. This demonstrates good citizenship and Christian living (Eph. 4:28-32; Heb. 13:17; I Thes. 5:12-13). Violations to the Parent-Student Handbook during the school day and after school can directly impact a student-athletes ability to participate in athletics.

Detention/Suspension/Behavior Contracts

Student-Athletes who accumulate an excessive number of demerits may be issued a detention or suspension. Detentions or suspension must be served on the scheduled day and time regardless of the athletic schedule. Student-athletes placed on a behavioral contract may be ineligible to participate in athletics; eligibility will be at the discretion of the administration.

Student-Athlete Conduct

Athletic participation is considered a privilege, not a right. Florida Christian student-athletes are public representatives of FCS and Jesus Christ. Student-athletes are expected to act appropriately. Behaviors that will not be tolerated include:

1. Fighting
2. Profane, derogatory, and degrading comments or obscene gestures
3. Inappropriate use of social media
4. Alcohol, tobacco or drug use or possession (including vaping)
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct
6. Defiance or disrespectful behavior
7. Taunting opponents or officials
8. Vandalism or destruction of property
9. Hazing, bullying, or intimidation of teammates
10. Racial Slurs

Student athletes who exhibit any behaviors listed above may be suspended from athletic participation pending an investigation.

Hazing, Bullying or Peer Harassment

Hazing or peer harassment that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health, or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in, or affiliation with any team will not be tolerated (whether on or off campus, social media or any other electronic means including air drop.) All athletes must be given the opportunity to compete without the threat of any type of abuse. Coaches have a responsibility to maintain a safe and positive environment for all athletes. Students are encouraged to notify coaches or other school personnel of instances of hazing or harassment. Anyone engaging in these behaviors is subject to being dismissed from the team.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Contest Ejection

Athletes and coaches at FCS are to be exemplary in their display of sportsmanship during games and practices. Team members should congratulate opponents after a game with a customary handshake and kind word. Unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind will be dealt with swiftly by FCS coaching staff to prevent any further acts. Taunting and/or in appropriate language directed towards an opponent or teammate is not “part of the game” and is inconsistent with the mission of FCS. Additionally, profanity, disrespect, and threat of or actual physical violence directed toward teammates, opposing athletes, coaches or officials may result in ejection from a contest by game officials. Ejection from an FHSAA contest will result in suspension from participation for one to six weeks and financial penalty. Students who are suspended from an athletic contest with a technical foul, red card, yellow flag, ejection, disqualification, etc. from a contest, the following consequences will occur: (1) These violations are subject to suspension from the next contest or multiple contests as deemed appropriate by the Association and/or Athletic Director. (2) If the infraction is a violation of school policy, it will be subject to school disciplinary action (Example: Profanity). All ejections are to be reported to the athletic director no later than the day after the ejection takes place. Egregious acts could result in permanent ban from high school athletic participation. Ejected parties will be responsible for paying any fines.

Team Dismissal Offenses

The removal of a student athlete from a team should be a last resort and is a result of a coach who feels that keeping the athlete would destroy the team or his/her ability to advance with the team. Behaviors that could result in dismissal could include, but are not limited to:

- Stealing
- Lying
- Cheating
- Use or possession of alcohol, tobacco (includes vaping) or illegal drugs
- Behavior that undermines the coach or team (absence, attitude, etc.)
- Inappropriate behavior in the classroom or during the school day

To remove an athlete from a team, a meeting should occur with the coach, player, and family to discuss the issue.

Spectator Conduct

Team meetings, practices and competitions are a part of the educational process at Florida Christian. Athletic competitions are unique in that they allow spectators to witness the educational process in action. The conduct of FCS spectators and fans is a reflection of Florida Christian and Christ to our community. Please observe the following guidelines when attending FCS sporting events.

- All cheering should be positive and supportive of the athletes involved.
- Respond to and support the efforts of Cheerleaders.
- Contest officials, opposing players and coaches should be treated with respect.
- Never express disagreement with coaching decisions or player mistakes publicly.
- Diplomatically censor negative behavior.
- Treat all property (home or away) with respect.

Administrative Discipline Process

- Discrete correction by FCS Administration.
- Removal from an athletic venue and possible consequences to student-athlete.
- Banishment from all athletic events and possible suspension of student-athlete.

Dress Code and General Appearance

Appropriate apparel and general appearance for all students are described in the [Parent-Student Handbook](#). Appropriate apparel should be worn for all road trips, before and after games, and practices. On Fridays, student-athletes may wear team t-shirts, polos or outerwear. Team warm-up pants or sweatpants are not to be worn during school hours. Any game day dress attire that does not conform with the FCS dress code must be approved by the principal or dean of students. There should be no visible permanent or temporary tattoos on any student at any time. All tattoos should be covered for practices or games. Additionally, boys are not allowed to have any piercings; gauges and piercing plugs are not permitted; and girls can only have piercings on their ears.

Early Dismissal

The Florida Christian Administration works hard to minimize the amount of class missed due to athletic activities. Several factors impact how and when contests are scheduled (daylight, travel time, safe warm-up time, weather, referee association, etc.). Be aware of the following:

- Student-athletes are responsible for all work missed due to early dismissals and absences because of athletic contests. If a student needs extra support, it is the student's responsibility to attend help class or schedule a time to meet with their teacher.
- All missed classes due to FCS athletic participation will be excused.
- Early dismissal times are published weekly by the athletic department.
- Students should communicate in advance with teachers regarding upcoming conflicts.

Game Admission

FCS utilizes Go Fan for purchasing tickets to all our home games. Screen shots of tickets will not be accepted. FCS students and staff may enter games at no-charge when presenting their FCS school ID, unless the contest is a tournament or FHSAA playoff game. Spectators will be able to purchase single event tickets, season passes and school-year passes on Go Fan.

Good Cause Policy

A good cause policy is required by the FHSAA to determine the eligibility of transfer students. Student-athletes who transfer during an academic year will be evaluated on an individual basis and decided by the Athletics Director in conjunction with the grade-level administrator and leadership team. The following factors may play a role in how a decision is reached:

- Timeframe of the transfer and games remaining in the season.
- Number of uniforms and equipment available.
- Reasons for transfer:

Positive Reasons

- Full and Complete Move
- Hardships outside of the student/family's control

Negative Reasons

- Discipline imposed from previous school
- Poor Academic Performance

Home School Athletic Participation

FCS is committed to ministering to home school families who desire to have their student-athlete participate in a Christ-centered athletic program. To be accepted, homeschool student-athletes and their families must go through an admission process that includes completion of [FHSAA forms](#), academic review, behavioral review and family interview. To complete the FHSAA homeschool verification form, you can contact the Home Education Office at HomeEducation@dadeschools.net or phone (305) 883-5323, Ext. 2026. The Home Education Office is located at 489 East Drive; Miami Springs, FL 33166. Any student that was dismissed, expelled, or asked to leave their previous school, will not be eligible as a homeschool athlete for 12 months starting from their date of dismissal. Homeschool students must abide by all FCS rules and guidelines outlined in the parent-student handbook. Failure to abide by these guidelines on campus, or during any part of any athletic event, could result in dismissal from their assigned athletic team. Homeschool student-athletes must submit transcripts at the end of each semester for eligibility purposes. Homeschool student-athletes should not arrive on campus during school hours unless specifically asked by a coach due to early dismissal for a sporting event. The athletic fee of \$350 per season is due prior to participation of any kind (pre-season, tryouts, etc.) by payment link <https://app.onechurchsoftware.com/floridachristian/forms/541>. Should a student not make the team, a refund will be issued upon written request.

Hotels and Travel

Hotel expenses and transportation are paid by:

- Athletics Budget for FHSAA state level competition; see athletic director for more information.
- Parents for all regular season trips

Student-athletes will be responsible for food and any spending money and parents are responsible for their own lodging reservations. Disciplinary action for improper conduct while on an overnight trip may be intensified.

Inclement Weather / Lightning

FCS utilizes Weather Sentry powered by DTN Weather Alert System for Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) readings, detecting inclement weather, and lightning through text messaging. Activity will be suspended for lightning strike within an 8-mile radius. All persons should seek shelter in a building or vehicle. All outdoor athletic facilities will be closed when we are under a lightening alert. FCS staff will announce lightning policies through the public address. An "All Clear" will be sent via text alert once there has been no electrical activity detected in the 8-mile radius for at least thirty minutes. Athletic Director, officials and head coaches will meet to determine the status of each game. It is understood that parents and spectators desire to know what decisions will be made. Please afford contest administration the time and space to make decisions. In the event of a hurricane or tropical storm, FCS will follow local recommendations from Miami-Dade County Emergency Management.

Injuries/Conditions/Concussions

Injury is a risk in any activity. FCS has a partnership with UHealth to provide an athletics trainer to handle all injuries to student-athletes. The following policies must be adhered to concerning student injury, conditions, or concussion:

- If a student-athlete is evaluated by a physician for an athletic injury, the athlete MUST turn in a doctor's note to the athletic trainer to resume participation.
- All instructions given by the athletic trainer must be observed by all coaching personnel.
- Should the trainer determine a student-athlete requires medical attention, a doctor's note must be provided to the trainer in order to return to participation of any kind.
- The athletic trainer's decisions related to student injury and participation are final.
- If your student-athlete has asthma or a severe allergy, he/she must have their inhaler or Epi-pen with them during practices and games.
- In the event an athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion, the athlete may not return to practice/game until they have documentation of their release from a physician and have successfully completed a return to play to protocol administered by the school athletic trainer.

Lockers

- Student-athletes will receive their locker assignment from the physical education coach in the locker room. Keep your locker locked at all times; FCS is not responsible for any lost or stolen items in the locker room.
- Lockers should be cleaned out by student-athletes at the conclusion of each season. All locks must be turned in with other equipment. Student-athletes will be assessed a replacement fee for locks and equipment assigned to them which are not returned or damaged.
- The neatness and cleanliness of locker rooms, weight rooms, hallways and other facilities is the joint responsibility of student-athletes and coaches. All spiked or cleated shoes must be put on and taken off outside of the school building.
- Improper behavior, horseplay, vandalism, roughhousing, harassment, hazing/bullying of others and improper care of equipment are examples of activities related to locker rooms for which disciplinary action would be appropriate, up to and including denial of participation. Incidents are to be reported to a coach or staff member immediately.
- Equipment rooms, staff offices and training rooms are to be entered only after receiving permission from a coach or trainer. Students are not to be in these areas at any time without supervision by appropriate school personnel.
- Participants will not be released early from school for the purpose of dressing for practices/games or going to the training room, unless specific approval is given by school administration.

Multi-Sport Athletes

Multi-sport participation is a tremendous platform for raising a well-rounded child.

- Physically, different muscle groups are emphasized with different sports. Specializing in one sport can produce wear and tear injuries. Multi-sport participation helps prevent injury and consistent muscle development.
- Socially & spiritually, athletes often find themselves at different levels of performance. They learn humility in sports in which they are less advanced, and how to lead well where they are high achieving.

In the FHSAA, sports seasons often overlap, and may do so significantly. Should a student-athlete desire to play two overlapping sports, clear and constant communication will be required between the student, both head coaches, and the parents. The general guidelines for multi-sport participation are as follows:

- Coaches at Florida Christian will accommodate multi-sport participation as much as is reasonable. Sport specialization will not be encouraged by any FCS Coach.
- With overlapping sports (fall & winter, winter & spring), the first season will be the primary until it comes to an end. Student-athletes should communicate with the second sport coach of their intentions to try out prior to said tryouts. Coaches can then plan to accommodate a delayed tryout if necessary. Practices for the second sport are not mandatory until the primary season ends.
- The parents, student-athletes, and head coaches of the two overlapping sports should all meet prior to the start of the first season to lay out all of the factors and find agreement.
- All parties must work in good faith to seek a reasonable solution.

Quitting a Sport

A student-athlete who quits a team after filling a roster position following tryouts or after the team's first contest if no cuts are made is ineligible to practice or participate in any other sport or out-of-season program until the sport in which he/she began has concluded its season. They also forfeit all athletic awards associated with the sport they quit. Exceptions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (such as serious injury) and only upon the agreement of the head coach and the athletic department.

Music

Music played at sporting events may not always be Christian music, but is selected to encourage a competitive atmosphere, promote fan involvement, and improve the overall atmosphere. Any music containing profanity, vulgarity or suggestive lyrics will not be played.

National Anthem

All FCS Coaches and student-athletes are required to stand respectfully at attention during the playing and/or singing of the National Anthem at all home/away events.

NCAA Eligibility

Prospective student-athletes at a Division I or II college or university have certain responsibilities to complete before you may participate. Information concerning who needs to register with the NCAA and what documents need to be submitted can be found in The Guide for College Bound Student Athletes on the NCAA website; www.ncaa.org (click on "Eligibility Center" [NCAA Eligibility Center](#)). It is the students' responsibility to begin this process and request items from the school as needed. FCS guidance counselors are available to assist with this process.

Participation Philosophy

Participation in athletics at Florida Christian School is open to every student but conditioned upon meeting the criteria of academics, character, and athletic skill necessary to compete. While all teams at Florida



Christian School are expected to play hard in the true spirit of competition, there is a different emphasis at each level of play.

Middle School (grades 6-8) - The athlete is provided with a learning experience and opportunity for basic individual skill development. Team concepts of play are introduced. During the regular season, participation is emphasized over winning. Team members are encouraged through active participation in games. Please note, that middle school student-athletes that are on a High School JV or Varsity roster may not “drop down” to compete in the SFMSC tournaments.

Junior Varsity (grades 6-11) - The athlete improves skills while learning team concepts that are more complex. At this level of increased physical development and better competition, there is an equal emphasis on winning and participation.

Varsity - The athlete is advanced in skill and physical development. Emphasis is placed upon individual and team potential. The athlete's playing time is determined by how it will best serve the team.

When making cuts, the coach is responsible to evaluate each prospective athlete based on criteria such as competitive skill; attitude and character; effort and work ethic; and commitment. Communicating with each individual specific reasons why he/she did not make the team will enable the student to target areas for improvement. Cutting an athlete is the least enjoyable task for any coach. These decisions are not taken lightly and often weigh heavily on coaches. The coach is also responsible for evaluating each athlete as to his/her role on the team. There are no guarantees regarding playing time, especially on the varsity level. The coach is the sole judge on who should start and how much playing time each player should receive.

Playing Time Philosophy

Florida Christian Athletics is committed to putting forth competitive teams. The value of any student-athlete is not tied to their playing time. Each member of a team (coach, player, parent) is asked to sacrifice their own personal wants and desires for the benefit of the team. The following guidelines have been put in place to delineate each person's responsibilities regarding playing time.

The Coach Should:

- Coach with a goal of winning!
- Never lose a competition due to being overly concerned about substituting.
- Value playing every player and work toward that goal.
- Push players to play with the type of intensity that requires substitution.
- Go with impact players when the game is on the line.

The Players Should:

- Practice so intensely that the coach feels pressure to reward them with playing time.
- Understand everything the team does, both offensively and defensively.
- Develop knowledge of as many positions as possible.
- Want to play, whether for long or short periods of time.
- Be ready by staying mentally engaged in the game while on the bench.
- If a starter, genuinely cheer for subs. If a sub, genuinely cheer for starters.

The Parent Should:

- Be a “Big Picture” thinker, especially in the early part of the season.
- Never be a “Sower of dissention” (Proverbs 6).
- Encourage the athlete to talk with the coach first on matters related to playing time.
- Determine if the child understands why he/she is not playing and what they think about it.
- Make any initial conversations with a coach a fact-finding event, based on positive assumptions about the coach's intentions.

Prospective Athletes

Prospective student-athletes (students not enrolled at FCS) will not be allowed to work out or take part in any team activity until he/she has fully completed the enrollment process. In addition, all required forms must be submitted to the athletic department before an athlete may participate in any team practice or activity.

Service Opportunities

Volunteers elevate the excellence of our events. The athletic department and coaches have been tasked with finding volunteers to help run each of their team's contests. Opportunities to serve include:

- Team Mom
- Admission Personnel
- Concessions
- Public Address
- Score keeper
- Scoreboard operator

If any of these opportunities interest you, please contact your student's head coach. If you are willing to serve outside of your child's team, please contact the athletics office.

Supervision

- Student-athletes should be supervised at all times when engaged in athletic activities.
- Students should wait until a coach arrives to begin activities.
- Returning from a late away game at night, coaches will supervise students until they are picked up.

Practice Times

- Times of practices will be set by the coach and explained in the parent meeting at the beginning of the season. Any variation or cancellation will be communicated through the coaching staff.
- No Sunday meetings or practices are permitted unless approved in advance by the administration.
- Vacation practices and tournaments are common for varsity teams. Middle school and JV practices scheduled over school breaks should be optional.
- When school is out because of hurricanes, or other natural disasters, all practices will be cancelled or postponed. Practices may resume prior to school when the campus and facilities are determined safe by the school administration.

Team Meetings - Parent and Player

Each team will have a mandatory parent/player organizational meeting prior to the first game. Information covered in the meeting may include, but is not limited to:

1. Coaching philosophy and vision
2. Spiritual discipleship plan
3. Practice & game schedules
4. Team rules and expectations
5. Health and safety
6. Costs/fees/travel/spirit packs
7. Conflict resolution plan
8. Volunteer/service needs
9. Playing time

Transportation

- Transportation on school days to away games will be coordinated by the Athletics Department.
- During transport, seat belts must be worn (if available) and all students must remain seated.
- Only team personnel and players are allowed to use FCS transportation (unless otherwise approved).
- All student-athletes will use the school provided transportation. Parents may request in writing permission for their student-athlete to drive to/from games. Students are not permitted to drive other student-athletes in their car.
- While food and drink are permitted on buses, coaches and players are responsible for keeping buses clean and free from trash and debris.
- Music that is played should be free from profanity, violence, or suggestive lyrics.
- High School Parents should arrange for pick-up of their student-athlete in a reasonable time after games and practices. Middle School student-athletes must be picked up promptly after games or practices. Middle school students are not to be unsupervised.
- Coaches may not leave athletes unsupervised, whether on FCS campus or an away site, until all students have been picked up.
- Cost of transportation for contest outside of Miami-Dade County or the use of a charter bus will be at the expense of the team requesting the vehicles.

Uniforms, Equipment and Practice Gear

Uniforms

- Team Uniforms will be purchased every 3-5 years for high school sports, and every 4-7 years for middle school sports.
- Athletics uniforms are the property of FCS and must be returned to the head coach at the end of the season. Certain sports (such as golf, tennis, etc.) uniforms cannot be reused and will be purchased by the student-athlete.
- Any portion of the uniform that will not be collected will be paid for by the student-athlete (spandex, polos, socks, caps/visors, etc.)
- Uniforms, whether owned by the school or the individual, should only be worn for athletic activities related to that sport. Once the season has ended, items owned by the student-athlete may be worn as desired.
- Parents are responsible for lost or damaged uniforms. Individual replacement of uniforms ranges from \$100 to \$250 per item. If the uniform is a custom jersey/pant, then the costs would be higher due to the 5 minimum quantity required to purchase a replacement.

Equipment

- Equipment necessary for practice and competition will be paid for by the athletics budget. These include football helmets, pads, catcher's gear, etc. Batting helmets (softball/baseball) are considered a personal item and would be paid for by the family.
- Helmets and pads purchased by FCS will meet or exceed safety expectations set forth by the FHSAA, NFHS or NOCSAE.
- Personally preferred equipment, specialty equipment, or equipment that cannot be collected and reissued shall be the responsibility of the parent (caps, batting gloves, bats, personal helmets, etc).

Legacy Helmet Program - The legacy helmet program allows a parent to purchase a football or lacrosse helmet for their student-athlete that is at the cutting edge of safety technology. Once purchased, FCS will ensure the athlete is issued the helmet chosen for the duration of their participation at FCS. Upon completion of their senior season, the helmet is gifted to FCS for continued use.

Practice Gear / Spirit Packs - Individual athletic teams have spirit pack items required for purchase. Items may include portions of the contest uniform (items that cannot be collected or reused for another athlete), shorts, T-shirts, hoodies, bags, practice gear, etc. All spirit pack items are paid for and kept by the athlete. The nature of each sport may necessitate different amounts for each spirit pack. Coaches should be mindful of the financial burden when selecting spirit pack items. Total cost of spirit packs are in the following ranges:

1. Varsity - \$100 to \$300
2. Junior Varsity - \$50 to \$250
3. Middle School - \$25 to \$200

Team shoes are not considered part of a spirit pack. Cheerleading spans two athletic seasons. As such, spirit pack fees may exceed the limits above. Note: team travel or personal equipment is not considered part of the spirit pack and will be an additional cost.

Financial Collection - The following process will be utilized to collect funds toward spirit packs:

- The coaching staff will communicate the spirit pack contents and price along with a link for parents to make credit card payments. They will also create a deadline for payment.
- Financial Hardship - Per FHSAA policy, Florida Christian School is not permitted to give items to students. Families with financial concerns should contact bking@floridachristian.org to make arrangements for payment plans.
- The coach will coordinate with the athletic office to order items and account for payments.
- Families who have not paid for the spirit pack by the announced deadline may have the charge applied to their FACTS account along with a processing fee.

Weight Room

The weight room, located in M-108, may be utilized by teams provided the coaching staff has completed a facility request using the outlook calendar. At times, there may be multiple teams using the weight room at the same time. No student is permitted to be in the weight room unless under a coach's supervision.

Athletic Awards and Recognition

College Athletic Signing Ceremonies Procedures and Process - The FCS Athletic Department will host signing ceremonies consistent with the National Letter of Intent (NLI) established dates, typically in November, December, February, and April. The dates will be set by the athletic department in accordance with the NCAA signing windows. Signing days may not fall on the first day of the actual signing period but within the window to accommodate all student-athletes and families schedules. The athletic department will do its best to accommodate all signees and family's needs when scheduling. Signings will be done inside the gym or cafeteria with athletic department signage. Decorations can be supplemented by families of student-athletes (such as balloons etc.). The head coach of the sport of the athletes signing will be responsible for verifying with the recruiting college coach that the athlete is receiving an athletic scholarship. Academic or walk-on/tryout status does not count as an athletic scholarship and will not be granted a spot within the signing ceremonies unless the college can confirm they are a recruited walk-on, with a guaranteed spot on the roster. The athlete signing must be a current FCS student-athlete in good academic and behavior standing. The student-athlete must have played the sport and completed their senior season at Florida Christian School in order to participate in the senior college signing ceremony. Any guest of the student-athlete that is not an FCS student or staff member must check in through the front office. For information regarding the NLI, visit www.nationalletter.org.

Varsity Letters & Pins

Student-athletes who participate in a varsity sport and complete a season in good standing qualify for a varsity letter and pin. The athlete will receive one chenille letter for their high school career. They will receive a sport-specific pin their first year and a service bar for each year after. To earn the letter and pin, the following criteria must be met.

1. The student-athlete and parents must honor their the athletic department sportsmanship agreement and be in good standing.
2. Must have completed the season including all conference and state postseason play.
3. Must have competed in at least 50% of the contests and/or other criteria set by the head coach specific to their sport.
4. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis by the respective coach and Athletic Director.

Disqualifying Protocols

A student-athlete who does not complete the season will not be eligible to receive their letter and pin. A student-athlete who completes the season but does not demonstrate commitment or sportsmanship may be disqualified from receiving these recognitions. The following protocols must be followed to disqualify a student-athlete who completes the season.

1. During the season, the head coach must notify a student-athlete in person of behaviors violating the student sportsmanship agreement. Should this behavior continue, they will not be qualified for a letter.
2. The head coach must contact the parents notifying them of the warning.
3. The head coach must notify the athletics director that a warning was issued.
4. Should the behavior continue, the head coach, athletics director, student, and parent(s) must meet to discuss the loss of letter and pin honors.

Athletic Awards Party: Athletic awards are presented at the team's party organized by the head coach at the conclusion of the season. The number of awards is limited; therefore, careful consideration is given to athletes selected (3 awards for middle school and J.V. programs and 4 awards for varsity programs). All athletes will receive a participation certificate. Athletes may earn a chenille letter in a Varsity sport if they meet the criteria above. There are two letterman jacket options that may be purchased online after receiving your letter. [Varsity Athletics Letterman Jacket - White Leather Sleeves | Florida Christian School \(onechurchsoftware.com\)](#) or [Varsity Athletics Letterman Jacket - Lightweight | Florida Christian School \(onechurchsoftware.com\)](#).

Athletic Department Awards

- The Patriot Award - The Patriot Award is presented to the one athlete from each team that best represents the character of Christ. The Patriot Award is FCS's highest athletic honor. It should go to the athlete who "sets the example in speech, in faith, in life, in love, and in purity." The recipient is selected by the head coach, but may be based on input of team members, assistant coaches, and FCS faculty, staff, and administration. Patriot Awards will be presented at the team's end of the season awards party.
- Sport Most Outstanding Player - The player of the year is awarded to one student-athlete from each team who most influenced the team's ability to be successful. This award recognizes God-given athletic ability, work ethic and contribution to the program. This award will be presented at the team's end of the season awards party.
- Male and Female Scholar Athlete of the Year - The scholar athlete of the year award is presented to one male and one female each school year. Recipients must have an exemplary reputation in the classroom, maintain a GPA of 3.75 or above. Preference is given to multi-sport athletes and

level of impact in the athletic arena. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.

- The Best Moment of the Year - Student-athletes who perform exceptionally in a single contest may be nominated to receive this award. Preference is given to postseason performances under pressure. The recipient is selected by the athletic administration. A ballot will be distributed to the high school student body. The results of that ballot will be used to guide the decision. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- Coach of the Year - Each year, up to five head coaches may be nominated to receive the coach of the year. To be nominated, coaches must lead their teams well, show significant improvement upon previous years or advance far into postseason competition. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- Male and Female Athlete of the Year - To be nominated for athlete of the year, student-athletes must have received either first or second team recognition by the Miami Herald and must have received at least one Player of the Year Awards that year. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- All-Academic Award - Varsity athletes who have a 3.5 GPA or higher in the academic quarter in which they participated in that sport will receive a certificate. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- Patriot Academic Award – Middle School and JV athletes who have a 3.5 GPA or higher in the academic quarter in which they participated in that sport will receive a certificate. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- Multi-Sport Athletic Award – Middle School, JV or Varsity athlete that participated in 2 or more sports seasons will receive a certificate. The award is presented at the appropriate ceremony at the end of the school year.
- Senior Athletic Awards – Here are the three awards presented at graduation: The Outstanding Christian Athlete is voted on by the coaching staff and presented to the student-athlete who best exemplifies the character of Christ; the Principals Academic Athlete presented to the student-athlete with the highest overall GPA and the Multi-Sport Athletic Award presented to the student-athletes who have participated in at least 6 years in a varsity sport.

Selecting Award Recipients

The awards recipients for the Best Moment of the Year, Coach of the Year, and Male and Female Athlete of the Year will be decided through the following process:

1. An electronic ballot with each of the nominees will be sent to the high school student body.
2. The athletics administrative team will meet to discuss the nominees and provide insight and make recommendations. The results of the student ballot will be used to guide the decision.
3. If a decision is too close to call, then the FCS leadership team will make a final decision.

All persons involved in the selection process who possess a conflict of interest will recuse themselves from the discussion and selection of that award.