BISON TENNIS



2026

BELIEVE. Short Memory.

Full Effort. Next Point.

Introduction

Dear Parents,

First, let me thank you for sharing your athlete with us. We as coaches believe that their health, safety, and development is the most important part and the life blood of our program. The tennis program for GFHS is built on a tradition of hard work and discipline. But it is also a place for young people to develop into the best person, student, and tennis player they can be. We offer an environment where we compete for state championships every season but also allow students without experience to be a part of a team and feel their contributions are valued.

In this Handbook you will find some greatly beneficial material in an effort to provide every chance of a successful and enjoyable experience for the student athletes in the program. Please note that it is every parent and athlete's responsibility to read and sign the confirmation link to show that you have done so. The handbook needs to be acknowledged before the first match.

A successful program relies on the grateful efforts of many people and if you feel you can contribute to any of the areas of the program, from snacks for the team, court set up, to spaghetti feeds we welcome and appreciate any assistance you can offer.

OUR PROGRAM CULTURE

Culture is how we act when the coach is not standing next to us. In tennis, where athletes are spread across courts and locations, culture matters.

Our Core Values:

EFFORT – Compete on every point. Hustle. Stay engaged.
ACCOUNTABILITY – Be prepared. Own mistakes. Communicate.
TEAMMATE FIRST – Positive body language. Support teammates.
GROWTH – Learn. Reset. Improve.

BELIEVE

BELIEVE is who we are. It means trusting preparation, competing with confidence, and committing fully to the next point.

GOLDFISH MENTALITY

We practice a short memory. Mistakes, bad games, and tough losses do not define us. We reset, refocus, and respond.

Coaches Council

The Coach's Council exists to protect team culture, improve communication, and support accountability across all courts.
Structure: 4 girls and 4 boys selected by the coaching staff from application
Meetings: Mondays at lunch in Simkins Room 314.

Expectations of Coaches

All coaches involved in this program are responsible for their actions and recognize that they are significant role models whose words and actions are a defining influence on the conduct and the performance of tennis players as athletes and people:

- Coaches will treat tennis players with equal respect, and without prejudice.
- Coaches will promote and support the emotional and physical development of tennis players.
- Coaches will communicate with tennis players and parents to foster positive relationships.
- Coaches will act with personal and professional integrity when representing the program.
- Coaches will use safe and appropriate coaching techniques, ensuring that tennis players have an enjoyable, challenging, and effective experience.
- Coaches will practice and encourage good sportsmanship and demonstrate respect for opposing student athletes and officials.

Tennis Team Expectations & Consequences

Participation in high school athletics is a privilege rather than rules. We believe that there are expectations that each tennis player must meet in order to be a part of this program.

In understanding this all tennis players agree to adhere to the following expectations of the GFHS Tennis Team:

RESPECT
- Yourself
- Our Program
- Other players
- Coaches
- Support people.
- Equipment

ALWAYS
- Be on time.
- Be coachable.
- Be a teammate.
- Be able to work as hard as possible.

ATTITUDE
- Encouragement
- Kindness
- Family
- Competitive
- Coachable

CONSEQUENCES:
The GFHS Tennis Team will adhere to all GFPS student handbooks and MHSA rules.

If a player fails to meet the expectations put forth by the Coaches Council and the coaching staff discipline will occur, and all discipline and consequences will be progressive:

1. **Coaches Council Intervention**
2. **Coach Intervention**
3. **Removal from practice & makeup to be able to compete.**
4. **10% reduction in letter points**
5. **Held out of match(s)**
6. **Removal from the team**

**If an athlete commits a severe violation of GFPS or MHSA rule, they may be removed from the team. The coaches and the administration team from the perspective school will make the determination.*

Parent Expectations

Parents/guardians are an essential part of an athlete's success. Not only are they uniquely positioned to provide advice, direction and positive support to players, their efforts and contributions to the program cannot be underestimated.

In an effort to continue them in order to be as successful as possible we kindly ask that parents continue to meet the following expectations:

- Accept the decisions by the coaches are for the benefit and success of the program as a whole.
- Please try to resolve grievances or complaints in a constructive manner with the coaches.
- Please wait at least 24 hours after a match to bring any complaints to the coaching staff- unless it involves the direct safety of your player.
- Please remember your words and actions can have a positive or negative impact on your player. Please try to be polite, respectful, and positive in all and any interactions.
- Keep in mind that emotions during matches are often increased. Controlling them is sometimes difficult but do your best to remain positive because you have a huge influence on how your player will respond and behave.
- Have fun, enjoy the moments, understand that your player is putting it all out there and competing to the best of their ability and for the vast majority of athletes they only have four seasons to compete.

Practice Schedule

MHSA Rules: Athletes must have **8** practices prior to competing in a tennis match.

Match Schedule

4/4 @ Billings Skyview/Senior
4/7 Missoula Sentinel/Hellgate
4/11 Helena Capital/Helena High
4/11 @ Helena JV
4/14 Conrad/Cutbank
4/18 Flathead/Glacier
4/25 @ Bozeman- East Tournament
4/28 Belgrade/Havre
5/2 @Bozeman/Gallatin
5/7 Crosstown JV
5/14 CMR * Senior Night *

Divisional Tournament @Kalispell 5/21-5/22 Flathead Community College
State Tournament @Kalispell 5/22-5/24 Flathead Community College

Forms

Physicals & Concussion Forms: You **MUST** have a physical, Concussion form, and all other paperwork turned in via ATS - directions are available on each school website and in GFH Tennis Google Classroom

Participation Fee:

- $40 paid at the Finance Office.
- Turn the receipt into the coaching staff.

Poster Ad sales:

- You can sell poster ads for $100 each (see attached sheet)
- ***ALL ADS DUE by 3/14***

Bison Tennis Lettering Policy

Lettering in a high school sport is an exciting and rewarding accomplishment - but it doesn't only award excellence, but also dedication and desire. Though the focus and purpose of athletics is teamwork, sportsmanship, school pride, and the development of character; lettering as a varsity athlete as part of a successful program is very memorable.

The number of points needed to earn a varsity letter is **65 points** - here's how you score...

Non Negotiable Requirements

To be eligible for a varsity letter, an athlete must:

- Complete the entire season as defined by the head coach, including practice attendance
- Honor all athletic and school codes
- Remain academically eligible
- Meet all attendance and behavior standards

Failure to meet any of these standards results in ineligibility for a varsity letter regardless of points earned.

Academic Standards

- A student will not receive a letter if they earn a final quarter grade of an F in any class during the sport's primary season quarter.
- 5 points are awarded for a 3.0 or higher GPA in Semester 1.
- 10 points are awarded for a 4.0 GPA in Semester 1.

Academic commitment matters.

Classroom Attendance

- A student will not receive a letter if they have 6 or more excused absences during the sport's primary season quarter.

Presence matters.

Behavior Expectations

- A student will not receive a letter if they have one major behavior incident.
- A student will not receive a letter if they have two or more minor behavior incidents.
- This applies at school and at all tennis related events.

Character matters.

Letter Requirement

Varsity athletes must earn **65 total points** while meeting all non negotiable standards.

Participation and Contribution Points

• 3 points for each varsity meet in which you compete in at least one dual match
• 7 points for competing as part of the AA Eastern Divisional Team
• 7 points per school sport participated in during fall or winter
• 7 points for each returning year in the Bison Tennis program
• 5 points for meeting fundraising goals
• 5 points for sportsmanship and positive attitude throughout the season

Deductions

• Minus 3 or more points for equipment not turned in on time
• Minus 3 points for leaving a meet early without prior permission
• Minus 3 points for each entered match missed without coach approval

Accountability matters.

Match and Improvement Points

The Bison Tennis program evaluates improvement using a skills based growth model rather than relying solely on wins and losses.

Players are evaluated in four areas:

1. Technical Skill Development
2. Tactical Awareness
3. Mental Toughness
4. Work Ethic and Coachability

Each category is scored on a four point scale.

Improvement scores may account for up to **15 total points** toward the 65 point requirement.

Match/Game Improvement Points

How Player Improvement Is Measured:

The Bison Tennis program tracks player improvement throughout the season using a skills-based evaluation system rather than relying only on wins and losses. This approach allows coaches to recognize growth, effort, and consistency while helping players understand where they can continue to improve.

Players are evaluated in four areas: technical skills, tactical awareness, mental toughness, and work ethic and coachability. Each area is scored on a four-point scale from emerging to advanced and is based on practice habits and match play.

Improvement over time is the focus. A player showing growth in skill execution, decision making, resilience, and effort is demonstrating success within the program. This evaluation framework helps guide coaching feedback, practice focus, and lineup decisions while supporting individual player development.

Improvement Rubric

4 – Advanced Growth

Significant measurable improvement in stroke mechanics and consistency
Demonstrates strong strategic decision making during match play
Maintains composure under pressure
Actively seeks and applies coaching feedback
Clear upward trajectory from tryouts to postseason

3 – Strong Growth

Noticeable improvement in at least two skill areas
Improved shot selection and match awareness
Competes with resilience
Applies coaching feedback consistently

2 – Developing

Some improvement in mechanics or consistency
Effort is present but adjustments are inconsistent
Growth is limited

1 – Emerging

Minimal skill progression
Inconsistent effort
Limited application of feedback

Travel

Throughout the season we travel for away meets in Missoula, Bozeman, and Billings. We will have a detailed itinerary released the week of travel. The program only allows for one bus to transport four teams and coaches. **Players CANNOT "find their own way" to matches to compete, you may fill out the paperwork to return home with parents/guardians.**

Expectations

- Be one time at the horseshoe to leave.
- We will wear team warmups/ gear traveling to matches.
- IF you want to travel home with your parents/ guardian please have the travel slip to the coaches 5 days before we leave.

Contacts

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