



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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RCA Athletic Program Purpose

The objectives of interscholastic athletics are the development of desirable traits in the individual and the meeting of students' competitive needs in a constructive, growth-producing setting. Championships should result as an outgrowth of personal success and positive, ethical coaching. It is hoped that each participant will be motivated and trained to strive for success and to obtain his/her peak performance as an athlete and a team member. It is expected that all participants and coaches will experience learning opportunities in self-discipline, emotional control, and sportsmanship.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the RCA Athletic Program is built around the *Portrait of a Graduate*. All athletic programs of RCA will endeavor to:

1. **CHRISTLIKE.** *Teach and model for athletes Christlike character through all the different aspects of an athletic season.*
2. **ACADEMICALLY PREPARED AND LIFELONG LEARNERS.** *Equip athletes with the tools needed to be prepared for the rigors of a season through discipline and high quality training that continues with them into everyday life.*
3. **SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.** *Challenge athletes to excel in training and competitions through encouragement and accountability.*
4. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS.** *Promote a supportive and cooperative community among all players, coaches, families, RCA, and all those involved in the game/sport by creating an environment of open communication, emotional control, and sportsmanship.*
5. **FOUNDATION TO LIVE BY FAITH.** *Remember that athletics are not the end game, but a vehicle through which students can learn how to stay the course, enjoy the journey, and finish well in their walk with Christ in all that comes their way.*

Athletic Rules

Athletic activities are voluntary, and participants are subject to rules and policies created by Riverside Christian Academy, and are bound by these rules as long as they choose to participate. Coaches have the right to formulate additional requirements of conduct for students under their supervision.

Affiliation: Our athletic program's affiliations are:

TS/AA (Tennessee State Independent Athletic Association)

Volleyball, Basketball, Softball, Golf, Soccer

SEEC

Football

Eligibility: To be eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics at Riverside Christian Academy, a student must:

1. Be registered and/or enrolled at RCA or in a Homeschool umbrella program.
2. Maintain a minimum of a "C" average in every class. Grade reports will be given to the coaches on a weekly basis when possible.
3. Have no significant disciplinary problems at school.
4. Have all required paperwork approved and on file with RCA.

Home School Participation in Athletics: The terms of this arrangement are as follows:

1. All homeschool students wishing to participate in RCA sports must be registered with a Homeschool umbrella program.
2. The athletes must be taking a minimum of five academic subjects or the equivalent administered by the umbrella program that counts towards graduation.
3. The participation fee will be \$250 for one sport.
4. Any additional sport for homeschool students will be a \$250 participation fee.
5. Homeschool Athletes must have all required paperwork approved and on file with RCA.

6. All sporting fees will be paid to the RCA business office for processing.
7. RCA students will have first consideration of team sports, but all homeschool students are welcome to try out at no cost.
8. Homeschool students will abide by the RCA student handbook in conduct and appearance while representing RCA as student athletes.

Athletic Paperwork: The documents below must be on file and approved by RCA before an athlete can participate in official practices and games. These documents are available through the front office, at the request of the Athletic Director and/or through your DragonflyMax account. All documents must be submitted according to RCA administrative procedures. Unless specified otherwise, any documents approved after April 1 in the current school year will remain valid until May 31 of the subsequent school year.

1. Proof of medical/hospitalization insurance for the student.
2. Medical Release and Participation Form.
3. A physician's physical exam report that is no more than one year old. (Physicals are good for one calendar year from the date of Physical)
4. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Form
5. Concussion Protocol Form
6. Transportation Waiver

Homeschool Players must also provide the following:

1. Homeschool Athlete Form
2. Birth Certificate
3. Updated Grades (As often as possible)
4. Proof of Enrollment in Homeschool Umbrella Program.

Tryouts: Tryouts are highly encouraged for every sport to gauge the level of interest in playing.

1. "Make up" tryouts are at the discretion of the coach.
2. Athletes who are wanting to participate in tryouts but do not have any existing RCA Athletic paperwork on file must complete a waiver before participating. The waiver is good for up to 5 sessions after which all required paperwork must be submitted and approved to participate.
3. Athletes trying out for a team do Not have to be enrolled in RCA or a Homeschool Program but must complete a waiver before participating.
4. In-season athletes who are wanting to participate in a **tryout** are allowed to miss practice(s) to attend the tryout; however, parents must communicate with the in-season coach in a timely manner the dates and times of tryouts. This guideline only pertains to practices missed, not games.

Regular Season / In-season: Regular season for a sport starts no sooner than 6 weeks before the first official game and ends after the last official game. Any practices or events occurring before this time are not considered regular season.

1. All RCA athletic paperwork must be submitted and approved by RCA administration before any athlete is allowed to participate in any regular season programs.
2. Athletes who are already participating in one in-season sport when another in-season sport begins cannot be required to attend practices until their current season concludes, unless the practices are scheduled on different days, in which case attendance may be required. Participation in practices that occur on the same day are encouraged but optional.
3. Parents must ensure that students arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before practice and are picked up promptly at the scheduled end times.
4. RCA will dismiss students from class for away games to arrive at least an hour before the posted game time.
5. AD (if applicable) will confirm away game information within 48 hours of scheduled game.
6. No parking is allowed behind the gates. If practice begins between 3:00-3:30, players may be dropped off behind the gate. There is NO pick up behind the gates. No parking on grass as well.
7. Coaches will set practice & game times for their teams and communicate those times to the parents and athletes.
8. Games will not be scheduled on Wednesdays. All RCA practices are to end by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, to allow our students to attend Wednesday evening worship. In addition, practice time on Sunday should be kept to the hours of 1:00 – 4:30 p.m., and no Riverside Christian Academy facilities are to be used on Sunday outside of those hours.
9. Athletes should attend practices and games unless they are sick or there is a death in the family. Injured athletes should still report to practice to support the team and participate in future game planning.
10. It is recommended that parents notify coaches within 24 hours if their child is unable to participate in a game if applicable.

Playing Time: Playing time is at the discretion of the coach. Coaches have the discretion and expectation to do what they believe is best for the team and each individual's growth. They will take practice, attitude, conduct, etc. into consideration. Please help your students to understand through conversation and example that being in a competitive program does not guarantee that they will make the team or the starting team, be the star of the team, get ample playing time during a game, or perhaps play in the game. Please take these things into consideration before approaching a coach

about your child's playing time.

Suspensions for School Disciplinary Infractions: Students suspended for disciplinary infractions may not attend practice nor participate in competitions during the discipline period. Coaches will be notified of all disciplinary issues at RCA.

Quitting a Sport: A player listed on the roster who decides to withdraw must notify the coach at least two weeks prior to the first official game of the season.

1. In the spirit of Excellence and Accountability mention in our *Portrait of a Graduate*, players who opt to depart from the team after the aforementioned deadline will be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn from the team and will be ineligible to participate in any other RCA sports programs for the current sport season of said departure as well as the following two sports seasons.
2. RCA sports seasons are Fall, Winter and Spring.
3. This rule applies to the following school year if a player departed from a team in the Winter or Spring seasons.
4. Any funds already collected up to that juncture will be forfeited.
5. Parents may request an exemption, which will be reviewed by the Athletic Director and President for potential consideration.

Open Practices: Open practices are practices that a coach may set up in the off season to work on skills and to gauge interest in the sport from prospective athletes.

1. It is highly encouraged that students who are playing or hope to play a sport in its regular season to attend these practices. Open Practices, however, are optional and never take precedence over any in season practices an athlete may have.
2. If a student attends an open practice to see if they desire to play, only a waiver needs to be filled out. This waiver only lasts for 4 sessions, after which all other paperwork is required to continue in RCA Athletics.

Strength and Conditioning: Strength and conditioning is vital to any athletic program. RCA makes every effort to give this opportunity to students. RCA athletes will be required to participate in a certain number of summer strength and conditioning sessions in the offseason for their particular sport. Parents will be notified of the number required in ample time to prepare. No athlete may be involved in any strength and conditioning without all RCA documentation received.

Uniform/Equipment Stewardship: Participants must return all school issued uniforms and equipment by the deadline set by the particular sport's coach. RCA has the right to

hold report cards, final transcripts, and/or diplomas until all sports equipment has been turned in. Parents may also be charged the replacement value of any uniforms that are not turned in by the deadline set by the sport's coach.

Player Appearance: Players should maintain a neat and clean appearance.

Boys shall keep hair neat and cut above the eyes and collar. Boys may not wear ponytails, buns, or hair bands. No player's hair shall be partially shaved/close-cropped. No player's hair shall be dyed or worn in any way that brings undue attention to the student or is distracting to other players. Only natural hair colors are allowed.

Girls are permitted to wear no more than two earrings in each ear lobe. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. No other visible piercings are allowed. Modest jewelry is permitted, but is subject to the administration's approval.

RCA players should not have tattoos. If they have them prior to registering at RCA, the tattoos need to remain covered during school hours and during all extra-curricular activities.

In all instances, the administration's decision regarding appropriateness of a player's appearance is final. Parents of players in violation of appearance policies will be notified.

Practice Attire: Athletic practice attire should adhere to the school's overall policy regarding modesty in all things.

Multi-Sport Athletes: RCA is a small school and we must do our best to share athletes. Coaches and parents should work together with athletes and parents to help athletes manage practice time and games for each sport. Athletes may participate in more than one sport during a single season with permission from parents, the Athletic Director, and all coaches involved.

Activity Fee: Participation fees are \$175 per sport for enrolled RCA athletes.

1. Player participation fees due to RCA will be capped for each enrolled RCA student at \$350 (i.e. if an RCA student plays more than two sports, the player fee for additional sports will be free if played in the same school year). There will also be a per family cap for RCA families with more than one student playing on an RCA sports team.

Per Family Caps:

3 Students or greater playing two sports = \$1,050 - fees will be capped for the family at \$900 (\$150 savings)

2 Students playing two sports = \$700 - fees will be capped for the family at \$600 (\$100 savings)

2. Homeschoolers/Independent Players participation fees are \$250 per sport.
 - a. Fee includes but is not limited to overhead costs, utility usage, liability cost, Athletic Director salary, and transportation costs spread over all sports offered. This does NOT go towards any particular RCA Sport program.

Travel to Away Games: Where possible, Riverside Christian Academy will arrange transportation for teams traveling to away games. If the school does not provide transportation, it is the parents' responsibility to provide transportation for their child to and from the game location, based on the time parameters given by the head coach.

Fund-raising Efforts/Concessions: RCA sports are not funded by tuition dollars or any other school income. Sports must raise their own funds; therefore, we ask parents to support their child's sports teams by participating in team fundraisers. Team coaches will assign workers to the concession stand at each game. You must work concessions when you are assigned, or find an appropriate replacement.

Coaching Conflicts: If there is a situation that has come up involving a coach's decision during a game or practice that has happened with your child that you disagree with, we ask that there be a 24 waiting period before this issue is addressed. After which we ask you proceed according to the following chain of command when applicable:

1. If possible, the player should talk to the coach first.
2. If the problem is not solved in step 1, the player and/or parent should talk to the coach.
3. If the problem is not solved in step 2, the player and/or parent should talk to the Athletic Director.
4. If the problem is not solved in step 3, the player and/or parent should talk to the school administration.

Communication: Team Stack and RCA emails are the current communication services for all RCA sports. All team mass communications will be done through these services.

1. No private texts or calls should be taking place between a Coach/Designated Coordinator and an athlete at any time. Team Stack messaging with athletes are +One, meaning parents are always included in any communication with an athlete. RCA emails are regulated by RCA administration.
2. Parent meetings to communicate policies, team rules, culture, and expectations will happen at the coach's discretion.

RCA Athletic Honor Code

Athletes will understand and uphold the Honor Code. Failure to conduct yourself according to that code may result in a loss of playing time, suspension, or removal from the athletic program. When at a school event, Christian behavior is expected. Athletes, coaches, and fans will model the Honor Code. Suspensions or disciplinary actions may be enforced based on the severity of the incident.

To God Almighty: I will seek to honor the Lord in all that I think, say and do (Deut. 26:17). I will submit myself to the authority of His grace and His commands (2 Tim. 3:16-17). I will recognize that my appearance and behavior reflect on Him as much as on me (1 Cor. 10:31).

To My Parents: I will attempt to honor my parents in everything that I think, say, and do (Ex.20:12). I will seek to learn all I can from them (Eph.6:1-3). I acknowledge that I cannot receive what I need in life or godliness without them (Ps.78:1-8).

To My Teachers, Coaches, and Officials: I will demonstrate respect, attentiveness, gratitude, and obedience (Heb. 13:1). I will seek to do all the work I have been assigned with diligence and integrity (Eph. 5:8-17). I will do my utmost to learn as much and achieve as much as I possibly can (Phil.4:8-9).

To My Classmates and Teammates: I will honor and respect the time, work, and feelings of my fellow students and teammates (Rom.12:9-18). I will try to model honesty, integrity, kindness, and modesty in my relationships (Phil.2:3-7). I realize that disturbances affect everyone at school and on the team and thus will strive for peace (Eph.4:1-6).

I, therefore, affirm my personal commitment to uphold these Christian responsibilities and the policies of the RCA Athletic Handbook, realizing that I will be able to enjoy the privilege of participating in the RCA athletic program only so long as I fully maintain this commitment.

Athlete Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

RCA Parent Honor Code /
Athletic Handbook Signature

Parents will understand and uphold the Honor Code. When at a school event, Christian behavior is expected. Parents will model the Honor Code. Suspensions or disciplinary actions may be enforced based on the severity of the incident.

- I will put the emotional and physical well-being of the youth participants ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will respect players, coaches, officials, spectators, and families at all times.
- I will respect the decisions of officials and coaches.
- I will not engage in any violence or verbal threats or use any profanity.
- I will not yell advice to my child during a game.
- I will model good sportsmanship for all youth participants.
- I will not belittle or ridicule anyone involved in a youth sporting event—in public, in private, in person, or online.
- I will do my part to keep sports fun and positive for every youth participant.
- I will endeavor to communicate all of the above with other fans who attend with me.

I, therefore, affirm my personal commitment to uphold the Honor Code.

Parent Signature: _____

I have read and understand the Riverside Christian Academy Athletic Handbook.

Parent Signature: _____