

ILLIANA CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL



Athletic Handbook

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General Information Section

ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

The interscholastic athletic program at Illiana Christian H.S. is an integral part of the entire school structure. Athletics should never be thought of as being separate from, above, or beneath the normal operation of our school. The athletic programs should comply with and reinforce the school's overall statement of purpose. Our highest goal is to bring athletics under the lordship of Jesus Christ by encouraging the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth and development of all participants through their athletic experiences.

Properly done, athletics are a positive learning experience. The athletes learn to refine their skills and improve their physical fitness. Participants in the program experience the privilege of membership on a team and learn their responsibilities to each other, the coach, the spectators, their school, and their opponents. Being part of the group teaches the important life lesson of placing group goals ahead of personal ones and how to make a personal contribution to the welfare of the team. Athletes are taught how to control their emotions and actions in a Christ-like manner, a valuable skill which carries over into everyday life. Athletes learn sportsmanship. More than mere self-control, sportsmanship is being thoughtful, kind, generous, and courteous even while being intensely competitive. Participants learn self-discipline and the benefits of hard work. Athletes are encouraged to always use and develop their talents to the fullest. School sports teach team members how to both win and lose with grace and dignity.

Interscholastic sports provide opportunity for participants to demonstrate Christian values, such as humility, compassion, and respect, even under the stress of competitive play. Everyone involved – players, coaches, and spectators – can witness to the world around them and can, by their behavior and attitude, bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ. The development of such Christian values in our youth and coaches is a high priority of Illiana athletics.

Athletics are recreational. Team members are involved in activities that are healthful, developmental, and fulfilling. Participation in sports should provide student-athletes with beneficial outlets for self-expression and physical exercise in addition to the sheer fun of competitive play. Interscholastic sports are not only recreational for the players, but also for the spectators. They provide a means by which a community can come together and support the efforts of "their" team. It is the intent of our athletic program for everyone involved to glorify our Lord through their participation in Illiana athletics, whether as fans or as active contestants.

School sports are an extension of the educational programs at our school. God created us with bodies, minds, and souls, and He is concerned about all three. Athletic education programs are an appropriate and necessary part of a complete, well-rounded Christian school. While those teams and athletes with exceptional skills may receive most of the publicity, the benefits of participation in our program are not limited to those few. Our hope is that *all* who participate will be better people as a result of their involvement in Illiana athletics. With this in mind, athletics should be encouraged and must remain an essential part of the total school program.

ROLE OF THE PARENTS

Parents need to set the standard of exemplary sportsmanship while attending games/matches and when discussing ICHS athletics with others and at home. Because of the nature of athletic competition, parents can be detrimental to a student-athlete's development when they become too involved as aggressive spectators and/or when they act as self-appointed player "agents" or "bleacher coaches" who choose to publicly second-guess coaches' decisions. Also, parents can also be susceptible to the temptation to blame the coach for poor play or lack of performance by their student-athlete or the team. When these types of behaviors occur, the child of these parents may feel excused for his/her effort, or lack thereof, and poor attitudes toward the coach and the team may develop as a result. Parents need to trust the school and coach as partners in the Christian education and development of their child. Coaches are certainly fallible people who will make mistakes at times. However, there must be a trust that the coach is doing everything that he/she can to help their child in their growth as athletes and as young adults. Mutual trust, respect, and encouragement among coaches, players, and parents will result in a top quality athletic program at Illiana.

This is not to say that parents of a student-athlete should remain silent if a problem arises. Like relationships with teachers, parents should feel free to have open, constructive discussions with the coach on issues pertaining to their child. Parents should expect that the coach will respond with honesty, respect, and a mutual concern for the well-being of their child. Parents are advised not to discuss concerns with the coach "in the heat of the moment," but, rather, should wait (at least overnight as suggested in the following "Communication Procedure") until emotions have cooled. In addition, parents should use discretion and restraint when determining whether to bring a concern forward to a coach. In all such cases, the Communication Procedure that follows should be employed.

Parents (and grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, classmates, neighbors and friends) in their roles as spectators should understand their responsibilities to be encouragers of the team, supporters of the school, and, most importantly, representatives of Christ. Spectators should remember that school athletics are learning experiences for the students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Athletes from all sports should be praised in their attempts to improve themselves as athletes and as people. In addition, appreciation for outstanding play by either team should be shown

More specifically, spectators should be aware that it is a privilege to observe the game/match. Respect should be shown to the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups. Treat them as our guests, or the name of Christ may be tarnished.

Game officials should be treated with respect. Understand that they, like you, are fallible and are doing their best to promote the student-athlete. Admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public and be eager to accept their authority.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES:

The Illiana Christian H.S. Athletic Department is committed to communicating the goals and objectives of the athletic program, eligibility rules, and expectations of our athletes. If more information is required or should a concern arise during an athletic season, the procedure listed below should be followed:

1. the student athlete should first speak directly with his/her coach,
2. if further clarification is required, a parent should then contact the coach (*it is advised that no contact between parent and coach be made until, at least, the day after the incident/event in question – the so-called “24 hour rule”*)
3. if the issue remains unresolved, the parent should then communicate his/her concerns to the athletic director

If a problem involving the Illiana Athletic Policy cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, a written request should be made to the athletic director stating the reasons for dissatisfaction. An eligibility committee consisting of two coaches (appointed by the administration), the athletic directors, and vice-principal will be convened to adjudicate Athletic Policy problems according to the following procedure:

1. the written request will first be considered by the committee,
2. the committee may then request a hearing with the involved parties,
3. the committee will make their decision by written ballot with a simple majority vote deciding the matter.
4. if the party or parties involved are still dissatisfied, they may bring the case to the Education Committee of the School Board

ELIGIBILITY RULES

In order to participate in interscholastic sports at Illiana the student athlete must:

- A. be legally enrolled in Illiana Christian according to IHSA rules. This means that he/she must have been enrolled at Illiana as a freshman in the fall, attended Illiana for all of the current and previous year, or transferred in from another school due to a change in residence. Transfer students sometimes are ineligible for up to a year depending on the circumstances of their transfer. For the latest rulings consult with the athletic director.
- B. have an updated Illinois High School Association physical examination card on file in the Athletic Office prior to *any* participation (including tryouts, practices, and games).
- C. be covered with medical insurance of their own or with the Illiana Student Insurance offered through the school.
- D. have passed *all* courses from the previous marking period (quarter). Failure to do so will result in the athlete being declared ineligible for two contests. This policy carries over to the following fall season for a fourth quarter failure.

Note: any athlete who has been declared academically ineligible will still be required to attend and participate in all practices (with the possible exception of when he is receiving academic help) and should be in street clothes at all games, even though he/she may not play.

- F. be doing passing work in *all* courses each week in order to remain eligible. If, at any time during the school year, the athletic director is notified of a student failing a class, the student will receive an eligibility warning. At the end of one week the student athlete must demonstrate that he has taken the necessary steps to correct the failing grade. If he/she is unable to do so they will become ineligible until they can prove they are passing all of their classes.
- G. be free from misconduct that might cause ineligibility (see Conduct Policy, pg. 9).

GENERAL ATHLETIC POLICIES

- A. Athletes who try out and are selected for a team commit themselves to the entire season. Any athlete who decides to quit a team after being placed on the eligibility list for that sport should have a conference with the coach. Students who quit without the coach's approval will not be allowed to participate in other sports at Illiana for a period of up to one (1) calendar year. The actual length of the suspension will be determined after a meeting of the administration, athletic director, coach, student athlete, and parents. The Athletic Director should be consulted in matters where a conflict between an athlete (or parents) and coach cannot be resolved amicably.
- B. No athlete shall drop a sport in season and join another team in the same season unless the situation meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - 1. It occurs before the final cut.
 - 2. It occurs because of an injury and/or
 - 3. it is by mutual consent of coaches or sponsors.
 - 4. It occurs due to extreme circumstances. "Extreme circumstances" do *not* include the following: Personality clash with the coach, insufficient playing time, or cramped social life. The situation must be serious and must have consequences for the persons involved. The coach must also give consent in cases of this type.
- C. Attendance at practice sessions and contests is mandatory. Coaches will ordinarily provide students with a schedule of both practice and contest dates. Students may be granted permission to miss a practice or contest if an excuse is provided to the coach well in advance. Outside of emergencies, last minute requests to miss a practice or game will be denied. Athletes commit themselves to faithfully attend all practices and games and should plan other activities around them during the season. In the event that two school events coincide (i.e. concert and game), the parents of the athlete/musician involved will decide which event is attended without repercussion from either director or coach.
- D. Athletes are required to be at school by **11:10 am** on the day of a contest or practice in order to participate, unless properly excused by the administration. Students who leave school early due to illness are not permitted to return to school for practices or games. Once at school, students must attend all classes (including P.E.) on game days.
- E. Athletes who have received disciplinary action by faculty or administration members must satisfy

- these obligations as assigned before they may attend practice. On contest days the athlete must inform the coach of any pending disciplinary action and make the proper arrangements.
- F. A meeting of all players and their parents will usually be held shortly after the teams have been selected for the purposes of distribution and explanation of school/team policies, collection of pertinent paperwork (emergency care waivers, practice schedules, etc.), discussion of team goals and objectives, etc. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory for all participants and at least one parent/guardian. If a meeting is not held, coaches are expected to provide some kind of booklet/folder with all pertinent information to parents and athletes.
- G. Illiana will provide the necessary transportation to and from away events. All student-athletes are expected to ride the school bus or van. Students should rarely (and only with administrative approval) be allowed to take their own vehicles to any away game/match. If a parent or other responsible adult (grandparent, older brother, etc.) wishes to take their child home from such an event, the parent/adult must personally make arrangements with the coach. The coach should make available a sign-out sheet for this purpose. The same holds true for a student who will be driving him/herself home in a vehicle brought by a parent/adult. Under no circumstances will a student-athlete be permitted to ride home with another student.
- H. Athletes are expected to dress appropriately for any contest, either home or away. Coaches will inform team members of specific requirements. The Illiana policy is that no blue jeans or T-shirts be worn. A shirt with a collar and Docker-style pants would be a recommended minimum standard for the boys. The clothes we wear at home or away reflect a great deal about ourselves and Illiana. Proper attire must be worn during practice, as well. This means, specifically, that shirts must be worn by female athletes at all times and male athletes must wear shirts when inside the building. In addition, inappropriate company logos, band shirts, etc. will not be permitted!
- I. Illiana will provide uniforms and, where applicable, warm-up apparel for all teams. School-owned uniforms must be returned at the end of the season in acceptable condition as determined by the coach. Athletes will be held financially responsible (fees added directly to tuition statements) for all items not returned or damaged beyond normal wear-and-tear, and awards, honors, and recognition may also be withheld.
- J. In order to facilitate church meetings, catechism classes, etc. Illiana, with the cooperation of local pastors, has designated Wednesday night as “church” night. No practice shall extend beyond 6:00 pm on that night and, as much as reasonably possible, no games/matches will be scheduled for that night. Afternoon baseball, softball, soccer games and other events may be scheduled for these days with the understanding that these games are usually over before the 6:00 deadline. Occasionally (actually, every spring), the league, over our objections, schedules away games for baseball and softball on Wednesdays. Please be assured that we will do our best to minimize these types of violations of our own policy.
- K. Illiana will not schedule games for the day before any exam, during Spring Break, on Ascension Day, on Good Friday, or on “Easter Monday.” Coaches will be expected to use their discretion when scheduling practices on those days.
- L. Athletes should accept their responsibilities for the cleanliness and maintenance of the Illiana athletic facilities. This includes keeping the gyms, lobby, locker rooms and grounds clean and

- litter-free. It also extends to the care for and treatment of the buses, vans, equipment and lockers.
- M. Occasionally, in the sport of wrestling, a visiting school will have a female on their team. No Illiana wrestler will be coerced or required to wrestle someone of the opposite gender. If a cross-gender match cannot be avoided, the Illiana athlete will be permitted to forfeit with as little consequence as possible and with the support of the coach.
- N. Coaches have the freedom to also institute their own policies for their teams and players, so long as they do not conflict with these general policies. Further details on policies re. transportation, practice procedures, dress codes, expected conduct/behavior, will follow in this handbook.
- O. At the beginning of each school year, Illiana offers every student the opportunity to purchase accident insurance. Many families have adequate insurance through their own policies. ***Illiana carries no insurance on athletes.*** The student must either purchase his own insurance or be covered by a family policy in order to be covered during athletic tryouts, practices, or contests.

CONDUCT POLICY

To be an Illiana athlete is an honor. Athletes are regarded by students, fans, and the general public as examples of what Illiana is all about. To be sure, the same can be said for some students who are not athletes, but that does not diminish the appropriate expectation that athletes be committed to exemplary and healthy living. Therefore the following rules will apply to all those participating in athletic preparation and competition at Illiana. Generally, the season includes the first day of try-outs and extends through the last day of competition. Consequences for second and third offenses refer to offenses within the same academic year.

- A. Student athletes may not use or have in their possession any tobacco product.

Penalty: Immediate suspension from athletic participation for the remainder of the season.

- B. Student athletes may not use or possess alcohol. In addition, such students may not be present at any gathering of peers where alcohol or illegal drugs are used. To avoid penalty for being present at such a gathering, a student must leave immediately.

Penalty: Immediate suspension from athletic participation for the remainder of the season.

- C. Student athletes may not use or possess any illegal drugs (marijuana, ecstasy, prescription drugs not prescribed for the athlete, steroids, cocaine, etc.) or drug paraphernalia (pipes, rolling papers, clips, etc.). Student athletes may not be present where illegal drugs are used or experienced.

Penalty: Immediate suspension from athletic participation for the remainder of the school year.

- D. If a student athlete violates any of the above rules regarding tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs a second time within the same academic year, that student may not participate in any organized athletic activity at Illiana for the remainder of the school year.

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- E. The administration may impose penalties greater than those prescribed above for offenses it believes to be more egregious. For example, drunkenness that caused injury to another person might be punished with permanent removal from athletics. Also, the administration will not be bound to legalistic interpretations of this policy; a student athlete that gets drunk on the night before try-outs, for example, will be dealt with as if the offense occurred in season. Finally, the administration also reserves the right to extend penalties beyond the academic year and into the following year if it deems that to be appropriate.
- F. Good conduct is not limited to avoiding tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs. . Participation in athletics is a privilege and not a right. Student athletes must display exemplary behavior and attitudes at all times both on and off the athletic field in order to continue to enjoy that privilege. This includes cooperation, good sportsmanship, respect, self-control, and submission to authority. The administration and coaches may impose penalties restricting involvement or participation in athletics as deemed appropriate for any inappropriate conduct.
- G. As alluded to above, coaches may set higher standards of conduct for their players than those set by the school's administration. And coaches may impose additional penalties on their players in addition to those imposed by the administration as long as those penalties do not violate other school policies.