

HANDBOOK FOR
PARENTS OF
STUDENT-ATHLETES



WHEAT RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

The athletic program is an integral part of the educational process of Wheat Ridge High School. It promotes a desire in our students and community to take part in sports either as a participant or a spectator.

Our aim is to develop competitive student-athletes but not to lose sight of educational values such as sportsmanship, citizenship, health and scholastic attainment. The athletic programs should also promote school morale and provide an additional source of self-esteem for our students.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To provide opportunities to learn games and improve playing skills to the best of their abilities.
2. To develop physical fitness and desirable health, hygiene and safety habits.
3. To provide opportunities to make real friends with team members and widen circles of friends by meeting student-athletes from opposing teams.
4. To provide opportunities to observe and practice good sportsmanship.
5. To realize that athletic competition is a privilege that carries definite responsibilities with it.
6. To reap the benefits of the special type of discipline that comes from participation and competition.
7. To understand the concept of teamwork and the individual's role as a team member.

COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

1. The community should realize that control of and responsibility for school athletics rests entirely with the school authorities.
2. School athletics should furnish a recreational opportunity for the general public as long as a community is willing to see that the program is conducted solely for the benefit of student competition and student spectators.
3. The community should judge the success of the season on the number of participants, the number of spectators, new skills acquired and good citizenship and good sportsmanship taught, rather than on the number of games won or lost.
4. The community should constantly keep in mind that an athletic contest is part of the school program and therefore is governed by the same philosophy.

SCHOOL AND STUDENT-BODY OBJECTIVES

1. Athletics should be educational.
2. Athletics should promote pride in one's school and community.
3. Proper student interest should be promoted.
4. All visiting schools should be treated as guests.
5. School policy should be consistently applied so as not to provide student-athletes with special privileges.
6. Sportsmanship, fair play and good school citizenship should be the goals of all student-athletes.
7. Every effort should be made to provide the best coaching, facilities and equipment possible within the economic constraints of the school district's budget.

Being a parent is often challenging, this effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of a student-athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility. There are many relationships, which are involved in being the sport-parent of a student-athlete.

The Player-Coach Relationship

Unfortunately, through televised games and the more recent proliferation of cable TV, many adults feel that they understand or perhaps know more than many coaches. Everyone becomes an expert. While this newfound expertise may heighten your appreciation of a sport, as a sport-parent, however, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Unfortunately, a sport-parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the sport-parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect their playing time or whether they win a starting position.

The Parent-Coach Relationship

In your role as a sport-parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But a student-athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities, which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest, is to have a brief meeting with his or her players. Student-athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

The Parent-Player

Some sport-parents may try to live through their child's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most student-athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

When you do speak with your child after a contest don't dwell on his or her play, how many points they scored or if they started. Instead, first ask how the team did? Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100% and have a good experience?

Relationship with Officials

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans, "How much are you paying the officials?" The home school does not get the officials. All officials are assigned by a commissioner or assigner of the particular sport and neither team has control of which officials are assigned.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls, please do not harass or taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship, which can easily be damaged by spectators.

Spectator-Cheerleader

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Taking this responsibility into your own hands is not appropriate. Fans that leave the stands to direct cheers may often cause or lead to confrontations with the opponents. Following the cheerleader's directions, therefore, is absolutely necessary at all athletic contests.

The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect of the event.

Wheat Ridge High School Mission Statement for Athletics

Wheat Ridge High School supports the philosophy, a quality interscholastic athletic program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students. The interscholastic athletic program enhances and supports the academic mission of the school system. We are committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all athletic contests. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others.

Being a member of the interscholastic program is a privilege to be earned and maintained throughout the season. Each time participants step into a school or onto the practice field and anytime they participate in a game they are expected to represent themselves, family, team and school in a responsible, sportsmanlike manner.

It is our responsibility to provide challenging opportunities for our student-athletes to compete successfully at the league, district, and state levels.

At Wheat Ridge High School

In addition to embracing and committing to the WRHS philosophy, we will also encourage and promote:

- ❖ The belief that student-athletes should participate in multiple and not specialize in any one specific sport.
- ❖ The concept of the broadest-based participation possible by offering all of the teams, which we can, and extending the opportunity to participate to as many students as possible.
- ❖ The premise that all teams are considered vital for our student-athletes and each is a valued part of our athletic program. No one sport is considered more important than any other.
- ❖ The approach that all teams are treated as fairly as possible.

The role of the parent in the education of a youngster is important. The support shown in the home is often manifested in the ability of the student to accept the opportunities presented at school, in the classroom and through co-curricular activities.

There is a value system -- established in the home, nurtured in the school -- which young people are developing. Their involvement in classroom and other activities contribute to that development. Integrity, fairness and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics, and these are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results.

Working to that end, we are joining with *The Denver Post* and Colorado High School Activities Association program called *Sportsmanship – It's How You Play the Game*. This is a program designed to positively change behavior in our schools and reinforce and reward the need for sportsmanship as one of the values taught through educational athletics.

Good sportsmanship, whether a student or a parent, is a true leader within the school and the community. As a parent of a student, your sportsmanship goals should include:

- ❖ Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- ❖ Encouraging our students to perform their best, just as we would urge them on with their class-work, knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances;
- ❖ Participating in positive cheers that encourage our athletes; and discouraging any cheer that would redirect that focus;
- ❖ Learning understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- ❖ Respecting the task our coaches face as teachers; and supporting them as they strive to educate our youth;
- ❖ Respecting our opponents as students, and acknowledging them for striving to do their best;
- ❖ Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances; and
- ❖ Be a fan...not a fanatic!

These and other expectations are included in the attached guidelines, which we hope you will take a few moments to review. They give us a road map to follow on a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You can have a major influence on your youngster's attitude about academics and athletics. The leadership role you take in sportsmanship will help influence your child, and our community, for years to come.

We look forward to serving you in the year ahead, and appreciate your continued support.

Guidelines for Parent and Student-Athlete Participation

All meetings with coaches are to be made by appointment only. Coaches will make their work numbers available to parents. Parents will refrain from calling coaches at their homes, unless completely necessary. There will be no meetings between parents and coaches on the athletic fields, gyms, or locker rooms.

The sole purpose of an extracurricular parent booster group is for positive reinforcement and support of the athletes, the athletic program, and to assist in the fund-raising for that program. There are no other agendas.

Coaches are NOT required to discuss player position, playing time, offensive, defensive or game philosophy/decisions with parents.

There will be no establishment of parent groups, websites, athlete groups, etc., without the written consent of the head coach, the athletic director, and the principal of Wheat Ridge High School.

The protocol when resolving an issue between student-athlete and coach is as follows;

1. student-athlete will make an appointment and meet with the coach,
2. next step > student-athlete and parent will make an appointment and meet with coach,
3. third step > student-athlete and parent will make an appointment to meet with coach and athletic director,
4. final step > student-athlete and parent will make an appointment to meet with coach, athletic director, and principal.

Any student-athlete that makes the decision to leave the team will make an appointment with the head coach to notify him/her of their decision, and hand in any school issued equipment.

Each coach will give a deadline date for school issued equipment to be turned in. Failure to turn in equipment by that date will result in a \$40.00 fine from the athletic department. In the case of equipment not returned or returned in non-usable condition, the student-athlete will be charged for the replacement of this equipment.

We understand that it is a privilege to wear the blue and gold of Wheat Ridge High School. We understand the sacrifices made to be part of this tradition. Therefore, we will have NO part in any incidents of hazing, initiation, harassment, disorderly conduct toward, intimidation of, bullying of, or discriminating against any other student, parent, or coach from Wheat Ridge High School, or any of our opponents.

Different Coaching Styles

Just as our students are exposed to a variety of teaching styles and techniques, our student-athletes are exposed to a variety of coaching styles and techniques. Consequently, the Athletic Department does not have any rules, which mandate the amount of playing time received by each player. Those decisions ultimately rest with the coaches in the program. Questions or concerns about playing time are best addressed in a player-coach or a parent-coach conference.

Expressing Concerns

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
2. Call the following day and make an appointment, which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
3. Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.
4. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a sport-parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation, which is given.

Sportsmanship

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others – players, coaches, officials and fans (*National Federation News*, March 1995, p. 10). It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. This means:

1. There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from our fans or spectators.
2. Taunting or trash talking of our opponents and their cheerleaders cannot be tolerated.
3. Spectators cannot leave the bleachers or enter onto the court or field during a contest.
4. Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.
5. We should not impede or interfere with our opponent's cheerleaders from leading their cheers.
6. In some specific sports such as basketball, we should not yell while an opponent takes a foul shot.

Responsibilities of a Student-Athlete

Most coaches would expect a student-athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual.
2. A student-athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
3. Players must be receptive to coaching.
4. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
5. As a member of a team, a student-athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Student-athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but the coaching staff and the school.
6. If injured, a student-athlete must report all injuries to either the coach or, more importantly, to our athletic trainer.

Responsibilities of a Coach

At Wheat Ridge High School, a coach has the responsibility for the following:

1. The selection of the squad.
2. The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
3. The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
4. The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
5. The decision of who plays in what position.
6. The establishing of team rules.
7. The selection of team captains.
8. The communication with student-athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when the sessions will start and finish.

Eligibility Requirements for Student-Athletes

Jefferson County Public Schools' are members of the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA). As members, Wheat Ridge High School is subject to all rules, regulations and policies of CHSAA.

- Participation in interscholastic activities as a part of a school's educational program is a privilege and not a right. Students wishing to participate are required to meet standards of personal behavior and academic performance which are related to school purposes. In this regard, the CHSAA and its member schools may exercise the fullest discretion permitted under law.

Wheat Ridge High School Eligibility Participation

Prior to participation in any interscholastic competition, it is required that all athletes have a signed Jefferson County School Participation Contract, current sport physical, and paid the required sport fee, on file in the athletics office prior to the start of the regular season.

Wheat Ridge High School Academic Eligibility

In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student/athlete must be a full time student and have passed 2.50 Carnegie Units (equivalent of five classes each carrying a .50 credit) each semester. At the end of a semester, the student's final credits in his/her subjects shall be used to determine eligibility for next semester athletic participation.

Additionally, there are attendance requirements that may cause a student-athlete to lose eligibility for a daily or seasonal period. In order to participate in a scheduled athletic contest, student-athletes must be in school by 10:00 a.m., on the day of the contest.

Any student-athlete who is absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 days or more shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has been in attendance for a total of 60 school days following his/her 20th day of absence.

Wheat Ridge High School Weekly Restriction

If a student receives two failing grades in a weekly grading period, in major subjects or the equivalent of, the student will be placed on Athletic Restriction. The student's name which appears on the restriction list will be restricted from all activities for a period of one week, Monday thru Saturday. Progress will be re-evaluated every week. Students who have improved to the administration's satisfaction will be released from restriction and have full privileges restored.

Prospective Collegiate Student Athletes

Many college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization founded in 1906 that establishes rules on eligibility, recruiting and financial aid. If you are planning to enroll in college as a freshman wishing to participate in Division I or II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse ensures consistent application of NCAA Initial-Eligibility requirements for prospective student athletes at all member institutions.

Eligibility

- Registration must be completed by going online to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.
- A \$50 registration fee (payable with a credit card) will be needed at the time of registration.
- Two copies of the printed form must be given to a counselor (Form 1 and 2 signed).
- Check the approved core course list.
- Coach's release form in Counseling Office.

*Division I and II certification require **two years of math, including at least one year of algebra and one year of geometry** (or a course for which geometry is a prerequisite). You must have a **core-course GPA of 2.0** (Based on a 4.0 scale) and a combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections or a sum score on the ACT based on the qualifier index scale which can be found on the NCAA web site.

Participation on an Athletic Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Wheat Ridge High School is a privilege and not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of a student-athlete. However, unlike recreation teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to win, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

Physical Education Class Participation

It is important to also understand that all student-athletes are expected to actively participate in all required Physical Education classes even when "in season" during their particular sport. Physical Education is an important and required course for graduation. Students who participate in interscholastic athletes should not expect "special" treatment from teachers to be excused from Physical Education classes even on the day of competition. Physical Education teachers will use prudent judgment with student-athletes on determining their participation level in class on the day of competition.

Cutting the Team

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at Blue Mountain HS, it may be necessary in some sports to cut a squad. This may occur due to limitations of our facilities, regulations specific to some sports, travel restrictions, and other factors.

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team, is developed by the coach.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that a student-athlete will make the squad.

Parents should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and be available to answer student-athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many student-athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or to try another sport. When parents and student-athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

The Purpose of a Freshman Team

Freshman teams exist to provide those student-athletes unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the student-athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on a freshman team may enhance the student-athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a freshman team does not guarantee that a student-athlete will automatically move up the following year to the junior varsity or varsity squads. The student-athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year.

Striving to win is important in athletics; however, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a freshman team. The development of student-athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a freshman squad while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team.

Practice Sessions and Games

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to a student-athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

Wheat Ridge High School, practice sessions:

1. May last two hours.
2. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. Check with the coach for the specific times.
3. Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
4. Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
5. May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.

Spectators at games, however, are very much encouraged. Positive and nurturing support of teams and student-athletes can be very helpful to performance in athletic contest.

Hazing

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an important activity for team bonding. However, it is actually a form of harassment and represents a Wheat Ridge High School Disciplinary Code offense. A more complete explanation of harassment can be found in the Jefferson County Public Schools Conduct Code Book.

Wheat Ridge High School prohibits recognized groups, organizations, athletic teams or those that attend events or activities sponsored, organized or supported in any way by those organizations, from hazing members, prospective members, or other persons seeking to obtain benefits or services from any of these organizations.

Hazing is an action or activity, with or without consent from a person, whether conducted on or off Wheat Ridge High School property, which is designated to or has the reasonably foreseeable effect of humiliation, denigrating, offending, physically or mentally abusing or exposing to danger a person, as a condition, directly or indirectly, of the person's consideration for, continuation in, admission to, membership in, participation in activities of, receipt of benefits or services from, an organization or group.

Any participant who chooses to not follow the above policy will be subjected to consequences on a case by case matter.

Risks of Athletic Participation (Assumption of Risk)

In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when someone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, death could also result. All student-athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At Wheat Ridge High School, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our student-athletes.

Sports Booster Clubs

Wheat Ridge High School's Sports Booster Clubs exists to support all teams and the entire athletic program. Booster Clubs should have three primary goals: to raise funds to assist the athletic programs, to increase school spirit and to encourage and promote good sportsmanship.

The Booster Club is not a vehicle to remove coaches, advance vested interests or to alter Athletic Department policy. It is a service and support organization, which works in harmony with Wheat Ridge High School and its athletic program.

All parents are encouraged to join a Booster Club and become an active member. Most Booster Clubs hold monthly meetings throughout the year.

Please feel free to call with comments concerning this handbook. Hopefully, you have found it useful. You might also want to take ten minutes and share this information with your son or daughter. Have a great season!

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Acceptable Behavior

- Applause during introduction of players, coaches and officials.
- Players shaking hands with opponents who foul out while both sets of fans recognize player's performance with applause.
- Accept all decisions of officials.
- Cheerleaders lead fans in positive school yells in positive manner.
- Handshakes between participants and coaches at end of contest, regardless of outcome.
- Treat competition as a game, not a war.
- Coaches/players search out and congratulate opposing participant or coach.
- Applause at end of contest for performances of all participants.
- Everyone showing concern for injured player, regardless of team.
- Encourage only sportsmanlike conduct.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Yelling or waving arms during opponent's free-throw attempt.
- Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.
- Booing or heckling an official's decision.
- Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official's call.
- Yells that antagonize opponents.
- Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
- Blaming loss of game on official, coaches, or participants.
- Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- Use of profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Do's and Don'ts

1. Cheer **for** your team.
2. But don't yell at your opponents.
3. Do not use vulgar or profane language.
4. Yelling at officials **cannot** be tolerated.
5. Do not yell at or distract a player shooting foul shots.
6. Taunting and trash talking directed at players, coaches and fans is not permitted.
7. Remain in the bleachers during the contest.
8. Do not interfere with our opponent's cheerleaders and their attempt to lead cheers.

9. Do not kick the bleachers; not only does this display poor sportsmanship, but this also damages them.
10. As a parent, please set a positive example for our students and student-athletes.

If you see or hear something, which is inappropriate, please help us by saying something to the offending individual.

Remember, that purchasing a ticket provides you with the opportunity and privilege to watch a contest; it is not a license to verbally assault others or to be obnoxious.

WHEAT RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EJECT ANY SPECTATORS WHOSE CONDUCT IS DETRIMENTAL TO GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. MISBEHAVIOR AT SPORTING EVENTS MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION OR SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY ACTION.