

Tupelo Christian Preparatory School

Athletic Handbook

“But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

Athletic Statement

This athletic booklet is designed to inform student/athletes and their parents of the rules, regulations and information that helped develop the rich tradition of competition in Tupelo Christian Preparatory School athletics.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, which carries with it varying degrees of honor, responsibility and sacrifice. Since competition is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate shall be expected to follow the rules established by the Athletic Department and other specific coaches’ rules for their sport. Each student athlete represents the body of Christ and the school community. It is the student athlete’s duty to conduct himself/herself in light of this manner.

The Athletic Department will enforce all rules and regulations as described in this Athletic Handbook. Parents and athletes are asked to sign an acknowledgement document each year stating that they have read and understand the information included in the Handbook and that the athlete is subject to disciplinary measures should he/she violate the rules and regulations set forth in this Athletic Handbook. Parents should expect consequences as well if they find themselves in violation of codes of conduct at the games or with TCPS coaches, other team’s coaches, and/or officials.

Mission of Tupelo Christian Preparatory School

The mission of Tupelo Christian School is leading students in partnership with Christian families, to know Christ and make Him known through rigorous academics, challenging athletics, stimulating arts, and servant-hood activities.

Philosophy of Athletics of Tupelo Christian Preparatory School

Because God is sovereign over all His creation, His Lordship must also extend to athletics. The Athletic department of Tupelo Christian Preparatory School recognizes this fact and, therefore, seeks to give honor to God by formulating a philosophy consistent with His character and will.

- A. We are deeply committed to presenting Christ to each of our athletes so that, by God’s grace each might grow in Christian character. This is our first priority because we are more concerned about the eternal destinies of our athletes than any other single factor.
- B. We desire that our athletes perceive a godly concept of success. While winning the contest is the object of planning and preparation on the part of both coach and athlete, it must not be considered as the sole measure of success. Other values, which are being built into the athlete, must be the ultimate criteria on whether or not we are truly successful.
- C. The criteria for determining the success of our athletes will be seen in the qualities they are developing in their lives. Such things as loyalty, respect for others, proper manners, perseverance, commitment, integrity, diligence, servant hood. Suitable response to crises, humility, handling victory and defeat, encouraging to others, demonstrating unconditional love, developing a work ethic, despising self-glorification, and knowing the joy of play are worthy standards.
- D. We know that athletics is not an end in itself. It may be used either to glorify God or bring Him into shame and derision in the world’s eyes. We desire to instill in our athletes this God-centered attitude toward athletics. This will encourage them to be well rounded student athletes who are developing interests and abilities in other areas.
- E. We as coaches acknowledge our ministry. It is a calling – unique and dynamic in its implications. We have been invested with the lives of young men and women. Our actions, our words, our thoughts, and even the motivations of our hearts must be apprehended by the Spirit of Christ.

Purpose Statement

Athletics is the medium by which we disciple and spread the gospel. Athletics is also the crucible by which athletes are tested and strengthened mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Athletics do not build character they reveal character.

Core Values

<u>E</u>xemplify Christ:	The love of Christ should shine through us
<u>A</u>ccept God’s Providence:	In losses and injuries
<u>G</u>lorify God:	Worship him with our abilities
<u>L</u>ove others:	Whether on our team or our opponent’s team
<u>E</u>njoy God:	Christ-centered in all of our relationships
<u>S</u>trive for humility:	Be a good winner

Vision

It is our hope and prayer that by God’s grace all of our student athletes will know Christ and make Him known. We are striving to partner with Christian families and offer

challenging athletics for our student/athletes at TCPS. We encourage participation in multiple sports.

Goals

The athletic program at Tupelo Christian Preparatory will measure its success by God's standards, not the world's. Each year, students will be led and encouraged to love one another, their school and our Lord. We will devote time to devotionals, practice, athletic competitions, and prayer. We will set goals each year that will meet the abilities of those on the team. With determination, we will maximize our God-given talents through maintaining a positive attitude, hard work and consistent techniques.

Objectives at T.C.P.S

1. To develop an athlete that cares about his/her school, and is proud of it, stands up for it and endeavors to encourage this same love, loyalty, and pride in school's standards and in his/her testimony.
2. To develop physical skills and learn about personal conditioning, good health habits, and safety along with the technical and tactical components of the individual sport.
3. To develop the knowledge that we have worth because of God and His Word.
4. To develop effective time management strategies that will help athletes achieve their goals.
5. To develop social skills through cooperation, commitment, service, and leadership.
6. To build championship programs that are second to none as we strive toward excellence in our athletics.

T.C.P.S. Sportsmanship Code

Honor Christ with your behavior.

Respect the visiting team and their fans.

Support and encourage our athletes during the game. (Refrain from taunting the other team.)

Respect the judgments of the officials.

Support the decisions of the coaches.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Must meet the school's scholastic academic requirements. Please check the current student handbook. Student/athletes must be able to maintain this requirement despite the heavy game and practice schedule. (Playing time may be affected.)
2. Must maintain conduct grades in accordance with the school's policy. (Playing time may be affected.)

3. Must be a full time registered student at TCPS that is cleared eligible by MHSAA within our determined school district (20 mile radius) or out of district and beyond. (Exception is Pee Wee football)

Parents:

- Must have parents that are willing to pay the uniform, camp, competition costs not covered by fundraising activities. These will be outlined each year.
- Must have parents that are willing to provide transportation at times.
- Must have parents that are willing to behave appropriately as a fan at all games and athletic competitions. (Star Sportsmanship) (TCPS Sportsmanship Code)
- Must have parents that are willing to be supportive and encouraging to their son/daughter in compliance with the rules and standards of the school and teams, including refraining from criticism and complaining.
- Encourage your son or daughter to speak with the Coach regarding any questions about personal involvement on the team (i.e. playing time and position).
- Must address legitimate concerns to the Coach first (the first meeting should be player and coach and then the player, parent, and Coach then parent, Coach and the Athletic Director). “Matthew 18”
- Must have parents that are willing to assist in all fundraising activities.
- Must be able and willing to work the concession area and/or gate or other game task lists duties as needed on a rotation basis.

Practice/Games

The parent and the coach relationship is a tough area to balance but with God’s grace we will strive to attain a cooperation that is workable for all involved. When a player is part of a team the parent becomes a cheerleader or encourager and agrees to leave the coaching to the coaches. Application of this will mean that parents will not be on the benches of teams or in dugouts or on sidelines unless invited by the Coach to do so. All practices will be open but the privilege to watch is just that to observe and enjoy the participation of your athlete. Thanks for your cooperation and working with us as we work with your children. (Parent/Coaches are of course exceptions to this.)

Physicals

Health forms are required as a release from the doctor before athletics participation can begin. Student/Athletes should not participate in practice or workouts until physicals are received by the Athletic office. Healthy eating, exercise and rest habits will be encouraged. Each May the NMMC provides free physicals at the furniture market building and all TCPS Varsity Athletes upcoming 9th through 12th graders are encouraged

to get their physical at this time. Seventh and eighth graders may get theirs at the Weston Reed offering in the fall for sport's physicals as needed.

Fund Raising

In order to raise the funds to operate our 30 teams we require the use of fundraising. Booster Memberships, program ad/sign sales, and fundraisers are used to raise over \$100,000 per year to provide the opportunities afforded student/athletes at TCPS. The Booster Club Executive Committee oversees the budget and spending of the Athletic budget and approves the use of funds not listed in the budget. Signatures for checks are required. The 500 Club is used to earmark funds for particular donations to a specific sport and/or need and is a separate account that is not in the general athletic budget.

Each year, the athletes help the T.C.P.S. Booster Club raise funds by selling ads for the Athletic programs and other activities. Parental help in this endeavor is expected. Ad sales, sign sales and fundraisers like the golf tournament and the speaker's banquet provide for the budget of the athletic department and are dependent on the involvement of all that participate. Joining the Booster Club should be the first move for a family with an athlete.

Discipline

Discipline Procedures will be done in accordance with school policy. Coaches will use running and playing time as consequences for violation of team rules. Removal from a team is the last resort but could be a possibility due to school policy or a violation deemed by the coach to be worthy. The Athletic Director will be involved in these discussions and decisions as needed.

*The type of punishment will be determined by the head coach of the team the player is participating with when the offense occurs. All punishments will be consistent with the Discipline policy of the school.

If or when a student/athlete is given a day(s) of ISS he/she will be allowed to practice and dress for games but will sit out a game for every day of ISS assigned. He/she will sit out the next game and each should be consecutive (no picking and choosing). If the athlete is involved in two sports such as soccer/basketball it will be the first of the two and in consecutive order. (Be sure this is clear.)

If or when a student/athlete is given a day(s) of OSS he/she will not be allowed to practice nor attend a game or event at TCPS or away the day or days of the suspension.

TCPS Athletics uses random drug testing to assure our families that we encourage a drug free environment at TCPS. We hope that our student/athletes see the testing as a way to prove that they are living a lifestyle that TCPS and their family would promote.

Lettering Policy

Lettering in a sport is a blessing and an honor. The requirements for lettering in a sport is recorded by the head coach of each sport and approved by the athletic director. The following list is a set of criteria that an athlete must meet in order to be eligible for a letter:

- Must be a member of a varsity level team
- Must contribute to the improvement of the varsity squad based on the coach's recommendation
- Must maintain conduct grades without any N or U
- Athletic Director must approve

Multiple Sport Participation

Athletic ability is a gift given to our student-athletes by God. We as coaches need to encourage them to use those gifts to the best of their abilities. Athletes should be encouraged by every coach to participate in sports each season (fall, winter, and spring). In the event that an athlete is involved in two sports that overlap (fall sport and winter sport), he or she will be required to **finish** the first sport before starting the second sport. Also if a student/athlete quits a sport at TCPS he/she will not practice or workout with the next upcoming season sport until the final game of the sport that was quit is complete. If an athlete plays in one game he/she cannot stop the sport until the season is over. We desire to teach our athletes to finish what they start.

The shared athlete can also involve the playing of two sports (x-country/swim, soccer basketball) simultaneously and this is the most difficult to work out fairly. We discourage athletes from stretching themselves and their families too thin and hope that the commitments involved will be weighed. In order to be sure that all parties involved are on the same page a written agreement between the two coaches with parent and student/athletes signatures is required for a student/athlete to participate in two sports at the same time along with Athletic Director approval. Practice and games will need to be discussed and spelled out with detail along with the discussion of the possibility of both playing on the same day and when the playoffs or championships occur, "who can count on this athlete?" It should be expected that the playing time of any athlete that is not at a practice for a sport will be affected.

Game day school attendance

In order for a student athlete to be eligible to participate in a school related athletic game/contest, they must be present at school for a minimum of fifty percent of the school day. School related absences and emergencies cleared by the administration are the only exceptions. Please see TCPS student handbook for the attendance policy. Student/athletes that miss school will not be allowed to practice/or play on the day of their absence.

Proof of Insurance

Any student who wishes to participate in athletics must have proof of insurance for the chance of injury that might occur while participating in a school related practice or game/contest. TCPS does have insurance on TCPS registered student/athletes and your health insurance will be the primary then TCPS insurance. With a collision sport like football many recommend a supplement just for the season. We require that you provide proof of insurance. We do pay for Catastrophic insurance through MHSAA. **When traveling to or from a sporting event our student/athletes are only covered when in a TCPS vehicle or a rental.**

Team Selection

Being a member of an athletic team at TCPS is a privilege and not a right. Upon certain circumstances, it may become necessary for the head coach of a team to perform try-outs and “cut” a player who does not meet a certain set of requirements. A copy of these requirements must be given to and approved by the athletic director. This will begin in the Junior High Program as numbers require. When tryouts are held for a sport attendance is expected in order to have the opportunity to be on the team.

Purchasing and Inventory

God has tremendously blessed TCPS. In return, he expects us to be good stewards of the things he has so richly blessed us with. In order to accomplish this, we must be diligent to take care of our equipment as best as we can and to keep strict inventories of anything that we might issue out to our student athletes. All purchasing will be done through the athletic director’s office in the form of purchase orders and by Head Coaches, who are given budgets for their particular sport. Coaches are responsible to inventory the uniforms and equipment for their sports and store them appropriately to be used the following year.

Booster Club

The booster club is an integral part of our athletic department. Its main purpose is to raise funds to support our athletic programs. Because the booster club is part of the athletic department, it falls under the leadership of the Athletic Director who will act as a liaison between the Booster Club and the head coaches. The executive members will be creating and maintaining a budget each year. The Booster Club is made up of the parents of our student/athletes and those that choose to join in support of TCPS athletics. We typically meet monthly and all members are welcome. To be on the agenda call the Booster Club President and get permission to be on the agenda and come and share with us. Each sport has a parent liaison that is invited to attend the booster meetings. The Booster Club operates under the authority and rules of the Board approved Booster Club Constitution and By-Laws.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy

The athletic department at TCPS is committed to being a positive Christian example both on and off campus. Therefore, the coaches and student athletes at TCPS will adhere to the alcohol and drug abuse policy that has been set forth by the school. Random drug testing should be expected as a member of any TCPS athletic team.

Game and Practice Supervision

To ensure the safety of our student athletes, no warm-ups, agilities, conditioning, practice, or games may be done without a head coach, assistant coach, or responsible adult present. It is also the responsibility of the coach or any of the aforementioned to be the first person to be at any of these events, and to be the last one to leave. Coaches should be sure that athletes are supervised. Parents please pick up student/athletes immediately after practices and/or games.

Transportation

Must ride to and from all away games with the team in the provided transportation or have written permission from parents to do otherwise and approved by the Coach. Requests to travel in other ways should be requested by the athlete's parent. The request should specify with whom the athlete is allowed to ride, why there is a need for other transportation, and who the driver will be. TCPS has two 30 plus passenger buses that require a CDL licensed driver.

Eligibility

Mississippi High School Athletic Eligibility: Student/Athletes should maintain a 2.0 GPA and be moving toward a timely graduation.

Student/Athletes should be in district to participate (A 20 mile radius for TCPS students, simply Google the home address and 5440 Endville Road, Belden, MS 38826 and use the shortest route.) If out of district then MHSAA will give a ruling, but will in most instances be ruled ineligible for one year if a transfer student.

Any student athlete changing schools in the same district as TCPS without a physical move to a new district will be declared ineligible for one year per MHSAA standards. A student/athlete is ineligible at TCPS for one calendar year from the day of enrollment if they are deemed ineligible.

Student/Athletes begin their eligibility the first day of school attendance their freshman year. When a student athlete goes to a school the first day they are a student at that school.

TCPS academic eligibility standards are a bit more demanding than MHSAA and include: D's are assigned 1 point and F's are assigned 2 points. A total of 3 points at the 9 weeks grading period will make a TCPS student/athlete ineligible for the next 9 week grading period. (We will operate by the TCPS handbook policy.)

During the period of TCPS **academic ineligibility**, a student:

- May not try out for a team
- Who was a member of a team during the previous year may rejoin the team at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director once eligibility is restored
- Must submit a weekly progress report to the coach or AD
- May practice with the team, but may not be dismissed from any class for a practice or a game (this privilege can be denied)
- May not attend any team practice or game that interferes with academic progress as determined by Administration and the Athletic Director.
- May not practice with any team that does not conduct a tryout at the beginning of the season until all eligibility requirements are met.
- May not receive post-season recognition if the ineligibility concludes the season
- Who becomes ineligible for a second grading period may be dismissed from the team at the discretion of the coach and athletic director.
- Who becomes ineligible for a third grading period will be dismissed from the team

Before the first practice:

- Student/Athlete should have a current physical and copy in the athletic office, a completed Athletic Participation Clearance form (Insurance), Parent agreement form, Emergency information form, and the Parent Permission form for travel.
- Prepared to pay Athletic Activity fee for each sport played and sell \$300 worth of ad/sign sales.
- Parents join the Booster Club and sign up for service opportunities.

MHSAA is the governing body for TCPS Athletics and we will be subject to any rulings that are stated in their handbooks. Please note that they have a website that may be accessed any time. www.misshsaa.com

Thank you for partnering with us as we strive to offer challenging athletics to Christian families here at TCPS.