

# *Oakwood Adventist Academy Athletics Handbook*



Oakwood Adventist Academy  
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Huntsville, AL 35896

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## **Warning of Inherent Risk**

Participation in athletic competition includes the inherent risk of injury, which may range in severity from minor injury, to disabling injury, even to death. Although serious injuries are uncommon in structured, supervised athletic programs, it is virtually impossible to eliminate all risk. Participants can and do have the responsibility in helping reduce the chance of injury by obeying all safety rules of each sporting activity, reporting all physical problems to coaches, following proper guidelines for safe play in athletic competition, and inspecting the integrity of their own equipment. Oakwood Adventist Academy takes all necessary precautions to provide student athletes a proper and safe environment for competing athletically.

# OAKWOOD ADVENTIST ACADEMY

## ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

### OUR PHILOSOPHY

The approach to athletics at Oakwood Adventist Academy flows naturally from the school's philosophy of Christian education. The purpose and intent of our athletic program is to bring glory to God through our participation and involvement in individual and team sports activities, and to develop within those who participate character traits of Jesus Christ. We desire for our student athletes to grow spiritually by teaching them to think and act like Christ in the competitive arena, and to model Godly character through their words, attitudes and deeds.

A key objective of the OAA Athletic Department is to develop each student athlete spiritually, so that the Holy Spirit controls and directs his or her mind and body in every athletic endeavor (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Within that philosophical framework, all of our coaches desire to train, disciple, and encourage student athletes to perform athletically to the maximum of his or her potential in order to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Athletic competition can often serve as a microcosm of life, providing perfect learning situations for teaching God's principles. Using the many kinds of problems and different situations that occur in athletic competition, coaches attempt to build within each student athlete eternal biblical principles and values, so that he or she might conform to Christ's image and demonstrate His character.

*Consequently, the primary goal of athletics/sports at Oakwood Adventist Academy is to provide a program that develops a Christ-like character in all student-athletes, encourages physical activity and fitness, builds individual and teamwork skills, promotes school pride, and provides opportunities for positive witness in the community.*

### OAA ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

- HASDA School Board
- Pre K – 12 Principal(s)
- Athletic Director
- Sports Coordinator
- Head Coach
- Assistant Head Coach

## **OUR PURPOSE**

The Oakwood Adventist Academy Athletics handbook outlines for administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents important information concerning the athletic program at Oakwood Adventist Academy. It is comprehensive, yet not exhaustive. Any comments or suggestions should be directed to the Athletic Director and/or Sports Coordinator.

The athletics program is an important part of the overall educational experience of the students at OAA, and must necessarily conform to the school's philosophy of Christian education. Athletic competition must never be allowed to damage the testimony of Christ or the philosophy and ministry of the school.

Through the athletic program at OAA, we aim to accomplish the following objectives:

- 1. To Develop, Nurture and Affirm (DNA) students for a lifetime of service to God and Humanity.**
- 2. To develop within each student athlete the positive character qualities of Jesus Christ, conforming ourselves to His image, and openly expressing those characteristics to others through athletic competition.**
- 3. To learn to give maximum effort for the glory of God in every aspect of the athletic program.**
- 4. To glorify God in word and deed by presenting a positive witness and testimony for Jesus Christ to the lost.**
- 5. To teach the biblical principle of respect for authority; players respect for coaches; coaches, players and fans respect for officials; and all a respect and reverence for God.**
- 6. To instill within every player the principle of setting aside our individual desires and goals for the good of the team.**
- 7. To provide opportunities within athletic competition to learn self-discipline and self-control, because true individual character traits are often revealed in the heat of competition.**
- 8. To encourage and provide opportunities for student athletes to cultivate a healthy body ('Temple of God').**

## **SPORTS OFFERED**

Oakwood Adventist Academy now offers four (4) avenues of athletic competition for lower elementary, middle school and high school students. They are as follows:

### Lower Elementary

- Soccer
- Basketball
- Track and Field

### Middle School and High School

- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Track and Field

In Lower Elementary athletic activities, the goal is to lay an athletic foundation of a Christian worldview, quality instruction and a fundamental approach to each sport. At this level, we will be introducing students to organized athletics through recreation-style games and clinics where every team member plays equally. Teams are coached by volunteer parent-coaches who focus on teaching the rules of the game, basic skills and good sportsmanship.

For Middle School athletic activities, the primary goal is to teach game fundamentals, teamwork, sportsmanship, the concept of commitment, respect for authority, and most importantly, development of the athlete spiritually. The Middle School level attempts to refine the basic concepts learned to participate, with greater emphasis on teamwork, skill improvement, and a greater depth of spiritual growth.

At the High School level, competition is more intense and requires an increased level of desire and commitment from each individual athlete. Many biblical principles, character qualities, and life lessons can be learned through competing at this level. Coaching demands at the High School level are more intense and to compete at this level requires complete dedication by the athlete and complete support of parents for the athlete while competing.

Oakwood Adventist Academy High School will operate as an independent entity for athletic competition until further notice. For Lower Elementary and Middle School competition, our school belongs to the Huntsville Independent Schools League (HISL).

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- Student-athletes must meet eligibility standards as outlined in the school handbook.
- Home-schooled students must be properly registered as participants in the athletics program.
- Students registered in other schools are not eligible to participate in OAA athletic programs.

To be eligible to participate in the athletic program at Oakwood Adventist Academy, a student must enroll as a full-time student at OAA and take at least four units of credit (two units for the semester schedule each semester) per year. “The Southern Union Conference supports home schooling for families who elect to use this form of Adventist Christian Education”. If a home student wants to participate in OAA Athletics, they must first complete a **Sports Affiliation Form** and **pay all affiliation fees plus the Athletic Fee** to be considered. It then must be approved by the Athletic Director, the Principal(s) and the HASDA School Board.

Student athletes must have a signed **Parental Consent Form** and have paid all **Athletic Fees** associated with the sport/activity they wish to participate in. Additionally, students must obtain a **physical exam**, performed and signed by a Medical Doctor using a Pre-Participation Health Assessment and Medical Examination form. This signed form for each student athlete will be kept on file in the registrar’s office, as well as with the Athletic Director and/or Sports Coordinator. For each home and away sports activity, the coach for each individual sport must have in his or her possession copies of the forms mentioned above for every member on that team.

To maintain athletic eligibility for a sport, students must remain self-disciplined in the classroom. Students may lose eligibility for disciplinary consequences involving classroom infractions or misbehavior (i.e. constantly getting kicked out of class, suspension, fighting, excessive horse play, language and dress). Student athletes receiving suspension from school will receive consequences from his or her respective coach, as well as indefinite suspension from the team. For any school infraction, a coach will ensure appropriate consequences for the student athlete (laps, suicides, running, etc.). For three to five infractions, the student athlete will receive consequences from their coach and miss one or more games. For more than five infractions, the student athlete will not be allowed to continue to be a member of the team.

In order for a student athlete to compete in an athletic game or contest, he or she must arrive at school no later than 8:15 am on the day of the game and attend all scheduled classes. If there is an absence or a tardy, student-athletes are subject to the same standards found in the discipline section of the OAA school handbook. The administration and Athletic Director reserve the right to deviate from this stipulation as circumstances and situations arise.

## **PARENTAL PARTICIPATION**

As part of OAA's partnership with parents, the athletic department requests involvement and participation by parents of student athletes in the overall function of the athletic program. Because of continual yearly budget constraints and limited athletic department manpower, there are numerous areas and activities that need parental support and volunteer time in order for our programs to function properly.

**GATE VOLUNTEERS** — control and collect money at the gates for all home sporting events. This activity is extremely important to the budget of the Athletic Department. Parents of athletes, on a rotating basis, may be asked to collect money at our home games. The Athletic Department will assign specific dates available to work and will endeavor to avoid asking parents to work when their student is playing.

**CONCESSIONS VOLUNTEERS** — responsible for the selling of concessions at all home sporting events. Similar to the gate procedure, parents may be asked to volunteer to work the concession booth for home games on specifically assigned dates. Again, all efforts will be made so that no parent works during their student's game.

**COMMUNICATIONS** — important information can be found in this handbook. All parents are encouraged to obtain a copy of the *OAA Athletics Handbook* from the Athletic Department or by downloading this document from the OAA web site ([www.oa.oakwood.edu](http://www.oa.oakwood.edu)). Other athletic information, such as changes in schedules, practice schedules, game times, etc., can be obtained through individual coaches and/or OAA Athletics Department staff. At the beginning of each season for each sport, game schedules will be provided that will include individual coaches' phone numbers and email addresses.

**OAA BOOSTER CLUB** — an important organization all parents of athletes are invited to join is the OAA Booster Club. The OAA Booster Club is a volunteer parent organization that provides valuable support to the Athletic Department and sponsors several fundraising functions and activities to help maintain a high quality experience for student athletes. Parents of all student athletes are strongly encouraged to participate in the OAA Booster Club.

The OAA Athletic Department depends on the support and involvement of parents in its goal to develop student athletes into the image and likeness of Christ through athletic competition. To build those desired character qualities in our student athletes, parents must agree with the school's philosophy of Christian education and the school's athletic philosophy. Parents should also be supportive of the decisions of the Athletic Director and the coaches and always use the Matthew 18 principle in any conflict or misunderstanding. **Both winning and losing in athletic competition provide valuable biblical and life lessons for our students that might not ever be learned anywhere else.**

## **STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

One of the purposes of the sports program is the development of individual skills in the student-athletes. Among members of a team there will be a wide range of skills and experience. In order to develop the skills of all team members, it is necessary that student-athletes be provided the opportunity to improve their skills on the court or field during competition. The following guidelines will be observed to ensure that every student participates in competitive team play for an appropriate amount of time.

**Level 1 Players** - These student-athletes are either novices or have minimal skills and experience in the sport.

**Level 2 Players** - These student-athletes have basic to intermediate skills and some experience in the sport.

**Level 3 Players** - These student-athletes have advanced skills and experience in the sport.

**Level 1 Players** - Will play a minimum of 3 minutes per sporting event.

**Level 2 Players** - Will play a minimum of 5 minutes per sporting event.

**Level 3 Players** - Will play a minimum of 8 minutes per sporting event.

\*Coaches will make the determination of the skill level of each student-athlete.

\*\*Beyond these minimum playing time guidelines, coaches will make the final decisions regarding playing time for any student-athlete.

\*\*\*Playing time may be impacted by disciplinary measures imposed by the coach(es).

## **QUITTING A TEAM**

All OAA student athletes are expected to honor their commitment to their teams if they are selected to represent Oakwood Adventist Academy in any sport. Any OAA student athlete who quits a team before the completion of that season will not be given the privilege of participating in another sport until the completion of the prior sport's season. Any OAA student athlete who quits a team is automatically off the team for the remainder of that season.

# **OAKWOOD ADVENTIST ACADEMY ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS/FAMILY/FANS**

**SPORTSMANSHIP**—Parents and fans should model biblical behavior while watching our student athletes in fierce athletic competition because that modeled behavior is just as important as the behavior of the athletes on the field and/or court. These principles should guide us as Christian parents and fans of our student athletes:

- 1. Show proper RESPECT to the players of both teams, remembering that each one is someone's son or daughter. Likewise, respect the visiting crowd, treating them just as you would like to be treated in their gym or at their field.**
- 2. Show proper respect for the officials and for their legitimate POSITION OF AUTHORITY over the game.**
- 3. Remember that the other team's players, coaches, and fans are not our enemies, JUST OUR OPPONENTS in a game.**
- 4. Please DO NOT "BOO" or otherwise show a negative reaction or behavior toward an official's decision or a player's performance.**
- 5. Remember that the Lord sees our actions and He knows our THOUGHTS and the INTENT OF OUR HEARTS.**

## **THE 24 HOUR RULE**

At Oakwood Adventist Academy, in accordance with who we are in Christ, we ask all parents to wait at least 24 hours before speaking to any coach about matters related to game decisions. We ask parents to abide by the following procedure when questioning any OAA Coach/Volunteer:

- 1. Wait at least 24 hours prior to requesting a meeting**
- 2. Call or email to set up an appointment**
- 3. If at all possible, meet face – to – face per Matthew 18:15**
- 4. Be respectful and courteous**

If the need arises to have a discussion with a coach, the discussion must be limited to your student-athlete. In meeting with any coach, please understand that playing time as well as other student-athletes will never be topics open to discussion. You are the advocate for your student-athlete; conversations outside that realm can result in gossip and rumor, which the OAA Athletic Department takes a strong stance against. For all disputes, please follow the chain of command as listed in the “OAA Athletics Administrative Structure” section.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Even though every coach in each individual sport may have specific rules and guidelines for that sport, the following rules are in effect for all athletes at OAA:

- 1. Demonstrate Christian behavior in all aspects of the game on and off the court and/or field. Respect God, others and yourself using self-control in all circumstances.**
- 2. Make academics a priority**
- 3. Absolutely no use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco at anytime (365 days per year). Proven use constitutes permanent expulsion from the team (1 Thessalonians 5:15, Proverbs 15:1).**
- 4. Meet time commitments for practices and games. Attendance at all practices and games is mandatory. Discipline will occur after the first unexcused absence and dismissal from the team after the third unexcused absence.**
- 5. Any improper or questionable language will not be permitted. Disciplinary measures will be taken for the first offense and expulsion from the team for the second offense. Let your performance do your talking for you. Improper language includes: swearing, ‘in your face’ boasting, and disrespect to officials, players, or coaches. Lead a spirit controlled life and the Holy Spirit will control your tongue! (James 1)**
- 6. Maintain school dress and hair code at all times, plus any other dress specifications outlined by coaches. Team unity is the focus for dress and should be standardized by each coach. Unnecessary accessories that are worn to draw attention to the individual *reflect a defiance of the team concept*. When we submit to one another, by complying with the team dress or hair code for the accomplishment of a goal beyond ourselves, we glorify Christ, not ourselves! In all areas dealing with attire or appearance, the goal is always modesty!**

7. **Athletic competition is a great source of fun; however, no foolish ‘horse-play’ or reckless behavior will be tolerated. Demonstrate concern for others and never intentionally injure another player.**
8. **Athletes should strive to obtain a minimum of eight hours of sleep per night. Prioritize your activities and manage your time.**
9. **Athletes should maintain a proper diet. Avoid junk food or eating food with ‘empty calories’. Remember, to compete with ‘total release’, your body must be fueled properly to perform at its full potential!**
10. **\*Because we are a Christian school, people watch us for consistency in our testimony; therefore, in addition to watching what we say, we must be aware of our actions. Any display of affection between boys and girls will not be permitted. Concentration upon the game and upon our witness for Christ is of utmost importance!**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES AND ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATION**

The success of the sports program hinges on the proper selection of qualified, dedicated athletics administration, staff and coaches. Above all else, they must be people who value and support the philosophy of Oakwood Adventist Academy and who will mold young athletes into people who emulate Christ. The athletic director or sports coordinator must be a Seventh-day Adventist who actively and enthusiastically promotes the philosophy of this document. Coaches must teach players by both word and example, that the philosophy of winning at all costs is neither honorable nor desirable. The coach must be an active member in the Seventh-day Adventist church. An OAA coach should:

1. **Model Christian ethics at all times**
2. **Encourage good sportsmanship at all times**
3. **Model and encourage a healthy lifestyle**
4. **Model respect for all people**
5. **Place the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of student-athletes above the desire to win**
6. **Be willing and able to provide spiritual growth and direction**
7. **Use positive coaching methods to improve the self-esteem of student-athletes**
8. **Insist that student-athletes observe the letter and spirit of the rules**
9. **Promote loyalty to school and team**
10. **Encourage an atmosphere of camaraderie and team play**
11. **Communicate and enforce codes of conduct**
12. **Educate student-athletes to assist fallen opponents, compliment extraordinary performance, and show respect in pre and post game activities**

## **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

Even though the athletic program is an important part of the overall Oakwood Adventist Academy experience, the mission of the school remains academic education. In light of our Christian educational philosophy and the school's mission, the OAA Athletic department endeavors to monitor academic progress and to encourage the academic achievement of each student athlete. To accomplish this, there must be continuous, clear and frequent communication between the athletic department, coaches, teachers, parents, and student athletes. In the athletic program, we teach our athletes to give their maximum effort in all academic endeavors as well.

We continuously monitor the academic eligibility of student athletes in order to comply with our eligibility rules. To monitor student academic progress, all interim grade reports will be reviewed by the athletic office and the student athlete's respective coaches. **It is the student athlete's responsibility to maintain academic eligibility.**

For some athletic events, athletes must be dismissed early from school and likely will miss some academic work. Early dismissal for away games or practices is never an excuse for failure to fulfill academic responsibilities. Each student athlete is responsible for contacting teachers before early dismissal regarding work or assignments that might be missed or assignments that are due that day. Student athletes must coordinate with the teacher to make up all missed work, including written assignments, quizzes, and tests. All assignments not completed will result in failure for that work and will jeopardize the athlete's academic eligibility.

**It is the athlete's responsibility to maintain and meet minimum academic standards, if not, it will result in athletic ineligibility. Ineligibility refers to that student not being allowed to PRACTICE or PARTICIPATE in any games until they meet the requirements.**

In addition to the OAA Athletics Department monitoring of grades during the semester, each nine-week grading period, a student athlete must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average, with no failing grade (F), to remain athletically eligible. A student who does not meet the required 2.0 GPA minimum and is not failing any course, may become eligible to compete if he or she is making all C's in all courses, three weeks into the next grading period. However, a student athlete who fails any subject at the end of a nine-week grading period will automatically be ineligible to participate during the next nine-week grading period. When failure occurs, parents and students are strongly encouraged to seek counsel from teachers, coaches, and the Athletic Director and/or Sports Coordinator to determine the causes and the possible solutions for poor academic performance.

## **FACILITIES**

The Lord has allowed Oakwood Adventist Academy to construct, open and facilitate our very own Multi-Educational Complex, complete with a fully functional kitchen and full length basketball court. Student athletes must learn to be good stewards of what we have and use these facilities wisely. Student Athletes should always leave an area cleaner than how they found it! Do not tolerate destructiveness or misuse of property at any time (including balls, bats, PE equipment, etc.).

Students must be **out of the building twenty minutes after the scheduled completion of practice**. Coaches will be the last ones out to ensure the doors are locked and all students have gone home. Make sure your ride is on time or you should have another place to go (another athlete's house). You cannot remain on the school premises or outside the facility after the coach leaves.

## **UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

The coach for each individual sport will issue uniforms before the first game of their perspective season. Each athlete will sign for the uniform by size and number. Check with your coach for the type of practice uniforms he or she desires you to wear. Although practice uniforms are not standardized, athletes must use modesty in practice attire.

Athletic game uniforms are very costly, so athletes must be good stewards of the uniforms issued to them. Student athletes will need to keep them cleaned and washed regularly. All school athletic equipment must be treated with care. If your coach gives you the responsibility for the team's equipment, see that you carry out your job responsibly. Any loss of or damage to school equipment or uniforms due to negligence or carelessness by a student athlete will be repaid in full by the student who is deemed responsible.

## **ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Injuries**— it is very important that all injuries are reported to the coach so that proper aid may be given. This includes injuries or problems that occur outside the sport in which the athlete participates in. Please be sure to let the coach know of any allergies, medicines, problems, or other ailments that might require special attention.

**Conditioning**— conditioning is the student athlete's responsibility prior to the start of every season. The student athlete should prepare themselves so that he/she can stand the physical stress that practice will put on their body. Begin gradual and easy, working up to a high level of conditioning, so that one will be ready for the start of the season.

**Physicals**— to participate in the OAA athletic program, each student athlete must obtain a **physical exam**, performed and signed by a Medical Doctor using a Pre-Participation Health Assessment and Medical Examination form **before** the season begins. Students may not compete or practice in any sport unless a current physical is on file. The Physical Medical Examination form must be signed and will be kept on file in the main office.

**Parental Consent Form** – Each athlete must have a parental consent form signed by parents and on file at OAA. These are posted on the OAA web site ([www.oa.oakwood.edu](http://www.oa.oakwood.edu)). Blank forms may also be obtained from the Athletic Department

**Concussion Release Form** – Every athlete and their parent/guardian must read and sign the AHSAA Concussion Release Form. A copy must be on file in the athletic office.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation to athletic contests outside of the Huntsville/Madison City limits will be provided by OAA school vehicles, unless otherwise specified by the Athletic Director or Sports Coordinator. Transportation for games will be announced prior to games. The only exception is when parents request and complete a trip waiver for each game. The waiver must be turned into the athletic department no later than noon on the day of the contest. In addition, when boys and girls are riding on the same vehicle, they will not be allowed to sit together.

All school vehicles must remain clean! Your stewardship responsibility is to ensure that the OAA vehicles remain clean to and from each athletic event. Riding home with parents does not relieve you of that responsibility.

Riding to a game or meet in a school vehicle should not include ‘rough housing’, any obscene language or listening to and singing secular music. Instead, you should try to prepare yourself mentally and spiritually for the upcoming game or meet. If you take time to conform your thinking to God’s will, you will reap benefits from your mental preparation.

For all local games away from the OAA campus, it is the responsibility of the student athlete to secure a ride to and from the game or meet. If the student rides with someone else, they should conduct themselves in a way that will honor God and conform to school policies.

All students riding in someone’s personal vehicle will relieve the Oakwood Adventist Academy of any responsibility or liability should an accident occur.

## **RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS**

Student-athletes and parents who have any concerns regarding the sports program must follow the Resolution of Concerns Policy outlined in the OAA school handbook (see pg. 30). It is expected that the biblical directive regarding the handling of disputes will be used as a guideline for all differences of opinion and other issues, and that in every situation the spirit and behavior displayed by coaches, student-athletes, parents and administration will be that which will honor God and fulfill the mission of Oakwood Adventist Academy to “**D**velop, **N**urture, and **A**ffirm (**DNA**) students for a lifetime of service to God and humanity.

## **CLOSING**

The OAA Athletic Department would like to encourage each student athlete by wishing you the very best in all your athletic endeavors. If we can help you in any way, please let us know. It is our heart’s desire to help each student athlete grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray that the sports program at OAA will truly encourage you to develop and mature in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Our hope is that, through the athletic program at OAA, you will strive to do your absolute best by using your God-given talents and abilities in athletic competition so that you will bring glory to Him!

## **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL**

<b>Athletic Director:</b>	Aldwin Jackson	Phone Number: (561) 351-9315 Email: <a href="mailto:aljackson@oakwood.edu">aljackson@oakwood.edu</a>
<b>Sports Coordinator:</b>	Charles Reese, Jr.	Phone Number: (256) 361- 3993 Email: <a href="mailto:creese@oakwood.edu">creese@oakwood.edu</a>

