

Bethany Christian School

Philosophy of Athletics Statement

Athletics are a part of God's creation and are intended to bring Him glory. From a Christian perspective, athletics should have a philosophy that when followed, allows for the entire athletics community; directors, administrators, coaches, supporters, players and their parents to also bring God glory. They should be drawn from God's Word and in many ways may differ from the "worlds view". It is vital that each Christian athlete, coach and supporter be willing to submit, make changes, grow and mature so that God will be pleased. Oftentimes this change is difficult due to past experiences, ingrown patterns, respected examples and simple tradition ("I coach the way I was coached"), yet these need to be brought under the scrutiny of God's Word for validation or rejection (Leviticus 20:23, Romans 12:1-2). The following is by no means exhaustive or inspired. It is meant to give perspective, create discussion and begin a process of making each program an extension of the love and acceptance we have in Jesus Christ.

#1: Athletics is a part of the whole person, not a separate part.

Unfortunately, many have come to believe that there is a legitimate difference between morality in sport and in everyday life. This is not taught by Christ. When the "fruit of the Spirit" is discussed in Galatians 5:22-23 no mention is made to indicate these traits as part time. We should accept actions on the field as an indication of the true person, rather than excuse them as being under stress. A practical application could be that language on the field or court should be the same as that in Church, your living room or in the classroom.

#2: Our primary goal is to elevate the reputation of Jesus Christ.

Our teams establish many goals, none of which is greater than bringing glory God and with it bring a great opportunity for success and failure. We as a Christian school should be obviously different in our attitudes and actions. Unfortunately, it is all too often the case that many observers may be turned away from Christ because of our conduct. We are called to be a light on a hill, especially in the athletic contest. Granted, we will suffer some setbacks in this high goal, yet we need to continually encourage our athletics and coaches to pursue the elevation of Christ's reputation. We are fortunate at BCS that each of our students have professed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and therefore can be held accountable to this standard.

#3: A person's Identity and performance should not be linked together.

The Bible instructs us not to place our worth in circumstances but in the position we have in Christ. Our self-worth is not to be determined by a win-loss record. An athlete may perform poorly, yet when he needs to be affirmed that he is still worthwhile, valuable, loved and accepted. This is God's example to us, in that while we were still sinners He loved us and sent His Son to die for us. Therefore, success needs to be evaluated on the type of people we are reproducing, on the characteristics and qualities our athletes are claiming for themselves, not on our finish in league or win-loss record.

#4: Allow God to grant victory or defeat.

The Bible has numerous accounts of God's people suffering, dying, losing, enduring hardships and persecutions. We must not equate victory in battle as proof of God's blessing or approval. We must be willing to endure any situation God chooses for us and accept it as part of His omnipotence and plan. God is more concerned with the process of attaining success than the success itself. It is clear in Scripture that obedience, hard work and patience does not always result in victory, at least not in this world (Genesis 37-50). However, in whatever we do, our attitude should be to elevate Christ and in doing so, we make much of Him. That is where our true success lies.

#5: As authorities established by God, umpires and officials receive our honor and respect.

All authority come from God (I Peter 2:13). Oftentimes human authorities make human mistakes which have a negative impact on us. Our response to this "injustice" is of great importance to God. Which is more important, my rights or God's reputation? I Peter 2:1a states, "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God." Are we willing to accept injustice, which is common to all men, in a way that would further the cause of Christ? Do our teams learn from the coaches not to blame referees or complain about field

conditions, etc.? (Philippians 2:14) We cannot change the conditions, so we will try to live above them and let people see a difference.

#6: Athletics is a vehicle to educate the whole person.

Our God has created many vehicles which are intended to teach us about life. Drama, music, academics and athletics are a few. We need to provide an environment through which God's truths can be effectively communicated. In athletics one experiences all human emotion from joy to sorrow, pride to humility, and camaraderie to loneliness. These experiences provide opportunities for godly Christian coaches to come alongside and impart God's truths about how these situations should be handled. For the Christian this opportunity extends further than just the physical and emotional needs and rewards. The Christian coach and athlete recognize the spiritual needs and are, therefore, able to bring his whole being into submission to Christ.

To conclude, much could be said to further amplify these Biblical distinctions. This brief account is intended for thought and discussion. It is vital to communicate clearly to our athletes this philosophy and many others. Our parents and supporters will also make a difference in the success or failure of our programs. May God be glorified through our involvement and direction into His athletic programs at Bethany Christian School'.