

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Athletic Program Philosophy

The athletic program, while an important and integral part of the total school program, is a privilege for Upper Perkiomen students. Through voluntary participation the student gives time, energy and loyalty to the program. He/she also accepts the training rules, regulations and responsibilities which are unique to an athletic program. In order to contribute to the welfare of the group, the student must willingly assume these obligations. The role demands that the individual participant make sacrifices not required of others.

As representatives of the Upper Perkiomen School District and its programs, participants are expected to exhibit exemplary behavior in and out of school. Therefore, it is understood that all responsibilities listed in, but not limited to, the Student-Athlete Code will apply at all times and that suspension and/or dismissal from athletics may result from failure to comply with these responsibilities.

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of the athletic program are to:

1. Provide opportunities for physical, mental, and emotional development.
2. Develop special skills in activities of the student's choice.
3. Develop such favorable personality traits as loyalty, cooperation, fair play and enthusiasm.
4. Embed in the participant's self-motivation, self-discipline, and self-setting goals.
5. Teach the ideal of good sportsmanship.
6. Help develop worthy use of leisure time, promote good citizenship, and create additional interests.
7. Provide an arena in which students can cope with problems and handle situations similar to those they will experience as adults.

Code of Ethics

1. Always play the game fairly.
2. Show courtesy for visiting teams and officials.
3. Establish good relationships with visiting teams and players.
4. Achieve a thorough knowledge of the rules of the game.
5. Respect the judgement of the game officials.
6. Recognize the true purposes of the program.
7. Remember that an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life or death for player, coach or fan.

Winning---Keeping It All in Perspective

The Upper Perkiomen School District endorses the belief, "athletes first-winning second." Athletic programs that have these priorities reversed are more likely to break rules, cut corners, or treat athletes in an unacceptable manner. This does not mean that winning is unimportant. Indeed, the immediate goal of any athletic contest is to win, but striving to win the right way is more important than actually winning. We ask that our parents and athletes support this attitude as well.

Requirements for Sports Participation

Each athlete must complete the following requirements prior to athletic participation:

1. Submit a completed/signed "PIAA Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation".
2. Submit a completed "Medical Emergency Information" card.

Athletes may have the medical exam performed either by the school physician or by a private physician. The physicals performed by the school physician will take place each June in the high school gymnasium. However, the Upper Perkiomen School District will not cover the cost of any private physical. The school sponsored physical date and times will be advertised and the required paperwork will be made available prior to each sports season.

Interscholastic Athletic Opportunities

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Football	Girls'/Boys' Basketball	Baseball
Field Hockey	Girls'/Boys' Swimming	Softball
Girls' Tennis	Cheerleading/Competitive Spirit	Girls' Lacrosse
Girls'/Boys' Soccer	Wrestling	Boys' Tennis
Girls'/Boys' Cross Country		Girls'/Boys' Track & Field
Girls'/Boys' Water Polo		
Golf		
Cheerleading/Competitive Spirit		

Summer Preseason Practices (High School)

PIAA designates the “3rd Monday before Labor Day” as the first day of practice for fall sports teams. (*Football heat acclamation will begin one week prior to the official start date.*) This ensures that teams will have had approximately 3 weeks of practice prior to their first game. Athletes interested in participating in a fall sport should expect to begin practice in mid-August. Wherever possible, summer vacations should be scheduled prior to the “3rd Monday before Labor Day.” Athletes who miss summer preseason practices/tryouts must contact the head coach prior to the absence and be willing to assume the consequences related to their status on that squad.

Sunday Practices and Contests

The PIAA requires a team have one day off during a calendar week, from Sunday through the following Saturday. Under certain circumstances, a team may practice on a Sunday after 12:00pm (noon). If a practice is scheduled on a Sunday, the team will have at least one day off during the week, from Monday through Saturday.

Vacations

Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are discouraged. In the event of an unavoidable absence due to a vacation, the athlete must contact the head coach prior to the vacation and be willing to assume the consequences related to their status on that squad as a starter.

Joining a Team After the Season Starts

Any athlete who comes out for a team during the season must have five (5) days of practice before they can compete in a scrimmage/contest. This is to ensure the general health and well-being of the student and allow the athletic department time to validate his/her eligibility. The five days of practice mirrors PIAA’s rule of teams practicing five days before they compete in their first scrimmage.

Student Insurance

1. The school district does not carry primary insurance to cover student athletic injuries.
2. Athletes must either purchase insurance through the school or verify that they are covered by a family insurance plan prior to athletic participation.

Sport Specific Team Rules

Team members are required to obey any sport specific team policies developed by the coaching staff. Such policies must be consistent with District policies. In addition, team rules will be approved by the athletic director & distributed to all team members at the start of the season.

Attendance

1. Student-athletes are expected to attend all classes on the day of a contest and the next school day following the contest. Habitual or unexcused absence before or after a contest may result in suspension from the team.
2. If a student is absent from school for the entire day, the student may not practice or participate in athletics that day.
3. If a student is sent home by the school nurse before the end of the day due to illness (and does not return), the student may not practice or participate in athletics that day.
4. If a student leaves early for any reason and does not return by the end of the day, he/she may not practice or participate in athletics that day. To be eligible to practice or participate in athletics that day, the student must return with a school sanctioned excuse and the absence must be exempt as defined in the "*Upper Perkiomen Student Handbook*."
5. All in-season athletes must be in school by 11:00am on the day of a practice or contest.
6. In-season athletes arriving after 11:00am will only be allowed to participate in a practice or a contest with an exempt excuse, which is explained in the "*Upper Perkiomen Student Handbook*."
7. No student shall practice or participate in athletics during any period of suspension.
8. Team members are expected to be present at all practices, team meetings, contests, and special occasions unless excused by the head coach.
9. Any exception to the attendance rules must have prior approval of the athletic director or principal.

Sportsmanship

Integrity, fairness, and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics. Student-athletes at Upper Perkiomen are expected to display these principles of good sportsmanship at all times by observing the following guidelines:

1. Accept your visibility and understand the seriousness of your responsibility and the privilege of representing your school and your community. Never behave in a manner that reflects poorly on your school district.
2. Learn the rules of your school and your sports and discuss them with parents, fans, and fellow students.
3. Cooperate with coaches, officials, and fellow players to conduct a fair contest.
4. Always respect the official's judgment and interpretation of the rules. Never argue or make nonverbal gestures that indicate disagreement.
5. Congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
6. Demonstrate self-control at all times.
7. Refrain from using profanity at all times.
8. Treat others with respect and dignity.
9. Shake hands with opponents prior to the contest and wish them luck.
10. Try your utmost to win within the rules.
11. Acknowledge your opponents with a handshake after the game.
12. Encourage your friends to treat opposing players the way that you would want to be treated by the opposing school's fans.

Students who display unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opponent, official, coach, guest or district personnel may be temporarily suspended from their current athletic team, dismissed from the current athletic team with loss of all awards earned during the current season, or removed from all further athletic programs for up to one year.

Quitting a Team

An athlete may not quit one sport and participate in another sport after the season has begun without the mutual consent of both coaches. An athlete may not quit one sport and begin organized pre-season preparation for the next season's sport without the mutual consent of both coaches

Athletic Uniforms & Equipment

1. Student-athletes must secure all valuables in their locker during athletic events. If possible, valuables should be left at home. The District cannot be responsible for lost or stolen articles.
2. Equipment/uniforms are issued to athletes on a loan basis.
3. Coaches will set a date for returning equipment within two weeks of the end of the season.
4. Announcements will be made in the school bulletin publicizing the collection date.
5. If any items are not returned, the following actions will be taken:
 - a. The student will receive a notice that he/she has an athletic obligation.
 - b. The student will not be permitted to begin any future athletic season until the obligation is taken care of.
 - c. The student's parents/guardians will receive an obligation notice.

Appropriate Dress and Personal Grooming

Students participating in athletic activities are expected to exhibit habits of dress and personal grooming representative of an Upper Perkiomen team. Appropriate and reasonable standards will be established by the coach of each team and communicated to all participants of the team. Failure to comply with these standards will disqualify a student from participation until the standards are met.

Assumption of Risk

Participation in interscholastic athletic activities often includes intense competition and poses the potential for serious, catastrophic, or life threatening injury. Participants and parents are urged to consider that there are inherent risks and hazards associated with athletic participation. Risks vary from sport-to-sport and can occur under direct supervision and with use of proper safety equipment.

Residency

Upper Perkiomen School District and PIAA (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association) residency regulations requires that students attend schools designated by their legal residence. Students who reside in the district yet voluntarily choose to attend a private school are not eligible to participate in the interscholastic athletic programs of the Upper Perkiomen School District. Students who reside in the school district and are Home Schooled or attend an approved Cyber School are eligible to participate in the interscholastic athletic programs offered by the district.

Hazing/Bullying

The Upper Perkiomen School District strives to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing/bullying. These activities of any type are inconsistent with educational goals of the District and are prohibited at all times. By definition, hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student. In some instances, hazing constitutes a criminal act. Hazing may lead to immediate dismissal from a team.

Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes

Everything you post is public information – any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online – even if you limit access to your site. Information (including pictures, videos, and comments) may be accessible even after you remove it. Once you post a photo or comment on a social networking site, that photo or comment becomes the property of the site and may be searchable even after you remove it.

What you post may affect your future. Many employers and college admissions officers review social networking sites as part of their overall evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters).

Similar to comments made in person, the Upper Perkiomen Athletic Department will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as:

- Derogatory language or remarks that may harm my teammates or coaches; other student-athletes, teachers, or coaches; and student-athletes, coaches, or representatives of other schools, including comments that may disrespect my opponents.
- Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; hazing; sexual harassment; full or partial nudity; inappropriate gestures; vandalism, staling; underage drinking, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors.
- Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
- Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation-regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional.

In short, do not have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. The on-line social network sites are NOT a place where you can say do whatever you want without repercussions. The information you post on a social networking site is considered public information. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image of which you can be proud for years to come.

Varsity Athletics

At the varsity level of interscholastic competition, coaches will have the dual responsibility of fostering individual skill development and achieving team success. To achieve this end, the most effective student-athletes as judged by the coaching staff, regardless of grade level, will be given the opportunity to further develop their athletic abilities and to participate at the most advanced levels of interscholastic athletic competition. Coaching emphasis will be placed on helping the members of the team to work together and to develop a strong desire to attain the highest possible levels of team success. Playing time or participation at this level is not guaranteed and is subject to the coaching staff's discretion.

At the highest level of athletic competition in high school athletics, athletes and parents should expect the following concepts to be emphasized

- Developing a high level of proficiency in the physical skills of the sport
- Having the coach's evaluation of an athlete's attitude, skills, and team role determine playing time
- Developing sophisticated strategy, situation analysis, and other mental aspects of the sport
- Specifically defining an individual athlete's role within the team concept
- Fostering maximum commitment to the athletic team
- Understanding and valuing the physical conditioning components of one's sport
- Understanding the importance of individual sacrifice for the good of the team
- Winning within the rules of sportsmanship and fair play.

Junior Varsity Athletics (JV)

At the junior varsity level, instruction and the development of individual skills for all athletes will continue to be emphasized. However, team success in inter-school competition will also be valued. Athletes will become increasingly aware of the importance of teamwork and a positive attitude toward team success. The number of athletes selected for the team will allow the coaches not only to instruct and assist the participants in their individual development but also to teach teamwork as an important factor in interscholastic competition. Playing time or participation at this level is not guaranteed and is subject to the coaching staff's discretion.

This is a transitional level to varsity athletics, and athletes and parents should expect the following concepts to be emphasized:

- Reinforcing and refining fundamental skills.
- Having the coach's evaluation of an athlete's attitude, skills, and team role determine game time
- Demonstrating sportsmanship and fair play
- Developing more sophisticated athletic strategies
- Specifically defining an individual athlete's role within the team concept
- Refining and reinforcing the concepts of commitment and team play.
- Focusing on physical conditioning and development
- Developing the ambition to achieve at the next level of competition
- Prioritizing skill and character development over winning

Team Selection/Tryouts

It is the philosophy of the Upper Perkiomen Athletic Department to provide opportunities for as many athletes as possible to participate in the programs. However, it may be necessary to limit the number of participants in an effort to offer the most worthwhile experience for everyone involved. If there are too many student-athletes on any given team, no one will receive the individual instruction they need and deserve. Therefore, coaches are permitted to "cut" when necessary. Coaches that intend to hold "tryouts" will:

- a. Discuss their intentions with the Athletic Director prior to tryouts.
- b. Provide a written copy of the selection process, including criteria to all athletes involved.
- c. Maintain accurate records of observation during each practice session.
- d. Provide sufficient observation opportunities for each athlete over the duration of tryouts to fairly compare candidates.
- e. Personally inform athletes that have been cut from the team.
- f. Provide an opportunity for "face to face" discussions between players not selected and the coaching staff.
- g. Refrain from posting a list of names of students who have not made the team.
- h. Encourage these athletes not selected to try out for the team again next season.
- i. Provide a list of students that are cut to the Athletic Director as soon as tryouts are concluded.