



**Coastal Mississippi Homeschool
Sports Association
Handbook**

WHO WE ARE

COASTAL MISSISSIPPI WILDCATS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and 509(a)2 public charity whose purpose is to promote the Gospel of Christ through youth boys' and girls' sports in the Coastal and Southern Mississippi area and to further promote the development of leadership, character, sportsmanship, discipline, and athletic ability, and to nurture youth fitness, volunteerism, and a lifelong love of sports, and operates exclusively for educational and charitable purposes. We compete against other like homeschool programs for the purpose of physical education and camaraderie while glorifying God. We form teams for inclusion in competitive sports such as track & field, cross country running, baseball, volleyball, and softball. In the future, we intend to add basketball, soccer, football, and cheerleading, depending on the amount of interest from the participants.

HOW WE GOT STARTED

We started this group to help Coastal and Southern Mississippi homeschoolers have an avenue to meet other homeschoolers, participate in a sports and fitness program, and compete against other homeschool teams, while honoring God. We compete in various sports against other Mississippi homeschool teams, as well as public and private schools. Our intent is not to replace or compete with any programs already have in place such as academic or social organizations. Instead, we would like to give homeschoolers in the Coastal and Southern Mississippi area an avenue to participate in competitive sports. Many other cities in Mississippi have teams such as this that have members from many different homeschool groups in their area; Hattiesburg, Jackson, Laurel, Meridian and many others as well as some in Louisiana and Alabama.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

COASTAL MISSISSIPPI WILDCATS is open to all homeschoolers in the Coastal and Southern Mississippi area. Our cross country and track & field teams are for children ages 8 through 18, and has three categories of athletes: elementary, middle school (Junior Varsity), and high school (Varsity). All other sports are for children ages 12 through 18 and have two categories: Junior Varsity and Varsity.

CMHSA MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote the Gospel of Christ through youth boys and girls sports in the coastal Mississippi area; to further promote the development of leadership, character, sportsmanship, discipline, athletic ability; to nurture youth fitness, volunteerism, and a life-long love of sports.

GOALS OF CMHSA

- To glorify God in competing through selflessly pursuing the good of the whole team, using our gifts, and displaying good sportsmanship.
- To instill values and virtues that are important to the athlete's personal growth, both on and off the field.
- To help athletes become influential members of our community and society.

We will strive to be a highly competitive program. This means that physical ability to compete will be a major factor, but not the sole determining factor, of a player's participation. Hard work, loyalty, dedication to the program, and being teachable are other crucial factors.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETES

- The athlete must sign and return the Athlete Agreement before he/she is eligible to play.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR COACHES

All CMHSA coaches must meet the following eligibility requirements to be considered for a coaching position with any team.

- Coaches must be professing Christians who are willing to openly discuss and share their faith.
- Coaches must be of good character and willing to provide character references if requested.
- Coaches cannot be listed in the sex offender registry or have any criminal history of abuse. All coaches will undergo background checks.
- Coaches must have competitive sports coaching or playing experience in the sport they desire to coach, or a similar sport. For instance, a candidate would be eligible to coach softball if he has experience playing competitive baseball. However, a candidate would not be eligible to coach soccer because he/she has experience playing competitive basketball.
- Coaches must demonstrate a commitment to coaching, teaching, and impacting the next generation of youth.
- Coaches must demonstrate good leadership skills, including maturity, responsibility, and stability.
- Coaches must possess a strong tactical knowledge of the sport they wish to coach.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES

The coach must be aware that he/she has a tremendous influence on an athlete. The athlete's welfare must always be the focus of each coach. The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. Therefore, the coach must subscribe to and model the following CMHSA values:

- Coaches must teach knowledge, skills, and strategies of the sport, as well as provide a positive role model for the athletes.
- Coaches must be an exemplary host to opponents and treat them as honored guests.
- Coaches must respect the officials' judgment and interpretation of the rules.
- Coaches must not be hostile or use profanity or inappropriate language.
- Coaches must play to win each game where possible. Coaches are granted reasonable discretion in these cases. However, coaches should understand they are accountable for decisions they make in game situations and may be asked to explain the reasons for those decisions.
- Coaches are encouraged to substitute and play as many players as possible after a comfortable margin for victory has been established. Coaches may also freely substitute in games where there is no obvious chance to win. We expect coaches to use reasonable discretion with substitutions.
- Coaches must never place winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- Coaches are not expected to manage the administrative and financial aspects of the program. Rather, that responsibility falls to the Sport Director, or Support Staff. This separation of duties is meant to provide accountability and protection for those involved.
- Coaches should, to the best of their ability, recruit parental volunteers to serve the various needs of the team.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

An especially important goal is to make the experience a positive one for the athletes and parents. To achieve that goal, we must all work together to support the following ideals:

- Parents should understand that CMHSA is a volunteer organization with many administrative and logistical functions to be performed outside of coaching, and they must strive to serve in necessary roles to assist with the success of the program.
- Parents must speak and act in a positive manner for the athletes and refrain from criticizing the efforts of officials, players, and decisions made by coaches.
- Parents should communicate with their son/daughter the expectations of sportsmanship.
- Parents should understand the time requirement for games and practices; and, that practice is a priority for all team members.
- Parents must not confront coaches or board/committee members during a game or practice. Rather, they need to follow the proper chain of command, as explained below.
- Parents must recognize that possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, any type of electronic nicotine delivery system, or weapons are prohibited at all CMHSA functions.
- Parents should inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of their child or the safety of others.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETES

- Athletes must display sportsmanship and treat all participants with respect, regardless of the score or the outcome of the contest.
- Athletes must not use profanity or inappropriate language.
- Athletes should accept both victory and defeat, both humbly and respectfully, not being boastful or bitter.
- Athletes should congratulate the opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
- Athletes must cooperate with coaches and fellow players.
- Athletes must have a positive attitude.
- Athletes should willingly receive constructive criticism from the coaching staff in such a manner that they can learn from the criticism and improve.
- Athletes must be teachable and work hard at practice and games.
- Athletes should strive to be the first to practice and the last to leave and take extra time at home to improve where needed.
- Athletes must understand that being a team member is a privilege and have the attitude that the team is bigger than one player.
- Athletes must have a wholehearted commitment and give max effort.

RISK FACTOR IN SPORTS

Participation in athletics involves a certain degree of risk for injury. Before going out for a team, the athlete must be aware of the risk so he/she will be able to reduce the chance for injury. Pre-season conditioning, learning the rules, understanding safety factors and the skills and techniques of your sport will also improve the chance of having a healthy season.

RESOLVING CONFLICT

If there is an issue with a coach, please follow the proper chain of command. Please do not confront coaches at games or practices. Rather, contact coaches by email or texting to set up a time to discuss the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, please use the chain of command step by step and we will do all necessary to solve the issue.

The chain of command is as follows:

1. Player to Coaches
2. Player/Parent to Coaches
3. Player/Parent to Athletic Director
4. Player/Parent to CMHSA Board

Conflict is always present because of our sin nature, but we shall strive as an organization to be obedient to God's word as we resolve conflict. Here are some verses that are helpful in keeping in mind as we approach each other in conflict. We shall strive to the best of our ability to resolve conflict at lowest level, direct person to person communication resolved in the spirit of restoration.

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Matthew 18:21-22

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,
1 Peter 5:6

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. *Matthew 23:12*

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, *Philippians 2:14-15*

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. *Matthew 5:9*

But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. *James 4:6-7*