

# **ATLANTIC COAST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HANDBOOK**

**KELLY BLOUNT, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**

**DEBRA LYNCH, PRINCIPAL**

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## INTRODUCTION

The athletic program at Atlantic Coast High School is an integral part of the total educational experience for our school community. Students are challenged to reach their potential in the classroom and prepare for their future with a rigorous academic program. In addition, they participate in athletics and other activities that compliment their personal growth and provide invaluable experiences. Atlantic Coast High School offers a variety of sports activities to all students who have the desire to represent their school. All students who wish to participate in athletics must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Duval County Public Schools and the Florida High School Athletic Association.

This handbook is organized to provide helpful information regarding Atlantic Coast's athletic program, the duties of coaches and the responsibilities and privileges of students who participate in athletics. Questions pertaining to student eligibility and athletic department policy should be brought to the attention of the athletic director. Questions regarding a specific sport or team can be directed to the appropriate head coach.

The athletic director is under the direct supervision of the principal and is responsible for the administration of the athletic program as set by the policies of the Duval County Public Schools, the Gateway Conference, the Florida High School Athletic Association, and Florida Department of Education.

The coaching staff is advised and directed by the athletic director and the principal. The athletic department is established and conducted for the welfare of each athlete. It is a goal of the athletic department for each sport to make a contribution to the overall development of the athlete, school, and community. Integrity, respect, and sportsmanship are essential to this process.

## ATHLETIC GOALS

The goal of the Atlantic Coast athletic department is to provide opportunities for student-athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline, acceptable behavior, and character. Members of teams must always serve as examples of high moral character and must demonstrate appropriate academic commitment, which is expected of all students. Participation in athletics at Atlantic Coast is a privilege, not a right. In addition to the rules established by FHSAA, each coach may have rules and expectations for the members of the team, which shall be made known to all players and parents in a pre-season meeting. The Duval County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct applies to all student-athletes on and off the field of play. The Atlantic Coast athletic program strives to produce well-rounded individuals and to develop leadership skills, a sense of responsibility and accountability, and sportsmanlike attitudes in our young people.

## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

### **FHSAA**

Atlantic Coast High School is a member of the Florida High School Athletic Association, which is the governing body of high school athletics in Florida. Questions pertaining to FHSAA rules and regulations should be directed to the athletic director.

### **Atlantic Coast High School**

The Atlantic Coast administration reserves the right to impose higher academic and discipline standards than those imposed by other governing bodies.

### **Residency and School Attendance**

1. Student must live within the Atlantic Coast attendance boundary as established by the Duval County Public Schools System, unless the student has been approved for a special assignment by the school principal.
2. Student must be in regular attendance at Atlantic Coast, carrying a normal class load; unless he/she qualifies under one of the exceptions listed below:

### **Exceptions to Residency and School Attendance Rules**

1. A legally registered **home education** student may participate in interscholastic athletics at Atlantic Coast if Atlantic Coast is the public school he or she normally would attend according to the school district attendance policy. Home education students and their parents should consult with the FHSAA Handbook prior to the beginning of the school year to ensure they have met all requirements for participation and eligibility. Form EL7
2. A student who attends a **charter school** that does not sponsor an interscholastic athletic program in one or more sports may participate in the sport or sports at Atlantic Coast if Atlantic Coast is the public school the student normally would attend according to the school district attendance policy. Charter school students and their parents should consult with the FHSAA Handbook prior to the beginning of the school year to ensure they have met all requirements for participation and eligibility.
3. A student who attends an **alternative school or other special school operated by a school district** may participate at the school he or she normally would attend according to the school district attendance policy, provided the alternative or special school does not sponsor an interscholastic athletic program.
4. A student who attends a **non-FHSAA member private school** that does not offer an interscholastic or intra-scholastic athletic program may participate in interscholastic athletics at Atlantic Coast. Non-FHSAA member private school students and their parents should consult with the FHSAA Handbook prior to the beginning of the school year to ensure they have met all requirements for participation and eligibility. Form EL12

## **Transfer Students**

1. A student who transfers to Atlantic Coast will be eligible if they satisfy the transfer rules as set forth by the school district. A student who changes schools prior to the first day of practice in a sport in which they wish to participate may maintain their eligibility.
2. A student who transfers to ACHS after the beginning of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year must have the following forms on file with the school prior to practicing or playing with a school athletic team:
  - **FHSAA Form GA4 – Affidavit of Compliance with FHSAA Policy on Athletic Recruiting**
  - **FHSAA Form EL6 – Notice of Transfer**

Inquiries regarding transferring to/from Atlantic Coast should be directed to the Guidance Office or the athletic director in order to avoid potential athletic recruiting violations, or potential loss of student eligibility.

## **Athletic Recruiting**

Athletic recruiting is a gross violation of the FHSAA rules. Athletic recruiting is unethical and unsporting conduct, and is forbidden by FHSAA Bylaws (Bylaw 6.3). School personnel, coaches, players and parents should make themselves aware of FHSAA rules concerning athletic recruiting, as forbidden actions on the part of any of these parties may result in a student disqualification, fine, or other punishment for the school.

## **Academic Eligibility**

1. A student who is academically eligible/ineligible at the beginning of a semester will continue to be academically eligible/ineligible for that entire semester. A student's academic eligibility for each successive semester will depend upon his/her cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the previous semester.
2. A student entering the ninth grade shall be eligible during the first semester of the ninth grade year provided that it is the student's first entry into the ninth grade and he or she was regularly promoted from the eighth grade the immediate preceding year.
3. A student must have a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 un-weighted scale in all courses as required by the Florida Statutes at the conclusion of each semester to be eligible during the following semester.
4. All students' cumulative grade point averages will be calculated by the school at the conclusion of each semester to determine each student's academic eligibility for the next semester. A student may retake a course or attend an approved summer school to affect his/her cumulative grade point average. However, for the purpose of determining eligibility, no form of grade recovery at the school level will affect a student's eligibility status.

### **Limit of Eligibility and Age**

1. A student has four consecutive calendar years of eligibility from the date he/she begins ninth grade for the first time.
2. A student becomes permanently ineligible four consecutive calendar years from the date he/she enrolls in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
3. A student may participate at the high school until he/she reaches the age of 19 if the student has not exceeded his/her four-year limit of eligibility.
4. A student becomes permanently ineligible at the high school level on the day he/she reaches the age of 19 years 9 months, with the exception of students who reach this age while participating in an FHSAA State Championship Series. Students are permitted to complete the championship series as long as they satisfy all other eligibility requirements.

### **Required Forms**

To insure that all of our students are eligible to play and have been cleared in all necessary areas, students are required to provide specific documentation to the athletic department. Documentation required to participate under usual circumstances includes the following:

- Pre-participation Physical – Physicals are only valid for one calendar year from the date signed by the practitioner who administered the physical. Physicals obtained during the summer will cover the student throughout the school year.  
[http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/athletics/forms/physical\\_form\\_2009\\_2010.pdf](http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/athletics/forms/physical_form_2009_2010.pdf)
- Parent Consent Form – The Parent Consent form is only valid for one year from the date signed by the parent and student.  
<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/athletics/forms/FHSA%20Consent%20and%20Release%206-09%20EL03.pdf>
- Sportsmanship Form – Sportsmanship forms must be completed by the student, parent and coach for each sport in which the student participates. The athletic department emphatically promotes an athletic program that practices good sportsmanship and expects good sportsmanship to be exhibited by players, coaches, parents and spectators. Sportsmanship forms
- Birth Certificate – Each student must supply (to be photocopied) an original or certified copy of their birth certificate to the athletic department. There are no exceptions. The birth certificate need only be provided once in a student's athletic career at Atlantic Coast.
- Verification of Insurance – The FHSAA has established insurance requirements for each student and member school. Prior to participating in any team conditioning sessions, practices or games students must provide proof of

insurance to the athletic department.

<http://www.duvalschools.org/static/aboutdcps/departments/athletics/forms.asp>

Other forms may be necessary for various situations including but not limited to transfer students, home education, charter, private school, and international exchange students.

### **Team Organizational Meetings**

Each team is permitted to have an organizational meeting prior to the first day of practice to make arrangements for physicals, explain eligibility, explain team selection policy, distribute practice schedules, build morale, and conduct off-season conditioning.

### **Team Selection and Rosters**

Tryouts for all sports teams are open to all academically eligible Atlantic Coast students, and middle school students who have been projected to attend Atlantic Coast according to the Duval County School Board. Student must have provided all required forms, and must attend all necessary try-outs or practices as determined by the coach. The number of athletes on each team will vary based on district and FHSAA guidelines. Students who cannot begin practice on the first official practice date due to overlapping school sports will be given an opportunity to tryout after the conclusion of their season. The Head Coach of each team will determine if “cuts” are necessary and will make all roster selections.

### **Equipment and Uniforms**

1. Uniforms are the property of Atlantic Coast High School
2. School colors are Black, White, and Texas Orange
3. Students must pay for any lost or damaged equipment and uniforms. Failure to turn in uniforms and school equipment will result in the issuance of a financial debt notice, the withholding of awards, and the withholding of uniforms and equipment in other sports.

### **Practice Schedules and Times**

Athletic practice schedules will be communicated by coaches to athletes and parents at the beginning of the season, or as necessary when changes are made. On school days practices will begin as early as 2:00 p.m. and should not exceed 2½ hours.

No Sunday meetings of players or practices are permitted.

### **OPEN FACILITIES PROGRAMS,**

#### **Open Facilities Program**

Coaches may open athletic facilities such as the gym, weight-room, track, practice fields, etc, for recreational activities or conditioning to students without being in violation of FHSAA Bylaws under the following guidelines:

1. The facility is open to all Atlantic Coast students, and only Atlantic Coast students, for participation.
2. Participation is strictly voluntary and is not required directly or indirectly for membership on a team.

3. Coaches may not provide coaching or instruction in the skills and techniques in any sport by any school personnel. Their presence may be in a supervisory capacity only.
4. Supervision by school personnel is required.
5. Open facility activities for a specific sport will conclude a minimum of two weeks prior to the first FHSAA permissible day of practice for that sport.
6. Students must have all required participation forms.

## **NON-SCHOOL TEAMS AND OFF-SEASON TEAMS**

### **Non-School Teams**

Students are permitted to participate on non-school teams (ie. AAU, travel teams) and Atlantic Coast teams during the same seasons or at any time. Participation on non-school teams should in no way interfere with student responsibilities to an Atlantic Coast team. Students are expected to give priority to Atlantic Coast teams.

The FHSAA requires that any coach associated with an Atlantic Coast athletic program and who is also affiliated with a non-school activity notify students of potential violations by association. Each student participating on a non-school team must be notified that their participation with the non-school team, affiliated with an Atlantic Coast team coach, and their subsequent enrollment and attendance at Atlantic Coast could render the student ineligible for one calendar year. Atlantic Coast coaches will provide notification to students using FHSAA Form GA6: Affidavit of Compliance with Policy on Non School Teams and Offseason Participation.

### **Summer League/Off-Season Teams**

Participation on approved summer league and/or off-season teams organized by Atlantic Coast is strictly voluntary to the student. In addition, students may be required to pay to participate on such teams in order to cover the expense of uniforms, equipment, officials, etc.

The FHSAA does not regulate the athletic activities of member schools held with their own students during the summer as defined herein with the exception of football and lacrosse. The individual member school principal, district school superintendent, district school board are responsible for adopting regulations governing the activities of their respective schools during this period of time. The summer season is defined as that period of time outside the FHSAA sports year. This period for each member school is defined as the day following the school's last day of spring athletic activities (including spring football practice), or June 1, and concluding with the Saturday of Week 5 in the FHSAA standardized calendar for the following school year.

## **AWARDS**

### **Varsity Lettering**

1. Criteria: Letters will be awarded on the basis of participation as determined by the coach. Athletes who do not meet the lettering criteria will receive a certificate of participation. At the sole discretion of the Athletic Director, varsity letters may be awarded on special merit.
2. Upon the completion of the first varsity sport the student will receive the Interlocking AC varsity letter with a sport pin. If the student participates in another varsity sport, he/she will receive a pin for each sport that he/she meets the criteria for. If a student letters in a



sport for more than one year, a chevron bar will be awarded after the original pin is received.

3. Upon coaches' recommendation, seniors and team managers may be awarded an Interlocking "AC" varsity letter even though the participation criterion has not been met.

### **Athletic Awards**

Each year various individual awards and honors will be available to student-athletes who excel in athletic competition and academically. Nominations for awards sponsored by the school, the Gateway Conference, and any other external organizations will be selected by the head coach, and or the athletic director.

1. **FHSAA All Academic Nomination**
2. **All America, All State , All City, Class Acts, Super 24 etc**
3. **All Gateway Conference**
4. **Male and Female Athlete of the Year**

### **FUNDRAISING**

All fund-raising activities require the approval of the Athletic Director. The Head Coach is responsible for completing the appropriate paperwork prior to the fundraiser and for maintaining prudent recordkeeping during the activity. All activities must be permissible under the guidelines set forth by the school board. Fundraising conducted by or for an ACHS team will be for the sole purpose of meeting team financial needs (equipment, supplies, travel expenses, and officials), and will be used at the discretion of the Athletic Director or Head Coach. Stand-alone donations should be accompanied by a letter from the donor specifically detailing its purpose and use.

### **PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e. practices, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning, etc.
5. Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation.
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication coaches expect from parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.

2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in the programs at Atlantic Coast High School, Students will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives participating on an athletic team. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Other student-athletes.

### **Parent/Coach Conference**

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue or concern.

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, the procedure you should follow is:

1. Call the coach directly or the Athletic Director to set up an appointment with the coach.
2. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.
3. If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation. Please note that concerns made directly to the Principal, District Athletic Office or Superintendant are typically re-directed to the Athletic Director.

## **ATHLETIC TRAINING**

### **Athletic Training Services**

Athletic Training services are provided on campus daily, available to all Atlantic Coast athletes. The athletic trainer is available after school to assess and treat sports related injuries, and is available for all home sporting events.

Students should notify their coaches of concerns that require the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer working with the coaches will determine any student's ability to participate in practice or games where injuries are involved. No student will participate if not cleared by the athletic trainer.

### **Concussions**

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body or from collisions between individuals or obstacles. The occurrence or possible occurrence of a concussion will be treated with the utmost concern for the student's well being. Any student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion including, but not limited to, loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems, shall be immediately removed from the contest or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. Removal from practice or game play resulting from a possible concussion can be made by any coach, team doctor, athletic trainer or any other ACHP (Appropriate Health Care Professional) working in such capacity with Atlantic Coast.

When it is suspected that a player has a concussion, the "Heads Up" 4-step Action Plan will be followed:

- Remove the athlete from play.
- Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.
- Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them information on concussion.
- Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health-care professional says he or she is symptom-free and gives the okay to return to activity.

The signs, symptoms, and behaviors of a concussion are not always apparent immediately after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and may develop over a few hours. An athlete should be observed following a suspected concussion and should never be left alone.

### **Return to Play (RTF) Criteria –**

No athlete should return to play or practice on the same day of a suspected concussion. "When in doubt, sit them out!" Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by an ACHP (as defined above) as soon as possible and practical. Any athlete who has sustained a concussion must be medically cleared by an AHCP (as defined above) prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition. After evaluation and examination by an AHCP (as defined above), return to play must follow a step-wise protocol as defined by the "Graded Return to Play Protocol" form and under the supervision of an AHCP, athletic trainer, coach or other health care professional (Post Head Injury/Concussion Form). A written medical clearance from an AHCP (as defined above) is required for return to competition (Post Head Injury/Concussion – RTP Form).

### **Heat Acclimation**

During the first seven calendar days, it is required that participants not engage in more than one practice per day. **Weekly practice time must not exceed 18 hours per week.** Competition day counts as 3 hours. No practice before or after competition is permitted. A walk-through is permitted during Days 1 – 6 of the acclimatization period. However, a one-hour recovery period is required between the end of practice and the start of the walk-through or vice-versa.

Beginning Day 8, it is required that the practice schedule not exceed a 2-1-2-1 format. This means that a day consisting of two practices should be followed by a day with only one practice. One walk-through session would be permitted each day. If a two practice day were followed by a day off, a two-practice day would be permitted on the following day.

On days when two practices are conducted, it is required that either practice not exceed three hours and 30 minutes (3 ½ hours) in length and student-athletes not participate in more than five total hours of practice activities on these days, excluding walkthrough sessions. Warm-up, stretching, and cool-down activities are included as part of the practice time. Practices should be separated with at least three continuous hours of recovery time between the end of the first practice and the beginning of the very next practice.

### **Weekly practice time shall not exceed 18 hours per week.**

On days when a single practice is conducted, it is required that practices not exceed three hours and 30 minutes (3 ½ hours) in length. A walk-through is permitted and should be separated with at least one hour of continuous recovery time between the end of the first practice and the walk-through, or vice-versa. Cross Country: Individuals must participate in a minimum of 10 practice sessions on 10 separate days prior to the first contest.

**Hydration and Rest.** The following procedures related to hydration and rest periods during a practice or contest (where applicable):

- For every 30 consecutive minutes of a practice, there must be at least a minimum 5 minute rest and hydration break.
- During every practice and contest, there must be unrestricted access to water at all times.
- A student-athlete shall never be denied access to water if he/she requests.
- Once the 14 day acclimatization expires, each school or school district is required to create a hydration and rest policy to implement for the remainder of the season.

## **NCAA ELIGIBILITY**

### **The NCAA Eligibility Center**

Students who are interested in participating in sports in college at the Division I or II level must register with The Eligibility Center. The Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all students who want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution as freshmen. In order to practice, play and receive an athletic scholarship, students need to meet certain academic benchmarks. An additional certification process exists to make sure the student is still an amateur, which is necessary in order for the student to compete.

### **Academic Credentials + Amateurism Status = College Eligible**

Students may register at any time, but it is recommended that they register during their junior year. The Eligibility Center will evaluate a student's academic credentials once the following information has been received, and the student has had their status requested by an NCAA member institution:

- Completed online registration;
- Fee payment;
- SAT or ACT test score on file from the respective testing agency;
- Transcript(s) from all schools or programs attended.