

PROVIDENCE ACADEMY



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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Philosophy of Athletics

Providence Academy aims to teach fundamental physical development to our students to benefit them for the rest of their lives. We teach each student to take proper care of his/her body, the temple of the Holy Spirit; to exhort one another in times of trial; to complete tasks which are begun; and to cooperate with team members.

We at Providence Academy must never allow the athletics program to become The Program. Athletics is offered so that the student can learn to face tough circumstances with determination and to continue on even if victory seems impossible. We desire for our athletes to learn to persevere, lose with grace, and win with humility.

Finally, the athletics program at Providence Academy teaches self-sacrifice, self-discipline, and personal commitment to attain the goal of excellence. Its primary goal is to develop characteristics in students that will enable them to overcome challenges they will meet throughout their lives.

Providence Academy Athletic Policies

Administrator

The administrator has the authority to employ and terminate coaches with the approval of the school board, and the advice of the athletic director.

Athletic Director

The athletic director oversees the final scheduling of athletic events in the school year. In appropriate situations, the athletic director will assist in executing policy within the manual and from the administrator. It should be the goal of the athletic director to oversee each sport and prevent or resolve any problems that may occur during any athletic season. The athletic director should also produce a workable athletic schedule which complies with PA Board policy and supports the normal daily operations of the school.

Coach

The coach is responsible for the development of his or her team. The coach will take any dictated policy from the administrator or athletic director and execute it without dispute. It should be the goal of the coach to successfully develop his or her team, spiritually and physically, within the framework of a sound philosophy of the sport and to unite all players on the team. The coach should build up a student athlete using constructive criticism and encouragement, while avoiding berating and needless criticism. Furthermore, it should be the goal to develop the team from top to bottom as best as possible, leaving a relative consistency of team success from year to year. However, the playing time of each athlete will be determined strictly by the coach. The coach will delegate authority to assistant coaches, who are approved only by the administrator and athletic director. In addition, the coach will be ultimately responsible for the conduct of the assistant coaches. A coach should also be open to the suggestion of an assistant coach, administrator, and athletic director. The coach will be ready and willing to discuss any matter **in private** with anyone. However, a coach should be careful of being influenced by favoritism from parents or players, an action which may disturb or destroy team unity. A coach will not publicly criticize athletic policy; rather, the disagreement may be addressed in a private meeting.

Assistant Coach

The assistant coach is directly responsible to the head coach for any actions taken involving the team. The administrator and the athletic director will approve the appointing of assistant coaches by the head coach. The assistant may be called upon to act as head coach should the head coach not be able to lead the team (sickness, leave of absence, suspension, termination). Each assistant coach should aim to support the head coach in all phases of team leadership. Disagreements between the assistant coach and the head coach should not be made public, which could destroy team unity. Any major disagreement should be addressed in private.

Standards of Conduct for Volunteer Assistant Coaches

Luke 2:52 – “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

The athletic program at Providence Academy is intended to help students increase in wisdom and stature so they will be able to overcome challenges throughout their lives. The following Standards of Conduct are given to Assistant Coaches as an aid to them in assisting Providence Academy in being faithful to its athletic philosophy.

1. In matters relating to athletic philosophy and policy, always submit to the Head Coach and/or Athletic Director. If you are ever unable to do so in good conscience, you are to do so until you have appealed the issue to the Administrator.
2. Never push athletics as “The Program” most critical at Providence Academy. Show interest in other school programs by attending some non-athletic activities or events.
3. Be an example of those traits we wish to build in our students:
 - a. Lose with grace
 - b. Win with humility
 - c. Exhibit self-sacrifice
 - d. Display self-discipline
 - e. Follow personal commitment to excellence
 - f. Persevere in tough circumstances
4. When interacting with opposing coaches and parents, return evil with good.
5. Allow the Head Coach to respond and handle disputes with game officials.
6. When problems arise with parents of students on the team, immediately involve the Head Coach and/or Athletic Director.
7. When coaching your son or daughter, beware of showing special treatment toward them or unfair high expectations of their performance.

As a Volunteer Assistant Coach at Providence Academy, you represent the school at every athletic event that your team participates in. Failure to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the standards stated above will lead to your removal as a Volunteer Coach.

SPORTS PROGRAM OFFERINGS FOR 2018-19

Fall Season

Boys

Varsity Soccer (Grades 9-12)
Junior Varsity Soccer (Grades 8-10)
Middle School Soccer (Grades 6-8)
Cross Country (Grades 6-12)

Girls

Varsity Volleyball (Grades 9-12)
Junior Varsity Volleyball (9-10)
Freshman Volleyball (Grade 9)
Middle School Volleyball (Grade 6-8)
Cross Country (Grades 6-12)

Winter sports

Boys

Varsity Basketball (Grades 10-12)
Junior Varsity Basketball (Grades 9-10)
Middle School Basketball (Grades 6-8)

Girls

Varsity Basketball (Grades 10-12)
Junior Varsity Basketball (Grades 9-10)
Middle School Basketball (Grades 6-8)

Spring sports

Boys

Varsity Baseball (Grades 9-12)
Middle School Baseball (Grades 6-8)
Varsity Golf (Grades 9-12)
Middle School Golf (Grades 6-8)

Girls

Varsity Soccer (Grades 9-12)
Junior Varsity Soccer (Grades 8-10)
Middle School Soccer (Grades 6-8)
Varsity Golf (Grades 9-12)
Middle School Golf (Grades 6-8)

A WORD REGARDING BEHAVIOR AT ATHLETIC EVENTS

PA students are all aware of the standards set forth by the school but are oftentimes unaware of what we expect from them as spectators. Therefore, we have listed a few things to keep in mind when you attend a PA athletic event:

1. Do not criticize. Fans sometimes feel that they are able to do it better, but this is not their job. Support the players and coaches; **build them up – don't tear them down!**
2. As difficult as it may be, comments to officials and opposing teams should be positive. Do not make derogatory comments to athletes on the opposing team or officials. Officials may not always be right, but they are never wrong.
3. Realize that the word Christian means "Christ-like." We as Christians are always testimonies, whether good or bad. PA wants to portray a good testimony always, **but especially to the public and private schools we compete against!**
4. LONG AFTER THE SCORE IS FORGOTTEN, OUR BEHAVIOR AND REPUTATION ARE REMEMBERED.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

**Providence Academy
Athletic Coaching Staff
2018-2019**

Athletic Director: Martin Sells

Soccer:

Varsity/JV Boys	Mike Cash
Assistant Varsity/JV	James Herington
Middle School Boys	Jay Peters
Varsity/JV Girls	James Herington
Middle School Girls	Jay Peters

Volleyball:

Varsity Girls	Lynne Little
Freshman and JV Girls	Sherry Chambers
Middle School Girls	Eve Little

Cross Country:

Varsity and Middle School	Eric Anderson
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Basketball:

Varsity Boys	Josh Roark
Varsity Girls	Mike Cash
JV Boys	Rusty Stover
JV Girls	No team this year
Middle School Boys	Bryce Ballard
Middle School Girls	Angie Grizzle

Baseball:

Varsity Boys	Jeff Reed
Middle School Boys	Mike Cash

Golf:

Varsity/Middle School Boys & Girls	Angie Grizzle
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SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS AND FEES

- A. **Each athlete must have a physical before they can participate in any camps, tryouts, practices or games.** The PA physical exam form can be found in the main office. Each May, Genesis Healthcare provides physicals at PA for students in the 5th – 11th grades. The cost for this physical is \$15.00. If an athlete does not participate in this program he or she will have to have a physical completed by a doctor annually before he or she can participate in any camps or sports associated with Providence Academy. This physical must be current. The physical must be dated no earlier than the date athletic physicals were completed at Providence Academy.
- B. Anyone interested in trying out for a team must be at the first practice of the season. The coach must be notified ahead of time if a student is going to miss the first practice for an excusable reason (illness, death in family, etc.).
- C. All students who participate in athletics will be charged an athletic participation fee. The purpose for this fee is to reduce the amount of money used from the general budget to cover athletic expenses. **The fee for varsity and junior varsity sports is \$75.00 per sport and the fee for middle school sports is \$60.00 per sport.**
- D. All families with children participating in athletics are required to support the athletic program by working the gate and the concession stand and helping with transportation to away games. This provides financial assistance to the athletic department in order to continually improve facilities and athletic equipment and to keep athletic fees to a minimum.
- E. Athletic fees are billed on your monthly statement and are due by the date stated on the invoice. Failure to do so may result in a loss of participation privileges. In the event of a financial difficulty, contact the bookkeeper to discuss other arrangements. Fees from one sports season must be paid before a student will be allowed to play the next sport.

GAME AND PRACTICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Once you have joined a team, you have committed yourself to that team until the last game is completed.
- B. **Participation on the school team will take priority over playing for club/park and recreation teams. Personal choice by the athlete or family to give club/park and recreation team higher priority may reduce the athlete's game time with the school team.**
- C. Athletes must be at every practice or game unless excused for one of the following reasons:
- Personal sickness.
 - Death in the family.
 - Previously scheduled commitment approved by the athletic director.

- D. Any athlete who misses a practice or game may have to make up practice activities and face the team's policy for reduction in playing time. This is not meant as punishment for an excusable absence, but as a reward and incentive to those team members who were present. A team member who must miss a practice or game may return to their former status as soon as they have fulfilled the team's policy for absences.
- E. Each coach will announce his/her discipline procedure for missed practices or games. Multiple unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the team.
- F. All athletes must be on time to practices and games. Coaches will announce their discipline procedures for tardiness.

ATHLETE'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- A. Every athlete is expected to maintain a good Christian testimony. At any time an athlete is not maintaining a Christian testimony on or off the field or in the classroom, he/she may be suspended or dismissed from the team.
- B. An athlete who receives a detention that forces him/her to miss practice must serve that detention. Coaches will discipline players who are late or miss practice for detentions.
- C. Athletes are expected to be examples of good conduct to other students. In that regard, when an athlete receives a suspension from school, the student will be suspended from his/her team during that period. Further action will be at the discretion of the principal.
- D. A suspended athlete may participate in tryouts for a team but may not actively participate in practice or games until he has served a probationary period.
- E. The use of profanity will not be tolerated. The use of profanity on or off the field may result in suspension from the team or loss of game time.
- F. Athletes are to be good representatives of Christ and Providence Academy on road trips. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
- G. Providence Academy does not condone and will not tolerate "hazing" or "initiations" of athletes by other athletes. Any such actions will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the athletic team.
- H. Any athlete or coach that is ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game. If the athlete or coach receives a second ejection, he will be suspended for two games. A third ejection will result in dismissal from the team and forfeiture of athletic privileges for the remainder of the school year.

RULES FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICES

AND GAMES

- A. All those involved in the athletic program must be in school by **11:00 a.m.** each day to participate in a practice or game scheduled for that day. The only exception is a previously scheduled doctor or dentist appointment or a previously scheduled commitment approved by the administrator. **If you are sick and do not attend school you can not attend the game scheduled on that day.**
- B. An athlete must maintain a C average with no F's to be eligible to play.
- C. No athletes will be added to a team's roster after 50% of its regular season games have been completed.
- D. The administration is responsible for the determination of eligibility of students and communicating to coaches. The length and impact of the probation period will be at the discretion of the administration.
- E. An athlete must abide by the following guidelines if placed on a probationary period:
 - 1. Before being reinstated to a team, an athlete on academic probation must obtain a grade verification form from the athletic director. The athlete is to give this form to his/her teachers and have the teachers fill in the grade and sign the form. The athlete is to acquire grades at the teacher's convenience. After all grades have been received, the athlete is to give the form to the athletic director for evaluation. If the proper improvements have been made, the athlete may return to the team at that time.
 - 2. An athlete on probation can **practice but will not be allowed to travel or dress out** for a game with the team while on probation. If an athlete travels on his own to an away game while on probation, he is to sit on the team bench in school attire.
 - 3. An athlete on probation is to attend all **HOME** games during his/her probationary period and sit on the team bench in school attire.
 - 4. These guidelines also apply to managers, statisticians, and scorekeepers.
 - 5. **Any violation of the probation guidelines may result in dismissal or suspension from the team.**

SELECTION OF TEAMS

- A. Each coach has the responsibility to select his/her team.
- B. Each coach will have try-outs to select team members.
- C. Final approval will come from the athletic director and the administrator.
- D. To provide proper training and appropriate playing time for each team member, there will be a limit to the number of athletes allowed on each team.

ATHLETE’S DRESS REQUIREMENT

- A. All athletes must meet the school dress code for modest dress at practice.
- B. The following chart summarizes dress code requirements for game days:

<u>SPORT</u>	<u>HOME GAMES</u>	<u>AWAY GAMES</u>	<u>TRAVEL TO & FROM</u>
Baseball	School attire	School attire	Uniform or school attire
Basketball (Boys)	Shirt and tie with khakis	Shirt and tie with khakis	Shirt and tie with khakis or warm-ups
Basketball (Girls)	Polo and khakis or dress shirt	Polo and khakis or dress shirt	Polo and khakis or team warm-ups with traveling t-shirt
Cross Country	School attire	School attire	Uniform or school attire
Golf	Golf shirt with khakis	Golf shirt with khakis	Golf shirt with khakis
Soccer (Boys)	Game jersey	Game jersey	Travel shirt and khakis or game uniform
Soccer (Girls)	School attire	School attire	Polo and khakis or game uniform
Volleyball	School attire	School attire or travel t-shirt	Polo and khakis, game uniform or travel t-shirt with warm-ups

****NOTE: THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO ALL PLAYERS, MANAGERS, STATISTICIANS, AND SCOREKEEPERS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH TEAM. ****

QUITTING

- A. Character is not built by quitting. Trying times are not times to quit trying.
- B. A student may drop off the team anytime before the third practice without penalty. After that period of time **no student may quit the team without penalty. Any athlete who quits a team will not be allowed to join the team the following year.** There should be a strong sense of belonging to the team even when personal injuries would restrict the individual's participation in practices and games. An injured player is expected to be at all practices and games as if he/she were healthy.
- C. An athlete who quits will be removed from the team roster and forfeit any post-season rewards such as team pictures, letters, awards, etc.
- D. Exceptions to this rule would be for family hardships, severe injury, or serious academic problems. The athletic director and the principal will decide any exceptions.

TRANSPORTATION

- A. Directions to all the games can be found on our website.
- B. When playing local teams, such as Tri-Cities, Cedar View, Hampton, etc., athletes need to meet at the opposing school's location unless prior arrangements are made.
- C. When traveling outside the area, we will go as a team in vans, cars and/or the school bus. All team members will travel together.
- D. A team member may ride home from off-campus game with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian provided that the coach has been notified by written or verbal communication from the parent(s) or legal guardian prior to leaving the game.
- E. An athlete may ride home from an off-campus game with a friend's parent(s) if the athlete's parents have provided the school or coach with written or verbal communication from the parent(s) or legal guardian prior to leaving the game.
- F. Parents must turn in a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance to the office before providing transportation for athletic events.
- G. If you are providing transportation from an away game for a student that must come back to the school you must travel with the designated authority of the school so that all parties arrive back at the school at the same time to meet the parents of the team members.
- H. All exceptions to the above can be amended by the athletic director/administration.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Any uniforms or equipment issued to an athlete are the athlete's responsibility to return in good shape.
- B. Lost or damaged equipment will be charged to the athlete.
- C. School uniforms are to be worn only for games, not for practices or other functions.
- D. **All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach or athletic director within one week after the last game of the season!**
- E. Any athlete who does not return uniforms and/or equipment will have his report card held and costs for replacement charged to his school bill. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until overdue uniforms, equipment, and fees have been turned in.

LETTERMEN AWARDS

- A. The school will have an athletic awards assembly at the conclusion of each season.
- B. **Varsity** athletes will be recognized for their efforts according to the following guidelines:
 - 1. To earn a varsity letter, an athlete must appear in at least half the games for that sport.
 - 2. Athletes who do not letter will receive a participation certificate for that sport.
 - 3. Managers, statisticians, and scorekeepers are also eligible for varsity letters.
- C. Certificates of participation are given to all junior varsity, freshman and middle sports athletes.

AWARDS

- A. Each varsity sport gives a minimum of three special awards.
- B. Each junior varsity, freshman and middle school sport give a minimum of one special award.

CHEERLEADING

Providence Academy does not offer, and does not intend to offer in the future, a cheerleading program. If you have questions regarding this decision (or any other decision related to the athletic program) feel free to contact the athletic director or school administrator.

MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Cleats are not to be worn in the building at any time. Proper athletic shoes must be worn in the gym at all times.
- B. Passes are sold at the beginning of the school year for admission to the home games during the school year. An athletic pass will be sold for \$50.00, which entitles families to pay \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for students at all home athletic events for the entire year. The family pass will be sold for \$125.00 to PA families and \$25.00 to PA grandparents. This entitles them to free admission to all the home games for the entire school year. These passes also apply to tournaments held at Providence Academy.
- C. The athletic director and administration will decide any questions or issues not discussed in this handbook.

A WORD TO OUR PARENTS – How to Best Support Your Athlete

The best way to support your athlete is to provide encouragement and to be positive, both at home and in the stands. If you or your child has a question, please have your child talk to his/her coach. If a situation is not resolved or is of a serious nature, then call the coach yourself. If no solution can be reached at that point, then call the athletic director to set up a meeting with all parties involved. Know that you are the most important people in your child's life and that he/she wants you to be proud of him/her. Be in the stands, rain or shine, and cheer.

Neither school administration nor the Board of Directors of Providence Academy claims any authority over teams participating in the Recreation leagues.

School administration and the Board of Directors recognize that teams within the league have sometimes used “Providence Academy” to identify their team, or are obviously connected with “Providence Academy” because their team is dominated by Providence Academy students.

The ‘brand’ of Providence Academy is critical to the long term viability of our school. Therefore, without any oversight or authority within the local recreational leagues, we respectfully request the Providence Academy name not be used with our school colors to identify recreational teams. The Providence Academy logos will not be provided by the school for use within any recreational league.

If you, as parents, are involved in any way with recreational teams, the Administration and Board of Directors ask that you consider the following Standards of Conduct as you “represent” your school in the community.

1. Be an example of those traits we wish to build in our students:
 - a. Lose with grace
 - b. Win with humility
 - c. Exhibit self-sacrifice
 - d. Display self-discipline
 - e. Follow personal commitment to excellence
 - f. Persevere in tough circumstances
2. When interacting with opposing coaches and parents, return evil with good.
3. Do not make derogatory comments to players on the opposing team.
4. Show respect for the referees who are in positions of authority during the game. No degrading comments, name calling, or confrontations after the game. Referees may not always be right, but they are never wrong.

Providence athletic programs are ever expanding, and our young students are heavily involved in community sport programs as well as many other activities. Much of our future reputation will be built on what others see when our students, along with their parent audience, compete with others in our community. It is important for all of us to remember that as students and parents, we represent Providence Academy and, more importantly, the Lord Jesus in whatever activities we and our children choose to participate.

This form must be returned to the main office before your child will be allowed to participate in his or her first athletic event of the school year.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Student's Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Parent's Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Phone Number: home: _____ cell: _____

Another Person to Contact: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone Number: _____

Insurance Name: _____

Policy and Group Number: _____

Physician: _____ Phone number: _____

Allergies: _____

Please initial by each statement:

- We have read the handbook and will abide by the rules stated in the handbook.
- I authorize qualified emergency medical professionals to examine and in the event of injury or serious illness, administer emergency care to the above named student. I understand every effort will be made to contact me to explain the nature of the problem prior to any involved treatment.
- In consideration for the opportunity to participate in the athletic program of Providence Academy, the Participant (or parent/guardian) acknowledges and accepts the risks of injury associated with participation in and transportation to and from athletic events. The Participant (or parent/guardian) accepts personal financial responsibility for any injury or other loss sustained during athletic events or during transportation to and from the events, as well as for any medical treatment rendered to the Participant that is authorized by the representatives of Providence Academy. Further, the Participant (or parent/guardian) releases and promises to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Providence Academy for any injury arising directly or indirectly out of the athletic events or transportation to and from the events.

Parent's signature

Date

**PROVIDENCE
ACADEMY ATHLETICS
OVERVIEW
Past, Present, & Future**

The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed overview of the athletic program at Providence Academy. The document narrates a history of the program, as well as paints a picture of the philosophy of athletics as it pertains to the overall vision and purpose of the school.

I. PAST

In the early days of PA, athletics was looked at as a means to generate school spirit and provide students with extracurricular activities beyond the bounds of the classroom. The only true expectation was that we would not start a program unless able to continue being competitive in subsequent years.

Over the years we began to have some success against the Christian schools that we played regularly. Expectations began to rise, but only to the degree that there was a growing appetite for increased competitive play, hence the incremental addition of public schools to the schedule.

With the accelerated rise of club sports, travel ball, AAU, etc., a contingency of student athletes came into the PA program having experienced very competitive play in those arenas. These families naturally brought this passion for competition into our sports program. Suddenly the parent expectations increased to a level never before seen. There were elevated expectations for coaches, for the level of competition, for the sports facilities, etc., and simply having a program that afforded students an opportunity to compete and have fun was no longer adequate...for some. This is, of course, not representative of the whole.

It was at this time that we developed the Athletic Committee, whose primary purposes was to ensure that the athletic program maintained proper balance, a Christ-centered framework, and an appetite for betterment in all areas. The Athletic Committee was made up of one board member, the school administrator, the secondary principal, Athletic Director and several dads.

After ongoing discussions within the Athletic Committee, five primary goals were developed: 1) Play a more competitive schedule, 2) Develop an elementary feeder program for basketball, 3) Try to join TSSAA if at all possible, 4) Develop the coaches by having them attend clinics or training events, and 5) Find an end-of-season tournament for our teams.

In the last several years, we are happy to say that these goals have been met, with the exception of joining TSSAA.

II. FROM PAST TO PRESENT

The following is a list summarizing these accomplishments:

- **Improved level of competition**—roughly 75% of PA competitors are public schools in the area.
- **End of season tournament**—joined the NACA.
 - In just our second year of participation:
 - Girls Soccer, Div. 1 Runner-up
 - Div. 2 Champions
 - Boys Basketball, Div. 2 Runner-up
 - Girls Basketball, Div. 2 Runner-up
 - Volleyball competed in Div. 1
 - Golf, 2x national champion
 - Golf, 2x national runner-up
 - Golf, 2x 3rd place finish
- **Elementary Basketball program**—there are now over 120 kids participating in this Saturday program targeted at developing young athletic talent.
 - The program has continually shown fruit in improving the competitive performance of both our boys and girls 5th and 6th grade teams.
- **Coaching Training**—coaches are receiving training from college coaches and professional organizations. New coaches have and will continue to be added to the mix.

Beyond program improvements, PA athletics has experienced the following improvements as well:

- **Facility/Equipment Improvements**
 - Batting cage for baseball field, as well as indoor batting cage for the gym
 - Covers for infield of baseball field
 - Speaker systems for baseball and soccer
 - Concessions trailer purchased and remodeled
 - Press box for soccer field (AKA, the tiki hut)
 - Covering for gate/admissions at soccer field
 - New volleyball nets and poles
 - Volleying machine for Volleyball
- **Other Noteworthy Items to Consider:**
 - PA Graduates have received scholarships in Boys/Girls Soccer, Boys/Girls Basketball, Baseball, and Volleyball

- Teams and individual athletes are participating in summer camps
- The Blue Ridge Classic continues to be a successful event
- Middle School Boys Baseball won 2015 conference tournament

As you can see, more has happened in the last five years than many realize.

A frequently asked question is why PA does not compete in TSSAA, which was a point of investigation for the Athletic Committee.

TSSAA communicated the following **two options**:

1. Make sure no athlete receives a scholarship of any kind, need-based or otherwise
2. Do give athletic scholarships, join the TSSAA private school division, and travel to Chattanooga and Nashville for most away games.

As to option 1, PA is fundamentally committed to ensuring that students who need financial assistance to receive a Christian education have that opportunity. In regards to option 2, joining the private school division within the TSSAA framework presents several difficulties. One, the distance factor for private schools (travel time to play games) is even GREATER than what we currently experience. Two, the level of play is much greater than the state of our current program.

Over the years, **PA athletics has improved considerably**. Those who have been around the school for more than a handful of years can attest to this. Moreover, the level of performance that PA teams produce is unparalleled for our size in this region.

Note the following enrollments of local high schools against which Providence is consistently competitive:

- Cloudland 325
- North Greene 345
- Unaka 375
- University High 515
- Happy Valley 585
- Chucky Doak 685
- PA 138

These numbers are telling. The level at which PA teams compete is tremendous!

- Is there room for improvement? Absolutely.
- Do we want to strive for **excellence** in all things, including athletics? Absolutely.

Now, more than ever, there is a greater push from select PA families that we raise our standards in pursuit of excellence (beyond training hard, playing hard, competing in a Christ-like manner, etc.).

Excellence now seems to be about the quality and experience of coaches, more difficult competition, more wins against that competition, and even a desire to have athletics be a draw for potential students, even if for that reason alone.

The following section lays out the purpose and philosophy of athletics at Providence Academy, including how excellence is understood from a Christ-centered, Gospel-centered vantage point.

Purpose – It is the desire of the school administration and AD that PA athletics be for those students who are enrolled in our school because their parents want a Christian education for them. While we are not against a Christian family being drawn to PA for sports, we do not use sports as a means for recruiting new students.

Excellence –“Excellence,” as we understand it, means things like teaching the athletes to train hard, play hard, compete in a Christ-like manner, be a good teammate (despite position on the team), and submit to the authority of the referees and coaches. This leads to the question of how the gospel influences this conversation. **What is gospel centered excellence?**

Gospel centered excellence is the faithful embrace, exercise, and expansion of God-given talents, abilities, and resources.

- Values of Gospel Centered Excellence:
 - **God over self:** Worldly excellence encourages a “selfward curvature,” in which focus is on my performance rather than on whether God’s own glory and excellence (2 Pet 1:3) are put on display. Whose kingdom am I serving? My own? Or God’s?
 - **Who over what:** Identity rests in Christ, not competition. God’s concern for us is first about who we are and only then what we do. The world says I am what I do or accomplish.

- **Faithfulness over fame:** It is not measured by what other people or schools are doing, but is rather a measure of our own faithful stewardship of resources (talent, abilities, training, money, etc.). The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 illustrates this principle: the master applauds those who courageously embrace and invest what's entrusted to them.
- **All over the one:** Gospel centered excellence seeks the good and excellence of all people, whereas worldly excellence creates the illusion of exclusivity and superiority. This again comes back to perspective, namely, a concern for the image of God in all people and a desire for others to excel in their gifts and abilities (whether teammates or opponents).

To flesh this out further: St. Augustine described sin as the state of being “curved in on ourselves.” This expresses itself in what he called disordered loves. We lose proper perspective of priorities on a regular basis, whether academics, athletics, or something else. True excellence, then, is magnifying the goodness and glory of God in all things, not making those good things into god things.

As Harold Best summarized, “Excellence is the process of becoming better than I once was. I am not to become better than someone else or even like someone else.”

- Progress, not production, is what honors God.
- Progress and improvement are the means by which we expand God-given resources. The measure of success here is not in comparing one's self to others, but measuring one's own progress.
- As in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), God grants intrinsic and extrinsic gifts, abilities, and resources and expects them to be used faithfully and courageously.

PA athletics strives to steward well what God has given. We pursue progress and aim for our athletes and teams to grow and be better than before. But the reference point for growth remains PA, not another program of comparison.

III. LOOKING AHEAD

Providence Athletics will strive to improve continually in respect to its mission to teach students to work hard and deal with life situations afforded by athletics that are not present elsewhere.

The following are specific initiatives under consideration:

Conditioning/Athlete Training

The old adage that a team is only as strong as its weakest link certainly bears truth in athletics. There have been and will always be some students who work harder than others in the off season to prepare for the coming year.

PA plans to do more in regards to instituting and requiring conditioning plans for athletes. Students will not experience the fullest measure of their abilities and skills apart from disciplined training, which means this is ultimately a stewardship issue.

Team Schedules

As shown in sections above, the strength of schedules and level of competition in athletics has grown tremendously. But there is room for growth in coming years.

PA teams will schedule more established and experienced private schools, as well as incorporate more public schools when seasons and schedules allow and align. In addition, the school will be proactive in the following areas:

- Checking on middle school conference affiliations / possibilities (similar to our current presence in a middle school basketball and baseball conference)
- Taking advantage of Thanksgiving and Christmas tournaments

Coaches (see p. 2 of Athletic Handbook)

Coaches will continue to receive professional training as is available. PA will seek coaches who are versed in particular sports, care about the development of students, and are committed to Christian education and the mission of Providence Academy.

Because of our school's mission, current size, budget, and other oversight factors, we select and appoint varsity head coaches from among our faculty and staff. Athletics are an extension of the mission of Providence Academy. As such, our athletic philosophy (see p. 1 of Athletic Handbook), including hiring, coincides with the overall mission of PA.

What if I have an issue with athletics and want to speak with someone about it?

Lines of Authority

Administratively, the person who oversees the athletic program has always been the secondary principal.

On a practical, day-to-day basis, the AD develops and oversees the athletics program, reporting to the secondary principal as necessary.

If a parent has an issue within a sport, they are to first go to the coach of that sport. If they still need help at that point they are to go to the AD. If after meeting with the AD they require further assistance they are to go to the secondary principal. Whatever decision the secondary principal makes (after consulting with the AD, coach, parent, etc.,) is deemed final.

The Head of School and PA board remain committed to this process. When an appeal reaches either level, they will **only** become involved if the issue is deemed critical by all parties and could potentially compromise the position of the school or athletic program in the region.

PA Athletics has come a long way. But we are not done yet. Go Knights!

For further questions regarding athletics, please refer to the Athletic Handbook