



Unity Christian Academy
2025-2026 Athletic Handbook

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FOREWORD

This Parent/Student Handbook outlines the policies that will support and strengthen that partnership. These guidelines are not meant to be restrictive or legalistic, but rather helpful and freeing. When we read, understand, and follow them, we contribute to a joyful, faith-filled community united by a shared purpose.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to serve Eastern North Carolina by educating the next generation through Christ-centered instruction that shapes the heart, sharpens the mind, and strengthens the soul for a life of discipleship.

MISSION STATEMENT

In partnership with parents and guided by the Gospel, we educate students by cultivating wisdom and virtue for a life of service to others as authentic Christian leaders, for the glory of Christ and His Church.

SCHOOL MOTTO

Pray for wisdom; Practice virtue.

PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

At UCA, we believe physical fitness is an essential component of a Christ-centered education. Our Athletic Program exists not only to strive for excellence in competition but also to shape student-athletes into devoted followers of Christ. We view sports as a meaningful opportunity—a tool for glorifying the Lord through effort, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Whether in victory or defeat, our ultimate goal is to reflect the character of Jesus in our attitudes and actions, both on and off the field, court, track, or course.

What We Believe:

- Christ is at the center of all we do—including athletics.
- Character matters more than victory; we pursue excellence with integrity.
- Discipline and perseverance are essential for both spiritual and personal growth.
- Teamwork reflects the body of Christ, where every member has value and purpose.
- Coaches are mentors who shape not only athletes, but the character of young men and women.
- Every athlete is called to steward their talents in a way that honors God and serves others.
- Our Athletic Program is committed to developing student-athletes who compete fiercely, lead selflessly, and live boldly for Christ.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

At UCA, student-athletes must always remember who they represent—first and foremost, Christ, then UCA, their family, and finally, themselves.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. This privilege is extended only to students who are in good standing with the school community and who demonstrate the character, commitment, and responsibility required of a team member.

Expectations for Participation

- I. *Commitment to Schedule*
 - A. Student-athletes are expected to fully commit to all practices and games. Regular attendance and punctuality are non-negotiable.
- II. *Academic Standing*
 - A. Academic success comes before athletic involvement. Students must maintain passing grades to remain eligible for play. Missed work due to games or travel is the responsibility of the student and must be completed promptly.
- III. *Health and Conduct*
 - A. Athletes must make choices that promote their physical and spiritual health. The use or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vapes, Zyn, or similar substances is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary consequences
- IV. *Respect for Others*
 - A. Treat all visitors—officials, opposing teams, coaches, and fans—with respect. Your behavior should reflect Christ and UCA at all times.
- V. *Attendance at School*
 - A. Students must be present at school in order to participate in athletic events. If a student misses more than 50% of the school day, they may not participate in any athletic activities that day, unless excused by the Athletic Director and Administration.
- VI. *Christlike Conduct*
 - A. All behavior—language, interactions with others, and conduct on and off the field—should be a positive reflection of Christ and our school’s values. Unsportsmanlike behavior, inappropriate interactions, or intimidation are unacceptable.
- VII. *Dress Code*
 - A. UCA’s dress code applies to all athletic activities, including practices, games, and tournaments. Shirts must be worn at all times.

VIII. *Game Day Attire*

- A. Expectations for Game Day Attire should be as follows:
 - 1. Boys: Khakis, Dress Pants, Polos, Button Up, Ties are acceptable.
 - 2. Girls: Dresses, Skirts, Slacks, Trousers, Blouses, Jumpers.
 - 3. All Game Day Attire must follow the UCA Dress Code outlined in the UCA Family Handbook.

IX. *Facility Care*

- A. Respect the facilities you use, whether at UCA, HBCC, or other venues.
- B. Leave spaces clean and undamaged. If something breaks, immediately notify a coach so it can be addressed. Honesty is always the best policy.

X. *Physicals Required*

- A. A current physical must be on file before a student may participate in games.

XI. *Injury and Illness Policy*

- A. If a student is sick and absent, they should stay home and rest.
- B. If a student is injured, they are still expected to attend all practices and games, unless otherwise approved.
- C. A doctor's note is required to return to full participation after an injury.

XII. *Quitting or Dismissal from a Team*

- A. Students who quit or are removed from a team for reasons not approved by Administration will be ineligible for any subsequent seasons in that academic year.
 - 1. *Example:* A student quits volleyball mid-season due to lack of playing time—they may not join the basketball team in winter.
- B. This policy teaches accountability. When you commit to a team, you are expected to see it through.
- C. Students who quit or are removed from a team in the Spring Season will be required to serve summer hours.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICY

At UCA, academics take priority over athletics. All student-athletes are expected to maintain passing grades throughout their athletic season in order to remain eligible to participate.

I. *Grade Checks and Eligibility*

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- A. Eligibility is reviewed at official benchmarks:
 - 1. Progress Reports
 - 2. Report Cards
 - B. A student-athlete may only be declared ineligible at one of these two official benchmarks.
 - II. Restoring Eligibility
 - A. Informal check-ins may occur on any Monday during the season to monitor academic progress.
 - B. If a previously ineligible student brings their failing grade up before the next benchmark, they may regain eligibility upon verification.
 - III. Ineligibility
 - A. Students who are ineligible due to grades will not participate in games but are still expected to meet all regular team responsibilities—this includes arriving when others do, sitting on the bench with the team, attending practices, and post-game expectations.
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PARENT EXPECTATION AND PARTICIPATION

At UCA, we view parents as essential partners in shaping student-athletes who reflect Christ on and off the field. Just like your athlete, you represent Christ and our school. That’s a responsibility we take seriously—and one we ask you to take seriously as well.

As a Parent, We Ask That You:

- I. *Be a Good Witness*
 - A. Your words and actions make a lasting impact—often more than a scoreboard ever could.
 - B. Be a Christlike example and a positive influence to your athlete and the greater UCA community.
- II. *Promote Sportsmanship & Teamwork*
 - A. Our athletes are not preparing for professional sports careers; they are learning life lessons.
 - B. Model humility, encouragement, and selflessness, which will far outlast their playing days.
- III. *Support UCA Policies*

- A. We prioritize academics and character development over athletics.
 - B. Support administrative decisions and behavioral expectations as we work together to raise students of wisdom and virtue.
 - IV. *Follow the 24-Hour Rule for Concerns*
 - A. If you have a conflict or concern with a coach, wait 24 hours before addressing it.
 - B. Heat-of-the-moment conversations rarely produce good outcomes. After that time, reach out respectfully.
 - V. *Let Athletes Speak First About Playing Time*
 - A. If your child is concerned about playing time, encourage them to speak directly to the coach. This builds accountability and courage. Our coaches are trained to handle these conversations with care and respect.
 - VI. *Let Coaches Coach*
 - A. Do not interrupt or interfere with coaching during games (e.g., calling your child over during timeouts).
 - B. Coaches have limited opportunities to instruct—please honor that space.
 - VII. *Build Positive Relationships with Coaches*
 - A. Establish open, respectful communication. We're all working toward the same goal—and we're all followers of Christ.
 - VIII. *Honor Commitment*
 - A. Please respect and support the practice and game schedule.
 - IX. *Observe Bench Etiquette*
 - A. Please avoid sitting directly behind the team bench. That space is reserved for our Little Warriors Cheer Squad during Basketball season.
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VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

While we recognize that every family has different responsibilities, our expectation is that Warrior Families volunteer. UCA Athletics thrives because of servant-hearted families who generously give their time and energy.

- I. **Volunteer Commitment**
 - A. We recommend that each athlete's family volunteer at least 2 games per season. Considering Fall, Winter, and Spring, there are 6 total service opportunities per year.

- B. Pro Tip: Volunteer during a game your child is not playing in (e.g., JV parents serve during Varsity games). This allows you to fully enjoy your child's performance and support the broader team community.
 - C. Can't Volunteer? Send Someone! If you're unavailable, consider sending a grandparent, family friend, or church member to serve in your place.
- II. Volunteer Roles Include:
- A. Concession Stand
 - B. *Line Judges*
 - C. *Scoreboard Operators*
 - D. *Bookkeepers*
 - E. *Stat Keepers*
- III. *We prefer consistency for the italicized roles. If you're interested in serving regularly in one of these areas, please contact the Athletic Director.*
- IV. Dress & Demeanor
- A. Volunteers should wear UCA Spirit Wear and a smile.
 - B. The first time someone volunteers, we will provide them a t-shirt!
 - C. Our goal is to create a welcoming environment that reflects the heart of our Warrior community through joyful service and hospitality.
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ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FEES

- I. To help offset the cost of running a quality athletic program, UCA requires a \$50 athletic fee per student, per season.
- II. This fee contributes to expenses such as:
 - A. Equipment
 - B. Jerseys
 - C. Referees
 - D. Facility maintenance
- III. Seasonal Sports Breakdown:
 - A. Fall
 - 1. Cross Country
 - 2. Boys Soccer
 - 3. Girls Volleyball
 - B. Winter
 - 1. Boys Basketball
 - 2. Girls Basketball

3. Hunter Safety Team
- C. Spring
1. Hunter Safety Team
 2. Girls Soccer
 3. Boys Volleyball
 4. Baseball
 5. Softball
 6. Golf
-

COACH EXPECTATIONS

UCA coaches receive contracts and a full set of responsibilities prior to the season. We want parents to be aware of the guiding principles behind our coaching philosophy:

- I. Lead well. Live like Jesus. Coaches are role models, and our athletes are watching.
 - II. Represent UCA with excellence. In conduct, attitude, and appearance.
 - III. Be prompt and prepared. Arrive early, stay late, and be intentional in every practice and game.
 - IV. Ensure safe, clean spaces. Coaches are responsible for checking that facilities and buses are clean and that all students have safely left.
 - V. Prioritize team unity. Encourage connection, shared goals, and mutual support.
 - VI. Promote sportsmanship and safety. This includes how we treat our own team, our opponents, and the officials.
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AFFILIATION

Unity Christian Academy is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Christian Athletic Association in the 1A South Division. In all of our sports seasons, division and conference schools get scheduling priority over non-conference schools. The MACAA has its own set of rules and regulations that we are to adhere to. If you adhere to all of the rules in this handbook, we will be exceeding expectations of the MACAA.

PRACTICES

Attendance

- I. Practices are mandatory.
- II. Any absence may result in a loss of playing time.
- III. Absences MUST be communicated in advance from the player to the coach.
- IV. After three unexcused absences, the student will be suspended from the team and may not participate in the next three games.
- V. During this suspension, students are still expected to attend practices and games but will not dress out.

Practice Environment

- I. Practices are closed to the public.
 - II. Only coaching staff, players, and team managers are permitted in the gym during practice times.
 - III. Parents who wish to stay must wait in their cars or in the foyer.
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GAMES

- I. *Attendance & Participation*
 - A. Game attendance is required.
 - B. If a student misses three games total or two consecutive games without prior communication or a valid excuse, they will be suspended from the next three games. Students must still attend those games and practices, but will not dress out.
- II. *Authority & Conduct*
 - A. Referees and officials have full authority during games.
 - B. Any form of disrespect may result in ejection.
 - C. UCA will support the decisions made by game officials.
 - D. Only authorized personnel are allowed on the court and team benches. This includes coaches, referees, athletic administrators, and trained medical personnel. Parents may only step on the court in the case of an injury to their child.

III. *Post-Game Responsibilities*

- A. Home Games | Athletes must help clean the gym before leaving. This includes sweeping bleachers, emptying trash, and ensuring the space is ready for weekend cleaning. This cultivates pride and responsibility for one of the nicest gyms around.
 - B. Away Games | Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves in locker rooms and on the bus.
 - C. Coaches will ensure all duties are completed before dismissal at both home and away games.
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AWAY GAMES & TRANSPORTATION

- I. All athletes must travel to games using the transportation provided by UCA, regardless of whether they are licensed drivers.
 - II. Parents may pick up athletes from the game location or from UCA when the team returns. Please communicate clearly with your child's coach and follow their pickup procedures.
 - III. With coach approval, students may ride home with another adult, but parents must inform the coach in advance and adhere to any specific guidelines (e.g., written permission, 24-hour notice).
 - IV. Athletes are expected to follow UCA's Code of Conduct while traveling.
 - V. Any damages to buses or property will be the responsibility of the athlete and must be repaired or paid for.
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PLAYING TIME

Playing time is **not guaranteed**—it is **earned** and left to the discretion of the coach. Athletes are expected to take initiative and approach the coach directly if they have questions about playing time. If concerns remain, parents may reach out respectfully.

UNIFORMS

- I. Uniforms are the property of UCA.
 - II. They will be checked out at the beginning of the season and must be returned clean and in good condition within one week of the season's end.
 - III. Uniforms may not be altered or tailored in any way and should only be worn for games.
 - IV. Please wash and air dry uniforms after each game, especially when needed again the next day.
 - V. Lost or damaged uniforms must be replaced at the athlete's expense (\$100).
 - VI. Uniforms must be returned to the Athletic Director only.
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ROSTERS

- I. Each sport has a maximum roster size to ensure proper preparation regarding uniforms, equipment, and transportation. Coaches may make roster cuts at their discretion.
 - II. While we aim to develop athletes—especially at the JV level—some athletes may serve as practice players or equipment managers if they do not make the official team.
 - III. UCA and MACAA welcome **homeschool athletes** to participate in our sports programs through enrollment in the Homeschool Enrichment Program.
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ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Participation in UCA Athletics is a privilege, not a right. Athletes are expected to uphold the standards outlined in this handbook with integrity, respect, and responsibility. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the team.

Possible consequences include:

- I. *Loss of playing time*

For missed practices, games, or minor infractions.

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II. *Team suspension*

Temporary removal from games and/or practices due to repeated or serious violations (e.g., unexcused absences, disrespect toward coaches or officials, misconduct).

III. *Loss of leadership roles*

Athletes serving as team captains or leaders may lose these roles if their behavior does not reflect UCA's values.

IV. *Behavioral contracts*

In certain situations, athletes may be placed on a written behavior plan in order to remain on the team.

V. *Removal from the team*

Continued or severe violations, including repeated unexcused absences, disrespect, dishonesty, or failure to follow team rules, may result in dismissal from the team.

VI. *Restitution for damages*

Students will be held responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing any school property or equipment they damage.

ATHLETIC COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

We have read and understand the rules and expectations outlined in the UCA Athletic Handbook. We acknowledge the consequences associated with violating any of the stated policies and agree to support and uphold the standards of the UCA athletic program.

Athlete Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date