

# Guidelines for Team Selection in Competitive Sports at KCA

## **Underlying philosophy and values re: competition in sports**

see article below on *“Athletic competition-some thoughts for Christians to consider”*

## **Criteria for the selection of competitive teams and playing time at the tournaments**

Typically students in grade 5 or 6 through 8 are invited to try out for CAASO Teams (grade 3 & 4's are included in Cross Country and T & F). The grade 5 or 6 students may not be included in some try outs depending on the sport and the class sizes that year. Christ-like attitude and sportsmanship are integral to what we want to promote. Player selection will be based on skill level and sportsmanship using as objective a criterion as possible. When selection has to be made between two players of similar skill and attitude, preference will be given to the student in the higher grade. A senior student, or a player who was on the team the previous year, does not have an inherent right to a position on the team, and must qualify by the same standards as a younger one. Our coaches will do their best to make notes so that constructive feedback can be offered those who don't make the team. Decisions about individual playing time at tournaments will follow similar criteria. Efforts will be made to give all players chances to play, but stronger players will typically see more play time. This should be explained to students. Part of the value of being on a team is the opportunity for growth and development in the sport at the practices, hopefully leading to increased playing time at future tournaments at KCA or the next school a student may attend.

## **Criteria for retaining the privilege of playing on a team**

Representing the school on an athletic team at KCA is a privilege, not a right. A player must keep his schoolwork and attitude in an acceptable state. If a student gets behind on class work, they may be required to miss practices to catch up and ultimately have to miss the tournament or other exhibition games if warranted. Similarly, unacceptable behaviour and attitude in class or other aspects of school life are grounds for losing team privileges. Decisions on these matters will be made between the coaches, teachers, and principal.

## **Responsibility entrusted to staff and volunteer coaches**

Coaches are entrusted with the responsibility of making the best team selection based on as objective a criteria as possible, including skill level and sportsmanship. They will do their best to be sensitive to students' in the processing of decisions. All things being equal, making choices primarily in the interests of fielding the most competitive team is not un-Christian (competitiveness is intrinsic to sports-see see articles below). Having said that, let's avoid attitudes of "winning at all costs". Even though winning is the goal in competitive sport, our primary purpose within this pursuit is to glorify God. How we handle the relational aspects of the team building process must not be compromised in the interests of success in competition.

## **How should we process disappointment or disagreement with coaching decisions**

Inevitably we may have incidents of disappointment and possibly disagreement on the choices made. Students should be properly prepared for the possibility of not making the team, and understand the criteria and process involved for team selection. Disappointment is natural, but devaluing of their self esteem in the wake of this process is unnecessary. At the same time, those who make the team should be taught humility in this context and warned against un-Christ like egos displayed in relation to their peers who aren't on the team. Parents should maintain prayerful support of this coaching process. They should understand that if they are not at the tryouts to watch how their child performs in comparison to others, then it is not fair to judge or criticize the selection of players - they need to have faith in the person that has offered their time and talent to help out our school team.

Second-guessing the coaches and unhealthy talk amongst other families can be very detrimental to what we're trying to build relationally. Concerns should be brought directly to the coaches involved following the Matthew 18 principle, and the circle kept as small as possible. Guard you words and your feelings in front of your children. Often, the students get over a disappointment much sooner than we allow them to.

## **How should staff and coaches respond to parents concerns**

Again, Matt 18 gives us important guidelines. Keep the circle small. Be open to hearing both sides of a story. Avoid being defensive. Winning an argument in the interests of winning a game can result in losing relationally. What matters most in light of eternity?

## Athletic competition--some thoughts for Christians to consider

excerpts from the Sports chapter in THE COMPLETE BOOK OF EVERYDAY CHRISTIANITY

<http://www.gospelcom.net/ivpress/title/exc/1454-2d.html> InterVarsity Press

and "Children and Athletics" by Douglas Wilson, Credenda Agenda

<http://www.credenda.org/issues/9-1childer.php>

Athletic competition--**is it right or wrong in itself?** We must never forget that the Bible alone determines the boundaries of sin. Not once in Scripture is there a hint that athletic competition should be considered as immoral or sinful. The Bible determines the definition of sin, and not the traditions of men. We have no more ground for saying that athletics are sinful than we have for saying that blue curtains are sinful. The defender of athletics does not have to prove from Scripture that sports are lawful; he must simply **show that Scripture does not prohibit it**. If God had wanted His children to stay away from balls in motion, He would have said so.

With this understood, we can then let the common athletic metaphors and similes of Scripture come to the argument in order to pile on. *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may obtain it.** And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified"* (1 Cor. 9:24-27). We are not told to attract nonbelievers to the faith the way a hooker attracts customers, or to exhibit the persistence of a serial murderer. Paul here obviously appeals to an ordinary and lawful part of human life in order to teach us about the Christian life.

Many Christians struggle with competitiveness. They regard competitive instincts as part of their fallen human nature--a symptom of the desire to be best and to succeed at the expense of others. Some authors, such as A. Kohn, have put forward a radical case against competition.\* This inevitably leads to a crisis of conscience when it comes to sports, for **competitiveness is intrinsic to sports** as participants compete against others, themselves, the clock or nature. The spur to improve and achieve is what motivates the participant, and the consequent excitement of the battle turns a sport into a spectacle worth watching. **Removing the competitive element from sports emasculates them**, stripping them of many of the benefits outlined above. The cut and thrust of competition and the discipline of performing within the confines of a strict code of rules sharpen the mental faculties, bond the members of a team together and lead to a higher level of physical achievement.

In many athletic programs, egalitarianism is rampant. **"Winning and losing are not important. What matters is that every child comes out of the game feeling good about himself."** What should distress us all is that this kind of paganism is taken by many Christians as **the "spiritual" and "non-threatening" approach**. It is quite true that a competitor should not care about winning more than he cares about glorifying God. But although it may sound crass, the point of playing a game is to win it.

The **problem is not the desire to compete but a temptation to win at all costs** and to bend the rules and a distorted perspective that views all of life in terms of winners and losers. Competitiveness becomes tainted when it seeps into other areas, such as family life, church or the workplace. Competing for the affections of others, for status or power, springs from pride, and such jostling for position is explicitly condemned by Christ (Mk 10:35-45; Lk 9:46-50), who took the form of a servant (Jn 13:1-5; Phil 2:6-7) and submitted himself even to death. Professional sportspeople are usually gracious in victory, for every winner has experienced defeat, and it is accepted that the losers will have other chances to fight back. In other contexts, however, competitiveness can result in the systematic suppression of the disadvantaged and powerless. Competitive desires are no more sinful than sexual desires. To one God has given the gift of sports, to the other the gift of marriage, as the proper context for their expression. To cross the boundaries in either case is to court disaster.