

TOWSON HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022



**TOWSON
GENERALS**

Purpose of Handbook:

The purpose of this handbook is to describe the rules, policies, procedures, regulations and framework within which the Towson High School Athletic Department functions. The handbook is meant to provide information that will facilitate successful participation in athletics. The content should be carefully reviewed by both parents/guardians and the student/athlete.

Introduction:

The Baltimore County Interscholastic Athletic Program is organized within the framework of the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) which is an affiliate of the National Federation of State High School Associations. A total of 28 sports are available to our students within Baltimore County's twenty-four high schools.

Varsity teams compete in four different classification levels 4A, 3A, 2A, and 1A in a schedule built around a core of intra-county competition. At the end of each sport season, varsity teams have the opportunity to qualify for county, regional, and state level tournaments. The majority of schools offer ten boys, ten girls, and eight coeducational teams.

Junior varsity competition is also available in 17 of the 28 sports offered, along with opportunities for additional post season play at the county level.

Baltimore County boasts the largest athletic program in the state of Maryland with over 1400 coaches and 12,000 student-athletes (49% of the student population, grade 9 through 12) participating yearly. Baltimore County also sports the largest total percentage of female participants in any interscholastic athletic program in the state.

Beginning with the 1994-95 school year, the Allied Sports Program was introduced to address needs of our students with disabilities. You may read about this program on our Allied Sports Program page.

The Baltimore County Public School Interscholastic Athletic Program is committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play at all athletic contests. We oppose instances and activities which run counter to the best values of athletic competition in order to insure the well-being of all individual student-athletes. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others.

The Baltimore County Public Schools support the philosophy that a quality interscholastic athletic program is vital to the positive social, emotional, physical, and educational development of students. The interscholastic athletic program enhances and supports the mission of the school system to increase student achievement as evidenced by the county wide All-Academic team and the statewide Minds in Motion program.

Philosophy:

The philosophy of Towson High School's Athletic Department is to foster a tradition of excellence through education and competitive experiences in athletics, to always have a focus on sportsmanship and to allow our students to grow beyond their classroom experiences. We believe that interscholastic athletics is a way to achieve a balanced educational program for our students with the understanding that academics are the student's first responsibility.

Athletic competition, by its nature, can contribute to a student's greater awareness of self-discipline, a growth of emotional maturity and an increasing realization of the worth of the team. We work to promote team work, aid in building a student's self-esteem and teach educationally sound sportsmanship practices.

Students should realize that participation in athletics is not only a privilege, but it is also an honor that requires responsibility for maintaining one's academic standing in the classroom and for maintaining high standards of conduct throughout the school day as well as outside of school hours. Our main concern for our students is their health and well-being and always comes before the outcome of an athletic contest.

All our coaches should be leaders to our young men and women by constantly and consistently setting good examples of what sportsmanship and athletics is. It is expected that our coaches will be consistent and fair in all rules and regulations applied to the athletes they coach. They should be aware of all county and state guidelines and should be a reliable source of information concerning such.

The primary goal of our interscholastic athletic program will always be to encourage effort, commitment, positive attitudes and dignity. It is recognized that a positive athletic program can significantly contribute to the school's morale and community pride as well as the pride and honor of all persons involved in the athletic program at Towson High School.

Chain of Command:

At Towson High School, the following chain of command shall be followed:

Principal, Athletic Director, Head Coach, Assistant/JV Coach, Player

If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your child's interscholastic participation, please communicate through the appropriate chain above. The initial contact should always be player to coach. All inquiries regarding procedures will be specific to your child and should not include references to other players on the team.

Athletic Eligibility

Scholarship

1. Students are ineligible if:

a. They have less than a 2.0 grade point average with no more than one failing, incomplete, or medical grade in the marking period prior to the start of the season of participation. This provision does not apply to incoming 9th grade students for fall eligibility.

- i. First, second, third, and fourth marking period will be used for determining scholastic eligibility for winter, spring, and fall.
 - ii. The ending dates for marking periods shall be designated on the BCPS approved calendar.
 - b. They re-enter school after withdrawing and their work or conduct at the time of withdrawal was such that they would not have been eligible in the marking period.
 - c. They did not attend school the marking period prior to the intended participation.
 - d. They are failing a class at the time of withdrawal in addition to another failure. The students shall be penalized for the withdrawal failure for one marking period only. Any first semester course or full year course dropped prior to November 15 will not be counted in determining eligibility. The date for dropping a second semester course is prior to April 15.
 - e. They turn 19 years old or older as of August 31.
2. A multi-hour course is counted as multiple courses when determining whether a student has maintained a 2.0 average but is counted as one course when determining the number of failed classes.
 3. A student who is eligible during a marking period who does not maintain a 2.0 average with no more than one failing grade at the close of that marking period becomes ineligible to play on the day report cards are distributed.
 4. A student who is ineligible in a marking period can become eligible to play no earlier than day report cards are distributed. However, this student can become eligible to practice on the day designated as the end of that marking period in which the ineligibility occurred.
- a. The return of an ineligible player is at the discretion of the athletic director and principal.

Enrollment in the School

1. Any student entering a Baltimore County high school after September 30 and before November 15, shall be ineligible to represent the school in interscholastic athletic competition during the first semester, unless such late entrance shall be by transfer from a school which the student has attended regularly during the current school year. Cases involving students who enter after November 15 will be decided by the principal and Coordinator of the Office of Athletics.
2. If a student transfers during a sport season and the transfer is not the result of a parental change of address or pursuant to law, the student is not eligible to participate in the same sport in which he/she participated at the previous school for the remainder of that sport season. (Note: Participation in a sport begins with the first day of team try-outs.)
3. Any student who attends a school outside the district in which a student resides without the special permission of the Superintendent's office of the Baltimore County Public Schools is ineligible.
4. The use of undue influence by anyone to cause a student to transfer from one school to another for an athletic purpose shall render the student ineligible for a period of one year from the official date of transfer.

5. A student who qualifies for a waiver of the four-year full-time enrollment may participate in extracurricular activities and is entitled to all the rights and privileges of a full-time student of the school, providing the student is currently enrolled.

Varsity - Junior Varsity Designations

1. Grade 9 students may play on a varsity team if the parents, principal, Athletic Director, and coach unanimously agree that the student is physically and mentally mature enough for varsity competition.
2. Eleventh and twelfth grade students cannot participate on a junior varsity team.
3. Ninth and tenth grade athletes are eligible for participation in either junior varsity or varsity games, with the athletic director's approval, if it does not exceed the maximum number of games per week.

Citizenship

1. The principal and athletic director should study the circumstances surrounding the tardiness or absence, partial or whole, of a team member on the date when the team is scheduled to play and determine if said student shall be allowed to play on that date.
2. A principal and athletic director should exclude any contestant who, because of bad habits or improper conduct, would not represent the school in a becoming manner, and exclude any contestant who has suffered serious illness or injury, until that contestant is pronounced physically fit by the school athletic trainer or their primary care physician.
3. When a student is willfully non-proficient in class work or is guilty of poor citizenship the student is ineligible.
4. A player or coach who is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct (which includes use of tobacco or tobacco-like products; see Board Policy, page 30) or fighting will not be allowed to participate in the next game. A substitute who leaves the team box and enters the playing area during a fight will be ejected.
 - a. An ejection or disqualification prevents a player or coach from attending the next regularly scheduled contest site (this includes bus, locker room, sidelines, bench, stands, or anywhere on the contest site).
 - b. When the ejection or disqualification takes place during the last game of the season, the penalty will be served at the start of the next season in that sport. If the penalty cannot be served because of resignation or graduation the schools' administration must take appropriate action and provide written documentation of such to the Office of Athletics.
5. Any player or coach who physically assaults an official, coach, player or spectator shall be immediately dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.
6. Once a player or coach has been disqualified, appeals from a coach, player, official, or other party will not be honored.
7. Should a student-athlete or coach be disqualified for a second time in the same sport or any other sport during the school year, the penalty shall be doubled. Any coach disqualified for a second time during a school year or any coach who has three or more players disqualified during a school year is required to appear before the Coordinator of the Office of Athletics.

8. A third disqualification of a student-athlete or coach in the same sport or any other sport during the school year shall result in immediate dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season. The offending student-athlete or coach shall be prohibited from any further participation in the interscholastic program for the remainder of the school year. Interscholastic participation by such individuals in subsequent school years may be jeopardized and will be judged on a case by case basis.

9. Failure of the school to enforce these policies for any reason shall prohibit that school from participating in any county, region, or state post-season play.

10. A student-athlete must complete the season in good standing to qualify for any post season awards.

Health and Safety

1. Each student is required to have accident insurance coverage (school insurance, Carefirst Blue Cross/Blue Shield, or any commercial accident policy) before being permitted to practice for inter-school competition.

2. A student who has not filed all required forms is ineligible (Form Release-Online Registration). These forms shall be provided by the school and signed by the parent or legal guardian.

3. A student must practice for a minimum of ten calendar days prior to participation in a scrimmage or contest. (Golf is the exception).

Participation on One Team Per Season

A student is permitted to participate in only one interscholastic sport during each season. However, a student who is waived or resigns from a team prior to the first game may try out for another team in the same season. The principal and athletic director shall approve such a change.

Eligibility Report Forms

The athletic director must submit a complete, accurate, and legible eligibility report form to the Office of Athletics one week prior to the published MPSSAA first play date of each season. If the report is not turned in by the due date, that team may not practice or compete until the eligibility report has been approved by the principal and submitted to the Office of Athletics.

Penalties

1. The use of any ineligible player in any interscholastic game, meet, or match, whether deliberate or inadvertent, shall make the forfeiture of the game, meet or match automatic and mandatory.

2. A student shall become ineligible at the time the violation was committed, where upon the student shall no longer be a member of the school squad. All games in which the student participated after becoming ineligible will be forfeited. Any one or a combination of the following penalties will be imposed against the ineligible student:

a. Declare the student to be ineligible for the next sixty school days following the latest violation. These sixty school days may carry over into the next school year if such violation occurred during the second semester.

b. Declare the student ineligible to compete in the sport in which the violation occurred during the subsequent season.

c. Declare the student ineligible for any sport for an appropriate period of time.

3. If one school has information that an eligibility rule is being violated, a statement of facts pertinent to the violation shall be submitted in writing immediately upon discovery to the Coordinator of the Office of Athletics, who shall render an interpretation and notify all schools within three days. If one or more schools do not accept this interpretation, the case must then be heard by the MPSSAA Appeals Committee for a final decision.

4. After a decision has been made by the MPSSAA Appeals Committee, a written statement will be sent to all parties regarding the outcome with an explanation of all circumstances leading to the

All Star Events:

By State rule 13A.06.03, individual student athletes may participate in TWO All-Star games upon the completion of their eligibility in the sport(s) in which this participation occurs.

Amateur Status:

Student athletes lose amateur status by using athletic skills as players for financial gain or by competing under an assumed name. Students shall also lose amateur status in a particular sport if they sign a professional contract in that sport. Students who have ceased to be amateurs in a particular sport may not represent a school in interscholastic athletics in that sport.

Graduates:

You may not have graduated from high school in a previous semester.

Non-School Participation:

You may participate in the same sport during the same season as long as the participation does not conflict with your school team's practice, games, or post-season tournaments.

Transportation:

All team members must travel in bonded carriers to and from all athletic events. If approved by the local school principal in advance, a team member may be released to the custody of a parent or legal guardian at the conclusion of an away contest. Approval must be in written form prior to the specified event and signed by the student athlete's parent or legal guardian. Students riding with a parent or driving their own car must fill out the BCPS Transportation Form and return it to the Athletic Director the day of the contest before they leave. Forms can be found at towsonathletics.digitalsports.com.

Relationship with Officials:

The commissioner of a given sport assigns officials to the scheduled games for a season. Neither team has control over which officials are assigned to our games. Officials agree to follow a code of ethics. Officials have no interest in which team wins and which loses they have a job to call a game and keep

things under control. It is important to understand that they are a necessary part of the game and that a contest cannot be played without them.

While some may not agree with the calls that are made please do not taunt or harass them. Comments directed out loud towards the officials will be interpreted as unsportsmanlike behavior and will give cause for the individual to be asked to leave. It is also important to remember that the officials are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed.

In many sports, a team may see the same officials several times throughout the season and coaches, athletic administrators and school officials work hard to establish a rapport as well as a good working relationship with them. This relationship could easily be damaged by the conduct of spectators or athletes. Coaches and assignors routinely evaluate contest officials as well as the fans behavior and the school's enforcement of the sportsmanship policy.

Expectations for Spectator Behavior/Sportsmanship:

The development of productive citizens for society through demonstrated acts of sportsmanship shall be the top priority of interscholastic activities

One of the missions of Towson High School Athletics is to teach and reinforce values in student/athletes as they relate to wholesome competition, good sportsmanship and fair play. It is expected that spectators reinforce these values by exhibiting appropriate behavior at all athletic events. A condition of entry into a Towson High School event is that all spectators agree to recognize the event as an extension of the learning process and that all present have the responsibility to model appropriate behavior. The event is a unique opportunity for spectators to be a part of a positive and productive learning environment.

School officials have the authority to remove spectators from a contest for unruly or improper conduct. The individual may be removed for the duration of a contest or for an extended period of time depending on the severity or frequency of the conduct. In severe instances school personnel may exclude an individual(s) from multiple contests, for the duration of a season or for even longer.

Person permitted on the players' bench or in the designated team area shall be limited to team players, coaches of the team, student managers, team medical personnel, and other AUTHORIZED personnel ONLY.

Participation, Playing Time, Try-Outs and Selection of the Team:

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Towson High School is a privilege and not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership means accepting all the responsibilities of a team. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. It is up to the discretion of the coach to use players best suited to the conditions and demands of the contest at that time. Playing time is earned through performance and is not guaranteed to any student-athlete at Towson High School. Only student-athletes should request a meeting with their respective coaches regarding playing time if it becomes an issue. Coaches will provide honest and constructive feedback to the student-athlete and identify performance areas that can be improved to gain additional playing time and experience.

Each year, selection of participants is based on the evaluation of their skills. Participation from previous years does not guarantee placement on a team. Having senior status does not ensure that an athlete will make the squad.

Parents should expect that every candidate (during both try-outs and regular season) will be treated fairly and given consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment and will handle the task of squad selection and playing time as positively as possible. They are always available to address athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut from a team is a disappointment for many athletes, as well as their parents, it is impossible to keep everyone. They may choose to stay and be involved with the team on a managerial position.

Assumptions of Risk:

In spite of protective equipment, supervision and sound instruction by coaches, there is a potential for serious, catastrophic or life-threatening injury. Participants and parents are urged to consider that there are inherent risks and hazards associated with athletic participation. Risks vary from sport to sport and can occur under direct supervision with the proper use of safety equipment. It is important that athletes wear all required protective equipment during every practice and game to ensure their safety. Broken protective equipment must be reported to the coach immediately and should not be used until repaired or replaced.

Hazing:

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an important activity for team bonding. However, it is a form of harassment and represents a Baltimore County Public Schools Disciplinary Code offense. A more complete explanation of harassment can be found in the Baltimore County Public Schools Student Handbook. Hazing, therefore, cannot and will not be condoned or permitted in the athletic program at Towson High School. This means that hazing is not tolerated on the fields or courts, in the locker rooms, on the bus, or at any other activity in which student-athletes from Towson High School are involved. Seek the coach, Athletic Director or a member of the administration immediately if any concern of hazing exists.

Equipment and Responsibility for Proper Care:

Most uniforms and equipment are assigned to student-athletes strictly on a loan basis for the duration of the sport season. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to maintain that equipment/uniform in the same condition in which it was received. Any damage or loss of equipment/uniform will be considered the direct financial responsibility of the student-athlete responsible for its care. Any athlete withholding property will not be permitted to participate in any other sport until the equipment is returned. Student-athletes will be charged the replacement cost of any equipment or uniform not returned. This cost must be paid before participating in any other sport.

Inclement Weather Procedures:

In the event schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all after-school activities are automatically canceled. These after-school activities include practices, contests, meetings, or other

events. Team members should make certain to contact their coach regarding interim or adjusted practice schedules.

Admission for stadium and gymnasium events at Towson High School will be as follows:

BCPS mandates that each high school charge admission to most athletic events. Admission is charged on a sliding scale for adults, students, children and senior citizens. Season passes are available for families, individuals and students through the athletic department at Towson High School. Admission for post-season (regional and state games) is determined by the MPSSAA.

Adults: \$5.00

Students: \$3.00

Senior Citizens: \$3.00

Children under 7 years of age and under: FREE

BCPS employees, displaying proper ID: FREE

Season Passes: Family of 5 (\$125), Adult (\$40), Student (\$20). Season Passes allow you to enter all home games throughout the school year, excluding playoffs and county championship games.

Buy Passes Here: spicket.events/towson

The Purpose of a JV Team:

JV Teams exist to provide athletes prior to participation at the varsity level an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on a JV team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity squad. The athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year. Striving to win is important in athletics. However, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV squad, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team.

Awards:

The following guidelines have been established to govern the awarding of athletic letter awards to Towson High School student/athletes who participate in varsity and junior varsity interscholastic events.

All letter recipients must finish the season as a member of the team in good standing, including all play-offs and the state tournament.

An athlete must attend/participate in all practices and games, to the best of their ability, throughout the season. Any conflicts should be communicated between the athlete and the coach immediately upon knowledge of the conflict.

The athlete must be a contributing member of the team.

The athlete must demonstrate good sportsmanship at practices and games as well as demonstrate good citizenship and behavior.

The athlete must be academically eligible the entire season.

The athlete must have participated in at least one varsity competition in order to be considered a member of the varsity team.

Varsity 'T' letter - first year on any varsity team.

Varsity Certificate - each season the athlete is on a varsity team.

Sports Pin - Years following a letter is received for the first time.

Baltimore County 'All-Academic' Certificate - awarded to a V or JV athlete who maintained a 3.0 GPA during the season.

MPSSAA 'Minds In Motion' Certificate - awarded to a V athlete who maintained a 3.25 GPA or higher during the season.

Junior Varsity Certificate - each season the athlete is on a JV team

School Attendance and Practice:

Unexcused absences or chronic tardiness to class or team practice may be sufficient reason for declaring a student ineligible at any time. The coach, in consultation with the Athletic Director, will determine the date and time of ineligibility.

To participate in any athletic event or practice, athletes are expected to be in all of their scheduled classes the day of the event. The principal, assistant-principal, or athletic director may excuse an athlete for prescheduled appointments, such as a driver's test, college visit, a court appearance, medical appointment, funeral, or an unforeseen emergency.

A student who has any absence other than those specified may not practice or compete on that date. A student who violates the above or otherwise misses class due to an unexcused absence will not be allowed to compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.

Prompt, regular attendance at practice sessions is necessary for the safety and conditioning of the student as well as for the benefit of the team. Team members should notify their coach prior to any practice that they must miss and should offer an adequate explanation for the absence. Chronic tardiness to practice or unexcused absences will be dealt with by the coach.

Physical Education Participation:

Any student enrolled in a physical education class is expected to dress and participate daily in activity. Anyone failing to take part in the daily activity of the physical education class will be ineligible to participate in practice or contests that day.

Use of Drugs and Alcohol:

The use of drugs and alcohol is an extremely serious health issue. Such use places the quality of life for the student-athlete in jeopardy. Also, at issue is the interdependency of team members and coaches, which requires that all student-athletes be mentally and physically prepared to give their best effort. If the student-athlete is using alcohol or illegal drugs not prescribed by a physician, he/she is placing himself/herself in serious jeopardy. While in season, distribution, consumption, or possession of drugs and alcohol by a student-athlete on school property or at a school-sanctioned event is verified, he/she

will be removed from the team until completion of a drug and alcohol program through the Baltimore County Department of Health

Prescription and Over-The-Counter Medications:

Under Baltimore County policy, coaches cannot give medications to students. This includes common over-the-counter medications. If a student athlete has prescription or over-the-counter medication that they may need or take during athletic participation they should make the coaching staff aware of the situation, so they can be given a “Parent’s Request to Administer Medication In School” form. Students may not carry with them or use any medication, including over-the-counter medications, until the form is filled out completed, signed by a parent and the prescriber and given to the nurse. Student athletes should not store their medication in the team’s first-aid kit. The only exceptions are inhalers or epi-pens for emergency situations.

Social Media Expectations:

The Athletic Department has adopted the following policy regarding the use of e-mail messages, websites, blogs, or other electronic communication: “The use of e-mail messages, blogs, websites, or other electronic communications to make inflammatory or derogatory comments, and/or inappropriate descriptions or pictures regarding another team member, another student, a coach, another school or team, or other staff member is prohibited. Possible consequences for violating this policy are: (1) Single game suspension; (2) Multiple game suspension; (3) Dismissal from the team.

Dismissal/Quitting the Team:

Once a student begins participating in a sport and his/her squad membership is terminated for rule violations or because the student-athlete has quit the team, he/she is ineligible to participate in any other sport during that season unless he/she is given prior approval by the athletic director and/or the school administration.

Sports Booster Club:

The Sports Booster Club exists to support all teams and the entire athletic program. Our Booster Club has three primary goals: To raise funds to assist the athletic programs, to increase school spirit and to encourage and promote good sportsmanship. The Booster Club is not a vehicle to remove coaches, advance vested interests or to alter Athletic Department policy. It is a service and support organization, which works in harmony with its athletic program. The athletic director serves as the liaison between the club and the school.

Practice Sessions:

1. May last two hours.
2. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. (Check with the coach for the specific times.)
3. Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
4. Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
5. May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.

Expressing Concerns:

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
2. Call the following day and make an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
3. Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.

Athletic Trainer Information:

Dominic Costabile LAT, ATC
Towson Sports Medicine
dcostabile@towsonortho.com

Sports Registration:

Form Releaf is a secure registration platform that provides parents/students with an easy, user-friendly way to register for Towson High School Athletics. Fall Sports registration will be done electronically except for the sport's physical forms. Completed sports physical forms can be scanned and sent to the Athletic Director Justin Nash (jnash3@bcps.org), or you can mail or drop them off to the main office.

All registering participants will be screened for academic eligibility, school enrollment and various other Towson High School, Baltimore County Public School and MPSSAA eligibility requirements prior to participation. Please understand that online registration is only the initial step in the registration process and does not guarantee participation. Technical issues should be directed to the customer service representatives of Form ReLeaf at: 1-844-367-6735

Form Releaf Website: <https://app.formreleaf.com/organizations/towson-high-school>

Social Media/Website Information:

Website: towsonathletics.digitalsports.com (schedules, events, coaches contact info, etc.)
Twitter: @TowsonHSsports
Instagram: towsongenerals

Athletic Director Information:

Justin Nash
jnash3@bcps.org
443-809-4296