

IGNITE ATHLETICS

Handbook (rev. 2026)



**Welcome to Ignite Athletics:
Home of the Flames**

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Mission Statement and Core Values

Ignite Athletics exists to provide homeschooled students the opportunity and benefits of participating in competitive team sports in an environment that promotes Christian values and good sportsmanship.

Ignite Athletics Core Values

Ignite Athletics coaches, athletic directors, and the Board of Directors are guided by our core values of:

I - Integrity: Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. (Titus 2:7-8)

G - Grace: And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil . . . (2 Timothy 2:24)

N - Nerve/No Fear: For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

I - Initiative: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it" – when you have it with you. (Proverbs 3:27-28)

T - Teamwork: Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! . . . And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him – a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12)

E - Endurance: And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Introduction: Ignite Athletics aspires for its athletes to compete at their highest potential against public and private school sports teams both locally and in the Tri-State area. West Virginia public schools athletic programs are regulated by the West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission (WVSSAC), and many private schools are governed by comparable entities. The policies in this Handbook governing athlete eligibility, dates of sports seasons, limits on off-season practices, and similar concerns reflect best practices and are generally consistent with policies of existing entities exercising oversight over school sports.

As Ignite Athletics continues to pursue opportunities to compete against local schools, it is important that it demonstrates its seriousness and legitimacy, and that it is clearly distinct from travel sports, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) teams and other under-regulated programs. Adherence to the policies in this Handbook is one important way to accomplish that goal.

Athlete Eligibility

Participation in Ignite Athletics is limited to students who are homeschooled - meaning that the students' education is parent-directed. Students enrolled in micro-schools, Montessori, or similar programs are not eligible to participate in Ignite Athletics.

- Each athlete must submit a copy of the Notice of Intent (NOI) filed with their local public school superintendent to the Athletic Director of their sport yearly. The NOI must contain an attestation affirming that the athlete is CURRENTLY being homeschooled. Athletes are not permitted to participate in any competition event until they have provided a valid NOI to the Athletic Director.
- Each athlete must submit a completed physical form indicating their medical fitness to participate. The form is available on the igniteathletics.org website. Athletes are not permitted to participate in any competition event until they have provided a completed physical form.
- Each athlete must participate in a minimum of twelve (12) official practices or workouts before being eligible to participate in a game, meet, or other competition event.
- Students who are enrolled in or attend private or public school on a full-time basis (including full-time virtual school) are not eligible to participate in Ignite Athletics. Homeschooled students who attend classes part-time at a private, public, or vocational school and/or are enrolled in a dual-credit college program are eligible to participate in Ignite Athletics, provided that they are not participating in the same sport at that school.

- Only students who are academically eligible may participate in Ignite Athletics. As part of the registration process, at least one parent must attest that the student is making satisfactory academic progress and has complied with the requirements of W.Va Code 18-8-1(C)(i)-(iv) and 18-8-1(E). If an athlete ceases to make satisfactory academic progress, or if it is determined that a parent has falsely attested to their child’s academic eligibility, the athlete will immediately be suspended from further participation in Ignite Athletics.
- An athlete’s age group is determined by his or her age on August 1 of the school year. Athletes will compete at their appropriate age or grade level, except that where there is a shortage of available players, younger athletes may be permitted to “play up” to a higher level of competition at the discretion of the coach and with the consent of the parents.
- Any student who participates in a sport with one school or team may not transfer in to compete for Ignite Athletics in the same sport during that same season (i.e., switching programs mid-season is prohibited).
- Varsity (i.e., high school) athletes are limited to a total of four years of eligibility regardless of whether the athlete competed for Ignite Athletics, a public or private school, or any combination thereof.
- Any student who has graduated high school is not eligible to participate in Ignite Athletics. The maximum age for eligibility is 19.

Registration

Registration and payments are facilitated online at igniteathletics.org. All forms and payment in full must be submitted before any athlete is eligible to compete. For families unable to pay all registration fees, payment plans may be arranged at the discretion of and terms set by the Athletic Director. There will be no refunds after uniforms are purchased.

Scholarships

The Ignite Board of Directors maintains limited funds that are dedicated to assist families for whom the registration fees present a financial hardship. Applications should be made through the relevant sport’s Athletic Director. The Board of Directors will review each application on a case-by-case basis. The Board welcomes contributions to the scholarship fund.

Ignite Athletics Sports Teams and Seasons

Sport	Season	Age Group	Sex	Maximum Games/Meets
Cross Country	Fall (Aug. to Nov.)	EL, MS, HS	Boys and Girls	16 Meets
Volleyball	Fall (Aug. to Oct.)	MS, HS	Girls	22 Regular Season
Volleyball	Spring (Mar. to Jun.)	HS	Boys	22 Regular Season
Soccer	Fall (Aug. to Oct.)	MS, HS	Co-Ed	20 Regular Season
Archery	Winter (Oct. to Mar.)	EL(4th and up), MS, HS	Co-Ed	N/A**
Basketball	Winter (Nov. to Mar.)	MS, HS, JV	Boys and Girls	22 Regular Season
Track & Field	Spring (Mar. to Jun.)	EL, MS, HS	Boys and Girls	16 Meets
Softball*	Spring (Mar. to Jun.)	HS	Girls	32 Regular Season
Baseball*	Spring (Mar. to Jun.)	HS	Boys	32 Regular Season

*These sports are not currently offered through Ignite Athletics, but have occasionally been made available through partnership with Cross Lanes Christian School and Teays Valley Christian School.

**Archery is a club sport and is not subject to the same rules as other sports. The number of meets is contingent on a variety of factors and is determined by the Athletic Director.

Key: EL=Elementary (age 8 through 5th grade); MS=Middle School (6th through 8th grade); HS=High School (9th through 12th grade); JV=Junior Varsity (younger or less-experienced HS athletes and/or advanced MS athletes).

Notes:

- Depending on the number of available athletes, some MS teams may include 5th grade athletes.

- Some schools in other states use a Junior High format instead of Middle School. When competing against Junior High teams, Ignite Athletics coaches may invite 9th Grade athletes from the HS or JV team to participate.
- Teams may occasionally compete in tournaments.
- Teams may not hold more than six (6) practices or workouts per week, and no combination of practices and workouts may exceed three (3) hours in one day.

Playing Time Guidelines

Ignite Athletics seeks to field competitive teams for all sports. Elementary teams are considered developmental, focusing on instruction and balanced playing time while varsity teams strive to compete at the highest level possible. Coaches are expected to keep this trajectory in mind when making playing time decisions.

Elementary: Not every sport has opportunities for elementary students. Those that do seek to develop skills and abilities within young athletes to prepare them for eventual competition. Games and meets are not guaranteed at this level.

Middle School: This level of competition is developmental with respect to skills and abilities as well as the overall program and culture of each sport. Coaches will attempt to give each athlete some amount of playing time in each competition. However, the amount of playing time will necessarily depend on factors such as the athlete's skill level, participation in practice, effort, attitude, and specific game situations.

High School: The amount of playing time is solely at the discretion of of the coach. The coach will decide which personnel groups maximize the team's ability to compete at the highest possible level. Coaches will consider each athlete's skill level, participation in practice, effort, attitude, and specific game situations.

Communication

Ignite Athletics uses electronic means to communicate with athletes, parents, coaches, athletic directors, and members of the Board of Directors. Examples include email, Stack Team App, and the Final Surge App (track/field and cross country). The Athletic Director of each sport has the discretion to choose the platform for communication. It is necessary for at least one parent to be in communication with their child's team through the chosen platform.

Additionally, each Athletic Director, head coach, and member of the Board of Directors has an Ignite Athletics email address available at igniteathletics.org.

Player Selection

Tryouts/Evaluations

Some sports teams have a limited roster and will conduct tryouts prior to the start of the season. Other sports have an open registration and will conduct an evaluation rather than a tryout. Tryouts and Evaluations will be conducted approximately 6-8 weeks prior to the first game or competition of the season. The dates for Tryouts and Evaluations will be announced approximately one month in advance through a variety of outlets including the Ignite Athletics website and social media platforms, email, and sport-specific apps.

- Coaches should make roster decisions collaboratively with each other, and where appropriate, with the Athletic Director.
- Coaches should make roster decisions expeditiously and deliver results within approximately one week by email.
- Coaches should contact the athletes who successfully made the team first, and then maintain a list of alternates to be contacted should any of those who made the initial cut decline to participate or who otherwise drop from the program.
- Coaches should be candid with athletes who make the cut but for whom little playing time is expected so that they can make an informed decision about whether to participate.

- After tryouts, and after alternates have been contacted, if there remain open roster spots, they may be filled by eligible late applicants at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director.

Athletic Director and Coach Selection

Ignite Athletics seeks to staff its Athletic Director and Coach positions with Christian men and women of good reputation who have the desire and ability to teach young athletes the skills and abilities necessary to perform at a competitive level while seeking to glorify God at all times. Athletic Directors and coaches are expected to regularly pray for and encourage the athletes and their families.

Each year, coaching positions will be reviewed by the Board of Directors who will consider both current and new applicants. All coaches and Athletic Directors must submit to and pass a background check, complete an application, and be approved by the Board of Directors. Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. Athletic Directors should review all potential coaches and submit their recommendation(s) to the Board of Directors for final approval. Every effort should be made to honor loyalty to past coaches, but approval will be made on an honest evaluation of an applicant's:

- 1) Coaching ability;
- 2) Christian character;
- 3) Adherence to Ignite Athletics' philosophy, policy, and procedures; and
- 4) A demonstrated respect for Ignite Athletics leadership, players, parents, officials, opponents, and fans.

The Board of Directors may remove/replace a coach or Athletic Director if problems and complaints have plagued his/her season, if there has been a serious lapse in one of the areas listed above, or credible allegations of misconduct.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Athletic Director

- Be willing to either serve as a member of the Board of Directors or regularly attend board meetings in an *ex officio* capacity
- Attends annual Athletic Director training clinic
- Receives coach applications and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors
- Assists coaches with initiating, promoting, and conducting tryouts and evaluations
- Assists coaches with securing practice and competition facilities
- Schedules games, meets, or other competition events
- Assists and provides oversight to coaches with respect to budgeting and finances
- Personally complies with all aspects of this Handbook and provides compliance oversight for coaches, players, and families regarding Ignite Athletics policies, procedures, and philosophy
- Communicates with coaches and the Board of Directors on a regular basis
- Schedules and runs the preseason parent meeting
- Maintains team communication platform
- Recruits and schedules volunteers
- Provides information as needed to the Ignite Athletics webmaster
- Serves as second level of communication for conflict resolution between parents and coaches
- Completes CPR training if required

Coaches

- Attend annual coaches training
 - Adhere to and support Ignite Athletics policies, procedures, and philosophy to include compliance with all aspects of this Handbook
 - Assist Athletic Director with initiating, promoting, and conducting tryouts and evaluations
 - Organize and lead practices
 - Competently instruct and motivate athletes in a positive way to achieve their best athletic and team performance
 - Be a Christlike role model for the athletes
 - Seek opportunities to spiritually mentor the athletes in various ways (e.g., regular devotional talks, memorizing scripture together, and group prayer)
 - Regularly pray for the athletes and their families
 - Work with the Athletic Director on budget projections and compliance with financial administrative duties
 - Communicate regularly and clearly with athletes and parents
 - Handle conflict humbly and with a view toward reconciliation and peace
 - Obtain CPR certification if necessary
-

Guidelines for Off-Season Play and Coaching

Off-season training and play are encouraged, however,

- Ignite coaches may not coach a travel team or similar off-season team comprised of Ignite players who would be on their regular season team in the same sport absent specific approval by the Board of Directors.
- Off-season team formation may include Ignite players, but they may not use any name, logo, or uniform identifying them as being affiliated with Ignite Athletics.

Off-season practices/training may be held so long as they are consistent with the following guidelines:

- No more than 18 off-season “open gyms.”
- No more than 30 off-season team practice/training sessions
- Open gyms must be open to all homeschoolers within the appropriate age groups

Volunteering

Ignite Athletics is a volunteer non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with a governing Board of Directors. The organization cannot function without the support of ALL Ignite Athletics families. Each family will be expected to fill essential volunteer roles. Needs will vary by sport. Examples include statistician (book keeper), clock and scoreboard operator, concessions, collecting admission money, line judging, etc.

Volunteer questions should be directed at the Athletic Director of the relevant sport.

Fundraising Expectations

Ignite Athletics continuously strives to keep the cost of our sports programs as low as possible. Registration fees* do not cover the full amount needed to run each sport, and extra funds are needed for expenses such as facilities rental, officials, equipment, and tournament fees.

Each sport is responsible for raising its own funds. Ignite Athletics asks that each family participate in fundraising efforts organized by their particular sport as well as for the overall

program. Each fundraising event should clearly communicate its beneficiary sport. “Fuel” is the fundraising entity for Ignite Athletics, and funds raised through “Fuel” are directed toward general operating expenses and scholarships.

*A portion of each registration fee goes to the general fund to pay for expenses applicable to the overall Ignite Athletics program. These expenses include insurance, financial and accounting services, web hosting, scholarships, and the annual banquet.

Conduct Standards

Ignite Athletics is committed to standards of conduct consistent with a Christian worldview. All athletes, parents and family members, coaches, Athletic Directors, and members of the Board of Directors are expected to aspire to exhibit Christlike behavior at all times. The Ignite Athletics family should always be kind, respectful, and gracious toward each other, our opponents, and officials.

Coach Conduct

Coaches are Christian role models, mentors, and leaders. Coaches should be mindful that they have the greatest impact on setting and maintaining expectations, culture, and standards of excellence for the team. As highly visible representatives of Ignite Athletics, each coach should accept and embrace his or her role, exemplifying conduct that is above reproach and demonstrating commitment to the program. Coaches should be known for kindness, fairness, professionalism, and accountability for themselves and their players.

- Each coach is expected to be committed to the development and success of the team. Practices should be conducted in an organized and efficient manner. Playing time decisions should be made consistent with the goals of each level of competition with a view toward giving every athlete opportunities to compete.
- Coaches are expected to comply with all Ignite Athletics policies and procedures. They should be diligent stewards of Ignite Athletics resources, equipment, and property.
- Coaches should clearly communicate expectations, game and competition schedules, and other necessary information to athletes and parents. They should be properly responsive to questions or concerns brought to their attention. When conflict arises, they should seek to resolve differences in a humble, Christlike manner with a willingness to achieve positive results.

- Coaches' speech and demeanor should reflect a degree of competitive and motivational intensity appropriate for their team's level of competition. However, they must not use foul, vulgar, or abusive language. Their interaction with players, opponents, officials, and fans should be respectful and charitable and marked by self-control. They should hold themselves and their players accountable for any instances of disrespectful language or conduct directed toward officials or others.
- Any coach who is ejected from a competition event will be suspended for the next scheduled competition and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.
- Coaches must consent to and pass a background check prior to being contracted and as required thereafter by the Board of Directors. Coaches must self-report to the Board of Directors, any circumstance or occurrence that may affect the coach's reputation, the safety of any other person, the ability of the Board of Directors to provide adequate oversight of the program, or similar concerns. Examples include arrest or contact with law enforcement, allegations of abuse, allegations of financial misconduct, etc.
- Dress Code: Coaches should always dress in a manner befitting their leadership role and consistent with the expectations of their sport. Ignite team logo apparel should be worn if provided during all home and away competition events.

Athlete Conduct

- Each athlete is expected to be committed to team goals. Athletes are expected to work hard both at practice and on their own time to develop the skills required for team and individual improvement. Personal performance is important but only as it is directed toward achieving team goals and unity.
- The head coach is the leader of the team. Athletes are expected to be respectful, attentive, and obedient toward the head coach and any assistant coaches.
- Each athlete is expected to faithfully attend every practice and competition. Necessary absences must be coordinated with the coach.
- Each athlete is expected to accept responsibility for the care and maintenance of Ignite Athletics equipment and uniforms and to contribute to facility setup and cleanup for practices and competitions.

- Each athlete should strive to maintain top physical condition by eating properly, getting sufficient rest, and observing good health and fitness habits. Athletes should abstain from the use of tobacco products, vapes, illegal drugs, and alcohol. Use of such products may result in disciplinary action to potentially include expulsion from the team.
- Foul, vulgar, abusive, or disrespectful language will not be tolerated either in-person or online. Players are expected to interact with officials, opponents, fans, and each other in a Christlike manner.
- Any athlete who is ejected from a competition event will be suspended for the next competition event and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the coach, Athletic Director, or the Board of Directors.
- Dress Code: Coaches and Athletics Directors are authorized to set sport-specific dress code standards. Athletes are expected to wear their official uniform for competition events. Practice attire should be modest and appropriate for the physical requirements of the sport. Clothing items having graphic designs containing foul, vulgar, or sexual images or language are prohibited.

Parent Conduct

- Parents are valued and essential members of the Ignite Athletics family and are uniquely situated to provide encouragement and support for the athletes and the program. The prayers of parents for athletes, coaches, and teams are important and appreciated.
- Parents should treat coaches, players, officials, and other fans charitably and with respect. They should seek opportunities to encourage or build people up and not to tear down. Parents should communicate clearly and openly with coaches and Athletic Directors, and when conflict arises, they should seek to resolve differences in a humble, Christlike manner.
- Parents are expected to volunteer to serve in a variety of ways as needed.
- Foul, vulgar, abusive, or disrespectful language will not be tolerated either in-person or online.

Conflict Resolution

Ignite Athletics recognizes that interpersonal conflict will occasionally occur. We place a high value on face-to-face communication, trusting in the Christian charity (love) and general good will of the Ignite Athletics family to amicably resolve conflict. When conflict arises, we expect that the offended party will first seek to address the matter one-on-one with the offending party either in-person or by telephone conversation – not by text message. Individuals should not copy third parties on emails or text messages or use social media to air complaints and responses. This is in keeping with the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18:15 that we should seek to reconcile with an offending brother (or sister) one-on-one.

Ignite Athletics Complaint Process:

- 1) If a problem arises concerning a player or coach, the first step is direct communication between the parties involved.
- 2) If additional steps are necessary to resolve the conflict, the parties should consult the Athletic Director.
- 3) If a resolution cannot be reached despite Athletic Director involvement, the Board of Directors will review the situation and determine the solution. Where necessary, one or more parties may be subject to expulsion from the program. The Board of Directors will conduct its inquiries in a fair and deliberative manner. Its decisions are final.

Disciplinary Action

Violation of policies set forth in this Handbook, particularly those involving foul, vulgar, or abusive language or conduct, disrespect, or violence are subject to disciplinary action by coaches, Athletic Directors, and the Ignite Athletics Board of Directors. Discipline may range from verbal correction to suspension or expulsion from the event or program. Any coach expelled from a competition event because of unsportsmanlike conduct should expect to be suspended more than one game and may be subject to additional disciplinary actions.

Persistent violations of administrative or similar policies by coaches or Athletic Directors may result in the Board of Directors suspending or expelling the offending party from the program.

Coaches are authorized to address immediate disciplinary issues involving athletes or other persons in attendance at a practice or competition event. Coaches are authorized to use traditional sports-related disciplinary responses (e.g., extra running, drills, adjusted playing

time, etc.) for poor sportsmanship, unexcused absences from games/practices, tardiness, lack of attention, minor disrespect or language infractions and the like. For blatant acts of disrespect, foul, abusive, or vulgar language directed at officials, coaches, players, or other individuals at a competition event, Coaches are authorized to expel the offending party from the event immediately.

Any member of the Ignite Athletics Board of Directors may initiate disciplinary action when a violation of the policies in this Handbook occurs in their presence.

Appeals of coach-imposed discipline will be handled by the Athletic Director who may seek counsel from the Board of Directors. Appeals from Athletic Director-imposed discipline or affirmation of a coach's decision will be handled by the Board of Directors. Decisions by the Board of Directors are final.

Credible accusations of criminal conduct will be reported to the proper authorities.

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