

WIDEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT #3 COACHES HANDBOOK



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Websites

Mesa Ridge High School

mrhs.wsd3.org

Widefield School District #3

wsd3.org

Colorado High School Activities Association

chsaa.org

Sports Schedules

csmleague.org

Philosophy

We the coaches of Widefield and Mesa Ridge High School are in the business of developing diverse disciplined individuals who are leaders and productive team members, who are capable of goal setting and goal achieving, and who have developed a sense of integrity and sportsmanship as well as a sound work ethic.

Further, the coaches and administrators of Widefield and Mesa Ridge High School feel that extracurricular activities of all kinds are an integral part of the educational system. To this end, we see our sports activities as part of an educational/athletic program; and consequently, our coaches, as teacher/coaches and our athletes, as student/athletes. Because successful athletic programs contribute untold positive benefits to an effective school climate, we believe that the education of our student/athletes is more important than the entertainment of the publics that we serve.

Participation in Athletics

The following materials must be on file in the main office of Widefield or Mesa Ridge High School before an athlete will be issued an "authorization to participate" card.

- (1) The Athletic Emergency Information/Consent for Treatment Card (DSA-29).
- (2) Parent Consent, Athletic Participation Checklist, Handbook and Philosophy Statement (DSA-27).
- (3) Medical History Form - Signed by Athlete and Parent/Guardian & Physical - Signed by either a MD or DO (DSA-28).

Under no circumstances shall an athlete be allowed to participate in practice until the card is presented to the coach.

Discipline Code

The following training rules, as well as team regulations, are necessary for the general welfare of interscholastic athletics at Widefield and Mesa Ridge High School.

1. Observance of all training rules is a year-round responsibility (summer included).
2. Team regulations for specific activities will be given at the beginning of each season. Violations of team regulations established by coaches of specific activities may result in abbreviated periods of suspension and/or other disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the team. If the parents/guardians of the athlete desire an informal hearing concerning the dismissal, an appointment with the dean/athletic director shall be made within 72 hours. Subsequent appeals concerning dismissal decisions may be made to the coaches' council, which shall be called into session by the dean/athletic director at the earliest possible time.

3. Possession and/or use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or any other controlled substances shall result in the following sanctions:

First Offense:

In season - Student/athletes shall immediately be suspended from competition for a **minimum** of ten percent of the competitive season. (One game in the sports of football, track and field, tennis, cross country, and swimming; eighteen holes of golf; two games or contests for other sports.) Penalties may be more severe depending on circumstances and/or sport regulations.

Out of season - Student/athletes shall be suspended from competition for a minimum of ten percent of the next competitive season in which they participate. (One game in the sports of football, track and field, tennis, cross country, and swimming; eighteen holes of golf; two games or contests for all other sports.) In order for this sanction to be considered fulfilled, the athlete must complete the season in which he/she serves the suspension. An athlete will have successfully completed a season if his/her season is ended early due to injury.

All student/athletes who violate these training rules shall be placed on probation for one year. The terms of this probation shall include but not be limited to conduct, citizenship, school attendance, and academic expectations.

Subsequent Offenses:

Athletes who break the conditions of their probation or who violate training rules more than once shall appear before a committee of head coaches and the Dean / Athletic Director for the purpose of hearing the allegations and of determining the duration of any probations and/or suspensions that will be enforced. Subsequent hearing meetings can be called to reconsider the duration of any disciplinary action. Appeal of these decisions may be directed to the high school principal, followed by the superintendent, and eventually the local school board.

Note-Student/athletes who fail to appear for their hearing will automatically be suspended from participation in any sport or activity until they show cause for their conduct.

These basic rules of conduct and minimum consequences have been established so that there is continuity between programs; however, the individual needs of each sport may require more stringent standards of expectation. Each coach is expected to establish a discipline code and enforce it based on the following considerations.

1. Is the rule relevant?
2. Is the rule fair? Does it infringe on any one student's rights?
3. Is the rule consistent and can it be applied equitably to all student/athletes?
4. What are the consequences and time lines for such?
5. To what extent should squad members be involved in the establishment of team rules?
6. Does the consequences fit the situation?
7. In what ways will student/athletes be rewarded for following rules?
8. Does enforcement afford the student/athlete due process? Does the discipline code allow student/athlete to tell his/her side of the story? *

* Never assume anything. Always ask at least six questions about the incident before drawing any conclusions.

Hazing

Definition:

"Any intentional knowing, or reckless act, by one or more persons, directed against a student/s that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of student/s for the purpose of being a member of a team or organization."

Examples are including but not limited to:

- Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, striking, branding, or placing a harmful substance on a student.
- Any type of physical activity that subjects a student/s to sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space and calisthenics.
- Any type of activity involving consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverages (liquor), drugs, or other substances.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens a student/s with ostracism, that subjects a student/s to extreme mental stress, shame or humiliation or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health or safety.

Myths:

- Unity Builder
- Motivator
- Non-Damaging

How do you know if it is hazing, ask yourself these questions?

- Is it an educational experience?
- Does it promote high ideals?
- Will it create respect for the organization?
- Do all members participate in the activity?
- Can parents witness the activity?
- Does the activity have value?
- Can the activity be defended in court of law?

If your answer to these questions is no, then it could be considered a hazing activity.

How do you "Break the Tradition"?

- Be proactive
- Be alert
- Take action

Dismissal of Athletes

Dismissal from a team is the last action a coach should take in attempting to discipline a student/athlete. Suspension, additional work, counseling, etc. are alternative ways of dealing with discipline issues.

The following reasons may warrant dismissal:

1. Failure to maintain required academic standards.
2. Violation of CHSAA or Metro League rules.
3. Suspension from school for reasons other than those outlined in this handbook or the Parent-Athlete Handbook.
4. Failure to comply with training rules.
5. Absence from practice or contests (each coach should have a clearly defined attendance policy).
6. Improper conduct on the bus as defined under regulations established by the district transportation department.
7. Theft.
8. Use of obscene language and/or profanity.
9. Insubordinations to either coaches or other school personnel.

The Student/Athletes Rights

While participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, students do have the right to:

1. Try out for the sport of their choice.
2. Compete on an even playing field for the opportunity to participate.
3. Be coached by knowledgeable professionals who put them first.
4. Be treated as a member of a free democratic society.
5. Be treated with quality medical care.
6. Compete in an environment free of emotional and/or physical coercion.

Transfer Rule

- Any transfer from eighth grade to the first entry into Widefield or Mesa Ridge High School on the first day of school is eligible to participate, provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.
- Any other student who transfers to Widefield or Mesa Ridge High School will be ineligible for varsity competition for the first 50% of the maximum regular season contest allowed in any sport in which the student was a participant during the last 12 months. The student may practice with the team and play at sub-varsity level provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.
- All transfer students must complete CHSAA Form 7 and have it on file in the athletic office.

Note: A student who transfers due to bona fide family move will always have full transfer eligibility provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.

NCAA Regulations

As a coach at Widefield or Mesa Ridge High School you have the opportunity to provide beneficial information to athletes and parents in regards to NCAA regulations. You should be able to answer some basic questions or at the very least direct your athlete/parent to the right people for answers, i.e. high school (counselors), clearinghouse web site, etc. Our athletic department has purchased videos and handbooks on this subject. They are available for your use. From time to time we will provide opportunities for you and your athletes to listen to experts on this subject. It is expected that you take advantage of this opportunity.

All coaches should:

- Inform athletes to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Talk about ACT and SAT test scores / national test dates.
- Inform athletes that the ACT test given to all juniors at Widefield or Mesa Ridge High School does count towards NCAA eligibility. All scores must be sent directly from ACT / SAT to the NCAA.
- Inform the athlete that the NCAA Clearinghouse is continuously reviewing ACT policies and is subject to change at any time, so they must see their counselor for current policy.
- Inform athletes to become familiar with the NCAA Clearinghouse website: ncaaclearinghouse.net

Legal Responsibilities

A. In dealing with student/athletes, coaches need to be aware that the courts hold professionals to a code of reasonably prudent expectations. In other words, what would a reasonably prudent professional do in any situation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of his/her student athletes? To this end, coaches need to guide their planning based on the following four areas of expectation:

1. WARN - All student/athletes need to know what dangers are inherent in the sport in which they are participating.
2. INSTRUCT - Coaches need to teach proper techniques and rules to compete safely. This includes the proper use of equipment.
3. ASSESS - Coaches need to make sure that athletes understand the instruction they have been given.
4. DOCUMENT - Coaches should be able to demonstrate through the use of practice plans, tests, videotapes, etc. that student/athletes have received the proper WARNING, INSTRUCTION and ASSESSMENT.

B. More specifically, coaches need to understand that they have the duty to:

1. Properly instruct and to verify that instruction as been assimilated.
2. Warn of possible dangers.
3. Provide supervision.
4. Provide a safe environment (including facilities and equipment).
5. Provide prudent health care relative to his/her sport:
 - a. Before injuries occur.
 - b. Emergency care.
 - c. Post injury care and rehabilitation.
6. Enforce rules.
7. Classify and to group (based on skill level, maturity, gender, size, and experience).
8. Afford student/athletes the opportunity of due process.
9. Safely transport student/athletes.
10. Foresee.

11. Plan.
12. Keep records.

C. In the unlikely event that you as a coach are involved in litigation it is helpful to keep the following reminders in mind:

1. Say very little.
2. Get an attorney familiar with sports law.
3. Discuss the case with lawyer only and only with your lawyer present.
4. Talk to no one else concerning the case.
5. Make a witness list and summarize the facts.
6. Never admit any liability and never point fingers at anyone else.
7. Avoid any statements at the scene of the incident.
8. Get names of witnesses who might later be difficult to find.
9. Stay close contact with legal counsel.
10. Schedule opponents carefully.
11. Have purchased quality equipment.
12. Be able to show what has been done to keep facilities safe.
13. Transportation (see transportation guidelines on the following page). Have copy of bus seating chart.
14. Keep current your first aid and CPR cards.
15. Know your limits (you're not a doctor nor an EMT).
16. Have you been negligent? Have you done what another coach would have done under similar circumstances?

Parental Concerns

Coaches may wish to consider the following strategies when dealing with parents:

1. Parent meeting - outline expectations and discipline code.
2. Involve parents - make them feel a part of the team.
3. Consider a newsletter to keep parents informed.
4. Remember parents merely want their sons and daughters treated fairly and the want their children to have positive experience.

Respect

Obviously, all coaches wish to have the respect of their athletes as well as the respect of their peers, officials, administrators and the community as a whole. To this end it is helpful to remember that respect can best be earned through the following:

1. Knowledge of the game.
2. Fairness - treating all athletes with equal regard.
3. Individual concern.
4. Model the kind of conduct that you the coach respect most.
5. How mature are you the coach - if the coach does not conduct him/her self as a professional how can we expect our student/athletes to conduct themselves with class?

The final measure of a successful, respected coach will be that he/she can say, "I'm proud to be a coach," and to have his/her athletes say, "I'm proud to have had that educator as my coach."

Rules Meeting

All head coaches shall attend annually a CHSAA approved rules clinic in their sport prior to the start of the first interscholastic contest. Penalty for non-compliance is probation followed by restriction through CHSAA. It is strongly recommended that ALL coaches (assistants) should also attend the meeting. See the athletic director for the date time of the meeting.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of the head coach to schedule buses for all away contests. Forms are available from the athletic director at the beginning of the season that are to be completed and turned into the athletic director by the given deadline. A bus requisition must be completed for EACH away trip.

All coaches are required to have a seating chart for each trip. Three copies are required: One on file with the athletic director, one for the bus driver and one for the coach.

In the event of cancellation or postponement, the coach is responsible for notifying transportation of any change and for rescheduling the trip. Coaches shall meet all state and district requirements before driving student/athletes in district vehicles to practices and or competitions. The small vehicle license are available through transportation.

Athletic teams are subject to the same rules of conduct as all other students riding on district transportation.

Students may drive themselves or with their parents to and or from competitions only with arrangements being made ahead of time with coach and prior written permission of their parents. Students may not drive other students to away competitions.

Directions to various schools/sports facilities are available in the Main Office.

Entry Forms and Entry Fees

It is the responsibility of the head coach to submit entry forms to meet directors. Further, the head coach will submit in writing all requests for entry fees to the athletic director, who shall then make sure that fees are requisitioned and paid on time.

Conferences and Professional Development

Because the yearly athletic budget does not make available sufficient funds to send every coach to one conference a year, all requests for conference attendance must be submitted in advance with all district paper work properly completed. Also, coaches must submit a budget with the request to cover cost of registration and a copy of the clinic brochure along with a DPA-10 form complete with signatures. Transportation will be determined in accordance with the district mileage chart. It is recommended that a district vehicle be used if possible. In most cases district funds will not be used to reimburse travel beyond the state line.

Any coach who has attended one conference during any year, shall not be permitted district funds to attend another conference during that school year. Request to attend a conference without district funding may be made at any time.

A Coach's Code of Ethics

The function of a coach is to properly educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. The interscholastic program is designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. All children should be treated as though they were the coaches' own and their welfare shall be uppermost at all times. In recognition of this, the following guidelines have been adopted for coaches by the National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Association (NFIOA) Board of Directors.

The coach must be aware that he/she has a tremendous influence, either for good or bad, in the education of the student/athlete and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character.

The coach must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with the student/athlete, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse and under no circumstances should authorize their use.

The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.

The coach shall be thoroughly acquainted with the contest rules and is responsible for their interpretation to team members. The spirit and letter of rules should be regarded as mutual agreements. The coach shall not try to seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

Coaches shall actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship by their spectators working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.

Contest officials shall have the respect and support of the coach. The coach shall not indulge in conduct, which will incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.

Before and after contests, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly greetings to set the correct tone for the event.

A coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student/athletes special consideration.

It is unethical for coaches to scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.

Communication

It is the policy of Widefield and Mesa Ridge High School that the intercom system be used to interrupt classes as seldom as possible. To this end, the intercom will be used at the end of 4th period prior to lunch and/or at the end of the day for emergency announcements. Coaches should not depend upon the intercom to communicate important information (such as game cancellations, practice postponements, or change of meeting sites).

Each team should develop a system that will guarantee that these kinds of important messages can be communicated by team members through some kind of "communication tree." The captains should be at the top of this tree, and all squad members should know how to keep themselves informed of emergency information.

Keys and Security

Keys will be checked out through the assistant principal in charge of building management or athletic director and the head custodian. If you have any problems with keys to your competition areas, the locker rooms, or your storage areas, immediately inform these two individuals. Under no circumstances should athletes have access to your keys.

It is the responsibility of every coach to closely monitor the security of our facilities. Traditionally, the locker rooms, classrooms, equipment storage areas, swimming pool, gymnasium and other physical facilities have been the object of vandalism and theft. Therefore, it is incumbent upon a coach to ensure all lockable facilities are secured after use, all equipment is returned to its proper storage area, and that the storage areas are locked.

Team members should be encouraged to make use of quality locks on their lockers. Student/athletes should never store valuables and large sums of money in their lockers. The school district cannot accept the liability for stolen or vandalized property.

Widefield and Mesa Ridge High Schools is monitored by a security system. Any coach conducting practices on weekends or holidays must make arrangements through the main office to ensure that the security system will be off and turned back on again after the end of said practice.

Planning for the Season

It is essential that each coach have a well-structured plan for his/her season of responsibility. If each athletic contest is to be conducted smoothly, specific needs must be met. If a coach does not have a clear understanding of what and why tasks must be completed prior to an athletic contest, problems develop – thus placing an unnecessary burden upon others.

In preparing for the year, coaches need to consider the following:

1. Equipment needs. Coaches know before the first practice that all equipment will be ready for the first day of practice.
2. Contest set-up needs and procedures
3. Crowd control needs (Supervision)
4. Number of aides needed to help run the event(s)
5. Payment of officials
6. Tournament entry fees (see entry forms and entry fees)

7. Transportation
8. Athletic eligibility
9. Awards banquets
10. Preseason team meeting to review:
 - a. Sports rules
 - b. School rules
 - c. League rules
 - d. CHSAA rules
 - e. Care of and proper use of equipment
11. Post-season team meeting to review athletic training rules.
Please remind your athletes once again at the end of the year,
that training rules are a year round responsibility.
12. End of season equipment check-in
13. Election of team captains
14. Prepare list of award winners
15. Post-season conference with athletic director
 - a. Equipment inventory
 - b. Needs request for following season
 - c. Year end report

Team Equipment

For most sports there are two types of equipment – uniforms and general team equipment.

Uniforms are checked out to individual team members who have qualified under eligibility requirements and who have been identified as a team member by the coach. Although it is the responsibility of the student/athlete to treat equipment with proper care and to turn in checked out equipment at the end of the season, it is the coach's responsibility to issue the appropriate charges when equipment is lost, stolen, or damaged. Further, it is the coach's responsibility to make sure that equipment that is issued is safe, appropriate and fits properly.

Athletes who are capable of regaining eligibility at quarter or semester may practice with a team provided they are eligible to compete in all other ways. Such squad members may not be issued a uniform until such time as they become eligible. If they fail to regain eligibility at quarter or semester they may participate as a member of the team for practices at coaches discretion.

Since equipment left about the campus and not securely stored can be stolen or vandalized, coaches must monitor their inventories closely. At the end of the season, equipment in need of repair should be brought to the attention of the athletic director during the coach's post-season conference.

All fines and charges should be turned into the business office just like any other condition.

Early Dismissal

On those occasions when teams have to leave school early for competitions, coaches should submit a complete roster to the attendance office at least one day prior to the early release. Student/athletes are responsible for their homework in all classes. Athletes are not allowed extended time to make up work for these absences as would be the case for other excused, absences. If an athlete has appointments which will take them from school on game days (or on the Friday prior to weekend competitions) they must have prior approval of the athletic director; otherwise, being absent on game day makes student/athletes ineligible to participate in that day's contest.

Playoffs and Overnight Stays

When a team qualifies for playoffs the coach must submit a meal and/or lodging request as well as a DPA-10 if any subs are needed. A roster of those athletes that qualified must also accompany the request.

Any other overnight stays other than playoffs must be pre-approved by the athletic director. Coach/team will be responsible for their own lodging and meals as well as the expenses for the bus driver.

All overnight trips MUST adhere to Board Policy IJOA-RC and a student travel request must be completed.

5. Overnight Trips

- a. All overnight trips must be approved by the District Superintendent.
- b. For any overnight trip, the teacher in charge shall have the name address, home and work telephone numbers of the parent or guardian of each student participating in the trip.
- c. For all overnight trips, a complete itinerary, which shall include place(s) or lodging, must be given to the parents or guardians.
- d. All out-of-state extracurricular activity trips must be approved by the Board of Education. If private vehicles are used, Form DSA-17 must be completed and filed in the principal's office.

Student travel request is available on the District Intranet: wsdi.viadesto.com. Username: lastnamefirstname(no space) Password: Employee #

Any out of state competition during the regular sport season must be on file with CHSAA.

Season Ending Procedure

At the end of any season the head coach shall submit to the athletic director:

- A roster of athletes who completed the season, who earned letters, and those who participated during the course of the season.
- A participation report indicating the number of males and females who participated in the sport broken down by grade.
- The names of athletes to be recognized for any special awards including Champions nominees, Academic All-state winners, etc.
- A season ending report.
- A needs request for supplies and capital improvements for the following season.
- An up-to-date and complete inventory.

Bad Weather Guidelines

Coaches should consider the following when determining if a game or practice should be suspended:

1. If you feel a tingle or your hair bristles, lightning is imminent and there is a very real threat of danger.
2. Thunder is only heard when lightning is within eight miles. Immediate thunder following a strike means that the lightning is in the immediate vicinity.
3. Thunder should not be the only guide to the closeness of severe weather. Varying weather conditions can make thunder impossible to hear. Not all lightning is accompanied by thunder. Observation of cloud formations and the movement of storms off Cheyenne Mountain should also serve as guides in these situations.
4. Weather conditions vary greatly around the Pikes Peak Region. While severe weather may appear to be very far away and the immediate vicinity safe, lightning can strike when it is least expected. A "flash to bang" of less than thirty (30) seconds indicates the field should be cleared. Coaches should allow thirty minutes after the last thunderbolt before returning to practice outside.
5. Return to practice fields should be at the discretion of coaches or the athletic trainer. Return to games shall be at the discretion of game officials and/or the assigned administrative representative.
6. Lightening detectors will be available to coaches that practice off site. Athletic trainer will have a detector for all on site activities.
7. In the event that the "flash to bang" is less than thirty (30) seconds, evacuation to a safe structure is of utmost importance. The primary choice for a safe structure is any fully enclosed, substantial building. If a substantial build is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative.

Qualifications of Coaches of Interscholastic Activities

All coaches of interscholastic activity programs (including competitive athletics, cheerleading, music and speech) who assume full responsibility for students under their direction shall be either:

1. A certified teacher holding a current certificate issued by the Colorado Department of Education.
2. Employed as a teacher, counselor and/or administrator at least 50 % of the school day.
3. A coach registered with CHSAA.
4. It is the practice at Widefield School District #3 not to employ non-certified hourly wage employees as coaches due to requirements within the Department of Labor.

Coaches not holding a CDE-issued teacher or administrator certificate, shall be registered with the CHSAA in one of the following capacities:

1. One-year Coaching Registration
2. Permanent Registration

Information on registration is available on the CHSAA website, CHSAA.org.

PENALTY FOR USE OF NON-QUALIFIED COACHES- A school using a coach who does not meet the requirements listed above shall be subject to penalties, to be determined by the Commissioner, which may include forfeiture, restriction, suspension or membership or other appropriate penalties.

Each coach shall be responsible for the contents of the CHSAA Constitution and By-laws and the pre-season and playoff bulletins. Coaches whose programs are in violation of CHSAA policies or by-laws shall be subject to restriction.

Assistant Coaches

An assistant coach shall be under contract to the district, must be a certified teacher, administrator or CHSAA registered coach.

Volunteer Coaches

All volunteer coaches must complete a Notice of Restrictions, Release and Assumption of Risk for Volunteer Coaches form. Volunteer coaches must also submit to an appropriate background check as determined by the District and two letters of reference prior to volunteering. All volunteer coaches shall be prohibited from assuming the responsibility for supervision and instruction, unless under the direct supervision of a contracted coach or certified teacher.

CPR / First Aid Certified

All coaches MUST be certified in CPR and First Aid from the beginning of their season through the last competition. A copy of your CPR and first aid card needs to be on file in the athletic office.