

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District

Student-Athlete Handbook

Adopted December 2011



The mission of RULH Middle and High Schools is to provide a dynamic and rewarding educational system centered on student success, personal development, and preparation for life.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Ripley-Union-Lewis-Huntington Local Schools (RULH) affirms that equal opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), military status, national origin, disability, age, ancestry or genetic information of a person. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity conducted under its auspices. This shall extend to employees therein and to admission thereto. Inquiries concerning the application of this policy may be referred to the superintendent or designated coordinators. This policy shall prevail over all Board policies concerning school employees and students.

Table of Contents

Philosophy	3
Definitions	3
Expectations of Student-Athletes	5
Paperwork to be completed before conditioning	5
Attendance at school	6
Eligibility	6
Personal conduct of Student-Athletes	7
Student-Athlete Code of Conduct	8
Transportation to and from contests	10
Conflicting activities	11
Changing sports in mid-season	11
Cuts	11
Adding athletes after the start of the season	11
Injuries	12
School closing	12
Uniforms	12
Cheerleaders	13
Acknowledgement Form	14



AN AREA OF CONCERN

Social Media is an avenue to stay informed, share with friends, and connect with others, but many of you are being seen and heard on these sites in compromising situations. If it is deemed that comments, pictures or postings on any form of social networking is detrimental to the education of students at RULH, disciplinary action may be taken.



PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy behind the organization and administration of the athletic programs of the RULH School District is based upon the belief that every pupil should have an opportunity to participate in athletics at his or her best ability.

Participants and adult coaches involved in extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate and promote the ideas of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in all phases of athletic competition.

Coaches and teachers are confronted with a tremendous challenge daily, which is to provide guidance to each student with whom they come in contact, be it in the classroom, on the field, track or court. It is their responsibility to assure that each Student-Athlete has benefited physically, emotionally, intellectually and morally through interscholastic competition.

DEFINITIONS

Coach/Advisor as defined in this document is one and the same and will be referred to as **Coach**. The term **Coach** may include assistant and volunteer coaches.

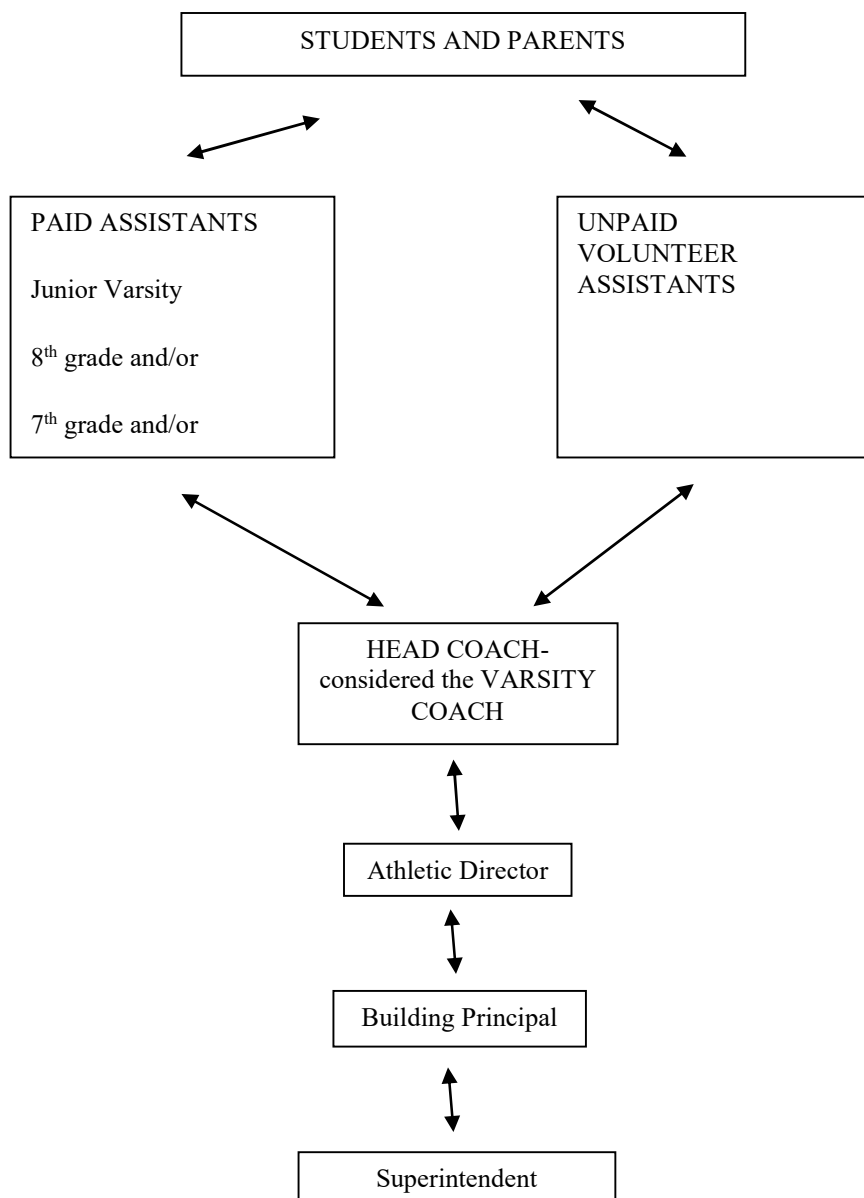
Assistant coaches are defined in this document as all PAID coaches below the level of head coach or varsity coach. This includes seventh grade, eighth grade, middle school, freshmen and junior varsity (JV) coaches.

Volunteer Coaches are defined in this document as all UNPAID coaches. Volunteer Coaches must be Board approved.

Student-Athlete as defined in this document shall include cheerleaders and may be referred to as **athlete**.

Any section of this document or portion thereof found by adjudication to be contrary to law or constitutional right shall be struck without affecting the remainder.

The athletic discipline and any additional rules governing student expectation relative to a given sport shall be distributed to each student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) at the mandatory OHSAA meeting conducted prior to that respective sport's season.



The flow chart above represents the chain of command for all decisions, suggestions, and concerns. Decisions, suggestions, or concerns should be handled as soon as reasonably possible, beginning with paid assistants and unpaid volunteers. If they feel the situation warrants a decision by the head coach, they should contact him/her as soon as feasible. Varsity coaches will report to the AD of the sport, who will report to the principal, who will report to the superintendent. If you do feel the person to whom you report is not handling the situation in a capable manner after bringing it to their attention, then speak with the next person in the chain of command. Please follow the chain of command.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

The coaches and administration in the RULH School District believe certain standards of behavior, scholarship and citizenship are important to a sound athletic program. Expectations, sometimes beyond those required of non-athletes, may be imposed upon those who present themselves as Student-Athletes.

The following objectives of the athletic program at RULH show the importance of the established policies:

1. To encourage the athlete to recognize his/her responsibility to self, coaches, fellow athletes, and school.
2. To encourage the athlete to realize success is achieved through self-sacrifice and hard work.
3. To encourage the athlete to become aware of the value of established training rules. A sound and healthy mind and body are needed for maximum performances.
4. To develop in the athlete a sense that winning is only one result of the above objectives.

PAPERWORK TO BE COMPETED BEFORE CONDITIONING

1. Each student must have a completed OHSAA physician's examination AND Emergency Medical Form before the Student-Athlete may participate in ANY team activities.
 - a. Summer open gyms or fields
 - b. Camps/clinics
 - c. Conditioning
 - d. Practice
 - e. Competition
2. In accordance with OHSAA Bylaw 3-5-1, the Pre-participation Evaluation is required to be completed once every 13 months. However, there is one exception and it reads: If the pre-participation athletic evaluation is conducted between May 1 and June 1, the pre-participation evaluation, signed by the medical examiner, is valid for one calendar year plus the remainder of that current school year's spring sports season (i.e. through mid-June).

ALL EXPECTATIONS OUTLINED IN THE STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR EACH BUILDING ARE ALSO IN PLACE FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES.

Student-Athletes are required to follow the rules and regulations outlined by the OHSAA. These may be found on the OHSAA site (OHSAA.org) under "eligibility."

All athletes and other participants on a team are under the following Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, 24 hours a day/7 days a week during the sports season.

A “sports season” as used above begins at the first organizational meeting of the team and/or first open gym/field and lasts until the awards program for that season has concluded.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

1. Athletes are expected to adhere to the attendance policies outlined in the Student Handbook.
2. Athletes must be in school prior to 9:30 am to be eligible to practice or play that day, subject to the exception listed in #5 below.
3. Athletes may not leave school before 1:45 pm to be eligible to practice or play that day, subject to the exception listed in #5 below.
4. Athletes must be in school on Friday in order to play on Saturday or Sunday, subject to the exception listed in #5 below.
5. Athletes may be able to participate where an absence is excused and approved beforehand by the Building Principal. Prior approval must be given by the Building Principal for medical appointments or attendance at a funeral. Proper documentation must be turned in following these events in order for the absence to be excused, allowing the athlete to participate in practice or a game that day.
6. Chronic absenteeism or non-credit status may effect eligibility for athletics.
7. A Student-Athlete that is charged with truancy will meet with the Athletic Director, Head Coach and Building Principal to determine if athletics is interfering with attendance at school. A plan of intervention will be developed.

ELIGIBILITY

All eligibility guidelines of OHSAA and the RULH School District will be strictly enforced and will govern academic eligibility at the middle school and high school level.

1. MIDDLE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY (Grades 7-8):
 - a. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY: A student enrolling in 7th grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement.
 - b. SUBSEQUENT ELIGIBILITY: Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grades 7 and 8 must be currently enrolled and must receive passing grades in **a minimum of five (5)** classes in which she/he is enrolled and have a minimum 2.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale. After establishing seventh-grade eligibility, a student athlete is permitted only four (4) semesters of athletic eligibility at the 7th and 8th grade level.
2. HIGH SCHOOL TOTAL ELIGIBILITY (Grades 9-12):
 - a. After a student completes the 8th grade, or is otherwise eligible for high school athletics pursuant to OHSAA bylaw 4-2-3, the student shall be eligible for a period not to exceed EIGHT semesters, taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not.

- b. A student who attains the age of 15 before August 1 shall be eligible for a period not to exceed EIGHT semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not.
- 3. NINTH GRADE ELIGIBILITY:
 - a. As part of the OHSAA requirement, a student enrolling in the 9th grade will be eligible for the first grading period if the student passed a minimum of five (5) classes from their 4th quarter, 8th grade classes and have a minimum 2.00 GPA as described below.
 - b. To be eligible thereafter, a student in grades 9-12 must meet the eligibility requirements below.
- 4. HIGH SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY:
 - a. Students are urged to check their eligibility with Building Principal and/or Counselor before adding or dropping courses.
 - b. In order to be eligible in grades 9-12, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school during the immediately preceding grading period.
 - c. During the preceding grading period, the student must have received passing grades in a minimum of five (5) one-credit courses, or the equivalent, which count towards graduation.
 - d. In addition, a student must earn a minimum 2.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale during the preceding grading period to be eligible.
 - e. Summer school and other educational options may not be used to substitute for failure to meet the academic requirements in “d” above.

PERSONAL CONDUCT OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE

- 1. Any discipline in school, on the bus, or on school property, whereby an athlete is suspended from school, will result in the removal of the athlete from practice and competition for the same amount of time as the discipline imposed. If in-school suspension is the consequence the coach will be notified and they will determine what punishment, if any, is given to the student athlete.
- 2. In matters pertaining to personal conduct of athletes in which violations of sportsmanship, attacks on officials, or other acts of misbehavior occur, the Head Coach of the sport, with input from the Athletic Director and Building Principal, will make the determination on the length of the removal from athletic participation. If the athlete to be disciplined is related to the Head Coach causing a conflict of interest, the Head Coach may have input regarding the discipline but the decision will be handled by the Athletic Director and/or Building Principal. The OSHAA Handbook should be consulted before the penalty is assessed. The length of removal will be based on the severity of the offense and the past history of the athlete's conduct on and off the playing field or court.
- 3. An athlete that has committed theft of school-purchased athletic equipment and/or other school equipment may be prosecuted. Restitution of missing items is expected. The Head Coach, Athletic Director and Building Principal will determine if removal from athletic participation is warranted. If the athlete to be disciplined is related to the Head Coach causing a conflict of interest, the Head

Coach may have input regarding the discipline but the decision will be handled by the Athletic Director and/or Building Principal. The length of removal will be based on the severity of the offense and the past history of the athlete's conduct on and off the playing field or court.

4. A separate dress code will be determined by the Head Coach of each sport. Student-Athletes are to project a sense of pride as they travel as a team. School uniforms are not to be worn in public unless the coaching staff approves this ahead of time.

STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Violation of the following rules at practices or during competition may result in immediate suspension from the ***school and/or the team, depending upon the severity, circumstances, etc.*** **Students should be aware that poor behavior on the playing field/court that may or may not result in a ruling by the officials of the game can still be cause for discipline by the coach or administrator.**

1. Rule 1 - Disruption of Athletic Event:

- a. An athlete shall not cause material disruption or obstruction to an athletic event by use of violence, force, coercion, threat, harassment, insubordination, or repeated incorrigibility.
- b. Threats made towards other students, staff members or school property will be dealt with severely. Law enforcement officers may be called, charges in Juvenile Court may be filed and the athlete may be suspended and/or expelled from school or the team.

2. Rule 2 – Damage of School Property:

- a. An athlete shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to real or personal property at any school activity on or off of school grounds. Furthermore, athletes shall not damage or attempt to damage the property of school employees at any time, on or off of school grounds.

3. Rule 3 – Assault (Menacing and Fighting):

- a. An athlete shall not cause physical injury or act or behave in such a way as could cause physical injury to another student, athlete, coach, official, or employee. No athlete shall knowingly cause another person to believe that the offender will cause serious physical harm to a person or the property of another. (Fighting or threats would come under this rule).

4. Rule 4 - Dangerous Weapons and Instruments:

- a. In accordance with the Gun-Free Act, all students are prohibited from bringing, possessing, or using any weapon on school property, in school vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activity. Students who violate this policy will be subject to expulsion or removal from school for a period of not less than one year. The Superintendent shall have the authority to modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

- b. The definition of weapon shall include, but is not limited to firearms, rifles, shotguns, knives, explosives, poisonous gas, or any form thereof, or paraphernalia associated with such weapons or look-a-like weapons.
5. **Rule 5 – Tobacco, Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages, Look-A-Like Drugs and Drugs**: An athlete shall not possess, sell, use, transmit (give to another), conceal or be under the influence of narcotics, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, controlled substances, drugs, look-a-like drugs, or any mind-altering substances.
- a. Included in this rule are “look-a-like” or counterfeit drugs, as covered under R.C. 2929.01, and R.C. 2925.37, prohibiting the making, selling, and possessing of counterfeit drugs. Over-the-counter medications are also included in this rule.
 - b. A controlled substance is defined as a drug or compound mixture including, but not limited to, narcotics, depressants and hallucinogens.
 - c. Any athlete who has a legal prescription-must report this fact to the office and have permission from their parent, their doctor, and the building principal, in order to take it to athletic events. The prescription must not be taken in dosages other than that prescribed by the doctor.
 - i. The proper forms can be picked up in the school office. The coach may be asked to keep the prescription in their possession for away contests.
 - ii. When prescription drugs are taken in excess, the same rules and penalties apply that apply to illegal drugs.
 - d. All medications shall be kept in the office and dispensed by the nurse or the nurse’s delegate (Coach).
 - e. A suspension will result from any use or possession of tobacco, including, but not limited to cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vaping devices on school property or at any school sponsored event.
 - f. A smell of fresh tobacco smoke on the body and breath of a student will be considered reasonable cause to suspend.
 - g. If damage is done to the building through the use of tobacco products, punishment will be administered and restitution and/or cleaning will be required. Example: Removal of snuff stains from carpet, stains on the walls or ceilings, on the bus, etc.
 - h. “Look-a-like” drug provisions:
 - i. “Counterfeit controlled substance” is defined in the following ways: 1) any drug or drug container or label that bears a trademark, trade name or other identifying mark used without the owner of the rights to such trademarks authorization; 2) any unmarked or unlabeled substance that is represented to be a controlled substance that is manufactured, processed, packed or distributed by a person

other than the person with legal rights to manufacture, process, pack or distribute it; 3) any substance other than a controlled substance that a reasonable person would believe to be a controlled substance because of its similarity in shape, size and color or the marking, labeling, distribution, or the price for which it is sold or offered for sale.

6. **Rule 6 – Insubordination:** (Defined as being unwilling to submit to authority or disobedience) An athlete shall not disregard or refuse to obey reasonable directions or instructions given by school personnel while the student is under the authority of the school. **REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF ANY RULE, DIRECTIVE, OR DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE SHALL CONSTITUTE INSUBORDINATION.**
7. **Rule 7 – Disrespect:** No athlete shall at any time show a lack of respect to any school official, coach, sports official, athletic director, administrator, student or other athlete. Examples of this offense could be making disparaging remarks, being outwardly sarcastic, saying things to achieve a derogatory effect, or back-talking the coach.
8. **Rule 8 – Violation of the Law:** An athlete shall not violate any law or ordinance when the athlete is under the authority of the school or its personnel. This would not only result in suspension or expulsion, but would also cause the school to refer the athlete to the proper legal authorities.
9. **Rule 10 – Profanity and/or Obscene Language:** An athlete shall not use profanity or obscene language either written or oral, in communicating with any school personnel, students, other athletes or visitors (visitors would include anyone not within the school personnel or student classification). Included in this prohibition would be the use of obscene gestures, signs, pictures, or publications.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM AWAY CONTESTS

1. All athletes must use Board-approved transportation when travelling to contests away from school ("away contests").
 - a. A student may be transported by parent/guardian to away contests with prior approval by the Building Principal.
 - i. Students may not transport themselves to away contests.
 - b. A student may be signed out at the away contest only by parent or guardian.
 - c. Students may only be transported by parent, guardian, or persons listed on the EMF.
2. Any student athlete suspended from a bus may not be transported to a contest on Board-approved transportation.

CONFLICTING ACTIVITIES

1. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, both athletics and academics, during their years in middle and high school.
2. If an athlete desires to participate in more than one activity during the same season, the Athlete Director will meet with the athlete, their parent and/or guardian and all available coaches or advisors to outline procedures if conflicts arise during the season.

CHANGING SPORTS IN MID-SEASON

1. From the time an athlete's name appears on the official eligibility list for interscholastic sport, he/she may not join or compete in another interscholastic sport until after the last scheduled practice or game of the first sport.
2. Exception to a mid-season change of teams rule may be permitted if both coaches and the Athletic Director agree that this change would be beneficial to the student-athlete without being unfair to the players on the team they are leaving.

CUTS

1. In the event that student participation exceeds a workable number of athletes, the coach has the responsibility of "cutting" athletes from his/her team.
2. If cuts are to be made, a minimum of two (2) practices are to be held before the cuts are made.
3. All athletes cut from a team will be done in private with the coach. At that conference, a reason based on performance or attendance may be given to the athlete, with or without a request from the athlete.
4. In the case of returning students, the coach may offer the athlete suggestions of ways to be better prepared for the next season.
5. Cuts shall be made at the sole discretion of the Coach and are non-appealable.

ADDING ATHLETES AFTER THE START OF THE SEASON

1. If cuts were not made, athletes may be added to the team by the Coach, but only after consulting the Building Principal and Athletic Director.
2. If cuts were made, there will be no additions once the roster has been set.
3. Exceptions may be made for students that move into the school district during the sports season. The student will need to complete sections of OHSAA Bylaws 4-7-2, 4-7-6 and 4-7-7 in order to be deemed eligible. According to OHSAA all the transfer students are INELIGIBLE until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's Office.

INJURIES

From time-to-time a student athlete may become injured as a result of actions on or off the playing field or court.

1. If a Student-Athlete is injured and must seek medical attention (ER, Urgent Care or Professional Trainer), they must have a medical release on file in the school office before they may be cleared to practice or play.
2. A signed note from a parent/guardian is not sufficient.

SCHOOL CLOSING

1. The Superintendent, Building Principal and Athletic Director have the responsibility of making the decision to cancel or reschedule athletic events in the case of school closing for any reason.
2. In the event that school is closed and the scheduled contest is being held away from school the Superintendent and Building Principal shall consult before a decision to participate is made.
3. In an attempt to be fair to all parties, it is desired that these decisions will be made by 12:00 noon on the day of the contest.
4. NO activities will be held if a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency has been declared in Brown County.

UNIFORMS

1. Uniforms are the property of the RULH School District unless otherwise noted.
2. Uniforms are not to be worn off the playing field/court unless prior approval by the Coach.
3. All uniforms are to be returned to the assigned Coach not more than 7 days following the end of the season.
4. If lost, destroyed or not returned the player will be charged fair market value for the uniform.
5. A player will be ineligible to participate in subsequent RULH sports if uniforms are not returned.

OTHER

1. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed. This includes beards, mustaches, goatees, etc. Participation will be denied until the situation is corrected (if not neatly trimmed).
2. Hair must be worn out of the eyes in such a way to not produce a safety risk or obstruction to the vision of the athlete.
3. Practices are for the coaches and student-athletes. Due to distractions, **practices are not open to parents or other adults excluding school personnel.**

4. Playing time is determined by the coach based on the needs of the team.
Coaches will not entertain discussions on playing time.

CHEERLEADERS

RULH Cheerleaders are considered Student-Athletes and are required to adhere to all rules and regulations outlined in this Student-Athlete Handbook and through OHSAA.

1. A physical card, used by the OHSAA, must be presented to the Athletic Director before any student can try out for cheerleading. The student/parent squad choice must be turned in at the same time.
2. The Cheerleading Coach will have a written set of guidelines prior to try outs.
3. An injured candidate may try out for the squad, upon which the following procedures shall be followed:
 - a. A signed medical release from a physician is required for an injured candidate to try out for the squad.
 - i. The document must outline the candidate's injury.
 - ii. The document must outline what the candidate can do and what they cannot do.
 - b. Injured candidates will be judged on only the categories in which they can perform.
 - c. The average of the candidate's score will be taken on only those tasks performed.
 - d. This average will be included into the athlete's total score.
4. Cheerleaders participating on squads will be determined by the Coach following tryouts.
 - a. RULH will have up to 4 cheerleading squads (7th, 8th, Junior Varsity and Varsity).
 - b. All decisions are left to the discretion of the Cheer coach and are final.

RIPLEY UNION LEWIS HUNTINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student/Parent Athletic Participation Contract

This page must be signed and returned to the Head Coach prior to any student competing in interscholastic athletics at RULH.

A. Discipline Code

I have received a copy of the RULH Student-Athletic Handbook. I consider this handbook to be the warning should any violation of the code of conduct occur. I understand the policies established in the RULH Student-Athletic Handbook of the Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District are in effect 24 hours a day/7 days a week from the first organizational meeting and/or first open gym/field until the awards program for that season has concluded.

B. Equipment

I will be responsible for the equipment that I have been issued. I understand that it is to be used for school activities only. I will keep it clean, in good condition and return it to my coach at the designated place on the required date. I will willingly pay replacement costs for any piece of equipment lost or damaged, other than that which is beyond my control or ordinary wear.

I further understand that I may not participate in another sport or receive awards until all equipment is returned and/or fees paid.

C. Risks or Injury

I hereby acknowledge that I have been properly advised, cautioned, and warned by the administrators and coaching staff of RULH School District that by participating in interscholastic athletics, I am exposing myself to the risk of serious injury. They could include, but is not limited to, the risk of sprains, fractures, ligament and/or cartilage damage which could result in a temporary or permanent, partial or complete, impairment in the use of limbs, brain damage, paralysis, or even death. Having been cautioned and warned, it remains my desire to participate in athletics. I hereby further acknowledge that I do so with full knowledge and understanding of the risk of serious injury to which I am exposing myself.

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date