



Saratoga High School
Athletic Handbook

2016-2017

Introduction

The Saratoga High School Athletics handbook is a reference guide for coaches, student-athletes, and parents concerning the policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Saratoga High School

The coach of an athletic team reports to the Athletic Director and is primarily responsible for the compliance by his/her squad members to the rules, regulations, and policies governing athletics at Saratoga High School. The Athletic Director will administer these rules and regulations as they relate to inter-squad and inter-coach relationships.

Sound reasoning, good judgment, and adherence to the school's core values will be the standard by which situations outside these stated rules and regulations are determined and evaluated.

Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation. Thus competition in high school athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to conform to standards established for the high school athletic program. This privilege may be revoked if the athlete fails or refuses to comply with the rules.

Philosophy

The athletic program of Saratoga High School is a dynamic integral part of the educational experience. It provides meaningful learning opportunities not otherwise offered in the classroom curriculum. It assists students in developing habits, attitudes, and ideals necessary for ethical competition and cooperation in our society. It also provides students with lifelong lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, ethical behavior, perseverance, commitment, loyalty, self-discipline, pride, cooperation, responsibility, and leadership skills. Saratoga High School encourages all students to participate in athletics by offering a well-rounded program of interscholastic athletics for young men and women.

Coaching

Saratoga High School hires experienced coaches, dedicated to educating student-athletes in developing individual skills, teamwork, good sportsmanship, and fair play. We prefer to recruit coaches from our faculty and staff. For coaches hired outside the school, every effort is made to integrate them into the entire school community. The same behavior expected of a teacher in the classroom is expected of all coaches during practices and games.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship will be a top priority as we Pursue Victory with Honor. As members of the Saratoga High School athletic department, students, coaches, and parents are expected to demonstrate proper respect for each other, opponents, opposing coaches, teachers, officials, spectators, and the community. Student-athletes and coaches are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct, both on and off the playing fields, as they are at all times a representative of their team, school, and community.

Commitment

All team members are valuable, and each team needs to know that it can count on its members to be there. Often this means sacrificing social life, family trips, and other events, which come in conflict with the rigors of training and competition. Learning to make choices is one of the most valuable life lessons an athlete takes from a good athletic program.

Athletic Program

Saratoga High School is a member of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL). The athletic directors of the member schools handle the management of the SCVAL. The league is divided into two divisions based on strength of program. The De Anza is for upper division teams, and the El Camino is for lower division teams. The assignment to each division is based on past performance and is evaluated at the end of each season by the coaches, AD's and Board of Managers.

Member Schools

Cupertino	Fremont	Gunn	Homestead
Los Altos	Los Gatos	Lynbrook	Milpitas
Monta Vista	Mountain View	Palo Alto	Santa Clara
Saratoga	Wilcox		

As a member of the SCVAL, Saratoga High School is responsible for following the Constitution, By-Laws, and Sports Regulations as established by the Executive Board of the SCVAL. The SCVAL Constitution, By-Laws, and Sport Regulations are continually reviewed, revised and updated.

Sports Offered at SHS

Fall Sports	Winter Sports	Spring Sports
Cross Country (B/G) Field Hockey (G) Football (B) Golf (G) Tennis (G) Volleyball (G) Water Polo (B/G)	Basketball (B/G) Soccer (B/G) Wrestling (B/G)	Badminton (B/G) Baseball (B) Golf (B) Lacrosse (B/G) Softball (G) Swimming (B/G) Tennis (B) Track and Field (B/G) Volleyball (B)

Registration for Teams

Online Registration

Parents must register student-athletes online by the required deadline in order to be eligible to try and pick up a "Ticket to Play." Possession of a "Ticket to Play" is required **before** trying out for **any** team and must be presented to the coach on the first day of tryouts. Registration link is on the SHS Athletics page under Registration.

- Physical Exams **CANNOT** expire during a student's season of sport and are good for one calendar year. There will be no exceptions to this policy beginning in 2014-15.
- Only the parent/guardian may register a student for athletics, there are legal documents that must be acknowledged and signed electronically.

Health Insurance

Under state law, school districts are required to ensure that all members of school athletic teams have accidental injury insurance that covers medical and hospital expenses. This insurance requirement can be met by the school district offering insurance or other health benefits that cover medical and hospital expenses. Some pupils may qualify to enroll in no-cost or low-cost local, state

or, federally sponsored health insurance programs. Information about these programs may be obtained by calling Covered California (800) 300-1506. (EC 49471.5)

Rules of Eligibility

Academic Eligibility Requirements

During each grading period, in their season of sport, students must attain a 2.0 grade point average (based on 4.0 scale) and be passing 4 classes (20 semester units).

1. Accounting for eligibility will be the Friday after the school-wide release of grades. The grades that will be counted for eligibility are six-week grades, twelve-week grades, and semester grades. Summer school grades may be computed to improve spring semester grades.
2. If a student earns a spot on a team but has not attained a 2.0 grade point average in the previous grading period (whether they were on a sports team or not at the time), one of two things will occur:
 - The athlete may be placed on academic probation (which allows them to compete)
 - The athlete will be ineligible if they have used their probation or are not passing four classes
3. A student may only be placed on academic probation once during their sophomore, junior, or senior year if their grades drop below a 2.0. Freshmen are NOT eligible for academic probation.
4. Students must be on track towards graduation as it relates to credits earned. Students may not be more than 15 credits behind at the end of any grading period.
5. All CIF eligibility rules still apply
6. Ineligible athletes may not be released early from the school day for athletic events.

Transfers from other high schools

All transfer students must complete the Residential Eligibility Application to participate in sports at Saratoga. This applies to transfers of any kind (family move, inter-district transfer, etc) even if the student-athlete did not play a sport at their prior high school. See the athletic director for the necessary forms.

Athletic Department Policies

General Rules

- Athletes are expected to be on time. Coaches may impose appropriate penalty for tardiness.
- If you are absent from school, you must notify your coach.
- If an athlete has attended school, he/she may not miss practice unless approved by coach.
- An athlete **must** attend 2/3 of the school day (1/2 if only two scheduled classes) in order to **practice** or **play in an athletic contest**. An exception may be granted if the Athletic Director is informed prior to the absence.
- Participation in school athletics takes precedence over all other outside activities. Recognizing that choices must be made in everything we do: **first priority must be given to high school athletics over club sports, music lessons, SAT prep classes, vacations and other non-school commitments.**

Grading Policy

Students who make a sports team will receive Physical Education credit for the sport. Each team has its own policy for how grades are assigned since it is treated as an academic class. At the beginning of each season, the head coach will review this policy with team members. Students who have met the 20 credit requirement for graduation, may opt to take the sport class for Pass/Fail grade. See your counselor for more information

Vacation Policy

Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are discouraged. Parents/athletes wishing to do so may want to assess their commitment to being an athlete. **Vacations are considered an unexcused absence.** In the event an absence due to a vacation is unavoidable, an athlete must:

1. Contact the head coach at least two weeks prior to the vacation
2. Be willing to assume the responsibilities and consequences of missing practice or athletic contests, such as reduced playing time. Consequences will be at the discretion of the head coach. The head coach will review his/her vacation policy at the beginning of the season.

Winter and spring sport athletes should be aware that practices/games may be scheduled during vacation periods and should not plan vacations during this time.

Schedule conflicts with other school commitments

Athletes may request to miss a practice or game in order to participate in another academic or extra-curricular school activity. Athletes must recognize that missed practices or games may result in reduced playing time in future contests.

Squad Selection

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic program while at Saratoga High, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without sacrificing the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport.

Tryouts

Generally, coaches will hold a pre-season meeting for all interested athletes explaining the tryout schedule and any pre-season voluntary conditioning sessions. Potential athletes are given a minimum of three (3) days to tryout for a squad. Athletes coming from another sport must complete their current season before going on to the next sport. They are given the same tryout period (three days) once their season ends.

Multi-sport Athletes

Multi-sport athletes must complete their current season and any post-season games before trying out or practicing for the next sport season. It is expected that all members of the coaching staff will support the entire athletic program and support athletes who must complete the prior season before starting the next season. This policy will be enforced by the Athletic Director to protect the team that is in season and the athlete from overuse injuries.

Multiple Sports in Same Season

Athletes may compete in more than one sport in the same season, i.e. swimming & track, but only with the consent of both coaches. Practice/Activity may not exceed 3 hours on any given day.

Practices

Coaches will have regular practice schedules depending on availability of the field, pool, or gym space. Practices are held daily before or after school Monday-Friday, and some teams even practice on Saturday. Sunday practice is not allowed per CIF policy.

Off-season Training

Coaches will clearly explain to student-athletes the benefits of off-season conditioning. Coaches may provide information about recommended pre-season training sessions and conditioning activities. Off-season activity is strictly voluntary and is not a requirement for team selection.

Varsity, JV and Frosh-Soph Teams

Saratoga's athletic program consists of Varsity, JV and/or Frosh/Soph teams within each sport. The classification of each sport is determined by the SCVAL. Juniors may play on a JV team if they are not selected for the varsity team, but may not do so if the team is classified as Frosh/Soph. Seniors may not play JV sports. Freshmen may play on either JV or Frosh/Soph teams. In the case when a coach feels that a ninth grader has the skill and maturity to participate on the varsity level he/she will consult with AD prior to selecting a freshman athlete for varsity level play. Special consideration will be given to the emotional, skill, and physical development of freshman.

Freshman Teams

While some local leagues may offer freshman level sports, the SCVAL does not sanction competition on this level. Some Saratoga athletic teams have enough participation from ninth graders to schedule freshman games, but it is not a league sanctioned team or official league contest.

Outside competition and summer leagues

According to CIF rules, no student-athlete may participate on a non-school team of the same sport during the same season. This includes club teams, leagues, tournaments, charity games, all-star games, 3 on 3 tournaments, college classes, etc. Since participation in a non-school event of the same sport will render an athlete ineligible and force the forfeiture of any Saratoga contests, student-athletes must check with the Athletic Director if there is any doubt as to whether a competition is permissible according to CCS and CIF by-laws. Individual sport athletes, like swimmers and wrestlers, may compete in same sport, same season competition but **must** enter the outside competition in "unattached status."

Saratoga High School, SCVAL, CCS, and CIF do not sponsor summer league teams. Although participation is allowed, it is not officially or unofficially associated with the above-mentioned groups. The parent assumes full responsibility for medical expenses and any liability that may occur as a result of participation on a summer league team.

Club Sports

Many athletes and coaches are involved with club sports. Saratoga teams are independent from all club sports. Participation in club sports does not fulfill PE requirements, nor is it a criterion for playing on a Saratoga team. Coaches may recommend, but not encourage, athletes to join a certain club team. Participation on outside club sports (different sport) is not an excuse for missing Saratoga practices or games.

Undue Influence-Recruitment of Athletes

The use of undue influence by any person or persons to secure or retain a student or to secure or retain one or both parents, guardians or care giver of a student as residents may cause the student to

be ineligible for high school athletics for a period of one year and shall jeopardize the standing of the high school in the California Interscholastic Federation.

Quitting a Team

To emphasize the importance and great degree of commitment required to be an athlete we highly discourage quitting a team. A student-athlete, who quits a team once league play begins, runs the risk of being dropped from the course with a WF grade. Please see your counselor before making this decision as Athletics uses the same drop deadlines that are used for academic courses.

Transportation

All athletes must ride in school provided transportation or in approved carpool vehicles to and from all contests. Students may be released to their parent/guardian after a contest upon approval of the coach. Buses can be reserved for teams with 18 or more athletes. Teams with less than 18 are encouraged to reserve school vans or arrange carpools. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY A STUDENT DRIVE THEMSELVES OR ANOTHER ATHLETE TO A CONTEST.** A parent may drive a group of students to competition once the district has approved them. A "Field and Activity Trip Private Car Travel Check" form must be filled out.

Code of Conduct

Expectations of Behavior

These rules will be in effect 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week for athletes in season:

1. Possessing, using, having consumed, or being under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, dangerous drugs, other controlled substances, or intoxicants of any kind, including anabolic steroids at a school sponsored activity will result in disciplinary action consistent with LGSUHSD board policy and school sanctions that range from short term suspension to removal from the team.
2. Outside of school activities, these prohibited acts can also result in disciplinary action ranging from short term suspension to removal from the team:
 - Possessing, using, having consumed, or being under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, dangerous drugs, other controlled substances, or intoxicants of any kind including anabolic steroids
 - Transferring, selling, distributing, offering, arranging, or negotiating to sell, or possessing quantities sufficient to suggest the intent to purvey, give, or sell to other students substances such as alcohol, narcotics, dangerous drugs, other controlled substances, or intoxicants of any kind including anabolic steroids.
 - Saratoga High School also requires that its students involved in athletic activities conduct themselves appropriately at all times while in public. Any public behavior at any time during a season of sport that is in conflict with District or school policies or codes of law enforcement is subject to team participation sanctions. These sanctions may range from short term suspension to removal from the team.

Hazing

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person. No student shall conspire to engage in hazing, participate in hazing, or commit any act that causes, or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation, or disgrace, resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or other person. Hazing is absolutely forbidden and will result in immediate dismissal from the team and further disciplinary action according to Board Policy.

Communication Guidelines

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When conflicts or issues arise, it is important that they be addressed immediately, and as directly as possible, so that they can be promptly resolved. It is important for student-athletes and parents to recognize that **coaching strategy and playing time are not appropriate subjects for complaint.** In addition, parents should follow any instructions from the coach about the best way/time to approach the coach with questions or concerns.

- First step: Student-athlete contacts coach – The student-athlete should present the conflict/issue to the coach as soon as possible. It is always best for students to become their own advocates. It is expected that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this first meeting.
- Second step: Parent contacts coach – If needed, a parent/guardian may contact the coach directly – but not just before, during, and after a practice or game. A parent should email or call the coach to set up an appropriate time to discuss the issue. The phone and email are not appropriate channels for conflict resolution.
- Third step: Contacting the Athletic Director – If a satisfactory solution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student and/or parent/guardian should contact the Athletic Director. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If needed, a meeting may be scheduled involving all concerned parties in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. The AD will respond to student-athletes and parent/guardians in a timely manner as to the disposition of their concerns.
- Fourth step: Contacting the administrator overseeing Athletics – If there is still not a satisfactory resolution the student or parent/guardian may contact the administrator overseeing Athletics. The Athletic Director should be informed this contact is going to be made. While there is no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

Retribution is prohibited in the California Education Code. Students and parents must be confident that the voicing of an opinion or concern, using the proper forum and method, is not only free from penalty or retribution, but is also strongly encouraged. The Athletic Director and coaches are committed to insuring that after a student or parent raises an issue or concern, there shall be no “retribution” in any form within the athletic department at Saratoga High School.