

# **Freedom Coaches Handbook**



## **Freedom Area School District Athletics**

**Athletic Director: John Rosa**

**Athletic Secretary: Natalie August**

**High School Principal: William Deal**

**Middle School Principal: Ryan Smith**

**Address: 1190 Bulldog Drive**

**Freedom, PA 15042**

**Phone: 724-775-7400**

**Phone: 724-312-6952**

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## Introduction

The Freedom Athletic Department is seeking coaches with strong leadership skills and those who are proven to be influential role models on and off the field. Coaching gives one the opportunity to teach something they enjoy and students the opportunity to learn in an area they are interested in. Coaching is not just about the wins and losses; it is about providing students with knowledge to be successful in the future. As a coach it must be your goal to help students discover and develop their talent while at the same time teaching life lessons. Coaches are not always the reason students decide to play a sport but are most often part of the reason they enjoy a sport and continue to play a sport. In advance we would like to thank our coaches for all their efforts in providing our students with an enjoyable and educational experience within athletics.

The following handbook will include the guidelines and regulations for coaching within Freedom School District. If at any point a coach should inquire a question on the following policies or about a subject not listed within this handbook please feel free to contact the school districts athletic director. Please take into account that this handbook may not include all expectation the athletic department places on coaching. However, it is considered to be comprehensive in nature.

## Coaching Ethics

1. Treat each player with respect and have a fair unprejudiced relationship with all players.
2. Teach student athletes to strive for success and not the mentality of winning at any cost.
3. Treat all opponents with respect and appreciation.
4. Keep control of emotions and tempers at all times during games practices and any athletic event.
5. The use of profanity and obscene language is prohibited.
6. Treat official with respect and appreciation, not criticizing the actions or decisions of the official.  
If a problem occurs communicate respectfully with the official.

## Preseason Requirements

### **Board Approval**

All coaches who have applied for a coaching job within The Freedom Athletic Department must first be approved by the Freedom Area Board of Education before fulfilling their duties.

### **School Clearances**

Child Abuse Act 151

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/findaform/childabusehistoryclearanceforms/index.htm>

Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check Act 34

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

FBI Cogent Background Check Act 114

<https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm>

### **Coaching Education**

All coaching staff members yearly must take the Concussion Wise, CDC, or the NFHS concussion education training BEFORE coaching any sport. The training is good for one calendar year. You must print the course completion certificate and turn it into the Athletic Office.

<http://concussionwise.com/Pennsylvania>

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act 59 passed in 2012, the educational course for coaches is available. Please use the Cardiac Arrest link for access to the free on-line program. This must be completed yearly.

<http://www.sportsafetyinternational.org/cardiacwise-pats/>

**Starting July 1, 2016, all coaches must adhere to the PIAA Rule requiring all coaches to have completed the coaching certification courses. More information about this requirement will be updated once it is received.**

All coaches must print and complete pages 14-16 of this handbook prior to the start of each season.

### **Athletic Physicals**

A physical is REQUIRED for all student-athletes to participate in any part of Freedom Sports.

Athletic Physicals must be submitted to the Athletic Trainer, Athletic Director, or Athletic Secretary at least 1 week prior to the start of the athletic season.

Student-athletes must complete a baseline concussion (ImPACT) test prior to participation in athletics for sports with the potential for contact. It is recommended that students take the ImPACT Test prior to the start of grades 7, 9, and 11. However, the trainer needs an ImPACT Test that is no more than two old.

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

Coaches must submit a tentative roster list at least 1 week prior to the beginning of the season.

The Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) and Athletic Secretary will review the roster list and confirm medical eligibility for participation.

Please use the Team Roster spreadsheet to generate your roster. This form will be emailed to you before the pre-season.

Emergency information will be supplied prior to the start of the season.

### **Injuries**

#### **Medical Releases for Athletic Injury**

All injuries that occur at a home or an away event should be reported to the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) immediately. This will ensure proper acute care, timely referrals to appropriate health care professionals, and less time the student-athlete may miss out of sports.

If the student-athlete seeks additional medical attention, they will need to secure a written medical release stating when they can return to full participation.

Releases should include the student-athlete's name, date of visit, reason for visit/diagnosis, and date for return to participation without restrictions.

The Athletic Trainer will work in conjunction with the medical professionals, parents, and student-athlete to determine when and if a student can return to practices and/or games.

## **Concussion Management**

Coaches should be aware that any student-athlete who suffers a concussion or is suspected to have concussion-like symptom **MUST**:

Be removed from participation and not allowed to return that day.

The student-athlete must be evaluated by a health care professional trained in the evaluation & management of concussions.

The student-athlete should complete a 5 Step Return to Participation program with the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) prior to full clearance to return.

Concussion specialist referrals can be assisted by the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s).

## **Medical Equipment**

Coaches are given a training kit (with medical supplies), water cooler, and an ice chest prior to the start of the athletic season.

It is the responsibility of the coaching staff to provide water and retrieve ice for practices and away events. During home events that are held at a venue at Freedom, the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) will assist in providing those supplies.

If a student-athletic trainer aide(s) is assigned to your sports team they will assist in providing water and ice for practices and away events. The Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) will facilitate this arrangement with the coaching staff. Student-athletic trainer aide(s) should not be evaluating, taping, or making return to participation decisions. They are there to assist with first aid, hydration, and to facilitate communication between the student-athlete, coaching staff, and any host Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) at an away event.

## **Training Room**

Athletes should only be in the training room to be evaluated or treated by the athletic trainer. Coaches should not allow the training room to become a “hang out” for athletes before and after practice.

## **In-Season Requirements**

### **Eligibility Guidance**

It is the responsibility of the head coach of each team to work together with the athletic director when it comes to eligibility of players. Each coach should know which players are not eligible to play prior to each contest. It is then the coach’s responsibility to enforce this restriction. The Athletic Director will notify the coach when players are academically ineligible.

Suspended students are not permitted to participate or practice in school athletics during their period of suspension.

Students will not be allowed to practice or participate at any sporting event if they are absent on the day of the event including homebound students.

Any student who arrives at school after 11:00 AM on the day of a practice or event will not be allowed to participate with their team for that day.

A student who is absent for a total of 20 or more school days will not be allowed to participate in any interscholastic athletics until he or she has been in attendance for 45 days after the 20th day absence.

### **Playing Time**

Playing time is to the discretion of the head coach of each team. As a head coach, one must communicate with players, parents and the athletic director about the team's policies and disciplinary actions.

Every effort should be made to provide each team member with the opportunity for playing time, but the collective efforts of a team must not be jeopardized to provide playing time for an individual.

### **Scheduled Events and Practices**

It is the coaching staff's responsibility to coordinate a seasonal sports practice schedule with the athletic director and the Licensed Athletic Training Staff. A copy of your tentative practice and game schedule must be submitted to the athletic director at least one week prior to the first official practice date. All practices should have a start and end time. Coaches need to make every attempt possible to end at the scheduled time.

Any changes should be communicated in a timely fashion. Any change that is not weather-related should be communicated at least 24 hours in advance to ensure coverage by the Licensed Athletic Training staff.

At least one coach must remain at the school or facility until all athletes have left the building.

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that non-athletic participants are not in the locker rooms to help in avoiding any problems including theft.

Coaches are to monitor their athletes to ensure they stay within their designated practicing areas.

No practices are permitted without the supervision of coaching personnel.

All changes to schedules or adding of games, scrimmages or tournaments must be coordinated through the athletic director.

All coaches are responsible for the actions and conduct of their team to and from athletic contest as well as during athletic contest.

### **Transportation Regulations**

All buses are ordered by the athletic director. A copy of bus departure times will be given to each coach by Thursday for the following week.

All changes must be requested through the athletic director.

It is the coach responsibility to make sure all team members arrive to the designated location for transportation at the designated time in order to board the bus.

The head coach is responsible for supervision and control during transportation of the athletes to and from an event.

No athletic team will be transported in private cars for any reason unless approved by the athletic director at least one day in advance of the contest.

### **Building Security**

No coach should ever prop any exterior doors open. This is a security issue and will not be tolerated. Coaches are reminded that a designated coach should always be the last person to leave the building and should lock all coaching offices, locker rooms, and practice areas. All lights should also be turned off when leaving.

### **Injury Procedures**

At the start of each season coaches should acquire a fully stocked first aid kit from the athletic trainer. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure their first aid kit is fully stocked prior to each contest or practice. Medical kits should be returned at the conclusion of each season.

In the case of an injury complete the following steps:

1. Examine the problem or injury to the best of your ability.
2. Give as much temporary relief as possible.
3. Take caution when providing treatment to not aggravate the injury. If there is any question as to the severity of the injury, do not move the student and contact the athletic trainer or call emergency services at 911.
4. If the injury is minor provide care and treatment on site.
5. In the case of a serious injury or illness the coach should attempt to first notify parents and guardians, if possible. If necessary see that the athlete is taken to the hospital for needed care. Finally check on the students' progress.

All injuries that occur during a practice or contest must be reported to the athletic trainer and athletic director. This is the coach's responsibility to report.

The athletic trainer will determine when a student athlete can return to the playing field. The coach must make sure an athlete is cleared before allowing a student to return to the playing field.



Emergency phone numbers:

Ambulance.....	911
Jackie Crytzer.....	(419) 632-1459
Freedom Police.....	(724) 728-4835
New Sewickley Township Police.....	(724) 774-2473
John Rosa, Athletic Director.....	(724) 312-6952
William Deal, HS Principal.....	(724) 417-8025
Frank Hernandez, MS Principal.....	(724) 683-9581
Medic Rescue Ambulance Service.....	(724) 728-3620

Information given to emergency personnel

- Callers name and position with the team (ex John Smith Head Coach)
- Location of accident
- Sex and age of the injured athlete
- Suspected injury to the athlete
- Condition of the athlete
- Location where the ambulance can be met

The person who completes the phone call should meet the ambulance at the predetermined site and lead them to the injured athlete. Be sure to always keep emergency contacts in an accessible location. At the beginning of the year all coaches should review emergency procedures with assistant coaches and players.

### **Equipment and Supplies**

The Athletic Director is in charge of ordering equipment and supplies for all school sports within the budget limitations.

The head coach of each sport should submit a list of all equipment and supplies for their sport each year within the budget limitations stated by the school's athletic director at least two months prior to the start of the season.

All equipment will be issued through the athletic department and at the conclusion of each season the head coach should submit a list of inventory to the athletic director.

The coaches are responsible for checking regularly the condition of the equipment used in games or practices and see that broken or damaged equipment is not used.

If any equipment is observed to be broken or damaged it should be reported to the athletic office and recorded.

### **Post-Season Requirements**

#### **Uniform Collection**

- 1) The head coach of each team is responsible for the collection of all equipment at the end of a season. The head coach should notify students in advance a time, date and place for collection of uniforms and equipment. The head coach should **NEVER** tell students to turn in their equipment to the office or athletic director.
- 2) If students fail to return their equipment on the designated date the head coach should contact those individuals still holding equipment.
- 3) Next is a referral to the athletic director. The athletic director will contact the student via public address and then meet with the student to discuss the failure to return the designated equipment. The student at this time may also be notified of replacement cost they are obligated to if the merchandise is not returned. The student will then be given ample time to return the equipment prior to further procedures.
- 4) Letter or phone contact with parents will then be made to notify them of the missing equipment and actions if the equipment is not returned. Failure to return may result in holding of report card, no assignment to next grade level and restrictions on participation in the following sports year.
- 5) The final step is a referral to high school administration for disciplinary actions.

#### **Athletic Awards**

The varsity award shall be presented to an athlete who satisfies the participation requirements at the recommendation of the coach. Normal criteria for lettering is participation in 50% of the quarters/halves/innings/games/etc. Coaches have the discretion to award letters to athletes who miss the 50% rule due to injury, illness, or other factors that affected playing time that were out of the student's control. Coaches should submit a list of letter winners to athletic director within one week of the conclusion of the season.

1st year award: Award letter with sport pin signifying sport. If the athlete is to letter in more than one sport he or she will not receive an additional letter.

2<sup>nd</sup> year award: Sport Pin and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Pin

3<sup>rd</sup> year award: Sport Pin and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Plaque

4<sup>th</sup> year award: Sport Pin and 4<sup>th</sup> Year Plaque

3 Sport Award: Tri Athlete Plaque – Must Letter in three sports in same school year

Athletes are only awarded (1) Letter, (1) 2<sup>nd</sup> year pin, and (1) Tri-Athlete Plaque

## OUT OF SEASON WORKOUT GUIDELINES

- 1) Teams that are in season have preference to athletic facilities
  - a) These teams will schedule facilities first
  - b) These teams may need to adjust practice schedules to accommodate needs which may bump or delay the start of an out of season workout
  - c) Every reasonable attempt should be made to inform out of season coaches of changes
- 2) No out of season workouts can be deemed “mandatory”
  - a) Coaches should avoid pressuring athletes in to attending
  - b) Attendance should not be taken
- 3) Competition out of season
  - a) School equipment may be used
  - b) School uniforms may NOT be used
  - c) School transportation will not be provided
  - d) School funding is not available for registration fees
- 4) Team members that are currently in a season sport (players attending that are in season)
  - a) Coach should structure workouts to develop skills
  - b) Conditioning should not be applicable to these athletes
  - c) Coaches should not ask these students to participate in drills that risk injury
  - d) Coaches need to encourage students that the in season sport has priority
- 5) Coaches should communicate progress and schedule to the Athletic Director
- 6) Coaches must be responsible for locking all interior and exterior doors and turn off lights
- 7) All code of conduct agreements signed by coaches in season remain in effect
- 8) Out of season workouts should remain low key and be used to create interest and build programs
- 9) All athletes should receive the same amount of practice time and reps in the off season. Players should not be classified as “starters”, “Back-ups”, of “Jr. Varsity” in the off season.

### **Social Media Policy**

As a coach in the Freedom Area School District, you are a role model for our past, present, and future players. Please remember that any post on social media sites will be seen by players, parents, community members, administrators, teachers, and school board members. Any post or comments that may be deemed detrimental to the athletic program and/or the district will be subject to discipline. Positive comments about the entire team are acceptable if they are used to promote the program. Coaches should try to avoid posts about individuals as this could divide the team. If you have any questions about acceptable use of social media, please contact the athletic director.

## **Athletic Coaches - General Reminders**

### **Coaching Expectations**

- 1) Follow all District Policies
- 2) Promote Sportsmanship by setting a good example
- 3) Communicate to Athletes and Parents
- 4) Establish team Rules/Code of Conduct and follow/enforce both of these
- 5) Emphasize that the players have to be students first, eligibility will be enforced
- 6) Be on time (early) for all practices and games, and have a plan for situations if you are absent or late
- 7) Always follow chain of command
- 8) Communicate any pertinent information to AD as soon as possible

### **Per Season Items**

- 1) Submit Rosters with Name, Grade, Numbers to AD
- 2) Attend mandatory rules meetings
- 3) Submit a copy of season practice/game calendar with times
- 4) Contact BC Times and Post Gazette Sports Departments for per season preview information
- 5) Take an accurate inventory of your equipment and submit any needs ASAP
- 6) Submit a criteria for letter winners

### **Budgets and Equipment**

- 1) All orders and requisitions must go through the AD
- 2) Submit needs with pricing to AD
- 3) All deliveries must be checked in by AD before they go to the coaches
- 4) Maintain an accurate list of distributed equipment

### **Team Rules and Discipline**

- 1) Maintain cleanliness in locker room and practice areas
- 2) No players may park in the cafeteria courtyard. During school they must stay in student lots.
- 3) Coaches should have clear team rules and expectations
- 4) Players should address Coaches, Administration, and officials properly.
- 5) Players must be in school by 11 AM to practice and/or play (unless special situations)
- 6) Eligibility will be checked weekly - ineligible players should be given study time

### **Security**

- 1) No students should be in locker rooms or athletic areas with coaches present
- 2) No doors (inside or outside) are to be propped open – EVER
- 3) Only the head coach can keep keys during the off season - asst coaches MUST turn in all keys
- 4) ID cards should be worn at all times
- 5) A coach should ALWAYS be the last one to leave (turn off al lights and secures all doors)
- 6) Only approved personnel and players should be at practices (no alumni unless approved as coach)

### **Communication**

- 1) Text and e-mails to players are OK - but do not personalize and keep appropriate (SOCAIL MEDIA)
- 2) Scores of games must be reported to BC Times, Post Gazette, and AD (call, text, and/or e-mail)
- 3) Maintain a good working relationship with parents and booster groups
- 4) DTV messages - send practice changes and other info via e-mail prior to 8 AM  
[dtv@freedomarea.org](mailto:dtv@freedomarea.org)
- 5) Check weekly schedules and bus departure times - they can change periodically

### **Professionalism**

- 1) Please be polite and courteous to custodial staff
- 2) Speak to opposing coaches, players, fans, and officials appropriately
- 3) Dress accordingly - you represent Freedom Area Schools
- 4) Assist Booster groups as needed
- 5) Address district administration appropriately
- 6) Enter through front door and check into office if you come in during school hours
- 7) Report any issues with players, parents, or officials to AD
- 8) Report any ejections to AD as soon as possible

### **Health and Safety**

- 1) All players must have a physical and baseline concussion exam prior to the first practice
- 2) All injuries must be reported to trainer
- 3) Any significant injury must be followed up with a parent phone call and call to AD
- 4) Take frequent water breaks and keep players hydrated
- 5) We have a 30 minute lightning rule - if you see it we must take shelter for 30 minutes from last strike.
- 6) Players should only be in training room if they need to be treated or taped
- 7) Players should have at least 10 practices prior to playing in games
- 8) All players should ride district provided transportation unless per approved or emergencies

### **Pride and Spirit**

- 1) Teams may wear game uniforms to school on game days
- 2) Be positive and encourage players - they look up to you
- 3) Support other Freedom Teams - Many Teams but only ONE Program

### **Post Season Items**

- 1) Turn in a record of all scores
- 2) Turn in a record of all letter-winners
- 3) Turn in a record of inventory
- 4) Submit needs for next season
- 5) Submit off season goals
- 6) Asst coaches need to turn in keys

Freedom Coaches Code of Conduct

We believe that the primary function of athletic coaching is educating students through participation in interscholastic competition. All interscholastic programs under the direction of the Head Coach are designed to enhance academic achievement and never interfere with opportunities for success in the classroom or on the playing fields. All coaches will prioritize the welfare of the student athletes at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the Freedom Area School District Board of Directors:

Our coaches will set an example of high ethical and moral conduct while collaborating with students, officials, administrators, media, and community.

Our coaches shall promote the entire interscholastic program and direct his/her program in harmony with district wide programs.

Our coaches shall exert influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster organizations, and administrators.

Our coaches shall respect and support contest officials. They shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against officials.

Our coaches will avoid use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with student athletes. Additionally, they shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use.

Our coaches will not engage in or permit profanity or obscene gestures. Physical or psychological intimidation or verbal abuse is also prohibited.

Our coaches shall remain current with building and district wide disciplinary policies as well as WPIAL and PIAA rules and regulations.

Communications between coaches, parents, and individual students is often confidential. Sharing this type of information personally or via e-mail or text messaging among other team members is inappropriate.

I agree to the term of this agreement

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Freedom Coaches Handbook and I understand all of the information and policies of the Freedom Athletic Department

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Freedom Athletic Coaches Pre Season Checklist**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list all keys including keyless door entry FOBS that you have been issued:**

**Please attach copies of the following:**

Concussion Training Course Certificate

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Course Certificate

**These certificates must be submitted every year and dated after July 1 of the corresponding school year.**

All employees are responsible to make sure that the Business Office and Linda Eldridge have all required payroll paperwork and clearances updated. Clearances must be updated every three years as per state law. By signing below the employee understand that he/she is responsible for making sure that this paperwork is up to date.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

