

Shreveport Homeschool Sports Policies

2016-2017

Foreword

NOTE to Players & Parents: Please read and prayerfully consider the following policies before signing your registration form. Your signature will indicate that you have read and agree with all Force policies.

Introduction

Shreveport Homeschool Sports (SHS), the FORCE, exists to help parents provide their home-educated student athletes in grades 7-12 the opportunity to play sports at a competitive level in a Christian environment. We support and advocate home education for the glory of Jesus Christ as an excellent educational choice throughout the high school years. The FORCE hopes to meet a need for students who would like to play competitive high school sports while continuing on the homeschooling journey with their family. Each existing sport within SHS is run by parents who have children participating in that particular sport. The FORCE organization is committed to working together as families in the discipline of our young people for Christ, and in using competitive sports to build character and integrity.

All parent-led FORCE sports teams, currently basketball, track, and volleyball, are members of the Shreveport Homeschool Sports organization.

Shreveport Homeschool Sports Board of Directors for the 2016-2017 season:

Athletic Director: Cathy Helms

Basketball/Volleyball representative: Sandra Merrow

Track representative and Marketing (website): Eric Wilkes

SHS Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, John 1:4*).

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (*Matthew 1:20-23*), and is true God and true Man (*John 1:1, 14*).

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, and only infallible, authoritative Word of God, which exercises final and ultimate authority in faith and life, over the individual, the Church, and human reason.

We believe that man was created in the image of God (*Genesis 1:26*), that he sinned and thereby incurred not only the physical death but also spiritual death which is separation from God (*Genesis 2:17, 3:6; Romans 5:12*); that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are sinners in thought, word and deed (*Romans 3:10-23*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins to satisfy divine justice (*Romans 5:9*), was buried and bodily rose from the dead according to the Scriptures (*I Corinthians 15:1-4*). We believe that He died as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified by grace alone through faith, on the basis of His shed blood (*John 3:16*,

Titus 3:5, Hebrews 7:25). We believe that those so justified are eternally preserved through the present ministries of our risen, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit (*John 10:27-29, Hebrews 7:25*).

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of, and indwelt by, the Holy Spirit and, thereby, become the children of God (*John 3:3, 14:16-17*). We believe that regenerate man must walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit in order to please God (*Galatians 5:16*).

We believe in "that blessed hope" -- the personal return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (*John 14:1-3, I Thessalonians 4:13-18*), and in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the just, and the everlasting punishment of the unjust (*I Corinthians 15:51-52, Revelations 20:11-15*).

We believe that the Church, composed of all those who truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, is the Body and Bride of Christ. We believe that Christ is head of the Body, the Church (*Ephesians 1:22-5:22*); that all believers are baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and having thus become members of one another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (*I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:3*).

SHS Code of Conduct

Acknowledging that none of us are perfect, and that all of us are in need of forgiveness, our hearts' desire in the Force organization is to love the Lord by glorifying Him in all pursuits, and to love and encourage one another in following Christ. Therefore, we ask that while attending or participating in a Shreveport Force function, all players, coaches, parents, and fans seek to honor the Lord in our dress and in our conduct, including but not limited to the following:

- No profanity
- No booing of players, teams, coaches, umpires, parents, or others
- No abusive or belittling language about or toward players, teams, coaches, umpires, or parents
- No disorderly behavior
- No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs.

Let us consider the many ways and opportunities we can be doers of God's Word (and not hearers only!) in our relationships with each other this year:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God...Matthew 5:9.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity...Colossians 3:12-14.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful...Colossians 3:15.

Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down... Proverbs 26:20.

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God... Philippians 2:14-15.

Our desire is to honor Christ in the way we treat one another. Competitive sports have a way of stirring the human spirit and revealing what is in our hearts, so our prayer is that we would call on the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in self-control at all times, and that we would bear good fruit and be found faithful to the Lord.

PLAYERS: SPECIAL ATTENTION!.... Playing on a competitive sports team is a privilege! However, it is **not** a right, nor is it a necessity of life. Your character and growth in Christ are the most important things. We care deeply that all of us among the FORCE families would support one another in raising up young people for Christ. Therefore, the Shreveport FORCE organization takes **character issues** very seriously, whether on or off the court or field. This covers many areas of life, including **honor to parents, respect toward coaches and teammates, honesty, good sportsmanship, integrity, diligence in your academic work and other responsibilities, just to name a few!** In order to enjoy the **privilege** of playing on a Shreveport FORCE team, and having a FORCE uniform, **please understand that questionable on-going character issues will be addressed** for the good of the student, the student's peers, the family, and ultimately for the honor of Christ. Please be sure to read all the **Policies** page so there is no question as to what is expected.

Coaches

Please remember that **coaches** are graciously **volunteering many** hours of their time to coach. Their efforts require tremendous sacrifices of time, energy, and sometimes even income and vacation time away from work. It is a rewarding position, but also a very difficult and demanding one that requires constant decision-making, and much of God's grace. **Let us be quick to encourage our coaches and pray for them. Encourage one another and build each other up. 1 Thess. 5:11**

Playing Time

FORCE teams are intended to be competitive. Our coaches make every effort to help all players improve their skills through team practices, and by encouraging individual practice and drills at home. Although our coaches seek to give all players playing time, we strive to be able to compete well against our opponents, and win as many games as we are able, to the best of our team's ability. Therefore, playing time for each player will vary, and no player is guaranteed a certain amount of playing time. Playing time per player is at the coach's discretion. Coaching decisions should be respected by players and family members.

Traveling to Away Games

Parents are encouraged to attend as many away games as they can **Parents:** If you are not able to travel to a particular game, please make arrangements **ahead of time** for your child's transportation, considering the following, **for safety reasons: All drivers carrying FORCE athletes must be at least 21 years of age. The only exceptions would be that a FORCE athlete can, with parental approval, drive himself along with family members only, or be driven by an older sibling that may be under 21. If your child drives his or her sibling(s)**

to or from a FORCE sponsored event, FORCE leadership will assume that the parent(s) of the siblings have approved of that driving arrangement. Please do not send your child to a carpool/caravan meeting place without knowing who they will be riding with.

For overnight trips, **at least one parent from each family is strongly encouraged to travel with us.**

Practices

It is encouraged that FORCE practices be **attended by the team that is practicing and their immediate family members only. In other words, practices are not intended to be open to everyone.** The practice session times will be better used to the fullest by the coaches and the athletes without the distraction of additional people. FORCE practice sessions are often shorter and occur less often than our competitors' practice times, so making the best use of our time is important.

Recognizing that **Sunday** is the Lord's Day, the Shreveport Sports organization encourages all team practices to take place on one or more of the other six days of the week.

Players are encouraged to attend all practices. Coaches depend on reliable attendance in order to plan and prepare effective practices. **Please notify the coach in advance if you are unable to attend.**

Players, please come to practice with an attitude of **humility**, and with a teachable and coachable spirit, ready to learn and cooperate with the coach's practice plan. Since our practice sessions are relatively short, staying focused is important.

Fees & Sponsors

The Shreveport FORCE program seeks to keep its season fees as low as possible for all sports. Registration fees cover expenses such as uniforms, facilities, referees, umpires, insurance, etc. Fees will not be refunded once the season has started unless otherwise voted on by the Shreveport Homeschool Force Board of Directors. We encourage all players to seek out sponsors in order to cover some of these costs. Simply print out a sponsor letter and sponsor agreement from the sponsor tab of our website. The Shreveport FORCE program will feature all sponsors on our website and provide links to sponsor websites. We will also display sponsor names on our home game banners. Sponsors should make checks payable to Shreveport Homeschool Sports.

Uniforms

FORCE teams do wear shorts as part of the FORCE uniform. Each sport is free to choose the style and cut of their uniforms to be both consistent with the needs of the sport and to maintain standards of Christian modesty. Players may wear compression garments or similar clothing underneath their uniforms if more coverage is desired as long as ACEL league requirements on uniforms are maintained.

Player Challenge

We are glad that you are a part of the Shreveport Force team! The leaders of The FORCE are

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praying for you and your personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

As a FORCE player, we challenge you to make a commitment to be a loyal team member, ready to help your team in any way you can. Discipline yourself to work with all your heart, as working for the Lord, and not for men (Colossians 3:23), and this will carry over into all of your life as a young person growing in the grace of Christ. On a side note, be grateful for your parents, thank them often, and be a help to them around the house. Speak kindly to your siblings; be diligent in your chores and academic work; walk in integrity. Seek to serve, and not to be served. Following Christ starts at home in the family!

Remember what our **Lord Jesus Christ** said are the **two greatest commandments: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself** (read Mark 12:28-31). Don't forget to do what Jesus said is the most important thing (see Luke 10:38-42)...sit at the Lord's feet by reading His Word and praying to Him everyday. Do this and you will never lose your way. Give your heart fully to Christ, and you will find abundant life! The Lord loves you and considers you precious enough to die for. There is no greater love than that! (see John 15:13). There is nothing more important than these things.

If you have never accepted God's free gift of salvation and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then we have **GOOD NEWS** for you! Your sins can be forgiven, and you can have eternal life with Him in heaven forever, because He paid the necessary price when He died on the cross. He was raised to life, that we might have life. If you desire to receive this gift of eternal life, repent and confess your sins to the Lord, and you will be a new creation! If you wish to do this, then do not hesitate to let us know, so that we can rejoice with you and encourage you in your new walk with Christ.

May the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be upon the FORCE this year, for the praise and glory of Christ!