

Dear Parent,

Athletics at River Dell are an outgrowth of the educational process. It is a place where students with athletic skills can enhance them. This letter will outline some of our philosophies and goals of the athletic program. Hopefully this will help you gain a better understanding of how a competitive interscholastic program is conducted and what comprises our expectations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me.

1. In each program, a coach and/or coaches are hired to be responsible for that program. Part of this responsibility is team selection. Criteria for selection are established by the head coach with input from their assistants. This may be a highly subjective process. Team selection, practices, and decisions regarding game situations and playing time are the responsibility of the coaching staff.
2. The River Dell High School athletic program is highly competitive. Please understand that when your child signs up for a team, there is a very real possibility they may not be selected if a squad reduction is necessary, or they may not be placed where you or they think they should; ie. JV or varsity. Coaches try to do the very best they can in keeping the most talented athletes, filling positions for play, and placing the athlete on the proper team. Our coaches are under a good deal of pressure to assemble the most competitive team possible. Any one of us might select different athletes for our teams. I believe it is the coach's responsibility and right to select the team with whom they will work the entire season.
3. The select team or club team syndrome. Each coach looks for something different in their players. Participation on a select or club team does not guarantee any player a spot on another select or club team or on any high school team either. While players can gain valuable experience playing outside the school athletic program, neither parents nor students should count on this type of participation to guarantee a spot on a high school team.
4. Playing time is something that is earned during practice. A coach must have confidence that a player they put into a game can function at that level of competition. This means the player must have demonstrated athletic competence, an understanding of the game plan, and the required level of conditioning necessary to perform. It is the coaches right to make these decisions. Our program structure (freshmen, JV, and varsity) allows for growth of the student, and the opportunity to demonstrate that they have earned the privilege to play. Starting positions and playing time are not guaranteed to seniors or anyone else. This is also up to the coaches discretion. Each team member is valuable to the team's overall progress. Some members may play a great deal, while others may not. Each athlete should have personal improvement as one of their goals.

Being a member of a team, regardless of time spent in actual competition, a person can learn many valuable lessons. Among them are the following: citizenship, sportsmanship, appreciation of others abilities, teamwork, responsibility, commitment, loyalty, placing team above oneself, learning to accept instruction and criticism, respect for others, winning and losing with dignity, self control, and being responsible for one's own actions.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Denis Nelson  
Supervisor of Athletics

\*Adapted from an article in Interscholastic Athletic Administration, summer 2001.