



# **Student-Athlete Handbook 2025-2026**





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## MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

### Virginia Wesleyan University Mission

An inclusive community grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and dedicated to scholarship, service, lifelong learning, and environmental stewardship, Virginia Wesleyan University inspires students to build meaningful lives through engagement in Coastal Virginia's dynamic metropolitan region, the nation, and the world.

### NCAA Philosophy

Colleges and universities in Division III place the highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, and an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among their student-athletes and athletics staff. To achieve this end, Division III institutions:

- Expect that institutional presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program at the institutional, conference and national governance levels;

- Place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators and place greater emphasis on the internal constituency (e.g., students, alumni, institutional personnel) than on the general public and its entertainment needs;

- Shall not award financial aid to any student on the basis of athletics leadership, ability, participation or performance;

- Primarily focus on intercollegiate athletics as a four-year, undergraduate experience;

- Encourage the development of sportsmanship and positive societal attitudes in all constituents, including student-athletes, coaches, administrative personnel and spectators;

- Encourage participation by maximizing the number and variety of sport offerings for their students through broad-based athletics programs;

- Assure that the actions of coaches and administrators exhibit fairness, openness and honesty in their relationships with student-athletes;

- Assure that athletics participants are not treated differently from other members of the student body;

- Assure that student-athletes are supported in their efforts to meaningfully participate in nonathletic pursuits to enhance their overall educational experience;

- Assure that athletics programs support the institution's educational mission by financing, staffing and controlling the programs through the same general procedures as other departments of the institution. Further, the administration of an institution's athletics program

(e.g., hiring, compensation, professional development, certification of coaches) should be integrated into the campus culture and educational mission;

Assure that athletics recruitment complies with established institutional policies and procedures applicable to the admission process;

Exercise institutional and/or conference autonomy in the establishment of initial and continuing eligibility standards for student athletes;

Assure that academic performance of student-athletes is, at a minimum, consistent with that of the general student body;

Assure that admission policies for student-athletes comply with policies and procedures applicable to the general student body;

Provide equitable athletics opportunities for males and females and give equal emphasis to men's and women's sports;

Support ethnic and gender diversity for all constituents;

Give primary emphasis to regional in-season competition and conference championships; and

Support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance, which may include opportunities for participation in national championships, by providing all teams with adequate facilities, competent coaching and appropriate competitive opportunities.

The purpose of the NCAA is to assist its members in developing the basis for consistent, equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual institutions to determine their own special objectives and programs. The above statement articulates principles that represent a commitment to Division III membership and shall serve as a guide for the preparation of legislation by the division and for planning and implementation of programs by institutions and conferences.

## **Intercollegiate Athletics Mission**

Virginia Wesleyan University proudly embraces the spirit of NCAA Division III by combining the rigors of a liberal arts education with a nationally competitive athletic program. Through inclusive, gender-equitable athletic programs, VWU not only hones athletic prowess but also nurtures ethical sportsmanship and personal growth.

## **ATHLETICS STAFF DIRECTORY**

### **ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM, REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Scheduling Guidelines for Academics and Athletics Conflicts**

1. Class attendance is expected of all students. Students who are participating in intercollegiate athletics may not miss class, seminar, or lab for practice.
2. Students who have a conflict between an athletic contest and a required academic activity, such as a class meeting or a lecture, should discuss it with their coach and professor as soon as possible, preferably during the first week of the semester and certainly in advance of the conflict. IF a mutually agreeable understanding is not reached, students must be mindful of the primacy of academics at VWU. Students should understand that acceptable arrangements might not be feasible for all classes, particularly seminars and laboratories.
3. Students should take their schedule of athletic contests into account as they plan their class schedules and should discuss this with their academic advisors. Students should provide coaches with a copy of their academic schedules/syllabi and inform them promptly, of any changes.
4. Coaches should make every effort to schedule practices and contests to avoid conflict with classes and should refer to their students' academic schedules to minimize conflicts. Coaches should ensure students do not miss classes for practice and should encourage students to work out possible conflicts between classes and contests as early as possible.
5. Faculty should provide a complete description of scheduling requirements to their classes early each semester (preferably before registration or during the first week of classes); faculty and coaches alike should work with students to resolve contest-related conflicts.
6. Coaches and faculty alike should avoid last-minute scheduling changes whenever possible, and faculty are asked to avoid scheduling extraordinary class meetings. Where possible, extraordinary sessions should be voluntary or offered with a choice of sections to attend. When a schedule is changed after students have arranged their commitments, it is important for the faculty member or coach to be flexible.
7. Normally classes will end each day by 4:15 p.m. (2 p.m. on Fridays). Seminars, however, will often extend beyond 4:15 p.m. Afternoon laboratories are usually scheduled until 4:15 or 4:30 p.m., and students who encounter difficulties completing a lab may need to stay later than the scheduled time. Students in all cases are expected to keep to their academic commitments and attend practices thereafter.

# **Academic Support Services**

## **The Learning Center**

Located on the second floor of Clarke Hall, the Learning Center supports students' success and houses staff and student services. Services offered include the following:

### **Subject Tutoring**

Individual and group tutoring is available for most subjects and courses. Subject Tutors are student peers who have excelled in the courses in which they tutor and who have been hired for their content expertise and ability to explain relevant concepts to others.

### **Writing Tutoring**

Students seeking help with any writing assignment are tutored by professional Writing Tutors who have graduate degrees and often serve as adjunct faculty at VWU. Writing Tutors consult with students on any writing task to help them develop their writing skills and hone their individual writing process.

### **Speech Tutoring & Public Speaking Coaching**

The Speech Lab is a space where students can work with a professional Public Speaking Coach to practice their presentation skills, record speeches digitally, and receive coaching to improve their speaking skills and help build confidence.

### **Academic Skills Workshops**

The Learning Center staff periodically provides workshops for classes and other student groups. Workshops covered include time management, organization, test taking and study skills.

### **Academic Advising**

All first-year and undeclared students are advised by professional Academic Advisors. These Academic Advisors are responsible for helping students learn to construct a degree plan, develop fluency in degree requirements, and understand what it takes to be successful in college.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Virginia Wesleyan recognizes and is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. In keeping with the Americans with Disability Act (and its revised version) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University provides academic accommodations and services for students with disabilities through the Disability Services Office. Students who want to receive accommodations are required to disclose their disability to the Disability Services staff and provide documentation of their disability.

## **Faculty Team Advisors Program**

The VWU Faculty Team Advisor Program seeks to help students achieve success in both their curricular and co-curricular pursuits, to highlight the common instructional mission shared by coaches and professors, and to advance cooperation between coaches and faculty members in support of the University's mission. Each of our 23 programs are paired with a faculty member and are expected to collaborate and provide opportunities for interaction at practices, games and/or social events sponsored by our athletic department.

## Student-Athlete Academic Requirements

Student-athletes at Virginia Wesleyan University must meet the following academic requirements in order to participate in all intercollegiate athletic related activities:

Number of semesters at VWU	VWU GPA required for full participation in athletics	Credit hours required for full participation in athletics **
After one semester	1.8	12
After two semesters	1.8	28
After three semesters	2.0	40
After four semesters	2.0	56
After five semesters	2.0	68
After six semesters	2.0	84
After seven semesters	2.0	96

Any student-athlete falling below the GPA or credit requirements will not be excused from any **academic responsibility\*** for any intercollegiate athletic related activity\*.

First semester ends with the conclusion of January term.

Second semester ends with the conclusion of the Summer Sessions.

\*Academic responsibilities include, but are not limited to

- Physically attending a class; submitting an academic assignment
- Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction
- Attending a study group that is assigned by the professor
- Participating in an online discussion about academic matters

\*Intercollegiate athletically related activities include, but are not limited to

- Practice
- Competition
- Team meetings
- Film sessions
- On-court/field activities called and required by any member of the team and confined primarily to members of the team.

\*\* This includes all earned credit hours, whether or not they count towards graduation.



## Athletic Eligibility

### Eligibility

***A student-athlete must carry a minimum of 12 credit hours throughout his/her entire season.*** If he/she withdraws from or audits a class and drops below 12 credit hours in either the fall or spring semester, he/she is immediately ineligible for intercollegiate practice or competition. He/she may not practice with or be near the team, which includes wearing practice gear. There is an exception for LAST semester seniors and full-time credit hours for graduate students. Please discuss these exceptions with the Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Head Coach well in advance of beginning the semester in question.

### Withdrawal from Class

Please refer to the academic calendar for the last day to withdraw from class. Do not drop below 12 credit hours. Student-athletes have a responsibility not to jeopardize their academic eligibility. This policy is also enforced during the drop/add period. Do not drop a class that reduces the course load below 12 credits without adding a course simultaneously to keep the minimum above 12 hours. Failure to do so renders the student immediately ineligible to practice and/or compete.

### Amateurism

You are not eligible for participation in a sport if you have ever:

- Taken pay, or the promise of pay, for competition in that sport.
- Agreed to compete in professional athletics in that sport.
- Played on any professional athletics team as defined by the NCAA.
- Used your athletic skill for pay in that sport.
- Ever accepted money, transportation or other benefits from an agent or agreed to have an agent market your athletics ability or reputation in that sport.

# STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Campus Citizenship

Student-athletes are expected to practice personal and academic integrity always.

At all times, student-athletes are representatives of the Department of Athletics and Virginia Wesleyan University. Therefore, it is the responsibility of student-athletes to conduct themselves in a manner deemed appropriate by faculty, coaches, and the athletic administration.

Student-athletes are expected to demonstrate respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership.

Student-athletes are to dress appropriately when representing Virginia Wesleyan University as deemed by the coaches and athletic administration.

Alcoholic beverages or non-prescription substances/drugs are not to be possessed or consumed by student-athletes, student managers or student athletic trainers, despite age, during Virginia Wesleyan University athletic-related travel, competition, practice or activity.

Student-athletes are to abide by the NCAA tobacco policies, which states that participants, coaches, athletic trainers, game administrators and/or officials are not permitted to use tobacco products in the playing areas during all NCAA regular season and national tournament competition and practices.

Student-athletes are expected to regularly attend all academic classes, to notify instructors in a timely manner when they will be away from class for scheduled athletic contests, to make appropriate arrangements with instructors to make up missed tests and other assignments due to athletic contests in addition to completing all course requirements.

Student-athletes are to arrive at class on time, not leave early, be prepared for all classes, be attentive/actively participate in class and complete all assignments.

Student-athletes are to communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with others as well as respect the property of others. Hazing or any initiation activities of any type are prohibited.

Student-athletes are to discourage bigotry, respect differences and learn from others' ideas, values and experiences. Student-athletes are to demonstrate compassion, responsibility and leadership through service and involvement with Wesleyan Engaged and the surrounding community.

The NCAA and VWU requires annually that all student-athletes must complete Title IX training for the prevention of sexual violence.

## Hosting Prospective Students

Making a visit to VWU's campus is an important part of the recruitment process. VWU wants prospective student-athletes to experience the many things that make VWU and its athletics experience so special. Current student-athletes play an important role in making sure that recruits feel welcome and have a great experience while they are here.

VWU Athletics also wants to ensure the safety and well-being, as well as protect the eligibility, of student-athletes and the recruits they are hosting. For this reason, Virginia Wesleyan University has established guidelines for both recruits visiting campus and the student-athletes who will be hosting them.

For student-athlete hosts, these rules outline the applicable NCAA rules and institutional policies of which student-athletes must abide while hosting a recruit.

These guidelines include the following:

A coach or staff member **may not** provide a student-athlete or prospect with the use of a vehicle.

VWU **may** provide only one student-athlete host per prospect with a meal only if they are accompanying the prospect on the meal.

VWU **may** provide a host with a maximum of \$40 for each day of the official visit to cover the actual costs of entertaining (including meals when campus dining is closed), the prospect (and the prospect's parents, legal guardian or spouse).

These or other funds **may not** be given to the prospect or be used for the purchase of souvenirs.

The student host **may** be provided a complimentary admission to accompany the prospect to an institution's home athletic contest.

The institution **may** provide reasonable entertainment within **30 miles** of the institution's campus to the prospect, their parents or legal guardians and spouse only. It is not permissible to entertain siblings, friends or other guests of the prospect.

Individuals involved in the recruiting visit (including the prospect) are expected to act in a responsible manner and to abide by the law. **The use of alcohol or drugs in recruiting is illegal thus strictly prohibited. This includes being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at any time while hosting a prospect during his/her recruiting visit.**

A prospect is **never** to be left alone or with a non-team member.

## Social Media

Student-athletes must be concerned with any behavior that might embarrass themselves, their teams, and/or Virginia Wesleyan University. This includes any activities conducted online. Virginia Wesleyan University supports and encourages individuals' expression of First Amendment rights of free speech. This includes participating in online social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.).

The University and Athletics Department does not place any restrictions on the use of these sites by student-athletes. However, as a member of the VWU Intercollegiate Athletics Department, student-athletes are a representative of the university and are always in the public eye. Please keep the following guidelines in mind when participating on social networking websites.

Before participation in any online community, understand that anything posted online is available to anyone, anywhere, at any time because posts can be stored even after they have been deleted by the user. Any text or photo placed online is completely out of one's control the moment it is placed online- even if access to a personal site is limited.

For personal safety, do not post home addresses, local addresses, phone number(s), birth dates or other personal information, photos or other items that could be embarrassing to one's self, one's team or Virginia Wesleyan University. This includes information, photos and items that may be posted and tagged by others.

Exercise caution as to what information is posted about whereabouts or plans as detailed or specific information could be used by predators.

Be aware of "friends"— many people are looking to take advantage of student-athletes, while others want to get close to student-athletes to give themselves a sense of membership in the team.

Virginia Wesleyan University, coaches and administrators can easily access any and all social media and/or websites.

Student-athletes could face discipline and even dismissal for violation of the Policies and Procedures or philosophies of Virginia Wesleyan University, the Athletics Department and/or the NCAA.

Individuals within the University and law enforcement personnel check these websites regularly. In addition to the unfortunate reality of online predators, potential employers and internship supervisors also use these sites to screen candidates. Many graduate programs and scholarship committees now search these sites to screen applicants. Virginia Wesleyan University student-athletes are advised to exercise extreme caution in their use of social networking websites.

## Hazing

Virginia Wesleyan University prohibits hazing by all students and campus organizations. Hazing includes harassing and excessive tasks associated with initiation or membership in an organization. It involves mistreatment of prospective members by those who exercise control over them. Hazing has been further defined by Virginia law at Va. Code §18.2-56 as follows: "'Hazing' means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily injury on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity."

Because hazing is contrary to the institutional values and goals of Virginia Wesleyan University, and is a criminal offense in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the University will not tolerate hazing by students or student organizations. Furthermore, the University will hold individuals strictly accountable for their actions.

Likewise, no individuals or campus organizations may retaliate against any individual who brings forward allegations of hazing, is a witness involved with, or cooperates in the investigation or adjudication of hazing cases. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, physical, verbal, or written harassment, threats, or intimidation of any person(s) who brought the complaint of hazing to the University or of anyone who was a witness or involved in the University's review of the case.

Examples of prohibited hazing include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Physical abuse such as paddling, striking, branding, electric shock or bodily contact with harmful substances
- Intimidation by threats of physical or other abuse
- Excessive exercise or other tasks intended to cause physical exhaustion
- Prolonged or repetitive tasks that result in sleep deprivation
- Prolonged or harmful exposure to the elements
- Compelled consumption of any amount of alcohol
- Compelled consumption of food, liquids or concoctions intended to cause nausea
- Any task which requires the participant to violate the law or the Institution's policies

Students must be aware that participation in the above listed activities, as well as retaliation association with a hazing complaint, will result in disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal. Furthermore, students must understand, and Virginia law explicitly states that consent or acquiescence of those who are hazed is not a defense for engaging in this practice.

# CELEBRATING MARLIN SUCCESSES

## What is a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee? (SAAC)

Presently, there are separate national SAAC for NCAA Divisions I, II and III. NCAA legislation mandates that all member institutions have SAAC on their respective campuses. Further, NCAA legislation requires that all member conferences have SAAC.

The information that follows will assist student-athletes in understanding how the network of SAAC, from individual campus committees to the conference and/or national committees, interact and support one another to shape intercollegiate athletics policy and enhance the student-athlete experience.

## History of the NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

An association-wide SAAC was adopted at the 1989 NCAA Convention and was formed primarily to review and offer student-athlete input on NCAA activities and proposed legislation that affected student-athlete welfare.

The initial national committee was comprised of student-athletes from all membership divisions for the purpose of ensuring that the student-athlete voice was one that accounted for the myriad of educational and athletics experiences of both female and male student-athletes at all NCAA member institutions. In August 1997, the NCAA federated along divisional lines. The federation caused the SAAC to expand to three SAACs representing NCAA Divisions I, II and III.

Each national divisional committee is comprised of both female and male student-athletes charged with the responsibility of assisting in the review of NCAA proposed legislation and representing the voice of the student-athlete in the NCAA governance structure. This is accomplished by providing student-athlete input on issues related to student-athlete welfare that are division-specific. (Federation has increased student-athlete participation in the governance process of intercollegiate athletics by increasing the number of SAAC members from the former Association-wide committee of 28 student-athletes to a sum total of 79 members serving on the national Divisions I, II and III committees).

The input of the respective Divisions I, II and III SAACs continues to be sought by a variety of constituencies within the Association. Student-athlete committee members have the opportunity to speak with their respective NCAA Management Councils, and the Divisions II and III SAACs continue to speak to legislative issues on the NCAA Convention floor.

## National SAACs (Divisions I, II and III) at a glance

Generate a student-athlete voice within the NCAA structure.

Solicit student-athlete response to proposed NCAA legislation.

Recommend potential NCAA legislation.

Review, react and comment to the governance structure on legislation, activities and subjects of interest.

Actively participate in the administrative process of athletics programs and the NCAA.

Promote a positive student-athlete image.

## **Mission Statement of the National SAAC**

*"The mission of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is to enhance the total student-athlete experience by promoting opportunity, protecting student-athlete welfare and fostering a positive student-athlete image."*

## **President's List and Dean's List Award Recognition Events**

Twice a year, the student athletes who have made the President's and Dean's List are honored at an awards ceremony, usually during Homecoming in the Fall and during Alumni Weekend in the Spring. Friends and family are invited to attend.

## **Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society**

The National College Athlete Honor Society was founded at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana on May 17, 1996, by DePauw head football coach and professor of kinesiology, Nick Mourouzis. Mourouzis recognized that there were many organizations that honored students for outstanding academic or athletic achievements, but none that did both. Chi Alpha Sigma hopes to bring honor and recognition to deserving student-athletes, their families, teams, athletic departments, and colleges in much the same way as Phi Beta Kappa honors scholastics. Each head coach nominates student athletes in January based on the following criteria and the induction is held in April.

- Must attend a four-year accredited college or university that is a member of the NCAA or NAIA.
- Must have earned a letter in a varsity intercollegiate sport sponsored by the NCAA or the NAIA.
- Must have achieved at least junior academic standing by the fifth semester or seventh quarter as determined by the certifying institution.
- Must have achieved a cumulative 3.4 (on a 4.0 scale) or equivalent grade point average by the time of the selection process.
- Must have endorsement from the head coach of his/her sport.
- Must have official documentation from the registrar's office as to class standing and grade point average.
- Must be recommended by the college or university Chapter Advisor.
- Must be of good moral character.

# ATHLETIC TRAINING/SPORTS MEDICINE

## ATHLETIC TRAINING FACILITY RULES

- No cleats or muddy shoes allowed
- No food or drink allowed
- No profanity
- Be on time for all treatments and rehab
- Be respectful of fellow athletes and athletic trainers
- No book bags, equipment bags, or sports equipment are allowed
- No smokeless tobacco is allowed
- Do not touch anything without permission
- The athletic training room is not a hangout. If you are not getting treatment, please leave
- No horseplay allowed
- Do not play with any rehab equipment without permission
- Athletes do not treat themselves in the athletic training room. This includes electrical modalities, accessing medication and rehabilitation equipment.
- If you cannot follow the rules, then you will be asked to leave.
- Only current varsity VWU athletes with completed requirements are entitled to athletic training services.

## Expectations of Student Athletes

- Student athletes are encouraged to report all injuries, illnesses, and all medical conditions to the athletic training staff.
- Student athletes need to utilize the athletic training facility and staff during the morning so that proper evaluation and referral can occur.
- All student athletes must sign in prior to receiving care from athletic training staff.
- Student athletes must show respect to the athletic training staff and fellow student athletes at all times.
- Student athletes are to leave the athletic training facility as they found it.
- Student athletes must be efficient with the time of the athletic training staff and efficient with their own time.
- The health and well-being of the student athlete is ultimately their own responsibility. The student athlete must take care of their well-being and seek assistance when needed.
- Email to set-up Athletic Training appointments.



## Athletic Training Hours

**Monday-Friday:** Posted on Athletic Training Facility Doors for each semester

**Saturday-Sunday:** No scheduled hours, scheduled practice and game coverage only

- All morning treatment and rehab sessions are **by appointment only**.
- We will be open 1 hour prior to every practice and 2 hours prior to every athletic event.
- We will be here approx. 30 minutes after every athletic event.
- Weekend hours will be determined based on game and practice schedules.
- Athletic Training room hours are subject to change at any time based on athletic training staff availability, sports season, and university breaks. We will try to post changes on the athletic training room door.

## TEAM PHYSICIAN SERVICES AND POLICIES

Student athletes at Virginia Wesleyan University are fortunate to have extremely easy access to the services of a highly skilled and experienced group of team physicians. In order to continue our relationship with OrthoVirginia we ask that the following guidelines be followed.

- Our orthopedic surgeon will host clinics once a week in the athletic training facility. The day and time of the week that they come is flexible but will be communicated once each clinic is set.
- All student athletes who are going to see a physician during on-campus clinics need to first be evaluated by a member of the athletic training staff and have their appointment scheduled. No walk-in appointments will be permitted.
- The athletic training staff will communicate with the physicians about the cases to be seen in clinic on a given day. Based on the recommendations of the athletic training staff and the team physician; student athletes may be asked to go to the team physician's office for their appointment. Often this is to streamline the care student athletes will receive.
- Student athletes will be responsible for finding transportation to and from appointment with team physicians.
- The athletic training staff will assist in getting directions to medical facilities to student athletes.
- The athletic training staff will make every effort to supply providers with insurance information on student athletes. However, student athletes are expected to take their insurance information with them to all medical appointments.

## STUDENT ATHLETE'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Virginia Wesleyan University athletic training department is dedicated to providing the best healthcare and customer service possible to the student athletes. As a student athlete, you may expect to receive considerate and respectful care. We will honor your rights to patient-centered care and thus you will be informed and involved in making decisions about your care. You have the following rights and responsibilities as a student athlete.

Student athletes have the right to:

1. Privacy and confidentiality regarding their medical care.
2. Expect that their medical records will be kept confidential and that access to information concerning them will be limited to those directly involved in your care. Their medical records will only be released in cases of medical emergencies, in response to court ordered subpoenas or to persons you specify with your written consent.
3. Access to all information contained in their medical record.

4. Know about their injury/illness and proposed treatment and to participate in the creation of their plan of care. Information will be given by the athletic training staff or its physicians in a manner in which the student athlete can understand including the right to know why they need a surgical procedure or treatment and who will perform that procedure or treatment.
5. Receive the necessary information to contribute to decisions about their care including cost, risk benefits, limitations of and alternatives to diagnostic and therapeutic modalities.
6. Give their informed consent before any diagnostic or therapeutic procedure is performed.
7. Be treated in a professional, courteous and respectful manner, which does not discriminate because of age, race, disability, national origin, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation or veteran status.
8. A second opinion or appropriate referral.
9. Express suggestions and/or concerns in an appropriate and respectful manner.
10. Know the names and positions of people involved in your care.

Student athletes have the responsibility:

1. To ask questions and seek clarification if they do not understand the explanation of their diagnosis, treatment, prognosis or any instructions.
2. To provide accurate information about their present illness and past medical history and wishes for their medical care.
3. To follow instructions concerning medications, follow-up visits, education recommendations, and other essential steps in their treatment plan and to notify the athletic training staff if this plan cannot be followed or if problems arise.
4. For treating athletic training staff and personnel in a respectful and courteous manner.
5. To arrive as scheduled for appointments and to notify the athletic training department in advance in cases of cancelations or reschedules.
6. For following all rules and regulations that are posted within the athletic training facility.
7. For treating the athletic training facility as a medical facility and maintain its cleanliness and orderliness.
8. For follow through on your agreed upon plan of care.
9. For considering and respecting the rights of others.

## **PRESEASON PRE-PARTICIPATION SCREENING POLICY**

In order to help identify any potential injuries or illness that may affect the student athlete's performance and/or activities of daily living the athletic training department, in conjunction with the Health Services Department, require all new student athletes to have medical clearance. The athlete will not be cleared to participate without the proper medical clearance.

Prior to the enrollment to the University, the athlete must register for the Athletic Trainers System (ATS) and complete all required documents in the athlete portal. In addition, the student athlete must provide a recent physical using the required form (within the last 6 months) and sickle cell lab test results. All tasks should be completed prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>.

All medical records will be reviewed by the Athletic Training Staff prior to athlete participation. In the subsequent years of athletic participation, the athlete will complete an annual medical update verification and new paperwork prior to the start of the athlete's athletic season via ATS. The athlete is responsible for providing accurate and current medical history on the update form. In the event of questionable or concerning conditions, further review and/or appropriate medical referrals will be made to ensure safe participation clearance.

## **RETURN TO PARTICIPATION POLICY**

The athlete will only be returned to athletic participation upon the clearance of the team physician or athletic training staff, which operates under the supervision of the team physician. All treating medical professionals will take care to make sure that the athlete's well-being is maintained when making return to play decisions. Documentation of full medical clearance must be obtained and maintained in the athlete's medical file for each injury/illness requiring it.

## **STUDENT ATHLETE REFERRAL POLICY**

When an athlete requires treatment out of the athletic training staff's scope of practice, they will refer the athlete to the necessary medical professional. When making a referral, the athletic training staff will make every attempt to follow the procedures of the athlete's insurance company to facilitate full benefits. When possible, orthopedic injuries will be assessed by the team physician's office on campus, enhancing continuity of care. The appointments will be made in a timely fashion taking academic, personal, and athletic commitments into account. The appointment will be made for the earliest available time.

In the event an athlete seeks his/her own referral without prior consult with the athletic training staff, s/he takes sole financial responsibilities and must provide proper documentation to the athletic training staff concerning assessment and treatment plan.

All athletes experiencing general medicine illnesses and reporting the athletic training staff will be referred to VWU Sentara Student Health Center. The athlete will then follow the referral process of the VWU Sentara Student Health Center. If the athlete experiences general medicine illness outside of athletic training and health services hours of operation the athlete should seek medical attention at an insurance approved provider.

# CONCUSSION SAFETY PROTOCOL

## Introduction

Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its student athletes. To this end, and in accordance with NCAA legislation [Division I Constitution 3.2.4.18; Division II Constitution 3.3.4.16; Division III Constitution 3.2.4.16], VWU has adopted the following Concussion Safety Protocol for all student athletes. This protocol establishes and/or identifies: (1) a sport-related concussion definition; (2) independent medical care; (3) preseason education; (4) pre-participation assessment; (5) recognition and diagnosis of concussion; (6) concussion management; (7) return to activity, including both return-to-learn and return-to-play; (8) reducing exposure to head trauma.

## 1. Concussion Definition

The 5<sup>th</sup> international conference on concussion in sport defines concussion as follows:

Sport-related concussion (SRC) is a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces. Several common features that may be utilized to clinically define the nature of a concussion head injury include:

- SRC may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head.
- SRC typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously. However, in some cases, signs and symptoms evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
- SRC may result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical signs and symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury and, as such, no abnormality is seen on standard structural neuroimaging studies.
- SRC results in a range of clinical signs and symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive features typically follows a sequential course. However, in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.
- The clinical signs and symptoms cannot be explained by drug, alcohol or medication use, other injuries (such as cervical injuries, peripheral vestibular dysfunction, etc.) or other comorbidities (e.g., psychological factors or coexisting medical conditions).

## 2. Independent Medical Care

As required by NCAA Independent Medical Care legislation, team physicians and athletic trainers shall have unchallengeable autonomous authority to determine concussion management and return-to-activity decisions for all student athletes. Further, the athletics health care administrator shall ensure that the concussion safety protocol is available for, and rehearsed by, all athletics personnel.

## 3. Preseason Education

All student athletes will be provided the NCAA Concussion Fact Sheet (or similar applicable material) and be required to sign an acknowledgement, on an annual basis during their pre-participation evaluation, that they have been provided, read and understood the concussion education material. This signed acknowledgement will be filed in the student athlete's medical record.

All coaches, team physicians, athletic trainers and directors of athletics will be provided the NCAA Concussion Fact Sheet (or similar applicable material) and be required to sign an acknowledgement, on an annual basis, that they have been provided, read and understood the concussion education material. This signed acknowledgement will be filed in a secure location.

#### **4. Pre-Participation Assessment**

All student athletes will undergo at least one pre-participation baseline concussion assessment. This pre-participation assessment will, at a minimum, include assessment for the following:

- Brain injury and concussion history.
- Symptom evaluation (Symptom Evaluation in SCAT5)
- Cognitive assessment (ImPACT test)
- Balance evaluation (Modifies BESS, Balance evaluation in SCAT5)
- Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)

The sports medicine team will review all ImPACT baseline tests for validity. Any baseline tests found to be invalid will be repeated no sooner than 24 hours. The athlete and coaches will be informed that the athlete cannot participate in any contact activity until the athlete has a valid ImPACT baseline test. Athletes with more than one invalid ImPACT baseline test will be further evaluated by the team physician. The team physician determines pre-participation clearance and any need for additional consultation or testing. Special consideration will be given for new baseline concussion assessment six months or beyond for student athletes who have suffered a concussion or who have a complicated concussion history.

#### **5. Recognition and Diagnosis of Concussion**

A member of the VWU medical team with training in the diagnosis, treatment and initial management of acute concussion will be present at all NCAA competitions in the following contact/collision sports: (basketball (men's and women's); field hockey; soccer (men's and women's); softball; baseball; volleyball; lacrosse (men's and women's); pole vault (men's and women's).

NOTE: To be present means to be on site at the campus or arena of the competition. VWU will ensure that such personnel will be from VWU, from the opposing team or will be contracted independently for the event.

A member of the VWU medical team with training in the diagnosis, treatment and initial management of acute concussion will be available for all NCAA practices in the following contact/collision sports: basketball (men's and women's); field hockey; soccer (men's and women's), softball, baseball, volleyball; lacrosse (men's and women's).

NOTE: To be available means that, at a minimum, medical personnel can be contacted at any time during the practice via telephone, messaging, email, beeper or other immediate communication means. Further, the case can be discussed through such communication, and immediate arrangements can be made for the athlete to be evaluated.

Symptoms of concussion include, but are not limited to: (1) physical symptoms of headache, nausea, balance problems, dizziness, visual difficulty, fatigue, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to noise, headache, feeling "out of it" or "foggy," vision changes, feeling dazed or stunned; (2) cognitive symptoms of feeling mentally foggy or slowed down, difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering, forgetfulness, confusion, feeling slow; (3) emotional symptoms of irritability, sadness, nervousness, feeling more emotional; (4) sleep symptoms of drowsiness, sleeping more or less than usual, difficulty falling asleep.

Visible signs of concussion include but are not limited to: lying motionless; unconsciousness; vomiting; vacant look; slow to get up; balance difficulty or incoordination; clutching the head.

If an athlete, teammate, coach, official or member of medical staff identifies signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussion, the following will take place immediately:

- The athlete must be removed from practice or competition.
  - The athlete must be evaluated by a member of the medical team with concussion experience.
  - The athlete must be removed from practice/play for that calendar day if concussion is confirmed or suspected.

The initial concussion evaluation will include:

- Symptom assessment. (Symptom Evaluation of SCAT5)
- Physical and neurological exam.
- Cognitive assessment. (ImPact Test)
- Balance exam. (modified BESS or balance evaluation of SCAT5)
- Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)

Because a force sufficient to cause concussion can also cause cervical spine or other head trauma, the initial concussion evaluation will also include assessment for cervical spine trauma, skull fracture and intracranial bleed.

## **6. Post-concussion Management**

An emergency action plan will be in place for any suspected or diagnosed concussion. This plan includes rehearsed arrangements for emergency medical transportation. The emergency action plan will be activated for any of the following:

- Glasgow Coma Scale < 13.
- Complete loss of consciousness (i.e. motionless and unresponsive).
- Seizure activity.
- Focal neurological deficit suggesting intracranial trauma.
- Suspected spine injury.
- Severe headache or severe confusion.
- Persistently diminished/worsening mental status or other neurological signs/symptoms.
- Repetitive emesis.

Because concussion may evolve or manifest over time, for all suspected or diagnosed concussions, there will be in place a mechanism for serial evaluation of the athlete.

For all cases of diagnosed concussion, the athlete and another responsible adult will be provided oral and/or written care regarding concussion management. Such instructions must be documented.

As most athletes with concussion have resolution of symptoms in 7-10 days, all athletes who have prolonged recovery more than two weeks will be re-evaluated by a physician. Such re-evaluation will be performed to confirm the concussion diagnosis, or to consider co-morbid or post-concussion diagnoses such as: sleep dysfunction; migraine or other headache disorders; mood disorders such as anxiety and depression; ocular or vestibular dysfunction; cervicalgia/neck pain; other post-concussion diagnoses. Athletes may be referred to physician sooner depending on the severity of symptoms or complexity of their case.

## **7. Return to Activity**

Student athletes require a graduated program of care following concussion, both for return-to-learn and return-to-play. Both will be considered carefully.

### **Return-to-Learn**

Returning to academic activities after a concussion is a parallel concept to returning to play after concussion. After concussion, brain energy may not be available to perform normal cognitive exertion and function. The return-to-learn concept should follow an individualized and step-wise process overseen by a point person within the athletics department, who will work in conjunction with a multidisciplinary team.

The VWU multidisciplinary team may vary student-to-student, depending on the difficulty in returning to a normal school schedule. Such team will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Team physician.
- Athletic trainer.
- Student Health Services
- Neuropsychologist consultant.

- Faculty athletics representative.
- Academic counselor.
- Course instructor(s).
- University administrators.
- Office of disability services representative.
- Coaches.

Student athletes who have suffered a concussion will not return to classroom on the same day. Following the first day of rest, the athlete will undergo an individualized plan that will include the following:

- The plan will be compliant with ADAAA.
  - The athlete will remain at home or in the dorm if he/she cannot tolerate light cognitive activity. Otherwise, return to the classroom and studying will be as tolerated and on a gradual basis.

The academic schedule will normally not need to be adjusted for more than two weeks. If the student athlete continues to require accommodations after two weeks, the following will occur:

- The athlete will be re-evaluated by a physician, which will confirm the diagnosis or consider other post-concussion diagnoses.
- Other members of the multi-disciplinary team will become engaged as needed.
- For more prolonged return-to-learn cases, consideration will be given to working with other campus resources, all of which will be consistent with ADAAA. Such resources will include any of the following:
  - Learning specialists.
  - Office of disability services.
  - ADAAA office.

### ***Return-to-Play***

It is important to recognize each return-to-play plan will be individualized and supervised by a VWU health care provider with expertise in concussion management. Final determination of return-to-play will be made by the VWU physician or his/her qualified designee.

The initial treatment for all athletes following concussion is at least 1-2 days of relative physical and cognitive rest. Relative rest should continue until the athlete has returned to his/her pre-concussion baseline status. Discretion can be used by the health care provider to introduce mild aerobic activity during the transition period of returning to pre-concussion baseline status, so long as such activity does not exacerbate post-concussion symptoms or signs.

Once the athlete has returned to his/her baseline status at rest and during unrestricted cognitive/classroom activities, a stepwise progression return-to-play protocol will take place. Progression from one step in the protocol to the next can take place when the stepwise activity does not lead to worsening or new symptoms. The stepwise progression includes:

1. Light aerobic exercise such as walking, swimming or riding a stationary bike for at least
2. 15 minutes. No resistance training is permitted. If asymptomatic with light aerobic exercise, then;
3. Sport-specific activity (mode, duration and intensity specific) exercise with no head impact. If asymptomatic with sport-specific activity, then;
4. Non-contact sport drills and resumption of progressive resistance training. If asymptomatic with non-contact drills and resistance training, then;
5. Full-contact practice and unrestricted training. If asymptomatic with full-contact practice, then;
6. Return-to-competition is allowed.

NOTE: If at any point the student athlete becomes symptomatic (more symptomatic than baseline), the team physician or physician designee will be notified, and adjustments will be made to the return-to-play progression. It is commonplace for progression of each step to take at least 24 hours.

### **8. Reducing Exposure to Head Trauma**

VWU is committed to student athlete health and safety. To that end, VWU will be proactive in efforts to minimize exposure to head trauma. The following procedures are in place:

- Concussion Fact Sheets, plus education regarding safe play and proper technique, are made available to student athletes at the time of the pre-season annual health examination.
- Concussion Fact Sheets, plus education regarding safe play and proper technique, are made available to coaches, sport administrators, team physicians, athletic trainers and strength and conditioning coaches on an annual basis.
  - Reducing gratuitous contact during practice.
  - Taking the head out of contact.
  - Teams will take a “safety-first” approach to sport.

## **Sickle Cell Trait Policy**

Sickle cell trait is an inherited condition of the oxygen-carrying protein, hemoglobin, in the red blood cells. Sickle cell trait is a common condition, affecting greater than three million Americans. Although sickle cell trait is most predominantly in African-Americans and those of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Indian, Caribbean and South and Central American ancestry, persons of all races and ancestry may test positive for sickle cell trait. Sickle cell trait is usually benign, but during intense, sustained exercise, hypoxia (lack of oxygen) in the muscles may cause sickling (red blood cells changing from a normal disc shape to a crescent or “sickle” shape) of red blood cells, which can accumulate in the bloodstream and “logjam” blood vessels, leading to collapse from the rapid breakdown of muscles starving for food.

*NCAA Policy:* the NCAA requires that all NCAA Division III student athletes have knowledge of their sickle cell trait status before the student athlete participates in any intercollegiate athletic event, including strength and conditioning sessions, practice, competitions, etc. If unable to show proof of prior testing by having the athlete’s primary care physician complete the sickle cell trait status, the athlete must be tested to determine the athlete’s sickle cell status.

*Athletics Testing Procedures:* All students that are unable to confirm their sickle cell trait status must undergo sickle cell trait testing prior to participation in any intercollegiate athletic activity. More information pertaining to sickle cell trait and NCAA athletics can be found at <http://www.ncaa.org/health-and-safety/medical-conditions/sickle-cell-trait>

## **Asthma Policy**

Student athletes who have been diagnosed with asthma are solely responsible for managing their prescription. The Athletic Training staff is not responsible for carrying, administering or checking expiration dates on inhalers. All student athletes who have an inhaler or a rescue inhaler are required to report this to the Athletic Training Staff so they are aware and can better monitor the student athlete’s health and care in relation to their asthma.

## **Diabetes Mellitus Policy**

Student Athletes with diabetes should report this to the Athletic Training Staff prior to coming to school or beginning athletics. Each student athlete with diabetes should have a diabetes care plan from their physician that includes blood glucose monitoring and insulin guidelines, treatment guidelines for hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia. Student athletes with diabetes should have a medic alert tag with them at all times.



*Supplies:* Student Athletes with diabetes should either carry the following with them at all times or provide the following to the athletic training staff to keep in the team medical kit.

- A copy of diabetes care plan.
- Blood glucose monitoring equipment and supplies.
- Supplies to treat hypoglycemia (sugary foods) and glucagon kit.
- Supplies for ketone testing.

## STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES

As a Virginia Wesleyan university student, you are required to comply with the conduct policies of the institution, regulations of the commonwealth of Virginia laws and federal laws. Furthermore, as a student-athlete you are also required to comply with NCAA policies and Virginia Wesleyan University Athletics Department policies.

### Statement of purpose:

The athletic department at Virginia Wesleyan University does not support the illegal or irresponsible use of alcohol or other drugs. Our department believes that the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs can be detrimental to academic *and* athletic performance. Therefore, the athletic department alcohol and drug policy was developed in accordance with this philosophy. The following program objectives are also consistent with this philosophy:

- Inform student-athletes and staff of the NCAA, departmental, university, and state policies concerning alcohol and other drug use.
- Discourage alcohol abuse, underage drinking, and the use of illegal drugs and banned substances by VWU student-athletes.
- Identify student-athletes who may have problems and assist in proper treatment.
- Create a positive and healthy atmosphere for Virginia Wesleyan athletes.

The jurisdiction of the athletic department regarding drug and alcohol offenses begins the first day of practice for a student-athlete and continues until the student is no longer considered a student-athlete as per the NCAA definition of student-athlete. Policy violations that occur at the end of a sports season or those that occur during a season but are not discovered until the end of the season will be applied to the next sports season in which the athlete participates.

A coach has the option of making any sanction more stringent, but **not any less stringent than Commonwealth of Virginia law regarding alcohol use**: persons under the age of 21 may not purchase, possess, or consume beer, wine, or distilled spirits

**NCAA regulations regarding tobacco use:** the use of tobacco products is prohibited in all sports during practice and competition.

**NCAA regulations regarding banned substances:** all student-athletes are required to attend, once per year, an NCAA educational session regarding banned substances and must sign the NCAA drug testing consent form.

The alcohol and drug policies of the athletic department are not in lieu of those policies set forth in the Virginia Wesleyan student handbook and planner but are designed to support the Virginia Wesleyan

community standards and to raise the awareness and educate student-athletes regarding their responsibilities as it relates to these policies.

## **Alcohol and Student Conduct Policy Statement**

Virginia Wesleyan University athletic department does not condone the illegal or otherwise irresponsible use of alcohol. Alcohol dependence is a progressive disorder in which both psychological and physical dependency can develop. The negative physical and mental effects of the abuse of alcohol are well documented. Even low doses of alcohol impair brain function, judgment, alertness, coordination, and reflexes. Very high doses cause respiration suppression and death. Chronic and abusive use of alcohol can produce alcohol dependency, dementia, sexual impotence, cirrhosis of the liver, and heart disease. There is a high correlation between alcohol abuse and academic failure. Sudden withdrawal can produce severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and life-threatening convulsions. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every member of the university community to know the risks associated with alcohol use and abuse. **In addition to student-athletes being subject to state law and university policy, the consumption of alcohol by student-athletes is prohibited in connection with any official intercollegiate athletic activity.**

A student-athlete who consumes alcohol will be accountable for any alcohol related incident in which he or she is involved. In such cases, the student-athlete is subject to university, department of athletics and/or team disciplinary action.

**The department of athletics prohibits the use of any funds to be used toward the purchase of alcoholic beverages for student-athlete consumption. This prohibition includes the purchase of alcohol for prospective student-athletes by current student-athlete hosts and the consumption of alcohol by prospective student-athletes while visiting the university. Regardless of whether a student-athlete host has reached the legal drinking age, purchasing alcohol for consumption by a person under the legal drinking age (i.e., a teammate or a prospective student-athlete) is a violation of state law.**

**The athletic department has approved the following policies and sanctions related to alcohol and other conduct issues:**

Violations of the college's alcohol policy and other student conduct policies will be dealt with based on the college's community standards, expectations and responsibilities. The sanctions that may be imposed will follow the university's community arbitration system and those sanctions are listed and defined in the Virginia Wesleyan student handbook and planner. The following outlines the athletic department's actions in conjunction with those sanctions.

**Official Reprimand:** the student-athlete will meet with the head coach and be disciplined at the coach's discretion.

**Conduct Probation:** the student-athlete will meet with the athletic director and the head coach to discuss the consequences of continued disrespect of the university's alcohol policy and consequences will be given on a case-by-case basis. These consequences **may** include game suspension.

**Alcohol Probation:** the student-athlete will meet with the athletic director and the head coach to discuss the consequences of continued disrespect of the university's alcohol policy and consequences will be given on a case-by-case basis. These consequences **may** include game suspension.

**Drug Probation:** While on drug probation, should a student be found using, possessing, or being in the presence of drug paraphernalia or illegal substances on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan, they may be subject to suspension or dismissal from the University.

**Disciplinary Probation:** the student-athlete will meet with the athletic director and the head coach. Consequences **will** include a one game suspension minimum and may include other penalties imposed by the head coach.

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## **Drug Policy Statement**

Every violation, whether a first offense or a second offense, carries the following sanctions:

- mandatory meeting with a member of campus life staff
- mandatory meeting with the athletic director and head coach

**Any violation of the university's drug policy, which is found to be true, and adjudicated by arbitration or administrative action:**

1. **First violation- one game suspension minimum and other penalties may be imposed by head coach**
2. **Second violation- suspended for remainder of season and may include other penalties imposed by head coach**

**Any policy violation involving the use of NCAA banned substances which is found to be true.**

1. **First offense: one game suspension minimum and other penalties may be imposed by head coach**
2. **Second offense: suspended for remainder of season and may include other penalties imposed by head coach**
3. **The head coach may have the option of making any sanction more stringent, but not any less stringent**

**The following definitions apply to this document:**

**Intercollegiate athletic activity** –activities including home and away competitions (including overnight trips), team practices, hosting recruits and other official team functions.

**University community arbitration system**- the organizational structure of this system is annually published in the Virginia Wesleyan student handbook and planner. The information includes a description of the following: the composition and duties of hearing bodies, due process and related proceedings, sanctions, and administrative action.

**Mandatory meeting with Campus Life** - the student-athlete will be required to meet with a campus life staff member, who will, in consultation with the university counselor, determine any appropriate referrals. The student-athlete is required to complete any additional referrals made by campus life staff.

**Game(s) suspension**—athletes will be permitted to attend and participate in practices conducted prior to or between the game(s) suspension. Athletes will be permitted to attend home game(s) in which they are suspended but will not dress for competition and will not travel to away contests.

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## **NCAA Banned Substances**