

Gilman School
Approach to Athletics
Values & Guiding Principles

Preface

The motivation to evaluate the state of athletics at Gilman has emerged from several sources. The School's current Long-Range Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees in 2011, identified the promotion of "meaningful and balanced participation in athletics" as one of its strategic objectives. As a result, the School created in 2012 an Athletics Task Force to begin reexamining the role of athletics at Gilman. That group, which was led by Director of Athletics Tim Holley, produced a set of conclusions and recommendations that have been submitted to the headmaster. The findings of the task force generated a further round of evaluation by a smaller group selected by the headmaster.¹

This second, smaller group has developed the following statement of values and set of guiding principles that articulate the role athletics should play in the education of Gilman boys and provide direction for the continuing development of the School's athletics program and its administration, including specific implementation steps.

Statement of Values

Gilman firmly believes that participation in athletics forms a vital part of the overall educational experience for all of its students in all grades, K-12. At their best, interscholastic and intramural competition and participation, as well as physical education in the lower grades, provide fertile grounds for important physical, social, and emotional growth and development. As with all aspects of our curricular and co-curricular program, the School should offer developmentally appropriate athletic options to serve the students' needs and to realize their full potential.

Guiding Principles

In accordance with these values, our guiding principles are as follows:

The Gilman Experience

Excellence: As we do in virtually every aspect of Gilman's program, we strive for excellence in intramural and interscholastic athletics, a pursuit that should be governed by and balanced within the context of our mission to educate the whole boy in mind, body, and spirit.

Balance: Our belief in the education of the whole boy in mind, body, and spirit demands that all aspects of school life be balanced. Athletics should be structured and weighed so that students are able to meet all of the demands of a Gilman education. Within the athletics program, we will appropriately and reasonably balance the different offerings.

K-12 Continuum: Consistent with our academic curriculum, each division's athletics program should build on the prior division's program. Lower and Middle School students should look up to and see opportunities for themselves in the Upper School sports programs.

¹ Bill Gamper '71, Director of Admissions; Harry Halpert '85, P '15, '17, '20, trustee; Rob Heubeck, Head of Upper School; Tim Holley '77, Director of Athletics; Pete Kwiterovich '87, Head of Middle School; Scott Sherman '72, PP '14, trustee; Scott Wieler PP '09, President of the Board of Trustees

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College: Gilman strives to provide an experience that allows students opportunities for success in life well beyond secondary school and college. Participation in college athletics may be a byproduct of a successful Gilman experience, but the School's primary aim is to produce men of character who attend the best colleges and universities available to them.

The Teacher-Coach Model

Teacher-Coach: Recognizing the primacy of connections between adults and students to the Gilman experience, Gilman affirms the importance of the teacher-coach model and remains committed to hiring and developing teachers who can and will work with boys in interscholastic and intramural athletics, as well as in all other parts of the School's program outside the academic classroom. Whenever possible, we will staff our programs with faculty coaches.

Non-faculty Coaches: Understanding the need to hire some non-faculty coaches to support an interscholastic program that includes 16 sports, the School will support non-faculty coaches to ensure their integration into Gilman's approach to athletics as a core component of a Gilman education.

Program Development

Under-squad Participation and Development: Undersquad (junior varsity and freshman/sophomore) teams serve a dual purpose of providing a training and proving ground for boys progressing to varsity teams and offering a meaningful interscholastic experience for all boys, including those who will progress to varsity and those whose interscholastic experiences might end at the undersquad level.

Intramural Athletics: Intramural sports are an integral part of the athletics program and complement the interscholastic program in supporting the School's efforts to educate the whole boy. Intramurals serve as viable alternatives to playing on interscholastic teams and offer meaningful opportunities for students and adults to connect outside the classroom.

Admissions & Enrollment

Admissions: When making admissions decisions, we consider many factors, including but not limited to athletics. We engage in athletic recruiting, just as we seek out students with other special talents, recognizing that we will admit only a limited number of students for whom athletics, or any other special attribute, serve as a distinguishing characteristic. As such, athletics provide only one of several ways to attract a diverse array of talented students.

It is critical that Gilman admit and enroll students and families who are committed to embracing the whole Gilman experience. Gilman should not be used by applicants and their families simply as a means to play a sport; instead, athletics and the consideration they receive in admissions are vehicles to the Gilman experience in its entirety.