

**Mead Junior/Senior
High School**



**Athletic Handbook
2026-2027**

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MEAD JUNIOR - SENIOR HIGH

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Participation on an athletic team can be a rewarding and meaningful educational experience that enhances a student's secondary education. It is important that students realize the time demands, responsibility, dedication and sacrifices required when making this kind of commitment. The Athletic Department hopes this document provides parents and students with a better understanding of our philosophy, goals and policies. The guidelines established herein for the interscholastic program of Mead Junior/Senior High School are revised each year and are indicative of what we hope to accomplish in our athletic program. The Mead Student Handbook and District policies may supersede these guidelines.

Terry Hickman, Activities Director
PJ Quinn, Superintendent
Mead Public Schools

PHILOSOPHY

Athletics is an integral part of the educational experience. Athletics provides opportunities that will help students develop physically, mentally, and emotionally. The competition of athletics is a healthy educational and physiological activity because it challenges each student to excel, to discover his or her physical limits, and to work cooperatively with team members. While winning is a natural goal in the pursuit of excellence, so too are the principles of good sportsmanship and enjoyment of competition.

Athletic participation at the Varsity level will be based on such attributes as ability, attitude, and team role. There will be a strong focus on winning at this level. Participation at this level requires a significant commitment of time and effort.

Junior Varsity is a transitional level that attempts to prepare athletes for Varsity competition. Though coaches may focus more on opportunity for all players, learning to win is part of the preparation for Varsity competition.

Junior High athletics will make an effort to provide opportunities for all athletes to compete in contests, though playing time will not necessarily be equal. This is more easily accomplished when participation rates allow for an A and B team to compete in such sports as basketball and volleyball. The NSAA permits sixth grade students to participate in Junior High athletics in certain cases. In such cases, the sixth grade students will be considered bona fide members of the team. Their placement on an A or B team and their playing time will be consistent with the criteria used for junior high students.

Despite the heightened efforts to provide playing time at the Junior Varsity and Junior High levels, students with substantial skill deficits may have limited playing time until those skills are sufficient to dictate more playing time. Such decisions will be made by the coaches.

No person, including students, may be treated in a manner which discriminates based on sex, race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, handicap or marital status. Any grievance shall follow procedures included in the Board of Education Policy Manual - Student: Civil & Legal Rights.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Expectations of Athletes

It is expected that all student-athletes display behavior that reflects sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play. Coaches will develop more specific expectations for their sports and teams. Only basic expectations are published here.

1. Attend school regularly.
2. Behave appropriately in the classroom and school setting.
3. Understand and abide by the rules of the game and respect the integrity and judgment of officials.
4. Avoid the use of profanity and inappropriate language or gestures.
5. Observe training regulations.
6. Attend practice.
7. Maintain good academic standing.
8. Behave appropriately outside of school.
9. Attend disciplinary and academic assignments before attending practice.
10. Avoid using social media in a manner detrimental to the team.

2. Expectations of Spectators

Mead Public Schools expects all parties present at a contest to display the highest possible level of sportsmanship. Players, coaches, and spectators should treat opponents, game officials and visiting spectators with respect at all times. Spectators who do not adhere to standards of good sportsmanship may be asked to leave the contest and/or be prohibited from future contests. If you are not sure what details good sportsmanship, please follow this simple rule: Cheer for your own team, but do not belittle opposing teams and officials.

1. Practice the accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.
2. Respect officials, coaches, and players.
3. Avoid the use of profanity and inappropriate language or gestures.
4. Follow the regulations of the school, including the tobacco-free and drug-free building rules.

3. Communication Expectations

It is best for all parties if positive relations can be maintained between players, coaches, and parents. These guidelines should help maintain such positive relations.

1. Communication should first occur between the player and coach. If a player has questions or concerns about playing time or similar matters, he or she should speak directly to the coach.
2. If the player-coach communication does not resolve the issue, parents are then welcome to discuss the matter with the coach. It is strongly recommended that the player be included in at least a portion of this meeting.
3. If the parent-coach communication does not resolve the issue, a meeting with the Athletic Director and/or Principal should then be scheduled. The coach and player may be included in at least a portion of this meeting.
4. Players and parents should make every attempt possible to avoid discussing such matters with coaches before or after contests. The Athletic Department strongly recommends to coaches that they do NOT discuss such matters as playing time after a contest.
5. In the case of an injury, parents should feel welcome to discuss the matter directly with the coach when necessary.
6. In cases of misconduct or mistreatment of an athlete, parents can express their concern directly to the coach, Athletic Director, Principal, or/and Superintendent.

REGULATIONS

1. Practice/Contest Regulations:

- a. No athlete will ever work out using school facilities unless he or she is appropriately supervised.
- b. Nothing will ever be done by any coach or athlete to take away from the sport in season.
- c. Coaches will encourage their athletes to participate in another sport during the off-season.
- d. Off-season unorganized practices will always start after the practices of the sport in season and will be concluded before the daily practice ends so as to not interfere in any way with the sports in season.
- e. If an individual is dropped from a squad, because of disciplinary reasons by the coaching staff or if they quit on their own accord, they may not practice for the next sport season using school facilities or under the supervision of a coach until the sport, which he/she quit, is completed, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- f. Individuals classified as seniors by the NSAA shall compete at the Varsity level only. Permission for seniors to compete at the Junior Varsity level must be granted by the Athletic Director due to special circumstances.

2. Participation on Other Teams

Any individual who is a member of any Mead Jr./Sr. High School interscholastic athletic squad (Grades 9-12) cannot participate in any other organized activity involving a similar sport, in school or out of school, during the period that he/she is a member of a Mead Interscholastic squad.

Examples:

- 1) Town team or church league volleyball during volleyball season
- 2) Town team or church league basketball during basketball season
- 3) AAU cross country or road races during track season

The before mentioned restrictions involve all students Grades 9-12

3. Travel To and From Activities

Mead Jr./Sr. High School staff members and activity groups travel to and from all contest events by school bus or school vehicles. Travel by private cars is discouraged, but when used, adult drivers are used whenever possible. Members of activity groups are expected to return from a contest/event by school transportation when available. Common Exceptions:

1. A participant may continue on a trip with his or her parents or remain at the site when their parents are visiting friends, relatives, etc. after the contest
2. If returning to Mead causes a hardship upon the family, such as if the participant lives between the site and Mead.
3. If a participant must return home early because of another obligation or emergency situation.
4. Students who go to an event/contest as spectators are allowed to participate in the pep band while at the contest/event.

This policy is followed in all aspects of the activity program in order to ensure unity among the squad/groups and because of the liability factor involved.

In (1), (2), and (3) of the exceptions above, the participant may be released to their *parents, or an acceptable designee of the their parents* at the site. The parent or designee must provide a written release to the sponsor/coach. The school reserves the right to approve a designee chosen by a parent. Therefore, such arrangements must be made prior to travel.

Should a student be in violation of the policy on transportation, he/she may face disciplinary sanctions up to, but not limited to, suspension from future contests or dismissal from the team.

Travel Expectations

- a. When traveling by school bus, students should remember the following:
 1. Always be on time for departure.
 2. There will be no loud or boisterous talking.

3. All riders will always be seated.
 4. There will be complete silence when the bus stops at railroad crossings.
 5. There will be no yelling or throwing items out of windows or body parts out of the windows.
 6. Students will always leave the bus by the front door.
 7. There will be no food or drink taken on the bus unless given permission by the sponsor. If concessions are allowed, disposal of trash to the appropriate areas is expected.
- b. Dress: Dress of team members should be clean, neat and in good taste.
- c. Meals: In some cases when an athletic team is required or will be away from home all day for a contest, arrangements will be made by volunteers to provide food for team members.

5. Participation and Attendance

Students must attend school the entire day of any scheduled school activity in order to participate in the activity. This includes but is not limited to performances, games, and practices. Failure to attend will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity. Any student missing more than 20 minutes of a period will be marked as absent and will not be considered to have attended the entire day.

The Principal, or the Principal's designee, retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail. Participation will normally be granted only when the absence cannot be avoided, is of a medical nature, or has been pre-arranged and the student has made academic arrangements for all classes. Students absent for a medical/doctor appointment shall provide a note from the doctor. Students should attend the periods before and after a medical/doctor appointment whenever possible. The right to participate **will not** be granted in cases of illness or oversleeping.

Students who leave a school-day event early will be counted absent from school from the time they leave the event until the end of the school day.

When an athletic event requires a student to miss one or more class periods, the sponsor/coach of the activity will notify all teachers of the respective buildings prior to the absence by putting a list of the students to be absent for the activity in each teacher's mailbox. Academic arrangements and/or makeup of work will be the responsibility of the student. An Assignment Form for School Activity Absence must be completed prior to departure.

6. Participation and Truancy

Athletes may not participate in a contest or a scheduled activity including a practice if they have been truant until such time as all detention time has been arranged or made up.

7. Physical Exam and Participation Form

All athletes must meet the following requirements before they start practice:

- a. Return a physical examination form indicating successful completion of a physical exam and signed by an attending physician or appropriate health care professional.
- b. Return the Student Participation and Parental approval form signed by both the student athlete and the parent or Guardian

8. Eligibility

Junior high and senior high school students, including part-time students, involved in activities must be passing 25 credit hours at the beginning of the week to be eligible for participation in competition. It will be indicated on the weekly report if the students are ineligible to compete in the activity that they are involved in. The Eligibility Report is produced each Monday morning. Part-time student parents/guardians will be expected to coordinate with the Athletic Director proof of their current grades, each week. Unless special circumstances exist, the student remains ineligible until the next Eligibility Report. This does not affect practice, only contests and performances.

Parents, the Athletic Director and the Principal, with the coaching staff, shall also reserve the right to withhold any student from participation should the classroom work or behavior indicate at any time that they are not working up to their ability.

Eligibility is also affected by the Co-Curricular Policy, which defines the consequences for violations including, but not limited to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. A complete version of the Co-Curricular Policy is included in the Junior-

Senior High Student Handbook.

NSAA GUIDELINES:

At the end of the semester, eligibility for the following semester will be reviewed according to the NSAA rule which requires students to pass 20 credit hours to be eligible for participation the following semester.

Representatives of the NSAA shall act upon requests for the consideration of such exceptions of Nebraska School Activities Association Requirements.

9. Activities on Church Night and Sundays

The Nebraska School Activities Association does not normally allow the scheduling of contests on Sunday. In addition to this, the school wishes to work cooperatively with the churches of the community. Practices of an organized nature may be held on a Sunday with approval of the building administrator should it precede a Monday Varsity Tournament or a post-season contest that occurs on a Monday or Tuesday. These practices are on a voluntary basis, though a player is expected to attend unless a conflict of schedule or belief exists, and can be no longer than 1 1/2 hours in length.

All Sunday practices must be approved by the building principal or the athletic director prior to the date of the practice.

10. Starting, Dismissal, & Length of Practice

The individual coach will designate all starting times of practices. All athletes are expected to be on the field or court at the time set by the coach.

In order that athletes and their parents may plan accordingly and for the welfare of the athlete, the following is suggested concerning the length of practice. (Practice time is time on the court or field; does not include dressing time)

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Senior High Activities | 2 hours recommended |
| b. Junior High Activities | 1 hour 45 minutes maximum |

11. Equipment

The athletic department tries to furnish the athlete with as much of the equipment needed as is feasible. We are confident that we have good equipment and in case of contact sports, our athletes are well protected.

All equipment will be checked out to individuals at the beginning of the season by the coach in charge. The athlete will be responsible for this equipment and should be prepared to pay for the cost of replacement if it is not checked in at the end of the season in reasonable condition. (Single or custom item replacement costs may be substantially more expensive than the original cost.) Athletes are assigned lockers in their respective locker rooms. Each athlete is expected to keep his/her locker locked when it is unattended by the athlete.

It is the responsibility of the athlete to check in the equipment at the designated time or immediately, should they quit a sport. If an athlete fails to check in their equipment at the designated time, they will be expected to pay for the cost of replacement. All collections for lost equipment will be handled by the Athletic Director or Principal.

At no time should an athlete wear equipment checked out to him/her except for practices and contests or for other acceptable events. Such equipment should never be misused. Any athlete found to be wearing or using school equipment for inappropriate purposes or inappropriately possessing school athletic equipment can expect to be treated as possessing property not belonging to him/her. Athletes may wear athletic equipment such as game jerseys during the day on the date of the contest.

Athletes and guardians purchasing their own football helmets must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Helmets must be purchased new (not previously owned/used) and be NOCSAE certified.
2. Helmets must be left in the school's possession during the offseason to be inspected and recertified as needed.
3. Cost of recertification of a personally owned helmet is the responsibility of the athlete's family.
4. The school is not liable for helmets that fail recertification, are lost, or are otherwise damaged or destroyed by this

process.

5. Helmets must match in color and adornment of those worn by the rest of the team.

6. Helmet fit and proper certification will be determined by the head coach at the time of the helmet being added to the inventory.

7. Helmets will be returned to the athlete upon their completion of their eligibility or they are no longer a member of the team.

12. Requirements for Lettering - Senior High

Each time an individual letters, they will be awarded a letter certificate by the coach of that sport at the conclusion of the season. The first time, and only the first time, that an individual letters in any sport, he/she will be awarded by the coach of that sport, the standard chenille letter representative of athletics.

General Information Regarding Lettering

1. All lettering requirements are based on varsity competition only.

2. There will be no letters awarded based upon Jr. High competition.

3. In most cases, senior high student managers will be awarded letters after they have been a manager for a sports season.

4. Lettering requirements can be waived at the discretion of the head coach with the approval of the athletic director in the case of a senior who has been out for a sport for four years or in the case of injury to an athlete.

5. All athletes must finish the season in good standing in order to receive a letter.

6. Letters will be awarded by the Athletic Department.

In order for an athlete to be eligible to letter, the athlete must have achieved one of the following requirements. It will then be up to the discretion of the respective coach as to whether the athlete will letter.

Football - The athlete must participate in one-third of all varsity quarters. An athlete may earn two bonus quarters for successful participation in a minimum of 75% of the school sponsored Summer Weight Training workouts and four bonus quarters for 90% completion. The head coach will normally determine letter winners.

Basketball - The athlete must average one quarter of participation for each game played during the regular season. (All tournaments included except district and state) An athlete may earn two bonus quarters for successful participation in a minimum of 75% of the school sponsored Summer Weight Training workouts and four bonus quarters for 90% completion. The head coach will normally determine letter winners.

Volleyball - The athlete must play in 1/2 of the season's varsity sets or matches during the regular season. (All tournaments included except district and state) An athlete may earn two bonus matches for successful participation in a minimum of 75% of the school sponsored Summer Weight Training workouts and three bonus matches for 90% completion. The head coach will normally determine letter winners.

Track - In order to earn a track letter, you must earn 12 points from the following categories. Coach has final say on whether someone letters.

- Points scored in a meet.
 - (Relays will be divided by 4). Athlete may earn a maximum of 6 points in this category.
- Honor roll.
 - Athlete may earn a maximum of 1 point in this category. Either 3rd Or 4th quarter honor roll.
- Personal bests.
 - After 1st meet for freshmen, compared to other years for upperclassmen. Athlete may earn a maximum of 3 points in this category.
- Being at every practice
 - (No unexcused absences, and make up all excused absences – maximum of 3 excused absences)
Athlete will earn either 2 or 0 points in this category.
- Good attitude throughout season (Coaches discretion).
 - Athlete will earn either 2 or 0 points in this category.
- Finish season in good standing (Compete at districts a must unless injured)
 - Athlete will earn either 2 or 0 points in this category.

13. Locker Room

All athletes will be under the supervision of the coach in charge while dressing. An athlete must not endanger the safety of others. The coach in charge will deal with all cases of misconduct while dressing.

Absolutely no use of cell phones or other devices will be used to record images of anyone in the locker room in a state of undress. Doing so will result in severe school and extracurricular consequences, and may be punishable by law.

Athletes are to always respect all equipment and supplies in the training room. Coach's offices and equipment rooms are off-limits to all athletes except student managers. Exception: the athlete is asked to enter for a conference by the coach.

14. Guidelines for the Use of the Weight Room

- a. Over-all supervision of the weight room is under the direction of the Athletic Director of the Mead Schools and the building principal and the coaches.
- b. A definite time schedule with a supervisor present will be set up for Monday-Friday during the summer by the school's weight room coordinator.
- c. The room will be used for the following purposes and in the following priorities:
 1. Physical education instruction-physical fitness program.
 2. By the sport in season - program to be designed by the head coach.
 3. Conditioning program for athletes not involved in athletic programs in season, grades 9-12.
 4. Summer conditioning program for all athletes' grades 7-12 the coming school year.
 5. Adult/community. Adults may use the weight room unsupervised but they assume all responsibility in the case of injury.
- d. Students will not use the weight room during the regular school day except as part of a regularly scheduled physical education class. (Students may not sign out of a study hall to use the weight room.)
- e. Students may use the weight room outside of school hours according to the District policy. However, no student is to lift without a partner in the weight room.

INJURY AND CONCUSSION

Injury

If a student sustains an injury, other than a concussion that requires a physician's attention, the student must submit his/her physician's written permission before the student will be permitted to participate in athletic activities, including practice and games.

Concussion

Concussion awareness has made great strides in recent years. The following 3 guidelines are taken from Nebraska's Concussion Awareness Act.

1. A student who participates on a school athletic team shall be removed from a practice or game when he or she is reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury in such practice or game after observation by a coach or a licensed health care professional who is professionally affiliated with or contracted by the school.
2. Such student shall not be permitted to participate in any school supervised team athletic activities involving physical exertion, including, but not limited to, practices or games, until the student (a) has been evaluated by a licensed health care professional, (b) has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed health care professional, and (c) has submitted the written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities to the school accompanied by written permission to resume participation from the student's parent or guardian.
3. Licensed health care professional means a physician or licensed practitioner under the direct supervision of a physician, a certified athletic trainer, a neuropsychologist, or some other qualified individual who (a) is registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily recognized by the State of Nebraska to provide health care services and (b) is trained in the evaluation and management of traumatic brain injuries among a pediatric population

Any student who has suffered a confirmed concussion will be prohibited from participating in athletic contests or practices until the appropriate return to play process has been completed. This will include the most up-to-date stepwise process available.

The school principal and athletic director will be notified of cases in which there is a question regarding the physical condition of a student following a concussion, including cases in which a difference of opinion exists between one or more parties mentioned above.

SCHOOL TRADITIONS

CHANT: "GO BIG RED"

COLORS: RED AND WHITE

NICKNAME: RAIDERS/LADY RAIDERS

SCHOOL SONG (to the tune of the "NOTRE DAME VICTORY MARCH")

MEAD HIGH WE PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO YOU
MEAD HIGH YOUR STANDARDS CARRY US THROUGH,
WITH OUR FIGHT FOR RED AND WHITE
FOREVER TO AND UPHOLD THE RIGHT. RAH, RAH, RAH.

RAH, RAH, RAH, RAH, FOR GOOD OLD MEAD HIGH
WE'LL SHOUT OUR PRAISES UP TO THE SKY,
ALWAYS EQUAL TO THE BEST,
OH! MEAD HIGH, WE LOVE YOU BEST. RAH, RAH, RAH.

Senior High Sports Seasons:

All interscholastic sports are divided into three seasons - fall, winter and spring. The division of sports, the date of the first organized practice, and the closing of the season shall be as follows: (no individual may participate simultaneously in more than one sport per season)

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Cross Country	August 10 th	State Meet October 23 rd
Football	August 10 th	End of Regular Season
Golf (Girls)	August 10 th	State Meet October 12-13 th
Softball (Girls)	August 10 th	State Tournament October 14-19 th
Volleyball (Girls)	August 10 th	State Tournament November 4-7 th
<u>Winter</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Basketball (Boys)	November 16 th	State Tournament March 10-13 th
Basketball (Girls)	November 16 th	State Tournament March 3-6 th
Wrestling	November 16 th	State Tournament February 16-20 th
December moratorium: No games, practices, contests of any kind from Dec. 23-27 th		
<u>Spring</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Baseball	March 1 st	State Tournament May 15-21 st
Golf (Boys)	March 1 st	State Meet May 26-27 th
Track	March 1 st	State Meet May 21 st – 22 nd

Junior High Sport Season: Opening practice dates subject to change.

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Football	August 17 th	October 5 th
Volleyball (Girls)	August 17 th	October 19 th
<u>Winter</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Basketball (Boys)	October 26 th	December 14 th
Basketball (Girls)	January 4 th (Open Gyms December)	February 27 th
December moratorium: No games, practices, contests of any kind from Dec. 23-27 th		
<u>Spring</u>	<u>Opening Practice</u>	<u>Close of Season</u>
Track	March 22 nd	May 7 th

No organized practices may be held in any sport between the close of the previous season and the end of the school year. The NSAA defines this period as the “school year, out of season” period. An organized practice shall be defined as such:

FOOTBALL: An organized practice shall mean more than five players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.

BASKETBALL & VOLLEYBALL: An organized practice shall mean more than four players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.

TRACK: An organized practice shall mean more than three players under the direct supervision of a sponsor.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Student Athlete of the Mead Junior/Senior High School listed below and the parent/guardian of said student, acknowledge having received and read a copy of the 2026-2027 Student Athletic Handbook outlining the procedures, rules and regulations for Mead Junior/Senior High athletes. Furthermore, both parent and student agree to abide by all procedures, rules and regulations as described in said handbook. This form must be signed by both student and parent/guardian and returned to the Athletic Director prior to the first competition.

Failure to agree to abide by the student handbook will result in the students' suspension from the activity until the Administration and/or the School Board of Education, working with the parent/guardian, can resolve the matter.

STUDENT NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____