

LAUREL KNIGHTHAWKS

TRACK AND FIELD PARENT HANDBOOK

2026



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Laurel Knighthawks Track & Field Committee

| | |
|--|----------------|
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| Rachel Neal – Assistant Coach (Lead Elementary Coach)..... | (601) 422-3289 |
| Bryan Hanna – Assistant Coach (Distance Coach)..... | (509) 392-3403 |
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Team Philosophies

"Compete with Honor...Finish Strong...Give God The Glory"

"We Win With Grace...We Lose With Class"

Code of Conduct

Laurel Knighthawks Track and Field is unapologetically a Christian organization. As such, administration, coaches, athletes, volunteer workers and parents are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is Christ honoring. In keeping with this standard, it is our expectation that all members will observe the following while acting on behalf of or while representing the Knighthawks program in any capacity.

- Dress and appearance should be modest and above reproach. Shirts should be worn at all times. This includes practice apparel for all participants.
- Personal conduct should be Christ honoring and above reproach.
- Language should be graceful and edifying. No foul language will be tolerated.
- Personal interaction with others should be pleasant and constructive. Bullying, hurtful speech, taunting, roughhousing, pushing, and/or hitting will not be tolerated.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarettes or vape (ing) by those legally underage or use of controlled substances is not permissible.
- Sexual misconduct of any form will not be tolerated.
- Media should be wholesome and of a manner that is in keeping with Christian principles.
- Crude or vulgar music, text or images in print or electronic form will not be tolerated.
- Any social media representing or depicting the Knighthawks or its members should be such that it represents the Knighthawks in a positive manner.
- While good natured cheers and jeers are part of an exciting competition environment, coaches and athletes from either team are not to be heckled or taunted in a hurtful manner.
- Coaches, athletes, and fans are expected to treat the judges and timing officials with respect. Arguing with and/or insulting officials in any form is not permitted.

Violation of this code of conduct is grounds for suspension or dismissal of athletes from the Knighthawks program as determined by the Board. Parents and fans found to be in violation may be asked to leave competitions without refund. Subsequent violations may result in parents or fans being barred from attending Knighthawks events.

Program Rules

Knighthawks Track and Field adopts the rules of the Mid-South Association of Homeschool Athletics (MSAHA) Rulebook (Current Revision). These rules will govern all MSAHA hosted meets. A copy of the MSAHA Rulebook is available at <https://www.msaha.net/forms>.

As described in the MSAHA Rulebook, all track and field competition will be governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field Rules except as modified by the MSAHA. NFHS Track and Field Rules are available for purchase at <https://www.nfhs.org/sports/track-field/rules>.

Non-MSAHA hosted meets will be governed by the adopted rules of the hosting conference.

Participation/Eligibility

Laurel Knighthawks Track and Field is open to all homeschooled athletes in Grades 1 through 12. The athlete must be homeschooled as defined by MSAHA Rule 2.1.

“Homeschooling is defined to mean that a student’s education is parent-directed. As such, the parents shall be involved in their child’s education by assuming the role of principal or headmaster, thereby (1) setting the date and requirements for high school graduation; (2) selecting and approving course materials and study schedules; and (3) selecting tutors, teachers, co-op’s, correspondence courses, videos, computer courses and similar resources for their child’s education … the student must maintain at least 51% of his/her education from classes that meet the homeschooling definition … Homeschooling does not recognize or include students who are enrolled in a traditional public or private school and who are completing their course work remotely from home.”

Athletes must be currently enrolled as a homeschooled student. Graduated students are not eligible, regardless of age.

Practice Facilities and Meet Venues

These rules are put in place to help protect athletes, coaches and fans from injury, to protect the Knighthawks Program and partner facilities/venues from liability for avoidable accidents and to protect partner facility properties from any preventable damage.

Please note that these rules should be observed in our practice facilities and all competition venues.

- No athlete or member family should speak in an official capacity on behalf of Knighthawk Track and Field to any facility/venue owner/operator, school official, program administrator, opposing team coach, player or fan unless specifically tasked to do so by the committee. Membership within the program does not grant the right to speak on behalf of the program, raise complaints on behalf of the program or to enter agreements on behalf of the program.
- **Only athletes, coaches or those invited onto the track and/or field should be on the track and/or field at any time.**
- All posted rules at any facility/venue shall be followed.
- Parking should be in designated parking areas only. Areas excluded are any grass surfaces, and any other parking areas designated by any facility/venue as no parking.
- In the event of personal injury or damage done to a facility/venue or facility/venue campus, home or away, due to a violation of these rules, the Knighthawks Track and Field program will not accept liability for repair, replacement or costs of damages. The individual member family responsible for the violation will be personally responsible for any necessary repair, reimbursement, or restitution.

- Failure to abide by these rules may result in suspension or dismissal from the program. If dismissed for failing to abide by these rules, no fees will be refunded and no previously published media will be retracted or revised. Failure to abide by facility/venue specific rules may result in retraction of Knighthawk Track and Field's permission to access the facility/venue for training and/or competition.

Disciplinary Policy

The Knighthawks Track and Field program recognizes the authority and autonomy of the individual families that comprise its membership. Matters of personal or individual discipline will at all times be referred to the parents of those involved. The only disciplinary actions that will be imposed by the Knighthawks program will be that of suspension or dismissal of an athlete or member family for a code of conduct violation.

- If problems arise between individuals or member families, those families should seek resolution and reconciliation among themselves. Committee members and coaches should not be asked to involve themselves in interpersonal issues.
- If problems arise between members and coaches or if a complaint needs to be raised against a coach, an Executive Committee exists within the organization. This committee has been tasked with mediating and resolving conflict involving coaches.
- If a code of conduct violation occurs, the board reserves the right to investigate the violation and to suspend or dismiss members. If dismissed for a code of conduct violation, no fees will be refunded and no previously published media will be retracted or revised.

Coaching Staff

All coaches are volunteer coaches. They have families, jobs and lives beyond Track and Field. They volunteer their time to coach your children. They are not paid and do not receive any program discounts for their service. Please respect their efforts.

If a parent has a sensitive concern that does not warrant an Executive Committee conference, said concern should be initiated via email, text or GroupMe to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the coach. Such issues should not be addressed before/during/after practice and/or meet.

Our coaches are disciples of Jesus Christ, believing in the forgiveness of sin by His shed blood, have proclaimed Him as their Lord, and strive to obey Him. They will encourage each athlete to focus on developing spiritually, mentally, athletically, and socially. Each coach has pledged that athletes will acquire more than track and field skills; they will be given the resources to find their passion and purpose, equipping them for excellence in athletics, and in life. Coaches understand that they are more than instructors, they are leaders, with a desire to assist young athletes, as well as their families. Both words and actions of coaches while on and off the track/field shall honor Jesus Christ.

The Head Coach is responsible for:

- Determining practice dates, times and locations as deemed necessary;

- Developing athlete skills and abilities;
- Organizing and submitting the team roster to the Mid-South Association of Homeschool Athletes (MSAHA) officials;
- Determining athlete qualifications and event placement;
- Creating team competition schedule; and
- Establishing and implementing program strategy

Assistant Coaches are responsible for:

- Assisting the Head Coach during practices and meets;
- Supervising practices and meets, when required, in the event that the Head Coach is unavailable. The Head Coach will meet with the Assistant Coach(es) prior to the scheduled absence, and will provide clear directions/guidance for executing the practice/meet;
- Developing athlete skills and abilities
- Determining athlete qualifications and event placement; and
- Establishing and implementing program strategy.

All coaches must be vetted and approved by the Executive Committee before being allowed to coach. This includes submitting a background check for review by the Executive Committee.

Competition

Knighthawks Track and Field is a developmental and competitive program. All participants will receive practice, training, and competition opportunities.

In a competitive program, there are no guarantees of participation in specific events. Every effort will be made to get athletes to qualify for events; however, qualification is earned based on ability and effort demonstrated in practice and in meets. Coaches will provide qualifying measuring and timing at practices. Athletes that would like to compete in the upcoming meet must be timed or measured. During this time, athletes will run, jump, or throw and their results will be documented. Athletes in running events shall be timed on a regulation track for each event prior to competition eligibility. Coaches will decide qualification determinations and strategy. Most conferences allow athletes to “run up” a division (i.e., Elementary athletes may compete in the Middle School division, and Middle School athletes may compete in the Varsity division. These opportunities are offered to individual athletes exclusively at the discretion of the coaching staff.

If an athlete is unable to attend a meet, they are required to notify their coach as soon as possible so that another athlete can participate in their event.

If a parent feels there is an issue with fair qualification determinations, they should set up an appointment with the coach to address their concern.

The competitive season generally begins in February and continues into May. Once the competitive season begins, track meets will occur approximately once a week. Not all meets offer opportunities for all ages; some meets are “Varsity Only”, or “Middle School and Up”.

In general, track and field meets are all-day events, but each meet will have its own schedule. Schedules are typically rolling (i.e., event times are estimated – each event will begin upon the completion of the preceding event). Any “scheduled event start time” is subject to change; however, the order of events will follow the published schedule. Meet schedules and other team notifications will be posted on GoupMe as information is released to coaches. New members can be added to the GroupMe site by any existing Laurel Knighthawks Track Club member. Track athletes competing in multiple events throughout the day will need significant nutrition and hydration; therefore, should plan accordingly. It is also recommended that athletes and spectators have access to an ample supply of sunscreen. Other accouterments may include garbage bags, canopies, chairs, picnic blankets, first aid items, towel, change of clothes, and a camera.

Each athlete should don the official Laurel Knighthawks uniform during competition, including the official tank and black shorts of the athlete’s choice. Slide or leggings are permitted and encouraged in the case of very short running shorts or wide-legged shorts. Running shoes are adequate for most events. Track spikes are optional, but are required to be no longer than 1/4-inch on many all-weather tracks. Coaches can answer any questions regarding maximum permitted spike length at any individual meet.

Rules enforced at any meet are in accordance with the hosting entity. Most public schools will incorporate rules adopted by the NFHS, most private school meets will incorporate rules adopted by the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools (MAIS), and homeschooled meets will incorporate rules by the MSAHA.

Although events available at any individual meet are based on individual meet hosts, in general, events available are listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 - Elementary Track & Field Events

| Elementary (Grades 1-5) | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 100 Meter Dash | 400 Meter Dash | 1600 Meter Run |
| 200 Meter Dash | 800 Meter Run | |

Table 2 - Middle School and Varsity Track & Field Events

| Middle School (Grades 6–8) and Varsity (Grades 9–12) | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| 100 Meter Dash | 100/110 Meter Hurdles | Shot Put |
| 200 Meter Dash | 300 Meter Hurdles | Discus |
| 400 Meter Dash | 4×100 Meter Relay | Triple Jump |
| 800 Meter Run | 4×200 Meter Relay | Long Jump |
| 1600 Meter Run | 4×400 Meter Relay | High Jump |
| 3200 Meter Run* | 4×800 Meter Relay | |

* Not available at MAIS meets for Middle School

Practice

Coaches reserve the right to hold practices at the time and location of their discretion and to conduct practices in the manner they believe will best prepare athletes for competition.

Practice commences in January and ends after the last meet, which can be scheduled into mid-May. Coaches will specify this in their communication.

Although no penalties are assessed for missing practice, absence from a significant amount of practice may affect competition due to a decline in conditioning. Once practices are scheduled, all athletes are strongly encouraged to be in attendance. As a courtesy, please let a coach know if you are planning to be absent at practice.

Athletes should arrive a few minutes early, change clothes and shoes if necessary and be ready to begin practice at the announced start time.

Athletes who are sick or injured will be under the direct supervision of their parents who will advise coaches of their ability and limitations concerning practice and competition.

Elementary athletes should always be under supervision of a parent or other non-athlete guardian at practice unless prior arrangement has been made with the coaching staff. All other athletes may attend practice alone as long as behavior does not necessitate parental supervision.

Athletes should be prepared to leave as soon as practice is over.

Injury or Medical Condition

Knighthawk coaching staff and trainers will do everything feasible to provide emergency care if an injury occurs during practice or competition. However, volunteer coaches are not emergency medical professionals. Injuries requiring medical attention will be the responsibility of parents and their chosen physicians.

In recent years, concussions have become a more prevalent concern. Knighthawks will treat all significant head injuries with utmost gravity. If concussion is a concern, athletes will be removed from practice or competition immediately and will not return until an athlete's parent has given consent.

If an athlete receives a significant injury of any kind or develops a condition that requires medical attention, the athlete must present a signed medical release to their head coach from their physician to return to practice or competition.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is key to the success of Knighthawks Track and Field program. All parents are encouraged to contribute in some way to the work of running the program. Work is divided into several areas for delegation. Each area will have a leader put in place by the committee to ensure the work is done efficiently and effectively. Volunteering is recommended and appreciated. Contact any committee member your desire to contribute/volunteer.

Some opportunities to volunteer include:

- Coaching
- Measuring distances at qualifying practices and/or at meets
- Timing athletes at qualifying practices
- Child safety duties
- Communications
- Equipment management
- Banquet & Awards
- Uniform ordering and distributing
- Team apparel ordering and distributing
- Photography
- Volunteer EMT/injury specialist

Costs and Fees

Knighthawks Track and Field strives to keep the cost of participation as low as possible. We are a volunteer organization and there are no paid staff members or coaches. Registration fees are collected to cover current or projected costs, which include, but are not limited to conference membership, insurance, uniforms, facility fees, equipment, and competition or other event fees

Cost and fees will vary year to year. A deadline for fees to be paid will be set at registration each year. If an individual's fees are not paid by the deadline, that individual athlete will not be allowed to participate and uniforms will not be ordered unless a previous arrangement has been confirmed with the committee.

In addition to the up-front cost of registration, there may be meet admission fees and/or parking fees.

Insurance

Sports specific insurance is required to participate in Knighthawks Track and Field. This insurance is non-declinable and will be purchased through registration fees. Sports physicals for each athlete are required in accordance to our insurance policy.

Sports Physicals

Each participant is required to have a sports physical on file for that current year. Sports physicals are valid for a 12 month period from date of issue. Sports physicals may be obtained at many local General Practitioner Doctor's Offices. Many in the area will provide them for free. A deadline to provide a completed sports physical form will be set at registration each year. If an athlete's sports physical hasn't been provided prior to the deadline, that individual athlete will not be allowed to participate until a completed form is provided.

Other Sports

Knighthawks Track and Field encourages participation in the ever-growing venue of homeschool sports and recognizes the fact that from time to time, conflicts will arise between sport schedules. The following guidelines are encouraged:

- The current “in-season” sport should take precedence.
- In cases of conflict between concurrent sports seasons, meets should take precedence over practices.
- Athletes should communicate clearly with their coaches to work out schedule conflicts and make up requirements for missed practices.
- Coaches are encouraged to reach out to other sports coaches and coordinate schedules when possible.

Acceptance of Stated Policies

Prior to final enrollment in any Knighthawks program or auxiliary, potential members will be provided access to a copy of the handbook for the current sports year.

Furthermore, each member enrolling will be asked to sign, on their enrollment form, a statement that they have read and agree to the terms and policies set forth within this handbook.

Enrollment in Laurel Knighthawks Track and Field or auxiliary is an affirmation of the members understanding of and agreement to abide by the policies set forth within this handbook.