



John G. Diefenbaker Athletics Handbook

John G. Diefenbaker High School has boasted a proud athletic history since opening its doors in 1971. For over five decades, our school teams have proudly represented the values and competitive spirit of the Diefenbaker Chiefs. We strive to cultivate an environment where student athletes are supported by coaches, teachers, teammates, and peers, helping them succeed in sports, academics, and the broader school community. Our goal is to develop strong student athletes who showcase their skills in competition while building the character required to grow into contributing citizens.

Educational athletics provides unique opportunities for student athletes to engage in their school community and learn outside the classroom. Our coaches operate through a character-based athletics lens, placing a central focus on integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and leadership. Ultimately, these virtues help our student athletes make positive choices in all areas of their lives.

Go Chiefs!

Teams

All of our teams participate in the **Calgary Senior High School Athletic Association (CSHSAA)**. The CSHSAA believes that interscholastic athletics, as a recognized component of the school curriculum, are educationally sound and enhance the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of young people. The Association promotes safe and fair competition for all member schools by offering a balanced program of quality learning experiences in a competitive sporting environment.

CSHSAA is a member of School Sport Alberta (SSA). SSA is the governing body for all high school sports associations in Alberta. Student athletes need to be registered with SSA to insure eligibility and fair play. SSA hosts provincial championships for all team and individual sports. Frequently, individual student athletes at Diefenbaker participate in wrestling, badminton, and track and field provincial competitions.

Diefenbaker Athletics fields teams and athletes in every sport offered by the CSHSAA. Each sport is placed in the appropriate CSHSAA division based on previous season success and the anticipated competitiveness of the upcoming season's roster.

Sports by Season

Fall (*Late August to Mid-November*)

- Junior and Senior Football
- Volleyball
- Girls Soccer
- Cross Country Running
- Swim (*October*)
- Golf

Note on Golf: Golf is not an official CSHSAA sport. The divisional championship is hosted by the Calgary Independent Schools Athletic Association and School Sport Alberta (SSA). Tournament play in the spring is not sanctioned by any sport association and is played purely for experience.

Winter (*Mid-November to Mid-March*)

- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Badminton (January – April)

Spring (*Late March to Early June*)

- Boys and Girls Rugby
- Boys Soccer
- Junior and Senior Field Hockey (*Girls*)
- Track and Field

Full season schedules can be found on the association website: [Calgary High School Athletics](#).

Fans and Playoff Policies

In alignment with the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) policies, all home basketball and volleyball events at John G. Diefenbaker (JGD) High School are designated as **closed events**. Attendance is strictly limited to immediate family members and current students of both JGD and the opposing school. Community members without a direct connection to either institution are not permitted on campus during these events. All students from Diefenbaker or the visiting school must present a valid school ID to enter.

All football games are hosted at **Shouldice Athletic Park**. Fans will be charged an entry fee to offset the cost of security. However, each student athlete will be provided with family passes for regular-season games so parents and immediate family members are exempt from admission fees.

All playoff games and city championships across all sports charge an admission fee for spectators:

- **Students, Minors, and Seniors:** \$2
- **Adults:** \$5

Junior & Senior Teams

Varsity (high school) athletics are comprised of Junior and Senior teams.

- **Junior teams** consist of Grade 10 and select Grade 11 students who may not yet be ready to compete at the senior level. The focus at the junior level is on skill development and providing an exploratory competitive experience.
- **Senior teams** place a higher emphasis on team success and advanced competition. As student athletes mature and reach the senior level, both expectations and the level of play increase.

In rare circumstances, a Grade 10 student-athlete may be placed on a senior team. These decisions are based on the positional needs of the senior team, as well as the mental, emotional, and physical maturity of the student.

Tryouts & Team Selection

Information regarding tryouts and team details will be shared in the weeks leading up to the start of each sport. For fall sports, tryout information will be emailed to parents prior to the start of the school year so students can prepare for day-one tryouts.

Important: Before participating in tryouts, students must submit an annual authorization form signed by their parents/guardians to the head coach. Please see the website for this form, or visit the PE office.

Students are encouraged to try out for any and all teams. Because player turnouts are high, we unfortunately cannot retain every student due to roster size limits. Every student will receive a fair opportunity to try out before final selections are made.

Team selection is the sole responsibility of each sport's coaching staff. Evaluation is based on several sport-specific attributes and character traits, including:

- Athletic ability and future potential
- Coachability, attitude, and work ethic
- Sportsmanship and team-first mentality
- Behavior and conduct outside of the sport

Should a parent or guardian have a concern regarding the tryout process or a final decision, they should contact the school's Athletic Director.

Fees

Every team has associated participation fees, which vary by sport. Most team fees cover the expenses of league play (referees, facility bookings), tournaments, uniform rentals, player photos, equipment, training supplies, and substitute teacher coverage. Higher fees typically indicate additional out-of-town tournaments, team apparel, or sport-specific opportunities.

Fees are expected to be paid prior to the first game of the season. Financial constraints should never be a barrier to participation. If team fees present a challenge, please connect with the Athletic Director to inquire about **KidSport** funding. Each student is permitted to apply for up to \$500 per calendar year (January to December).

Fundraising

All teams participate in two fundraising initiatives in their season of play. We have been partnered with Vertical Raise since 2023. We have raised around \$20 000 each year with this program and has allowed our programs to purchase additional equipment and offset costs associated with the athletics department. We also host a bottle drive for each season of play. Student athlete participation is mandatory.

Practice and Game Schedules

Most teams are active before and/or after school 4 to 5 days per week. While demanding, it is a highly rewarding experience. Generally, schedules consist of 2–4 practices and 1–2 games per week, alongside weekend tournaments depending on the sport.

Tryout, practice, and tournament schedules will be communicated at the start of the season. Official game schedules for all sports are posted on the

[Calgary High School Sports](#) website. Students should expect to arrange their own transportation to off-site local league games; however, teams will generally travel together via school bus for out-of-town tournaments.

Approved Communication Channels

Official communication between coaches, teachers, and student athletes must occur strictly through email, TeamSnap or Hudl. These are the only approved platforms for school-related athletic communication.

Playing Time

Student playing time is determined solely by the coaching staff. **Playing time is earned, not given.** In contact sports, student safety is a primary factor in these decisions.

If a student athlete has questions regarding their playing time, they should first approach their coach directly to discuss the matter. If a parent wishes to discuss playing time, they must schedule an appointment with the coach. Should further concerns remain after this meeting, parents may then contact the Athletic Director.

Student Code of Conduct

As representatives of John G. Diefenbaker High School, student athletes must uphold high standards of behavior both in and out of competition. In alignment with the Calgary Senior High School Athletic Association (CSHSAA) constitution, students are strictly prohibited from:

- Engaging in the use or possession of alcohol, illicit drugs, or performance-enhancing substances.
- Demonstrating disrespectful behavior as a participant, spectator, visitor, or representative of JGD.
- Directing abuse toward officials while participating in or spectating any sport.
- Directing obscene gestures toward players, coaches, officials, or spectators.

Students who violate this Code of Conduct will be suspended from their team by the Athletic Director until disciplinary consequences are finalized by the Principal, in conjunction with the CSHSAA Executive Board.

Every student athlete and their parent/guardian is required to sign both the CSHSAA Code of Conduct and the JGD Player Contract before competing.

Fairness in Sport

In accordance with Bill 29, the Government of Alberta legislation titled “The Fairness and Safety in Sport Act”, each student athlete who wishes to participate in female athletics must complete an **Athlete Eligibility Confirmation** form. This form will be provided by your coach and should be returned with your *authorization to tryout* form.

Attendance & Academics

Attendance Policy

The John G. Diefenbaker Student Code of Conduct mandates that students attend 100% of their classes. Unexcused absences will result in athletic consequences, including a loss of game eligibility.

Furthermore, the Athletic Department expects 100% attendance at all practices. If an athlete must miss a practice, they must notify their coach directly in advance. Unexcused or uncommunicated absences from practice will leave game-day eligibility to the coach’s discretion.

Academic Expectations

Students are expected to maintain total academic integrity at all times. Open communication between the student athlete and their teachers is critical. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate upcoming athletic absences in advance. Student athletes remain fully accountable for all course work, tests, and assignments regardless of their sports schedule.

Students who are not experiencing success in their classes need to work with their coach and their teacher to create a plan to catch up on school work and pass their class. As long as students are engaged in their learning and openly working with their teachers and coaches to work towards being successful in their courses, participation on their school team will not be impacted.

Night of the Chiefs

The **Night of the Chiefs** is our annual athletic recognition banquet, where we celebrate the successes of our student athletes. All participants are recognized for their commitment, and major award winners are highlighted. These include Male and Female Athlete of the Year for each grade level, as well as scholarship nominees and winners.

Tickets for the banquet are included in your team fees. Please note that if a student plays multiple sports, they are only required to pay the ticket fee once. The event takes place on the **first Wednesday in June**, with detailed information sent out in May.

Coaching & Staffing Structures

In accordance with the CSHSAA constitution, the head coach of any school team must be a certified teacher.

- **Teacher Sponsors:** In instances where a community coach possesses the technical sports knowledge to run a team, a teacher will act as a *Teacher Sponsor*. In these cases, the teacher sponsor remains legally designated as the head coach of record.
- **Standards:** Teacher-coaches and community coaches are held to identical behavior and ethical standards under our Code of Conduct.

Contact

For all athletic inquiries, please contact:

- **Athletic Director:** Matthew Kerslake
- **Email:** mrkerslake@cbe.ab.ca