



KCAC

CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER

HANDBOOK



NAIA Champions of Character®

The vision of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character program is to change the culture of sport. Its mission is to provide education to instill the values that build character so students, coaches, and athletic administrators know, do, and value the right thing within and outside of the sports setting. It raises the standard for positive student-athlete development in athletics and academics.

The Champions of Character program is designed to help student-athletes, coaches, and administrators to find balance by keeping five core values – **integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership** – at the heart of the sport experience. In addition to instilling an understanding of character values in sport, the program provides practical tools for student-athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators to use in modeling exemplary character traits.

The purpose of the Champions of Character program for student-athletes is to learn and understand how the values play out in both practice and competition. These character values help young people - and those associated with their development - make good choices in all aspects of their life and reflect the true spirit of competition. Research shows that the longer a student-athlete competes in college sports, their social reasoning – sacrificing for the good of the team – decreases. Champions of Character hopes to reverse that trend.

The purpose for coaches is to intentionally define, model, shape and reinforce the values through their coaching and mentoring.

The purpose for athletic administrators is to foster procedures that provide a positive atmosphere, an attitude of sportsmanship, and a safe experience for all students, athletes, officials, and spectators at its athletic events.

KCAC is committed to the NAIA Champions of Character program and advancing character-driven athletics.

The 5 Core Values

Integrity: Knowing and doing what is right

BE COMMITTED: Set high standards for your behavior and stick to them even in difficult situations.

BE COURAGEOUS: Stand up for what you believe is just and good.

BE HONEST: Choose words and actions that are sincere, not misleading.

BE DISCIPLINED: Remain dedicated and self-controlled, even when challenged.

BE RESILIENT: Learn from mistakes and losses; seize the opportunity to improve.

Respect: Treat others the way you wish to be treated

BE ACCEPTING: Support everyone's worth and dignity, regardless of background, abilities or beliefs.

BE CONSIDERATE: Always be aware of and honor others' rights and feelings.

BE ATTENTIVE: Be ready to learn from coaches, officials and other contestants.

BE ENCOURAGING: Demonstrate concern for the growth and development of all others.

BE APPRECIATIVE: Value the guidance of supportive adult and student leaders.

Responsibility: Embrace opportunities to contribute

BE HELPFUL: Understand and advance the group's positive goals.

BE CONSCIENTIOUS: Be aware and careful of the choices you make.

BE ACCOUNTABLE: Accept that your actions impact everyone around you.

BE PERSEVERING: Work through difficulty and discouragement in pursuit of individual and team objectives.

BE RELIABLE: Prove that others can depend on you.

Sportsmanship: Bring your best to all competition

BE COOPERATIVE: Join teammates, opponents, coaches and officials in mutual quest for excellence.

BE FAIR: Compete skillfully, guided by the letter and spirit of the rules.

BE GRACIOUS: Savor the challenge of a tough competitor and meet it with your finest performance, win or lose.

BE HONORABLE: Respect the game and everyone's contributions.

BE HUMBLE: Take success in stride - share the credit.

Servant Leadership: Serve the common good

BE EMPOWERING: Inspire and help others to grow, succeed and lead.

BE VISIONARY: Raise expectations for yourself and the team.

BE INTERCONNECTED: Recognize the vital link between individual effort and group achievement.

BE GENEROUS: Freely contribute hard work and support to reach the team's goals.

BE ENERGETIC: Initiate action - do what needs to be done.

KCAC Champions of Character Committee

The KCAC Champions of Character Committee is composed of the 13 Champions of Character Liaisons who are appointed from each institution.

According to the NAIA, Conference Character Committees are dedicated to promoting Champions of Character® throughout conference activities and include five areas.

1. Character Education: Professional development

- a. Ongoing training and professional development for conference coaches, athletic administrative staff, and student-athletes.
- b. All coaches are required to complete the Character-Driven Coaching course.

2. Hospitality and Game Management: Conduct in competition

- a. Set and communicate expectations for hospitality and game management.
- b. Work with the Conduct and Competition Committee who reviews ejection and suspension reports to create programming for areas of concern.
- c. Establish procedures for responding to extreme behavior, including a crisis management plan.

3. Share the Character Message

- a. Hold a sports summit to bring together the supervisor of officials, athletic director, coaches, and captains to discuss game experience expectations and issues for a particular sport.

- b. Share the Champions of Character message during conference championships or conference-wide servant leadership projects.

4. Promote and Recognize Character: Awards and Recognitions

- a. Coordinate Champions of Character national awards for the conference.
- b. Recognize officials, athletic directors, coaches, and student-athletes for demonstrating character with individual and Champions of Character All Conference team awards.
- c. Create a Champions of Character page for your conference website.

5. Oversight and Assessment

- a. Use the results from the Champions of Character scorecard to assess your conference plan.
- b. Conduct game experience surveys for officials, athletic directors, and coaches.

KCAC Campus Character Liaisons

Each NAIA institution has a Champions of Character® Liaison who implements the program.

1. Character Education: Professional Development.

- a. Ongoing training and professional development for coaches, athletic administrative staff, and student-athletes.
- b. Off NAIA Academy learning modules for student-athletes.
- c. Incorporate Champions of Character into current activities.

2. Hospitality and Game Management: Conduct in Competition

- a. Oversee athletic events including Conduct in Competition Guide
- b. Conduct contests according to the NAIA's standard for game management
- c. Use NAIA resources to promote your Champions of Character program prior to and during the event.
- d. Use the PA announcements at the start of each contest.

3. Share the Character Message

- a. Organize a servant leadership activity characterized by student leadership and athletic community engagement.
- b. Develop Champions of Character outreach activities in your community; partner with a local school or organization to deliver the core value message.
- c. Conduct at least one student-led, servant leadership activity.

4. Promote and Recognize Character

- a. Submit award nominations.
- b. Create a Champions of Character page on your athletic website.

5. Oversight and Assessment

- a. Understand the Champions of Character Scorecard requirement and input Scorecard date in NAIAHelp.
- b. Use the Scorecard to identify areas that need improvement.
- c. Review ejection and suspension reports to address areas of concern.

KCAC Champions of Character Awards

Medallion Awards

The KCAC Champion of Character Medallion Award recognizes continuing student-athletes who have participated in intercollegiate athletics for a minimum of one full academic year. Recipients need to have demonstrated the Champion of Character core values of Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Sportsmanship, and Servant Leadership.

The coaching staff of each team may select a KCAC Champion of Character Medallion Award recipient for the season. The KCAC Liaisons submit names for the award to the conference office. Recipients will receive a Champions of Character Medallion and be honored at the sport KCAC championship event.

Criteria for being selected for the All-KCAC Champions of Character Medallion:

1. Identified as a full-time student in good standing.
2. Be currently participating in a varsity intercollegiate program.
3. One full academic year of full-time status and participation in the varsity intercollegiate sport program.
4. Cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.
5. Students may be nominated and receive the COC Award up to 3 times during their career, provided the above criteria are met.
6. The nominee has not been ejected for fighting or other sportsmanship reasons during the current sport season.

Sport Team of Character Award

The KCAC recognizes one team in each sport as the conference's Team of Character. The team will be announced at the sport KCAC championship event and will be recognized with a banner.

Based on a coach's recommendation, Campus Liaisons will submit nomination information.

Criteria to be submitted:

1. Description of how your team displays exemplary character.
2. Summary of NAIA or KCAC Champions of Character Activities.
3. Brief summary of Service Activities and other Champions of Character Projects completed by your team.

Please note: Teams with ejections to coaches and/or student-athletes for profanity, fighting, or dissent toward an official during the current season of competition are not eligible to be nominated and will not be considered for this award.

KCAC Female and Male Champions of Character Student-Athlete of the Year Award

Each KCAC school may submit one male and one female nominee to compete for the KCAC Champion of Character Student-Athlete of the Year Award. The recipients will receive a plaque. The student athletes must return to school for the next academic year.

The Campus Liaison submits electronically the complete application package **as one file** to the KCAC office by May 10 (or date set by the KCAC office).

The nominee's application will include the following:

1. Nominee's essay describing his/her demonstration of the core values of respect, responsibility, integrity, sportsmanship and servant leadership during sport participation and during campus/community involvement.
2. A listing of the nominee's achievements demonstrating sportsmanship, leadership, and scholarship (academic honors, athletic honors, and campus/community involvement).
3. Three letters of recommendation, one each from the Head Coach, Student Life representative, and a faculty member.
4. Registrar's verification of the student-athlete's GPA.
5. Signatures of the nominating person, President/CEO, Athletic Director, and Campus Character Representative.
6. Individual picture

The members of the KCAC Champions of Character Committee will review the submitted applications and select one female and one male KCAC Champions of Character Student-Athlete of the Year. Committee members shall not vote for their own campus nominees. The recipients will be honored at the KCAC Sport Management Conference in August.

The KCAC Champions of Character Committee will then vote between the female and male KCAC Champion of Character to select the NAIA LeRoy Walker Award nominee. The name and materials will then be submitted to the NAIA office for consideration for the national award.

KCAC Female and Male Team of Character Awards

Each KCAC school may submit one female and one female team to compete for the KCAC Team of Character Awards. The recipients will receive a banner. Teams who did not win their individual sport Team of Character award may be nominated for the KCAC award.

The Campus Liaison submits electronically the complete application package **as one file** to the KCAC office by May 10 (or date set by the KCAC office).

The team's nomination includes a documented display of exemplary character and sportsmanship on the field, on campus, and in the community, including outreach presentations of the Five Core Values.

Supporting materials would include examples of how the team exemplifies the Five Core Values.

1. A listing of the team's accomplishments and COC activities
2. Registrar's verification of the team's GPA—varsity members only.
3. Essay describing how the team displays exemplary character and sportsmanship on the field, on campus, and in the community, including how the team exhibits at least one of the five core values.
 - Include a Head Coach quote—why is character a vital part of the team chemistry and how has it helped the team's performance?
 - Also include a student-athlete quote—why is character a vital part of the team chemistry and how has it helped the team's performance?
4. Three letters of support, one each from the institution's Faculty Athletic Representative, a Student Life staff member, and a member of the community.

5. Signatures of the nominating person, President/CEO, Athletic Director, and Campus Character Representative.
6. Team picture

The members of the KCAC Champions of Character Committee will review the submitted applications and select one female and one male KCAC Team of Character. Committee members shall not vote for their own campus nominees. The recipients will be honored at the KCAC Sport Management Conference in August.

KCAC Coach of Character Award

Each KCAC school may submit one nominee to compete for the KCAC Coach of Character Award. The recipients will receive a plaque. The award recognizes a head coach who has been outstanding in embracing the five core values of the NAIA Champions of Character initiative by deliberately teaching character to his/her student-athletes through sport.

Criteria

1. Must be a head coach of the NAIA institution and been employed by the institution a minimum of five years.
2. Must be clearly outstanding in:
 - a. embracing the five core values of the NAIA Champions of Character initiative;
 - b. methods to deliberately define, model, shape and reinforce character to his/her student-athletes within the coaching environment including any Live 5 program implementation.

Nomination Materials

1. Official nomination form.
2. Current high resolution photo.
3. Description of specific methods (drills, techniques) the coach uses to intentionally implement character coaching.
4. An essay of no more than 300 words written by the nominee answering the question: "As a Coach of Significance please elaborate on at least one drill or technique you use to teach to character to your team and its impact on your team."
5. Maximum of three letters of recommendation addressing how the nominee demonstrates or teaches character and/or the impact of the coach's teaching on the team from:
 - a. Nominee's president or athletics director;
 - b. A current or former player;
 - c. A colleague.

No additional materials will be accepted.

Nomination Procedure

1. Any NAIA member institution may nominate one head coach and submit the required materials to the commissioner of their affiliated conference by May 10 (or date set by the KCAC office).
2. A conference committee makes a single selection. Conferences are free to announce their conference winner at any time after selection.
3. The nomination materials for the conference winner are to be sent to the National Office by July 15.

The Bottom Line--Responsibilities for KCAC Campus Liaisons/Champions of Character Committee Members

1. Be the go-to person on your campus to promote Champions of Character.
2. Work with your athletic director and SID to encourage Champions of Character behavior during competition.
3. Make and promote policy as a member of the KCAC Champions of Character Committee.
4. Make sure new coaches of all levels complete the Coaches Character-Driven course within their first 60 days of employment.
5. Submit individual sport Medallion awardees for fall, winter, and spring sports.
6. Submit individual sport Team Of Character nominations for fall, winter, and spring sports.
7. Submit nominations for KCAC Champions of Character awards.
 - a. Female student-athlete
 - b. Male student-athlete
 - c. Female team
 - d. Male team
 - e. Coach of Character
8. Vote for the KCAC Champions of Character awardees.
9. Complete your campus Champions of Character Scorecard.
10. Be an active participant in and promote KCAC Champions of Character education.