# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

# 2025-26 STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

**Updated September 2025**

# 2025-26 Valdosta State University
# Student-Athlete Handbook

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## VSU QUICK FACTS

**FOUNDED:**
1906

**ENROLLMENT:**
11,270

**PRESIDENT:**
Dr. Richard Carvajal

**DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS:**
Mr. Troy Katen

**ATHLETIC AFFILIATIONS:**
NCAA Division II
Gulf South Conference

**NICKNAME:**
Blazers/Lady Blazers

**COLORS:**
Red and Black

**ATHLETIC OFFICES:**
The Complex - 401 Baytree Rd.
(Main Athletic Office Suite, Men's & Women's Basketball, Men's & Women's Cross Country, Men's & Women's Tennis, Volleyball, Cheer)
Athletic Field House - 605 W. Mary St.
(Football, Soccer, Weight Room, Athletic Training)
Blazer Field House - 2601 N. Patterson St.
(Baseball)
Athletic Little House - 2609 N. Patterson St.
(Golf, Softball)

**ATHLETIC PHONE NUMBERS:**
229-333-5890 (General)
229-333-5844 (Football/Soccer/Athletic Training/Weight Room)
229-259-5562 (Baseball)
229-333-7405 (Softball)

**ATHLETIC FAX:**
229-333-5972 (Main Athletic Office)
229-245-2494 (Football, Soccer, Weight Rm)
229-333-5205 (Athletic Field House Training Rm)
229-259-5561 (Baseball Field House)
229-333-5375 (Softball Field House)

# BlazerCreed

Valdosta State University is a learning environment based on trust and mutual respect in which open dialogue, vigorous debate, and the free exchange of ideas are welcome. The University is equally dedicated to the core values of community, including a commitment to practice **civility, integrity,** and **citizenship.** As members of this community, and proud Blazers, we will strive to uphold these core values for the advancement of the University.

**Civility** – A Blazer shows courtesy and compassion as well as respect for the dignity of every human being.

**Integrity** – Each Blazer is responsible for his or her own actions, and our community is stronger when we contemplate the context of our decisions and uphold the principles of trust and honesty.

**Citizenship** – Every Blazer has an interest in the well-being of the community, and, therefore, a duty to stay informed, to make positive contributions, and to offer support to those who need help.

As a Blazer, I pledge to uphold the core principles of **Civility, Integrity,** and **Citizenship**.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VSU STUDENT-ATHLETE

1. Always be aware that you are representing Valdosta State.

2. Make sure you fulfill your potential both as a student and athlete.

3. Make sure you finish your college career with a degree.

4. Always abide by the rules and regulations of your team, the Department of Athletics, Valdosta State University, and the NCAA, as well as all federal, state and city laws.

5. Valdosta State University student-athletes should reflect the high standards of honesty and integrity set by the NCAA for the conduct of intercollegiate athletics.

# ACADEMIC CALENDAR

**FALL 2025 THROUGH SUMMER 2026**

**Fall 2025**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mon, Aug 18 | First Class Day |
| Mon, Sep 1 | Labor Day Holiday |
| Thurs, Oct 9 | Midterm |
| Mon-Tues, Oct 13-14 | Fall Break |
| Wed-Fri, Nov 26-28 | Thanksgiving Holidays |
| Mon, Dec 8 | Last Class Day |
| Tues-Fri, Dec 9-12 | Semester Final Examinations |
| Fri, Dec 12 | Graduate School Graduation |
| Sat, Dec 13 | Undergraduate Graduation |

**Spring 2026**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mon, Jan 12 | First Class Day |
| Mon, Jan 19 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday |
| Thurs, March 5 | Midterm |
| Mon-Fri, Mar 16-20 | Spring Break |
| Mon, May 4 | Last Class Day |
| Tues-Fri, May 5-8 | Semester Final Examinations |
| Fri, May 8 | Graduate School Graduation |
| Sat, May 9 | Undergraduate Graduation |

**Summer 2026**

**Maymester (Summer I)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Thurs, May 14 | First Class Day - Maymester |
| Mon, May 25 | Midterm |
| Mon, May 25 | Memorial Day-Holiday |
| Thurs, June 4 | Last Class day |
| Fri, June 5 | Final Examinations |

**Summer II (full term)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Tues, Jun 9 | First class day |
| Fri, Jun 19 | Juneteenth Holiday |
| Thur, Jul 2 | Midterm |
| Tues, Jul 28 | Last Class Day |
| Wed-Thurs, Jul 29-30 | Final Examinations |

**Summer III**

| | |
|---|---|
| Tues, Jun 9 | First class day |
| Fri, Jun 19 | Juneteenth Holiday |
| Fri, Jun 19 | Midterm |
| Wed, Jul 1 | Last class day |
| Thurs, Jul 2 | Final Examinations |

**Summer IV**

| | |
|---|---|
| Tues, Jul 7 | First class day |
| Thurs, Jul 16 | Midterm |
| Tues, Jul 28 | Last class day |
| Thurs, Jul 30 | Final Examinations |

# TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

***** Area Code is 229 and all prefixes are **333** unless otherwise noted

President - Dr. Richard Carvajal ..... 5952
Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs - Dr. Sheri Noviello ..... 5950
Vice-President for Student Affairs - Dr. Vince Miller ..... 5941
Department of Athletics Main Line ..... 5890
Director of Athletics – Troy Katen ..... 5462
Executive Assistant – Nicole Kucza ..... 5462
Associate Athletic Director & Senior Woman Administrator - Jennifer Grubbs ..... 5901
Assistant Athletic Director for Communication - Kit Strief ..... 5903
Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing – Greg Richard ..... 3531
Director of Ticketing and Game Operations - Vaconna Hardin ..... 245-3762
Compliance Officer – Courtney Smith ..... 293-6069
Athletic Development Officer (Boosters) – Abigail Harrell ..... 249-2631
Faculty Athletic Representative – Dr. Keith Lee ..... 245-3823 or (C) 229-392-6726
Head Athletic Trainer - Jay Johnson ..... 5897 or (C) 229-415-5249
Assistant Athletic Trainer – Claire Guilliams ..... 259-5565 or (C) 229-630-1668
Assistant Athletic Trainer – Amanda Cooper ..... 5897 or 5477 or (C) 484-896-8608
Hughston Clinic Athletic Trainer – Colton Bowser ..... 5897 or 5477 or (C) 217-552-8631
Hughston Clinic Athletic Trainer – TBD ..... 5897 or 5477
Hughston Clinic Athletic Trainer – Hayley Widman ..... 5897 or 5477 or (C) 419-677-3848
Athletic Field House Training Room ..... 5897
The Complex Training Room ..... 5477
Blazer Field House Training (Baseball) ..... 259-5565
Strength & Conditioning Coordinator – Michael Doscher ..... 219-3219

**Baseball** Head Coach – JD Hulse ..... 259-5562
Assistant Coach – Geoff Bramblett ..... 259-5563
Assistant Coach – Jared Cantu ..... 259-5564
**Basketball Men's** Head Coach - Mike Helfer ..... 5893
Basketball Men's Assistant Coach - Nate Nowicki ..... 5904
**Basketball Women's** Head Coach – Chandler Merkerson ..... 5892
Basketball Women's Assistant Coach – Tyler Vaundry ..... 253-4565
**Cheerleading** Head Coach - Desiree Hagan ..... (C) 229-560-4030
**Cross Country Men's/Women's** Head Coach - Todd Smoot ..... 5378
**Football** Head Coach – Graham Craig ..... 5970
Administrative Assistant - Angie Colbert ..... 5970
Assistant Football Coaches -
Sean Fogerty ..... 5685
Greg Harris ..... 5850
Tyson Kee ..... 5851
Alex Nelson ..... 5969
Aidan Panni ..... 5944
Malik Slater ..... 5852
**Golf** Head Coach - Jared Purvis ..... 5377
**Red Hot's Dance Squad** Head Coach - Kelli Fields ..... (C) 460-1825
**Softball** Head Coach - Thomas Macera ..... 7405
**Soccer** Head Coach - Stephen Andrew ..... 219-3290
**Tennis Men's & Women's** Head Coach - John Hansen ..... 5902
**Volleyball** Head Coach - Kaleigh Zoucha ..... 5894
Alumni ..... 5979
Auxiliary Services ..... 5706
Bookstore ..... 5666
Bursary ..... 5719
Career Opportunities ..... 5942

***Telephone Directory Con't***

Counseling Center ..... 5940
Dean of Students ..... 5941
Financial Aid ..... 5935
Housing Office (Residence Life) ..... 5920
- Brown Hall ..... 333-5918
- Centennial Hall ..... 333-5269
- Georgia Hall ..... 333-5917
- Hopper Hall ..... 333-5916
- Langdale Hall ..... 333-5915
- Lowndes Hall ..... 333-5914
- Patterson Hall ..... 333-5913
- Reade Hall ..... 333-5912

Intramurals ..... 5898
**POLICE ..... 333-7816 / EMERGENCY 259-5555**
Post Office (Campus Mail) ..... 5672
Recreation Center ..... 5898
Registrar ..... 5727
Spectator ..... 5685
Student Government ..... 5674
Student Health Center
- Main ..... 5886
- Appointments ..... 219-3200
- "After-Hours" On-Call Nurse ..... 259-2083

***Extra Numbers...***

# INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Athletics is to develop student-athletes so they may achieve academic success and social development. This must be done within the academic framework of the institution, with consideration for the student-athlete's physical and emotional well-being and in concert with the institution's overall mission. With respect to non-participants, the athletic program seeks to serve the region and enhance the development of the institution by fostering a sense of loyalty and community among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters.

## ATHLETICS PHILOSOPHY

We believe the student-athlete has the right and responsibility to exhibit integrity in academics, in citizenship and in athletic competition. To this end, the Athletic Department will pursue policies in recruitment, advisement and athletic competition scheduling that will foster the academic success and amateur standing of the student. An environment for the student-athlete will be provided so that; health, safety, fair play, equity and civic contribution will be valued.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other federal, state, and local laws, Valdosta State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, disability, or veteran status in employment processes, admission or financial aid programs, or educational programs or activities.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

The Valdosta State Department of Athletics competes on the NCAA Division II level and is a member of the Gulf South Conference (GSC). Valdosta State offers 12 sports, six for men: baseball, basketball, cross-country, football, golf, and tennis, and six for women: basketball, cross-country, soccer, fast-pitch softball, tennis and volleyball. The Department of Athletics also coordinates the cheerleading and dance troupe programs for the institution.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is an important component of your student-athlete experience at Valdosta State. Many opportunities exist for you to participate in community service activities. **Each student-athlete is expected to participate in six (6) hours of community service per academic year.**

The F. Lamar and Nancy Pearson Community Service Award was presented for the first time in April, 2001, and goes to the athletic team that has the highest number of community service hours. The 2022-23 winner was the volleyball team. The volleyball team had a total of 474 community service hours which averaged out to 33.85 hours per team member.

## F. LAMAR and NANCY PEARSON COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *2024-25* | *Volleyball* | *2015-16* | *Softball* | *2006-07* | *Golf* |
| *2023-24* | *Volleyball* | *2014-15* | *Softball* | *2005-06* | *Football* |
| *2022-23* | *Volleyball* | *2013-14* | *Softball* | *2004-05* | *Baseball* |
| *2021-22* | *Golf* | *2012-13* | *Softball* | *2003-04* | *Volleyball* |
| *2020-21* | *Vacant due to COVID-19* | *2011-12* | *Softball* | *2002-03* | *Softball* |
| *2019-20* | *Vacant due to COVID-19* | *2010-11* | *Softball* | *2001-02* | *Softball* |
| *2018-19* | *Softball* | *2009-10* | *Softball* | *2000-01* | *Softball* |
| *2017-18* | *Softball* | *2008-09* | *Women's Basketball* | | |
| *2016-17* | *Softball* | *2007-08* | *Golf* | | |

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY SPORTS HISTORY

The proud history of Valdosta State intercollegiate sports dates back 69 years to the 1954-55 school year when the college instituted men's basketball, four years after the first male students enrolled. Baseball followed in the spring of 1955, men's tennis was instituted in 1959 and men's golf came on board in 1960. In 1958, the college began a 14-year association with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the Georgia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GIAC).

Valdosta State joined the Division II ranks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1973 and became affiliated with the South Atlantic Conference in 1974, adding men's cross country to the growing list of sports. Women's sports came on the scene when tennis was instituted in 1973, followed by women's basketball and volleyball (briefly) in 1974, cross country in 1975 and softball in 1983. The women's program was affiliated with the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) until the NCAA absorbed that group in 1982.

The 1982 year was a historic year for Valdosta State athletics. Football became the sixth men's sport and 10th overall, and the college joined the Gulf South Conference, which embraced both the men's and women's programs. This fall marks the 41st year of that association. The program expanded further in the fall of 1995 with the reinstitution of women's volleyball, the school's fifth for women and 11th overall, while soccer became the sixth women's sport and 12th overall in the 2011-12 school year.

Valdosta State sports teams have had two nicknames, the Rebels from 1955-72, and the Blazers and Lady Blazers since 1973.

# VSU ATHLETICS … A BACKWARD & FORWARD GLANCE

The 2024-25 season finished with the tenth national championship in program history as the men's tennis won its fourth national title in thrilling fashion over Washburn, 4-2, in May in Orlando, Fla., finishing with a perfect 26-0 record. The Blazer football team returned to the postseason winning its eleventh conference title and earned a return to the NCAA National Championship game finishing 13-1 on the year. During the winter season, the men's basketball team returned to the NCAA South Regional in 2024. Its first national tournament appearance since 2021. VSU had twelve (12) student-athletes earn All-America honors in 2024-25, marking the most since 2014-15 with thirteen (13) All-America honorees.

In April, the athletic department announced its annual awards as men's tennis standout, Takeshi Taco and volleyball senior, Kaia Baker, were named the Herb and Linda Reinhard Male and Female Athletes of the Year, while softball player Jayme Prandine, along with baseball outfielder Farid Eljaiek earned Scholar-Athlete of the Year honors.

In addition, both the Red Hots and Cheerleaders had outstanding seasons with the Red Hots finishing as national champions in the Hip Hop Division II Finals. The Cheerleading team finished fourth in the Intermediate All-Girl Division.

Academically, the Blazers also excelled in both the fall and spring term with 41 student-athletes earning a 4.0 in the fall and 50 in the spring. Women's tennis led the way with the top cumulative team grade-point average in both semesters. The 50 student-athletes to earn a 4.0 in the spring was the most in program history.

Also in Spring 2025, Valdosta State University was accepted into the National College Athlete Honor Society as the Georgia Xi Chapter of Chi Alpha Sigma (ΧΑΣ), which recognizes student-athletes from accredited four-year NCAA, NAIA, USCAA or NCCAA institutions who excel in both the classroom and competition.

To be inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma, a student-athlete must attend a four-year accredited college or university who are members of an association or organization that promotes academic achievement and varsity level athletics competition while holding commitment to the principles of integrity, sportsmanship, and overall development of their student-athletes. The honoree also must achieve at least junior academic standing by the fifth semester or seventh quarter, as determined by the certifying institution, and must have achieved a minimum cumulative grade-point average of a 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale).

The Blazers held their first induction ceremony on May 7 with an inaugural class of 37 student-athletes representing 13 sports.

# LOOKING AHEAD …

The Blazers look to 2025-26 season with great anticipation as the football team is set to compete in its 43rd season in 2025 under hew head coach Graham Craig. He was hired as the 12th head coach in program history in January, 2025. Craig and the Blazers were picked tied for second in the preseason Gulf South Conference poll, while the team starts the season with a neutral site game against Clark Atlanta at historic Legion Field in Birmingham, Ala., on Aug. 30. The schedule features five exciting home games at Bazemore-Hyder Stadium and the team will play its first game against a Division I opponent since 2003 at The Citadel on Oct. 11. The Blazers have ten games this season as they look to win their league-best 12th GSC title and fifth national title.

Men's and Women's Cross Country Head coach Todd Smoot looks to build on the success from last fall and continue the ascent both regionally and nationally in men's and women's cross country and host the conference meet. Meanwhile, ninth-year head women's soccer head coach Stephen Andrew looks to continue the strong success with a talented team in 2025 and a strong returning nucleus of players. Eighth-year head volleyball coach Kaleigh Zoucha opens the 2025 season in Colorado and then hosts the 2025 Fall Tournament at Valdosta State, Sept. 12-13. Zoucha's group returns a strong group of players, coming off back-to-back 19-win seasons in 2023 and 2024.

The winter sports (men's and women's basketball) – The Lady Blazers went 17-12 and 12-10 in Gulf South Conference play under new head coach Chandler Merkerson in 2024-25. She begins her second season at the helm of the program with a number of key returnees and new faces in 2025-26. The Blazer men's basketball team returned to the NCAA postseason in 2024-25 for the first time since 2021 with a 25-7 record overall and an 18-4 mark in GSC play. Under the direction of Mike Helfer who begins his 21st year at VSU in 2025-26, the Blazers return a solid core of players and have added the services of some very talented newcomers.

The spring sports (softball, baseball, tennis, golf) – crank up in February and continue through the remainder of the school year. The men's tennis team is coming off back-to-back national titles and an unprecedented 26-0 record in 2024-25. The Blazers have won 42-straight matches dating back to the final 16 wins of 2023-24. The Blazer men's tennis team now has four national titles tying the football team for the most in school history. The team will challenge everyone they play as storied head coach John Hansen returns for another season at the helm of both programs with all four men's titles to his credit.

Blazer assistant baseball coach J.D. Hulse takes over the reigns of the baseball program in 2025-26 after former head coach Jan Weisberg who took over the head job at Eastern Kentucky in June. Hulse helped lead VSU to a 30-22 record last season and a 22-10 mark in GSC play as he has a strong returning group of players and some talented newcomers for the 2026 season.

The young and talented men's golf team looks to challenge some of the top programs in the country and host the 35th Annual Southeastern Collegiate at Kinderlou Forest Golf Club in March, 206, as one of the premiere NCAA Division II golf tournaments in the country under the direction of head coach Jared Purvis. Head coach Thomas Macera won 30 or more games in 18 of his 20 seasons in Titletown (2020 – COVID) and will be poised to return to the NCAA postseason in 2026. The Blazer softball team qualified for its fifth NCAA Division II World Series in 2021 and reached the Super Regionals in 2022, before narrowly missing the regional in 2023 and 2024. Macera, who has over 1,000 career wins to his credit in his career, he is 832-291-2 at Valdosta State.

# BASEBALL

The sport has enjoyed great success throughout its 60-plus year history, winning over 1,500 games and the university's first national championship in 1979. Baseball also has won eight regional and 16 conference titles. In June 2025, J.D. Hulse began as the fourth head baseball coach of the Blazers since 1967. The Blazers play their home games at beautiful Billy Grant Field at Tommy Thomas Park, named in memory of VSU former athletic director, baseball coach and golf coach, Billy Grant, as well as legendary coach Tommy Thomas. The field is located at the north end of North Campus, 10 blocks from the university's main campus.

# MEN'S BASKETBALL

Head coach Mike Helfer and the Blazers returned to the NCAA postseason in 2024-25, while the program won its first conference title in 2021 with a thrilling 75-70 victory over Alabama Huntsville. In 2024-25, the Blazers went a 25-7 record overall and an 18-4 mark in the GSC. The 25 wins marked the most since Helfer won 26 games in 2019-20. During Helfer's tenure, he has guided the team to an Elite Eight berth in 2010, nine trips to the NCAA postseason and 17 conference tournament appearances. From 2016-2021, Helfer has led the team to a staggering 85-15 record in GSC play, while he eclipsed the 300-win mark at VSU in 2019-20, and won his 500th game in his career in 2020-21. He is 386-198 in 20 seasons at Valdosta State and 572-281 in 28 seasons overall coaching. Home games are played in The Complex.

# WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Lady Blazer head coach Chandler Merkerson begins her second season at the helm of the program after going 17-12 overall and 12-10 in GSC play in 2024-25. The Lady Blazers had their first Elite Appearance since 1984 in 2021-22, and put together five outstanding seasons under former head coach Deandra Schirmer, culminating in tying the school-record for victories in a season, going 30-3 in 2023-24, hosting the first NCAA South Regional in program history that year, while winning their fourth conference title as well. Home games are played in The Complex.

# WOMEN'S & MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

The Valdosta State men's and women's cross country teams are familiar sights on the streets of Valdosta throughout the year, but especially in the fall months. Under the leadership of Head Coach Todd Smoot, these dedicated runners annually advance to the conference and regional meets in addition to a grueling regular season schedule. The teams were able to complete a fall season in 2020 as the first two teams to compete following the COVID-19 shutdown in the spring of 2020. In 2021, the both the men's and women's teams finished sixth at the conference meet, while Angie Cipriani earned second team all-conference honors. The cross country teams will host the annual Border Clash in September at Freedom Park in Valdosta.

# FOOTBALL

Valdosta State instituted football and joined the Gulf South Conference in 1982, and the sport has enjoyed tremendous success, especially since the turn of the century. Since 2000, VSU has gone an incredible 236-59. The Blazers have won or a share of ten of the last 24 conference championships (11 overall), advanced to postseason play 20 times. Moreover, the program has reached the national championship game seven times (2002, 2004, 2007, 2012, 2018, 2021 and 2024) with four national titles. The 2002 team finished second in the nation as did the 2021 team and 2024 team, while the 2004, 2007, 2012 and 2018 squads won the NCAA Division II national championship. VSU went a school-record 14-0 in 2018 winning a thrilling 49-47 national championship matchup against Ferris State. The Blazers won a GSC-record 25-straight games from the final game of 2017 through the regular season of 2019. Over the 42-year history of the football team, VSU is 346-138-4 all-time. Home games are played in Bazemore-Hyder Stadium, located directly behind University Center. In January 2025, Graham Craig became the 12th head coach in the history of the program.

# MEN'S GOLF

The Blazer men's golf team has been one of the most successful programs in the country over the last 30-plus years, earning 23 trips to the NCAA Division II national tournament since 1989. A total of six conference championship plaques and a host of All-America citations fill the trophy case in The Complex. The program's most recognized alumnus is PGA touring pro Briney Baird, who was a medalist in both the 1994 and 1995 NCAA national tournament, while being named 1995 National Player of the Year. Baird was inducted into the GSC Hall of Fame in 2022. Brent Witcher became the second Blazer to be named National Player of the Year when he won the Jack Nicklaus Award in 2009. The NCAA Division II national tournament was held at Valdosta Country Club in 1999, while a 2005 super regional was played at Kinderlou Forest Golf Club. Head coach Jared Purvis guided the Blazers hosted the NCAA super regional in 2021. The Blazers hosted the Gulf South Conference Championship in 2024.

# WOMEN'S SOCCER

The women's soccer team became the 13th sport at VSU when it took the pitch in the fall of 2011. Head coach Stephen Andrew guided the Blazers to the NCAA postseason for the first time since 2014 with an 11-7-1 record overall and an 8-4-1 mark in GSC play in 2021. Andrew is 66-53-14 at VSU as the all-time leader in victories for the program. Andrew is 51-35-10 in GSC play and has guided VSU to seven Gulf South Conference Tournament appearances in eight years. In the inaugural campaign in 2011, the Blazers advanced to the GSC championship game and followed with trips to the NCAA postseason each of the next two years. In 2014, the red and black defeated North Alabama for the program's first GSC title. Former Blazer Taylor Snell earned the program's first All-America honor in 2017. Soccer plays its home matches at the VSU Soccer Complex outside the Athletic Field House.

# SOFTBALL

The VSU softball team finished the 2025 season with a 26-25 record overall and 19-13 in GSC play. Over the years, softball has been one of the most successful programs at VSU winning multiple conference titles and advancing to even more NCAA postseasons through the years, including 17 of the last 19 NCAA postseason tournaments. Softball's success reached the pinnacle in 2012 when it won a school-record 58 games and earned program's first national championship in a women's sport. Overall, the Blazers have played in three national championship games. Head coach Thomas Macera has led the team to seven GSC Championships during his 20-year career at VSU. He is 832-291-2 at VSU and is 1034-354-2 overall coaching. His 832 wins are tops in victories in program history. Home games are played at beautiful Steel's Diamond at Blazer Park located behind the baseball field.

# WOMEN'S & MEN'S TENNIS

The VSU women's tennis team has been a dominant program in the Gulf South Conference for years, annually fighting for conference and regional titles. The program has produced a multitude of all-conference and all-America players. The Blazer men's team has enjoyed great success over the years as it became the third program to win a national title in 2006, before winning again in 2011 and then back-to-back national titles in 2024 and 2025. The men's team also advanced to the 2007 national championship match and the 2010 title match. Team members annually dominate all-conference selections and the squad perennially is listed among the nation's top ten teams. The 2025 season was no exception as VSU won a GSC-record 17th conference title and the fourth national title in program history and tenth for the school. VSU went a school-record 26-0 for the 2025 season and had numerous All-America honorees as long time head coach John Hansen was inducted into the GSC Hall of Fame. Home matches are played at the VSU Tennis Center adjacent to The Complex.

# VOLLEYBALL

Women's volleyball returned to campus in the fall of 1995 as it also was an intercollegiate sport from 1974-80. The team has qualified for seven postseason tournaments since the sport was reinstituted. The program turned to the leadership of head coach Kaleigh Zoucha in 2018, who brought a winning mentality to VSU after an outstanding career as both a player and assistant coach at Nebraska-Kearney. The squad has appeared in the GSC Tournament ten of the last 11 seasons and won the GSC title in 2014. Zoucha begins her eighth season at VSU in the Fall of 2025 and is coming off back-to-back seasons of 19 wins. The team was voted 4th in the GSC preseason poll. Home matches are played in The Complex.

# CHEERLEADING & REDHOTS DANCE TEAMS

The Cheerleading Team and Red Hots Dance Team are integral parts of the athletic department and compete nationally, while doing routines at home football and basketball games to pump up the Blazer faithful. In 2025, the Red Hots won their ninth national title with a championship in D2 Team Dance. In 2021, the Blazers continued their national success in both cheer and dance as they each had top three finishes. The Cheerleading team finished second at the national championship, while the Red Hots were third in the Jazz Division and second in the Hip-Hop division. Overall the Cheerleading Team and Red Hots have a combined 15 national titles with nine for the Red Hots and six in Cheerleading. This past April, the Red Hots won their ninth title and the fourth since 2018, while the Cheerleaders finished fourth nationally.

# ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Valdosta State is proud to have some of the finest athletic facilities of any institution in the country. As a student- athlete you will spend many hours at your sports facility and we hope you will help the institution maintain it. The Complex houses the Blazer basketball, Lady Blazer basketball and volleyball teams. One of the top Division II arenas in the country, The Complex seats 5,350.

Immediately adjacent to the Complex are the 12-lighted hard courts that are the home of Valdosta State tennis. The courts were renovated during the 2000-01 season and again prior to the 2008 season, and the tennis complex is now one of the best facilities in the GSC.

The Blazer baseball team plays at Billy Grant Field located on North Campus. The Billy Grant Field complex includes the baseball field house, which opened in the spring of 1997. The field house includes offices, training room, locker rooms and an indoor batting and pitching building for baseball and softball. New stadium seating and a press box were constructed at BGF in 2005.

The Lady Blazer softball team calls one of the newest athletic facilities home. Steel's Diamond at Blazer Park, located directly behind Billy Grant Field at North Campus, opened in the fall of 1999 and is one of the premier facilities of its size in the country. A new $400,000 state-of-the-art Softball Fieldhouse was opened in 2007 and houses locker rooms.

The Blazer football offices relocated to the new VSU Athletic Fieldhouse in January of 2009. The field house features a state-of-the-art weight room and athletic training facility as well as locker room space and a pair of practice fields. Valdosta State football is played in the city Board of Education-owned Bazemore-Hyder Stadium, which seats 10,000 plus, and was rebuilt from the ground up prior to the 2004 season. The women's soccer program is also housed in a wing of the Fieldhouse, an area that includes locker rooms and coaches' offices. The soccer team plays in VSU's newest athletic venue, a 350-seat stadium which opened in the fall of 2011.

The Blazer golf team plays golf at Kinderlou Forest Golf Club, a beautiful 18-hole layout designed by Davis Love, III. Kinderlou will also serve as the host site for the Southeastern Collegiate Invitational, one of the top college tournaments in the South and hosted the NCAA South/Southeast Men's Golf Super Regional in 2022.

# GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE

The purpose of the GSC is to regulate, control and promote all recognized activities of intercollegiate athletics sponsored by the member institutions. The highest standards of personal honor, NCAA eligibility and fair play are required. All member institutions agree to pursue and enforce such measures as may be necessary to prevent violations of NCAA and GSC by-laws, regulations, policies and procedures, and rules specific to each sport sponsored.

The administrative, athletic and faculty personnel of GSC member institutions and their respective student- athletes, agree to dedicate their efforts towards the promotion and practice of honor, integrity and true sportsmanship in all phases of intercollegiate athletics, including the solicitation and recruitment of potential student-athletes and the control of employees, students and spectators.

As a student-athlete at Valdosta State you will compete in what is probably the toughest Division II athletic conference in the country, the Gulf South Conference.

Headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, the GSC membership roster includes:

1. University of Alabama-Huntsville
2. Auburn University at Montgomery
3. Christian Brothers University
4. Delta State University
5. Lee University
6. Mississippi College
7. University of Montevallo
8. Trevecca Nazarene University
9. Union University
10. Valdosta State University
11. University of West Alabama
12. University of West Florida

Affiliate Members

1. Flagler University (Women's Lacrosse only)
2. Lander University (Women's Lacrosse only)
3. Spring Hill College (Men's & Women's Soccer & Women's Golf only)
4. Virginia State University (Women's Lacrosse only)

The **Gulf South Conference** recognizes official champions in 16 sponsored sports and Invitational Champions in the "emerging sport" of women's lacrosse. The GSC conducts championship events in **eight** men's sports (baseball, basketball, cross country, golf, soccer, tennis and indoor/outdoor track & field) and **ten** women's sports (basketball, cross country, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, indoor/outdoor track & field and volleyball). The Football Championship is awarded to the team(s) with the highest win-loss percentage in league competition. For the fourth year in a row, the GSC will conduct an Invitational Tournament in women's lacrosse in hopes of officially sponsoring the sports in the near future. Results from women's lacrosse will not be included in the All-Sports Trophy calculations.

Separate All-Sports trophies are awarded each year to men's sports women's sports and an overall champion is named. Valdosta State won its eighth men's all-sports trophy in 2018-19 and its third women's award in 2000-2001. VSU won both the men's and women's all-sports awards during the 1996-97 year, becoming just the second conference school to win both in the same year.

## VSU'S GSC ALL-SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS

| Men | Women |
|---|---|
| 1996-97 | 1994-95 |
| 2001-02 | 1996-97 |
| 2003-04 | 2000-01 |
| 2007-08 | |
| 2008-09 | |
| 2009-10 | |
| 2012-13 | |
| 2018-19 | |
| 2024-25 | |

# GSC'S TOP TEN AWARDS

Each year the conference selects at least five men and five women as its "Top Ten" Award winners based on the criteria for the Commissioner's Trophy, with the most outstanding male and female earning the Commissioner's Trophies.

**Men**
1997 Lance Funderburk, Football
1998 Klaus Acker, Tennis
2001 Dusty Bonner, Football
2003 Sammy Watson, Baseball
2009 Jon Koenigsfeld, Baseball
2010 Jon Koenigsfeld, Baseball
2011 Philip Pakebusch, Tennis
2013 Ryan Schraeder, Football
2018 Beau Justice, Basketball
2020 Clay Guillozet, Basketball
2021 Brishen House, Cross Country
2022 Brian Saunds, Football
2023 Luca Mack, Tennis
2024 Sammy Edwards, Football
2025 Takeshi Taco, Tennis

**Women**
1997 Kathy Kennedy, Basketball
2001 Tracy Sprolden, Basketball
2005 Eva-Marie Petschnig, Tennis
2007 Khaleh Thomas, Basketball
2010 Natali Gumbrecht, Tennis
2012 Morgan Johnson, Softball
2013 Morgan Johnson, Softball
2014 Courtney Albritton, Softball
2015 Courtney Albritton, Softball
2016 Caitlyn Calhoun, Softball
2020 Logan Hill, Softball
2022 Kwajelin Farrar, Basketball

# COMMISSIONER'S TROPHY

The Commissioner's Trophy is the highest honor the Gulf South Conference bestows upon a student-athlete, and either a Lady Blazer or Blazer has won it 12 times, including softball's Courtney Albritton, who won the honor back-to-back in 2014 and 2015. Fellow softball player Morgan Johnson claimed the honor the two seasons prior to Albritton, making VSU just the second school in conference history to have a student-athlete win the award four straight years. In 2010, VSU baseball player Jon Koenigsfeld was the fourth male VSU athlete to win the honor and the first since 1997. In 1997, Lance Funderburke and Kathy Kennedy swept the award for Valdosta State. In addition to those three, Chris Hatcher won twice in 1994 and 1995 as did Bridget Moore in 1986-87. Masa Oreskovic teamed with Hatcher to sweep the award in 1995. Valdosta State's history of Commissioner's Trophy honorees exhibits VSU's dedication to excellence in and out of the classroom. VSU's Commissioner's Trophy Winners are listed below:

**Men**
1994 Chris Hatcher
1995 Chris Hatcher
1997 Lance Funderburke
2010 Jon Koenigsfeld
2020 Clay Guillozet

**Women**
1986 Bridgett Moore
1987 Bridgett Moore
1995 Masa Oreskovic
1997 Kathy Kennedy
2012 Morgan Johnson
2013 Morgan Johnson
2014 Courtney Albritton
2015 Courtney Albritton

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Athletic teams at Valdosta State are provided with a specific number of grant-in-aids in accordance with budgetary restrictions and NCAA bylaws. These grants are awarded by Valdosta State upon recommendation of the head coach and the approval of the Director of Athletics. An athletic grant-in-aid is restricted to educational expenses, such as tuition, fees, room, board and course-related books.

**Athletic financial aid is renewable on a yearly basis but can be altered or canceled during the year if you render yourself ineligible for competition, or fraudulently misrepresent any information on an application, letter of intent or financial aid agreement, or engage in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary penalty, or voluntarily withdraw from a sport for personal reasons.**

The renewals of institutional financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability shall be made on or before July 1 before the academic year in which it is to be effective. The institution shall promptly notify in writing each student- athlete who received an award the previous academic year and who has eligibility remaining in the sport in which financial aid was awarded the previous academic year whether the grant has been renewed or not renewed for the upcoming academic year. Notification of financial aid non-renewals must come from the institution's regular financial aid authority and not from the institution's athletics department.

***Additional Financial Aid***

Additional financial assistance, such as outside grants and loans, must be in compliance with NCAA rules and regulations and must be reported annually. Therefore, it is of great importance that you check with your coach and the Director of Athletics before accepting any financial aid.

## PELL GRANTS

In many cases, Pell Grant funds may be used to supplement your athletic scholarship. Your athletic grant-in-aid will outline stipulations regarding Pell Grants.

## TEXTBOOK SCHOLARSHIP

If books are included in your scholarship, **required** books for your classes will be issued at no cost to you. Go to the VSU Bookstore and identify yourself as a student athlete. The Bookstore has a file, by sport, of student athletes who are authorized to receive books through their scholarship, along with a copy of your schedule *IF* you registered during priority registration. If you did not register during priority registration or you have made changes to your schedule you must take a copy of the new/revised schedule to the bookstore and notify personnel that you have a new schedule. If you have a problem with your books, please check with Nicole Kucza in the Athletic Office. At the end of the semester, books will be returned to the Bookstore.

## CHARGES NOT PAID BY ATHLTIC FINANCIAL AID

Listed below are institutional charges that will not be paid by the VSU Department of Athletics:

**1.** Parking fines/tickets on or off campus
**2.** Refundable deposits to the institution
**3.** Parking decals/registration
**4.** Charges for damaged or lost college property
**5.** Orientation Fees

## IMPERMISSIBLE AID

Impermissible aid is a topic that needs to be of great concern to you because it is a serious violation of NCAA rules and could cause you to lose all future eligibility.

In addition to gifts and/or money, impermissible benefits are also the following:

1. receiving more than the allotted number of complimentary admissions at any price;
   **or**
2. selling complimentary admissions at any price;
   **or**
3. receiving material benefits that are not available to the general student body.

# REDUCED OR CANCELED AID

**PERMISSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR AID TO BE REDUCED OR CANCELED:**

1. If the Student Athlete:
    a. Renders himself or herself ineligible for intercollegiate competition. **This includes, but not limited to, dropping below full time (12 credit hours) status at any point in the semester.**
    b. Fraudulently misrepresents any information on an application, letter of intent or financial aid agreement.
    c. Engages in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary penalty.
    d. Voluntarily withdraws from a sport at any time for personal reasons.
2. Non-Athletic Related Conditions: Failure to comply with Valdosta State University's non-athletically related conditions (e.g. compliance with academic policies or standards, compliance with team rules or policies, etc.). **This includes, but not limited to, dropping below full time (12 credit hours) status at any point in the semester.**
3. Fraudulent Misrepresentations: Failure to report to practice or after making only token appearance as determined by the institution, would constitute fraudulent misrepresentation of the signed letter of intent or financial aid agreement.
4. Misconduct: If the student-athlete is found to have engaged in misconduct by the university's regular student disciplinary authority, even if the loss-of-aid requirement does not apply to the student body in general.
5. Exigent Circumstances: To the extent permitted by NCAA rules, Valdosta State University reserves the right to reduce athletic aid for room and board should classes have to be taught substantially on-line.

# HEARING OPPORTUNITY

NCAA Bylaw 15.5.2.4 requires that you have an opportunity for a hearing when athletic financial aid is reduced, cancelled or not renewed. If you wish to appeal this decision and have a hearing, you must notify the Athletics Compliance Officer (Courtney Smith, csmith6@valdosta.edu) in writing, within 30 days of the date of this notice. Your hearing will be conducted by a panel selected by the Faculty Athletics Representative and will take place within 30 days of your request. You may have an adviser present at the hearing proceeding, but the adviser may not address the panel directly. The decision of the hearing panel is final.

# ACADEMICS

## ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

The first priority of a student-athlete at Valdosta State University is to achieve academic success. To be successful in the classroom, the student-athlete must follow the University-outlined academic policies and procedures. These procedures are found in the undergraduate catalog.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Student-athletes are expected to complete all academic work free from fraud or deception. Following are typical academic dishonesty violations; however, they are not to be considered all-inclusive.

1. No student shall receive or give or attempt to receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, examination or other assignment included in any academic course.

2. No student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including but not limited to tests, examinations, laboratory equipment, and roll books.

3. No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person material which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any examinations scheduled to be given at any subsequent date in any course of study offered by the University, without authorization from the University.

4. Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them.

## ACADEMIC SERVICES AND TUTORING

The student-athlete Academic Services Program has been created to assist in the retention and graduation of student-athletes at Valdosta State.

For tutoring information contact your coach or Jennifer Grubbs, Associate Athletic Director & Senior Woman Administrator, jshead@valdosta.edu or 229-333-5901 or visit the Academic Support Center, located on the 2nd floor in Odum Library. Student-athletes who have excessive class absences or miss tutoring sessions will not be eligible for future tutoring services provided by the Department of Athletics.

## ADDING AND DROPPING CLASSES

All student-athletes MUST see Courtney Smith (229-293-6069) before any classes are dropped. She needs to know how dropping a class will affect your 24-hours toward satisfactory progress and monitor that you are enrolled in at least 12-hours during the season.

## CHANGING MAJORS

According to NCAA guidelines, the student-athlete must declare a major prior to the beginning of his/her fifth semester (third year) of full-time attendance, disregarding summer sessions. When the student-athlete chooses a major, the 24-hours required by the NCAA each year for satisfactory progress, must be acceptable toward the designated degree. During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use any credits acceptable toward any VSU degree program to count towards the satisfactory completion of 24-credit hours required for continuing eligibility. The student-athlete may change majors at any time during the school year, but he/she is still responsible for the 24-hours that must be earned and counted toward the designated degree. The student-athlete needs to see Jennifer Grubbs before changing majors and complete the necessary paperwork for the Registrar's Office.

# CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Valdosta State University expects all students to attend all regularly scheduled class meetings held for instruction or examination. It is recognized that class attendance is essentially a matter between students and their instructors. Instructors must explain their absence policy in the course syllabus. All students are held responsible for knowing the specific attendance requirements as prescribed by their instructors and for the satisfactory make- up work missed by absences. The University's absence policy states that a student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled classes of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade in the course.

Due to the demanding travel and competition schedule of student-athletes, there may be instances when the student-athlete will miss several class meetings. Students participating in authorized activities as an official representative of the University (i.e., athletic events, delegate to regional or national meetings or conferences, participation in university-sponsored performances) are automatically excused by the university: These students will not receive academic penalties and, in consultation with the instructor of record will be given reasonable opportunities to complete assignments and exams or given compensatory assignment(s), if needed. Student-athletes must provide written confirmation from their coach to the course instructor(s) not fewer than 10 days prior to the date for which the student will be absent from the class, except in the case of short notice events. Written confirmation and explanation of short notice events must be provided to the instructor as soon as possible. The student-athlete is responsible for all material presented in class and for all announcements and assignments. When possible, students are expected to complete these assignments before their absences. In the event of a disagreement regarding this policy, an appeal may be made by either the student or the instructor of record to the department head.

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to notify the instructor as soon as one is aware that a class will be missed. It is also the responsibility of the student-athlete to make up any exams, labs, and assignments missed due to athletic participation, in a timely manner.

For further information or assistance, please contact Jennifer Grubbs, Associate Athletic Director & Senior Woman Administrator, jshead@valdosta.edu or 229-333-5901.

# CLASS ABSENCES AND PROBLEMS

1. Student-athletes are urged to schedule classes so as to minimize conflicts with practice and competition.
2. When practice schedules conflict with class schedules, student-athletes are expected to attend class.
3. Student-athletes should meet with each professor at the beginning of each semester to present a copy of the athletic schedule and discuss the procedure to promptly make up any assignments missed due to competition.
4. Student-athletes are encouraged to interact with professors on a regular basis. If you need assistance, see your professor as soon as possible.
5. Class excuses/travel letters are provided by the Athletic Office and student-athletes are required to give professors the letters prior to athletic event, home or away. This responsibility falls solely on the student- athlete.

# CREDIT FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

1. Student-athletes may receive one (1) academic credit per year for their participation in athletics.
2. Student-athletes must schedule this credit, **KSPE 1390 Varsity Athletics**, during their regular scheduling period.
3. If a student-athlete quits or is dismissed from their team for any reason during the semester in which they scheduled the credit, it is his/her responsibility to officially withdraw from the course utilizing the normal withdrawal procedure. If the student athlete is unable to meet VSU's withdrawal deadline, an alternate academic plan to complete the course will be implemented.

# GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Your grade point average (GPA) is extremely important and you should know it and understand how to calculate it. To compute your GPA, divide your hours taken into the total number of grade points earned. A grade of an A is equal to four (4) grade points, a B is three (3), a C is two (2) points and a D is one (1). Your grade point average is used to determine your eligibility as well as your ability to graduate. Take care of it.

At Valdosta State University, the *institutional grade point average (GPA)* is used as the official GPA for determining both **NCAA eligibility** and **eligibility for graduation**. This GPA is calculated solely from coursework attempted at VSU. While *transfer credit* may be applied toward fulfilling academic requirements within a student's major or overall degree plan, neither the hours nor the grades associated with those transfer courses are included in the calculation of the institutional GPA. VSU does maintain a *cumulative GPA* that includes both institutional and transfer credit; however, this cumulative GPA is **not** used in determining NCAA eligibility or graduation status.

**Graduation Requirement:**
As stated in the VSU Undergraduate Catalog, candidates for undergraduate degrees must:

- Complete a minimum of **120 semester hours** of academic work (or more, depending on major requirements).
- Earn an **institutional GPA of 2.00 or higher**, based solely on coursework attempted at Valdosta State University.

No student will be eligible for graduation without meeting the 2.00 minimum institutional GPA requirement, regardless of the cumulative GPA that may include transfer credits. This policy applies to all undergraduate students at Valdosta State University and is aligned with institutional standards and NCAA compliance requirements.

Valdosta State University's GPA calculation method is in full compliance with:
**NCAA Bylaw 14.2.9.3.5.3 – Calculation of Minimum Grade-Point Average:**

*"A student-athlete must meet the minimum cumulative grade-point average at the certifying institution based on the method of calculation used by the institution for calculating cumulative grade-point averages for all students, and the calculation shall include only course work normally counted by the certifying institution in calculating the cumulative grade-point average for graduation (regardless of whether an institution requires multiple minimum grade-point averages for graduation)." (Adopted: 1/18/14, effective 8/1/16 for certifications of progress toward degree for Fall 2016 and thereafter)*

In accordance with this bylaw, VSU certifies NCAA GPA eligibility using the same institutional GPA that is used to determine graduation eligibility. Transfer credits are not included in this calculation, consistent with institutional policy.

# SATISFACTORY PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS

In order to compete in intercollegiate athletics, each student-athlete must meet all NCAA eligibility requirements for practice and competition. To be eligible in your sport for the following season, each athlete must pass a total of 24 hours during the fall, spring and summer terms that count toward graduation. If you make a D in a class and you have to repeat the class for your major, that class will only count once toward your 24 hours earned. In addition, the student-athlete must satisfactorily complete nine (9) semester hours of academic credit the preceding regular academic term in which he/she has been enrolled full-time at any collegiate institution (summer school cannot be used to satisfy this requirement).

A student-athlete must achieve a minimum **institutional (VSU)** grade point average of 2.00 prior to the beginning of each fall term.

If you are a junior/community college transfer and transfer 48-degree credit hours into Valdosta State University, your cumulative grade point average at Valdosta State must be a 2.0 after the first year at Valdosta State. If you do not have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 at the end of spring semester, the student must return to Valdosta State for the summer term to raise his/ her cumulative GPA to a 2.0. If the student has a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better, but has earned less than the required 24-credit hours for the academic year, he/she may choose to be a transient student at another institution for the summer term.

1. Credit Hour Requirements
    a. The student-athlete must be admitted as a regularly enrolled, degree-seeking student in accordance with the regular, published entrance requirements of Valdosta State University.
    b. The student-athlete must be enrolled as a full-time student maintaining a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. **(If a student-athlete drops below 12 credit hours, at any time, he/she is not eligible to practice or compete and his/her athletic aid will be cancelled for the term in which they are below full-time status.)**
    c. The student-athlete must complete nine (9)-semester hours of academic credit the preceding regular academic term in which he/she has been enrolled full-time in any collegiate institution.
    d. If a student-athlete is enrolled in less than 12 credits, he/she is not eligible for practice or competition and athletic aid unless the student is in their final semester of the baccalaureate program and has prior approval from the Director of Compliance.

2. Designation of Degree Program
    a. A student-athlete must designate a program of study leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree by the beginning of the fifth semester of enrollment (third year).

3. Progress toward a Degree
    a. A student-athlete must achieve "satisfactory progress" as defined by the institution, toward his/her designated degree program.

# SCHEDULING CLASSES

Due to the additional time demands placed upon student-athletes, they will be given an advantage in scheduling with the following conditions:

1. All student-athletes are permitted to register on the very first day the registration system is open for registration for the following term. This early registration time is officially for graduate students and senior students enrolled at the University. However, due to strict time constraints, student-athletes can register during this time. This is a special privilege the University has offered to student- athletes. Do not take it for granted!

2. If the student-athlete does not register on this specific early registration date, registration priority will fall back on the student-athlete's academic classification in the following order: Graduate students and seniors; juniors; sophomores; freshmen. If you wait until your academic classification to register, you may have limited classes available to you and creating a schedule that fits with your athletic schedule may be complicated.

# ONLINE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS

Student athletes admitted to Valdosta State under a Freshman Presidential Exception are not permitted to enroll in a fully online academic major or program.

While occasional enrollment in individual online courses is permitted when appropriate for scheduling or academic progress, it is the policy of the Athletic Department that students admitted under this exception are expected to be primarily engaged in on-campus academic programs. The intent of this policy is to ensure adequate academic support, foster greater campus integration, and promote overall student development through in-person instruction and resources.

Students admitted under the Freshman Presidential Exception often benefit from increased academic structure and support. Fully online academic programs may not provide the level of engagement and oversight necessary to ensure their academic success, especially during the critical first year of college. By requiring in-person enrollment, the institution can better support the unique academic and developmental needs of these student-athletes.

Requests for exceptions to this policy will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances and must be approved jointly by the Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, the student athlete's head coach and the Director of University Advising.

This policy is effective beginning with Fall 2025 academic term and applies to all incoming student-athletes admitted under a Freshman Presidential Exception thereafter.

# STUDENT ATHLETE GRADUATION STOLES

Undergraduate and graduate student-athletes who are in good standing with the University and VSU Athletics may be eligible to receive a graduation stole in recognition for their athletic and academic achievement. In order to receive a graduation stole, all student-athletes must satisfy the following conditions:

1. Graduating student-athletes must be affiliated with a recognized VSU Athletic team and appear on their respective team's final roster in their last semester of eligibility. This requirement must be satisfied regardless of other considerations, including final GPA. Student-athletes who are unable to complete their eligibility due to a career-ending injury or other extenuating circumstances are exempt from appearing on their team's final roster. However, all other relevant VSU Athletics and university requirements must be satisfied.

   NOTE: Student-athletes who quit or are dismissed from their teams do not qualify for a stole. In the event that a student-athlete who has quit or has been dismissed rejoins their team, they may become re-eligible for a graduation stole, provided they remain in good standing with VSU Athletics and the university.

2. A graduation stole will be purchased for student-athletes for the semester in which they have applied for graduation. Confirmation of the graduation application must be obtained from the Valdosta State University Office of the Registrar. Student-athletes must be able to provide evidence, upon request, that they will graduate in the indicated semester and year to receive a graduation stole. Student-athletes who are in good standing but require extra semesters to graduate will receive their stole in the semester in which they will graduate.

# NCAA AND GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE REGULATIONS

## ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT POLICY

All equipment issued to the student-athlete will be his/her responsibility.

1. All equipment issued must be returned within two weeks of completion of the season. If not, a hold will be put on the student-athlete's records until the equipment is returned or paid for.
2. Do not lend or exchange clothing without notifying your coach. All clothing is issued to a particular student-athlete. If equipment is not returned, the person who was assigned that equipment is held responsible.
3. Only garments used for participation in VSU athletic activities will be laundered.

## COMPETITION OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION

Outside competition is any athletic competition against any other outside athletic team (including an alumni team) that does not represent the intercollegiate athletics program of the same institution. A student-athlete becomes ineligible for intercollegiate competition for the remainder of the season in his/her sport if he/she competes as a member of any outside team in any non-collegiate, amateur competition during the institution's intercollegiate season in the sport. Please check with your coach regarding **ANY** outside competition activities you may wish to pursue.

## COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSIONS

Valdosta State University provides four (4) complimentary admissions per eligible athlete, in their respective sport, in events where admission is charged: football, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball. This also includes the cheerleaders and Red Hot's dance team. Complimentary tickets shall be distributed only to persons designated by the student-athlete upon proof of identification. Paper tickets will not be given to student-athletes.

## NAME, IMAGE, & LIKENESS (NIL)

Valdosta State University's name, image, and likeness policies exist to protect both Valdosta State University and its student-athletes. Please contact VSU Athletic Compliance Office with any questions.

- Courtney Smith - csmith6@valdosta.edu
- Troy Katen - tkaten@valdosta.edu
- Jennifer Grubbs - jshead@valdosta.edu
- Ansley DeCenzo - amdecenzo@valdosta.edu

Valdosta State Athletics NIL Policies:

- The name, image, and likeness disclosure form must be submitted before participating in a name, image, and likeness activity. (Appendix
- Valdosta State University, the VSU Athletic Department, staff members, or boosters may not compensate or arrange compensation to a current or prospective intercollegiate athlete for his or her name, image, or likeness.
- Name, image, and likeness opportunities cannot conflict with academic or team-related activities.
- Student-athletes cannot endorse alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, gambling, adult entertainment, and other categories inconsistent with VSU's values, mission, or that negatively impacts or reflects adversely on VSU.
- The use of VSU facilities for name, image, and likeness activities is prohibited unless approved in advance by VSU's Athletic Director.
- Student-athletes may not wear or use any VSU trademarks/logos when engaging in name, image, and likeness activities unless properly licenses by the Athletic Department.
- Student-athletes may not engage in name, image, or likeness activities while representing the institution. This includes practice, competition, conditioning, team travel, community service/engagement, and other VSU promotional activities.

Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is a name, image, and likeness activity (NIL)?**

It is an activity that involves the use of an individual's name, image, and likeness for commercial or promotional purposes.

**Who is a professional service provider?**

A professional service provider is an individual who provides third-party services to a prospective or current student-athlete. It includes, but is not limited to, an agent, tax advisor, marketing consultant, attorney, brand-management company, or anyone who is employed or associated with such person.

**Can international student-athletes benefit from name, image, and likeness?**

Yes. However, compensation may affect international visas. International students should consult with the Valdosta State International Office before agreeing to a name, image, and likeness contract.

**Does compensation I receive through NIL activities affect my financial aid?**

Compensation you receive does not affect your athletic scholarship, but may affect the amount of federal and state aid you receive.

For more information on name, image, and likeness, see Appendices C (Guidelines for NLI) and D (NLI Disclosure Form).

# PLAYING AND PRACTICE SCHEDULES

1. A student-athlete may not participate in countable athletically related activities for more than 20 hours per week during the sport's championship season.

2. Any competition counts as three (3) hours regardless of the actual duration of the contest.

3. Practice may not be conducted at any time (including vacation periods) following competition, except between contests, rounds or events during a multi-day or multi-event competition.

4. Practice may not exceed four (4) hours per day.

5. Each team must have one day off per week, except during participation in one conference and post- season championship and any post-season certified bowl games or National Invitation Tournaments, and during participation in NCAA championships.

6. *Non-championship season activity* – 24 days of practice (includes competition) in a 45-day period.

7. Countable athletic-related activities include, but are not limited to:

    a. practice
    b. athletics meetings with a coach
    c. competition
    d. field, floor or on-court activity
    e. setting up offensive and defensive alignment
    f. on-court or on-field activities called by any member of the team and confined primarily to members of that team
    g. required weight-training and conditioning activities
    h. required participation in camps/clinics
    i. visiting the competition site (cross-country and golf only)participation outside the regular season in individual skill-related instructional activities with a member of the coaching staff
    j. discussion or review of game films
    k. participation in a physical activity class for student-athletes only and taught by a member of the athletic staff

Outside the championship season, a team may only do conditioning/weight lifting and skill development activities. This activity may not exceed two hours per day, eight hours per week, and there must be two days off per week. Skill development may not exceed two (2) hours per week per athlete.

No class time may be missed for practice activities.

# PRIVATE LESSONS

A student-athlete may conduct private lessons in his/her free time as long as the following guidelines are met:

1. compensation is the going rate;
2. the lessons are not conducted on the university's facilities; and
3. none of the university's equipment is used during the lesson.

# SEASONS OF COMPETITION

A student-athlete shall not engage in more than four (4) seasons of intercollegiate competition in any one sport. At NCAA Division II institutions, a student-athlete shall complete his/her seasons of competition during the first 10 full-time collegiate semesters of collegiate enrollment (excluding summer terms). A student-athlete is considered to have used a semester when the student-athlete is officially registered full-time during a regular term of the academic year and attends the first day of classes for that term, even if the student-athlete drops to part-time status during that first day of classes.

# SPORTS CAMPS AND CLINICS

A student-athlete who is employed in any sports camp or clinic must meet the following requirements:

1. must perform duties that are of a general supervisory nature in addition to any coaching or officiating assignments;
2. compensation must be the going rate for camp counselors;
3. a student-athlete who only lectures or demonstrates at the camp/clinic, may not receive compensation for his/her appearance at the camp/clinic.

# TRANSFER FROM VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Department of Athletics ultimately hopes all student-athletes will complete their four years of eligibility and graduate from Valdosta State University. However, there may be conditions that necessitate a student-athlete transferring to another institution. The NCAA has established transfer regulations that must be met for a student-athlete to become eligible at the institution to which he/she transfers. While enrolled at VSU, a student-athlete must abide by the following NCAA guidelines to communicate with athletic department personnel at another four-year institution:

- VSU student athlete must provide the VSU Athletic Compliance Office with a **written** notification of transfer.
- VSU undergraduate student athlete must complete the **NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Transfers Educational Module** related to transferring. Click here for the link to the module: http://d2transfer.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/
- VSU student athlete must fill out/print the module's **Certificate of Completion** and provide the certificate to the VSU Athletic Compliance Office.

VSU Athletic Compliance will enter the student's information in the NCAA Transfer Portal within seven-consecutive calendar days of receipt of a written notification of transfer from the student-athlete **or** receipt of confirmation of the student-athlete's completion of the educational module, **whichever occurs later**. Student athletes must provide their written notification of transfer to VSU Athletic Compliance by **June 15.**

You should contact Courtney Smith, Compliance Officer, to request further information regarding your ability to communicate with other institutions and for advisement on the NCAA transfer regulations.

Student athletes should be aware that the VSU Athletic Department may restrict services provided to student athletes who request to be placed on the national transfer database. Examples include but are not exclusive to department services and access to athletic facilities.

For more information regarding transferring, please go to the following NCAA link: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Transfer/FourYearGuide.pdf

# CONDUCT

Participation in intercollegiate athletics at Valdosta State University is a privilege extended to a gifted few. As the institution's most visible ambassadors, student-athletes are expected to uphold, at all times, high standards of integrity and behavior that reflect well upon them, their families, coaches, teammates, the Valdosta State University Athletic Department and the university.

## SANCTIONS

Student-athletes are subject to the following sanctions:

- Immediate suspension from all athletically related activity pending further review by the Director of Athletics or his/her designee, in concert with appropriate campus authorities following arrest or charge of any of the following:
    - a felony
    - sports wagering
    - illegal possession of a weapon
    - sexual assault, or
    - other serious matters as determined by the Director of Athletics

## APPEARANCE

As a Valdosta State University student-athlete, you are highly looked upon representatives of the university. As a result, you should carry yourself in a respectable manner whether you are on the court, on campus, in the classroom, or in the community.

## GAMBLING ACTIVITIES

Staff members of a member conference, staff members of the athletic department of a member institution and student-athletes shall not knowingly:

1. provide information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition;
2. solicit a bet on any intercollegiate team;
3. accept a bet on any team representing the institution;
4. solicit or accept a bet on any intercollegiate competition for any item (cash, shirt, dinner) that has tangible value;
5. participate in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate athletics or professional athletics, through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling.

## HAZING

This policy applies to all Valdosta State University students, clubs, and registered student organizations.

All rites and ceremonies of induction or private actions by individuals which tend to occasion or allow mental or physical suffering are prohibited. Specifically, hazing is defined as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, ridicule, or the breaking of school rules.

Activities considered to be hazing include two elements: (1) coercion, either overt or covert, and (2) production of physical or mental discomfort, in either the participant(s) or spectators. Such activities suggested or ordered by a group or a member of a group to new or trial members will be considered to carry with them covert coercion even if the activity is defined as "voluntary".

Paddling in any form, physical and psychological shocks and creation of excessive fatigue are always considered hazing. Other activities which very often carry with them elements of hazing are: quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips, or any other such activities; wearing apparel in public which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; late work sessions which interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with the regulations of the community. This is not to be considered an all-inclusive list.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Your reputation, along with that of the Valdosta State University Department of Athletics, is of utmost importance. If you have a web posting on Instagram/X/TikTok, or any other similar sites be aware these pages can be seen by anyone with internet access. These sites are being monitored. DO NOT post photographs portraying incriminating or illegal acts. Not only will it give you and Valdosta State University a bad image, but it can also jeopardize future job opportunities. If such pictures are found, you will be instructed to remove them. Failure to do so will result in further action and consequences.

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The administration, faculty, staff, and students of Valdosta State University realize that any type of harassment creates an environment hostile to the goals of this institution. Therefore, we establish this sexual harassment policy for the VSU community. While sexual harassment is a violation of law, the procedures described are not of a legal nature, and they do not preclude appropriate legal action. This policy seeks to protect the rights of the complainants, the respondents, those persons involved in implementing this policy, and the integrity of VSU as an institution of higher learning.

Valdosta State University is committed to a working and learning environment that is free of discriminatory intimidation. The exploitation of institutional, academic, or supervisory authority to sexually harass students, faculty, or staff members is a form of illegal sex-based discrimination in violation of [the] law as well as Valdosta State University policy. Such conduct will not be tolerated on this campus or in connection with any university function wherever conducted.

To avoid the potential for sexual harassment and conflict of interest, it is expressly provided that no sexual relationship should exist between supervisor/evaluator and subordinate or between teacher and student. If a sexual relationship develops, the responsibility for evaluating, grading, etc. shall be transferred promptly to another individual.

# DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**GENERAL**

The Equal Opportunity Commission's Guidelines on sexual harassment states that unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual'semployment,
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual, or,
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

**QUID PRO QUO SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Explicit or implicit promises of rewards for cooperation via misuse of institutional authority, e.g., to affect a subordinate's employment / admission, professional / academic advancement, salary / financial aid, performance ratings / grades, tenure / graduation, etc.

Explicit or implicit threats of punishment for non-cooperation via misuse of institutional authority, e.g., to affect a subordinate's employment/admission, professional/academic advancement, salary/financial aid, performance ratings/grades, tenure/graduation, etc.

**HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Speech or conduct that creates a hostile or offensive working or academic environment; interferes with an individual's work/scholastic performance; prevents an individual's full enjoyment of professional or educational opportunities; or induces conformance, stress, anxiety, fear, or sickness on the part of the harassed person.

Such speech or conduct is reasonably regarded as offensive and substantially impairs the academic or work opportunity of students, colleagues, and co-workers. If it takes place in the teaching context, it must also be persistent, pervasive, and not germane to the subject matter. The academic setting is distinct from the workplace in that wide latitude is required for professional judgment in determining the appropriate content and presentation of academic material.

Implicit in the definition of sexual harassment is the assumption that it prevents the realization of the complaint's full potential as an employee or student. All persons who sexually harass another rob victims of the freedom to do their tasks. Consequently, sexual harassment is considered unethical and unprofessional as well as illegal and against university policy.

# STUDENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CODE

*Updated: Fall, 2023*

**Section I. Student Sexual Misconduct Code**

**Initial Review of Sexual Misconduct Reports:**

Upon notice of the alleged Sexual Misconduct the institution's Title IX Coordinator ("Coordinator") will assess whether a formal investigation, informal resolution, or dismissal would be appropriate. In making this determination, the Coordinator will assess whether the allegation(s), if true, would rise to the level of prohibited conduct, whether a Formal Complaint must be filed, whether an investigation is appropriate in light of the circumstances, whether the parties prefer an informal resolution, and whether any safety concerns exist for the campus community. The need to issue a broader warning to the community in compliance with the Clery Act shall be assessed in compliance with federal law.

**Confidentiality:**

Where a Complainant requests that their identity be withheld or the allegation(s) not be investigated, the Coordinator should consider whether or not such request(s) can be honored in a manner consistent with the institution's obligations to promote a safe and nondiscriminatory environment. The institution should inform the Complainant that the institution cannot guarantee confidentiality. Honoring a Complainant's request for confidentiality shall not prevent the institution from reporting information or statistical data as required by law, including the Clery Act.

**Retaliation:**

Anyone who has made a report or complaint, provided information, assisted, participated, or refused to participate in any manner in the Sexual Misconduct process, shall not be subjected to retaliation. Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to retaliation should immediately contact the Coordinator or their designee. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**False Complaints/Statements:**

Individuals are prohibited from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information to a system or institution official. Any person found to have knowingly submitted false complaints, accusations, or statements, including during a hearing, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including suspension or expulsion) under the appropriate institutional process.

**Amnesty:**

Students should be encouraged to come forward and to report Sexual Misconduct notwithstanding their choice to consume alcohol or to use drugs. Information reported by a student during the Sexual Misconduct process concerning the consumption of drugs or alcohol will not be used against the particular student in a disciplinary proceeding or voluntarily reported to law enforcement; however, students may be provided with resources on drug and alcohol counseling and/or education, as appropriate. Nevertheless, these students may be required to meet with staff members regarding the incident and may be required to participate in appropriate educational program(s). The required participation in an educational program under this amnesty procedure will not be considered a sanction. Nothing in this amnesty provision shall prevent an institution staff member who is otherwise obligated by law (the Clery Act) to report information or statistical data as required.

**Jurisdiction:**

Each institution shall take necessary and appropriate action to promote the safety and well-being of its community. Accordingly, Sexual Misconduct should be addressed when such acts occur on institution property, at institution -sponsored or affiliated events, or otherwise violates the institution's student conduct policies, regardless as to where such conduct occurs.

**Access to Advisors:**

For Formal Title IX Complaints: Both the Complainant and the Respondent, as parties to the matter, shall have the opportunity to use an advisor (who may or may not be an attorney) of the party's choosing. The advisor may accompany the party to all meetings and may provide advice and counsel to their respective party throughout the Sexual Misconduct process, including providing questions, suggestions and guidance to the party, but may not actively participate in the process except to conduct cross-examination at the hearing as outlined in the Resolution/Hearing section below. If a party chooses not to use an advisor during the investigation, the institution will provide an advisor for the purpose of conducting cross-examination on behalf of the relevant party. All communication during the Sexual Misconduct process will be between the institution and the party and not the advisor. The institution will copy the party's advisor prior to the finalization of the investigation report when the institution provides the parties the right to inspect and review directly related information gathered during the investigation. With the party's permission, the advisor may be copied on all communications.

For Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Complaints: Both the Complainant and the Respondent, as parties to the matter,

shall have the opportunity to use an advisor (who may or may not be an attorney) of the party's choosing at the party's own expense.

The advisor may accompany the party to all meetings and may provide advice and counsel to their respective party throughout the Sexual Misconduct process but may not actively participate in the process. All communication during the Sexual Misconduct process will be between the institution and the party and not the advisor. With the party's permission, the advisor may be copied on all communications.

**Interim Measures:**
Interim measures may be implemented at any point after the institution becomes aware of an allegation of Sexual Misconduct and should be designed to protect any student or other individual in the USG community. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter Sexual Misconduct and retaliation. Interim measures must be implemented consistent with the provisions in the applicable Board and institutional policies and procedures.

An interim suspension should only occur where necessary to promote safety and should be limited to those situations where the Respondent poses a serious and immediate danger or threat to persons or property. In making such an assessment, the institution should consider the existence of a significant risk to the health or safety of the Complainant or the campus community; the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability of potential injury; and whether less restrictive means can be used to significantly mitigate the risk.

Before an interim suspension is issued, the institution must make reasonable efforts to give the Respondent the opportunity to be heard on whether the Respondent's presence on campus poses a danger. If an interim suspension is issued, the terms of the interim suspension take effect immediately. The Respondent shall receive notice of the interim suspension and the opportunity to respond to the interim suspension.

Within three business days of receiving a challenge the institution will determine whether the interim suspension should continue.

**Definitions and Prohibited Sexual Misconduct**

A. **Community:** Students, faculty and staff, as well as contractors, vendors, visitors, and guests.

B. **Complainant:** An individual who is alleged to have experienced conduct that violates this Policy.

C. **Confidential Employee:** University employees who have been designated by the Title IX Coordinator to talk with an alleged victim in confidence. Confidential employees must only report that the incident occurred and provide date, time, location, and name of alleged respondent (if known) without revealing any information that would personally identify the alleged victim. This minimal reporting must be submitted in compliance with Title IX and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act). Confidential Employees may be required to fully disclose details of an incident in or to ensure campus safety.

D. **Consent:** Words or actions that show a knowing and voluntary willingness to engage in mutually agreed -upon sexual activity. Consent cannot be gained by force, intimidation or coercion, by ignoring or acting in spite of objections of another, or by taking advantage of the incapacitation of another, where the respondent knows or reasonably should have known of such incapacitation. Consent is also absent when the activity in question exceeds the scope of consent previously given. Past consent does not imply present or future consent. Silence or an absence of resistance does not imply consent. Minors under the age of 16 cannot legally consent under Georgia law. Either party can withdraw consent at any time by using clear words or actions.

E. **Dating Violence:** Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the alleged victim. Dating violence includes but is not limited to sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

F. **Domestic Violence:** Violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the alleged victim; by a person with whom the alleged victim shares a child in common; by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; or, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the alleged victim.

G. **Incapacitation:** The physical and/or mental inability to make informed, rational judgments, and can result from mental disability, sleep, involuntary physical restraint, or from intentional or unintentional taking of alcohol and/or

other drugs. Whether someone is incapacitated is to be judged from the perspective of an objectively reasonable person.

H. **Nonconsensual Sexual Contact**: Any physical contact with another person of a sexual nature without the person's consent. Sexual contact includes but is not limited to, touching of a person's intimate parts (such as breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals); touching another person with one's own intimate parts; or forcing a person to touch his or her own or another person's intimate parts.

I. **Nonconsensual Sexual Penetration:** Any penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth by a penis, object, tongue, finger, or other body part; or contact between the mouth of one person and the genitals of another.

J. **Privileged Employees:** Individuals employed by the institution to whom a complainant or alleged victim may talk in confidence, as provided by law. Disclosure to these employees will not automatically trigger an investigation against the complainant's or alleged victim's wishes. Privileged Employees include those providing counseling, advocacy, health, mental health, or sexual assault related services (*e.g.*, sexual assault resource centers, campus health centers, pastoral counselors, and campus mental health centers) or as otherwise provided by law. Exceptions to confidentiality exist where the conduct involves suspected abuse of a minor (in Georgia, under the age of 18) or otherwise provided by law, such as imminent threat of serious harm.

K. **Reasonable Person:** An individual who is objectively reasonable under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the person being evaluated by the institution.

L. **Reporter:** A individual who reports an allegation of conduct that may violate this Policy but who does not a party to the complainant.

M. **Respondent:** An individual who is alleged to have engaged in conduct that violates this policy.

N. **Responsible Employees:** Those employees who must promptly and fully report complaints of or information regarding sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Responsible Employees include any administrator, supervisor, faculty member, or other person in a position of authority who is not a Confidential Employee or Privileged Employee. Student employees who serve in a supervisory, advisory, or managerial role are in a position of authority for purposes of this policy (*e.g.*, teaching assistants, residential assistants, student managers, orientation leaders). Responsible Employees are not required to report information disclosed at public awareness events (e.g., "Take Back the Night," candlelight vigils, protests, "survivor speak-outs" or other public forums in which students may disclose incidents of prohibited conduct).

O. **Sexual Exploitation:** Sexual exploitation occurs when an individual takes nonconsensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for his or her own advantage or benefit, or to the benefit or advantage of anyone other than the one being exploited. Examples of sexual exploitation may include, but are not limited to, the following:
   1. Invasion of sexual privacy.
   2. Prostituting another individual.
   3. Nonconsensual photos, video or audio of sexual activity.
   4. Nonconsensual distribution of photos, video or audio of sexual activity.
   5. Intentional observation of nonconsenting individuals who are partially undressed, naked, or engaged in sexual acts.
   6. Knowingly transmitting an STD or HIV to another individual through sexual activity.
   7. Intentionally and inappropriately exposing one's breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals in nonconsensual circumstances.
   8. Sexually-based bullying.

P. **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct, based on sex or gender stereotypes, that is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of employment or status in a course, program or activity; is a basis for employment or educational decisions; or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to interfere with one's work or educational performance creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment or limiting one's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity.

Q. **Sexual Misconduct**: Includes, but is not limited to, such unwanted behavior as dating violence, domestic violence, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual penetration, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking.

R. **Stalking:** Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.
   1. Course of conduct means two or more acts, including, but not limited to , acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.
   2. Substantial emotional distress means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

**Section II. Reporting Sexual Misconduct**

A complainant of sexual misconduct may, but need not, file a criminal complaint with law enforcement officials, file a misconduct report with a Responsible Employee or the Title IX Coordinator, or both. A report may be filed anonymously, although anonymous reports may make it difficult for the university to address the complaint. Any individual who believes that the student is a victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report allegations of sexual misconduct promptly.

All reports of sexual misconduct alleged to have been committed by a student must be handled consistently with requirements set forth in Appendix B. Section III. Process for Investigating and Resolving Reports of Student Misconduct.

All reports of sexual misconduct alleged to have been committed by a non-student member of the VSU community will be addressed and or resolved through the VSU and Board of Regents' applicable policies for discipline of non-students.

**A. Institutional Reports**

Complainants of sexual misconduct who wish to file a report with the University should notify a Responsible Employee or the Title IX Coordinator, Selenseia Holmes, in the Office of Student Conduct & Title IX (229) 333-5409 or email saholmes@valdosta.edu.

Responsible Employees informed about sexual misconduct allegations involving any student should not attempt to resolve the situation, must notify and report all relevant information to the Title IX Coordinator as soon as practicable. Confidential Employees are not bound by this requirement but may, consistent with their ethical and legal obligations, be required to report limited information about incidents without revealing the identities of the individuals involved to the Title IX Coordinator. All members of the VSU community are encouraged to report incidents of sexual misconduct promptly.

VSU has Deputy Title IX Coordinators to whom reports may be made, as well. Complainants are encouraged to report their complaints in writing, though oral complaints will also be accepted, taken seriously, and investigated, to the extent possible. While complaints should be made as quickly as possible following an alleged incident of sexual misconduct, all reports will be accepted regardless of when reported.

The Title IX Coordinator shall refer to the System Director any allegation(s) of sexual misconduct that could, standing alone as reported, lead to the suspension or expulsion of the respondent(s). The System Director will work with the institution to determine whether any interim measure(s) are necessary and to assign an investigator who will work under the direction of the System Director or designee, if directed by System Director. If an allegation is not initially identified as one that would lead to the suspension or expulsion of the respondent(s), but facts arise during the course of the investigation that would require transfer to the System Director, the Title IX Coordinator shall transfer oversight to the System Director or designee. The System Director shall have the discretion to retain oversight or transfer oversight to the institution.

**B. Law Enforcement Reports**

Because sexual misconduct may constitute criminal activity, a complainant also has the option, should he or she so choose, of filing a report with campus or local police, for his or her own protection and that of the surrounding community. The institution may assist the complainant in reporting the incident to law enforcement officials.

Complainants considering filing a report of sexual misconduct with law enforcement should preserve any evidence of sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Clothing worn during the incident including undergarments;
2. Sheets, bedding, and condoms, if used;
3. Lists of witnesses with contact information;
4. Text messages, call history, social media posts;
5. Pictures of injuries;
6. Videos.

**C.** Anonymous Reports

Reports of sexual misconduct can be reported anonymously to University Police (229) 333-7816, or the UPD website at https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/forms/anonymous-tip-reporting.php.

Anonymous reports can also be made via the Student Conduct Incident Report Form located at https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?Valdosta StateUniv or by contacting the Office of Student Conduct & Title IX at (229) 333-5409, or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator at (229) 333-5463 or titleix@valdosta.edu.

**Section III. Addressing Reports of Student Sexual Misconduct**

**A. Support Services**

Once an individual makes a complaint, receives notice that a complaint has been made against him or her, or the Title IX Coordinator otherwise learns of a complaint of sexual misconduct, the complainant, respondent and alleged victim (where applicable) will receive written information about support services, such as counseling, advocacy, housing assistance, academic support, disability services, health and mental health services, and legal services that are available on campus. Students can receive confidential counseling services on-campus through the VSU Counseling Center at no charge. In addition, the VSU Counseling Center can provide direct referrals to community-based organizations that provide additional services and support.

Information about support services will be provided regardless as to whether an individual elects to go forward with filing a formal complaint of sexual misconduct or with notifying law enforcement. Information on support services will also be provided to students and employees regardless of where the alleged misconduct occurs.

**B. Informal Resolutions**

Allegations of sexual misconduct may be resolved informally, without a determination of misconduct, if **all** the following are met:

1) When complainant(s) and respondent agree to an informal resolution.
2) When the initial allegation could not result in expulsion.
3) When the complainant(s) and respondent(s) agree to the terms of the informal resolution.
4) When the investigator concludes that informal resolution is in the best interest of the parties and the institution's community.

The alleged victim(s) and respondent(s) have the option to end informal resolution discussions and request a formal process at any time before the terms of an informal resolution are reached. However, matters resolved informally shall not be appealable.

**Section IV. Investigations of Institutional Reports of Student Sexual Misconduct**

**Investigation**

Throughout any investigation and resolution proceeding, a party shall receive written notice of the alleged Sexual Misconduct, shall be provided an opportunity to respond and shall be allowed the right to remain silent or otherwise not participate in or during the investigation and resolution process without an adverse inference resulting. If a party chooses to remain silent or otherwise not participate in the investigation or resolution process, the investigation and resolution process may still proceed, and policy violations may result.

Until a final determination of responsibility, the Respondent is presumed to have not violated the Sexual Misconduct Policy. Prior to the finalization of the investigation report, timely and equal access to information directly related to the allegations that has been gathered during the investigation and may be used at the hearing will be provided to the Complaint, the Respondent, and a party's advisor (where applicable).

Formal judicial rules of evidence do not apply to the investigation process, additionally the standard of review throughout the Sexual Misconduct process is a preponderance of the evidence.

1. The parties shall be provided with written notice of the: report/allegations with sufficient details, pending investigation, possible charges, possible sanctions, available support services and interim measures, and other rights under applicable institutional policies. For the purposes of this provision sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting Sexual Misconduct, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. This information will be supplemented as necessary with relevant evidence collected during the investigation. The notice should also include the identity of any investigator(s) involved. Notice should be provided via institution email to the party's institution email.

2. Upon receipt of the written notice, the parties shall have at least three business days to respond in writing. In that response, the Respondent shall have the right to admit or deny the allegations, and to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and supporting materials. A Complainant shall have the right to respond to and supplement the notice. Throughout the Sexual Misconduct process the Complainant and the Respondent shall have the right to present witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

3. If the Respondent admits responsibility, the process may proceed to the sanctioning phase or may be informally resolved, if appropriate.

4. An investigator shall conduct a thorough investigation and should retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview. The investigator shall also keep a record of any party's proffered witnesses not interviewed, along with a brief, written explanation of why the witnesses were not interviewed.

5. An investigator shall not access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional made in connection with the party's treatment unless the party has provided voluntary written consent. This also applies to information protected by recognized legal privilege.

6. The initial investigation report shall be provided to the Complainant, the Respondent, and the party's advisor (if applicable). This report should fairly summarize the relevant evidence gathered during the investigation and clearly indicate any resulting charges or alternatively, a determination of no charges. For purposes of this Policy, a charge is not a finding of responsibility.

7. The Complainant and the Respondent shall have at least 10 calendar days to review and respond in writing to the initial investigation report and directly related information gathered during the investigation. The investigator will review the Complainant's and the Respondent's written responses, if any, to determine whether further investigation or changes to the investigation report are necessary.

8. The final investigation report should be provided to the Complainant, the Respondent, and a party's advisor, if applicable, at least 10 calendar days prior to the Hearing. The final investigation report should also be provided to all Hearing Panel members for consideration during the adjudication process.

**Resolution/Hearing**

The Respondent and the Complainant, as parties to the matter, may have the option of selecting informal resolution as a possible resolution in certain cases where the parties agree, and it is deemed appropriate by the institution. Where a matter is not resolved through informal resolution a hearing shall be set. All Sexual Misconduct cases shall be heard by a panel of faculty and/or staff. All institutional participants in the Sexual Misconduct resolution process shall receive appropriate annual training as directed by the System Director or Coordinator and required by the Clery Act and Title IX.

In no case shall a hearing to resolve a Sexual Misconduct allegation take place before the investigation report has been finalized. The investigator may testify as a witness regarding the investigation and findings but shall otherwise have no part in the hearing process and shall not attempt to otherwise influence the proceedings outside of providing testimony during the hearing. All directly related evidence shall be available at the hearing for the parties and their advisors to reference during the hearing.

Relevant facts or evidence that were not known or knowable to the parties prior to the issuance of the final investigative report shall be admissible during the hearing. The institution will determine how the facts or evidence will be introduced. The admissibility of any facts or evidence known or knowable by the parties prior to the issuance of the final investigative report, and which were not submitted during the investigation, shall be determined by the institution in compliance with the obligation to provide both parties an equal opportunity to present and respond to witnesses and other evidence. Notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing as well as the selected hearing panel members shall be provided to the Complainant and the Respondent at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Notice shall be provided via institution email to the parties' institution email. Parties may attend the hearing with their advisor.

Hearings shall be conducted in-person or via video conferencing technology. Where the institution determines that a party or witness is unable to be present in person due to extenuating circumstances, the institution may establish special procedures to permit that individual to provide testimony from a separate location. In doing so, the institution must determine whether there is a valid basis for the individual's unavailability, require that the individual properly sequester in a manner that ensures testimony has not been tainted, and make a determination that such arrangement will not unfairly disadvantage any party. Should it be reasonably believed that the individual presented tainted testimony, the hearing panel will disregard or discount the testimony. Parties may also request to provide testimony in a separate room from the opposing party, so long as no party is unfairly disadvantaged, and they have the opportunity to view the testimony remotely and submit follow-up questions.

At all times participants in the hearing process, including parties, a party's advisor, and institution officials, are expected to act in a manner that promotes dignity and decorum throughout the hearing. Participants are expected to be respectful to others and follow procedural formalities outlined by this Policy and the institution. The institution reserves the right to remove any participant from the hearing environment if the participant refuses to adhere to the institution's established rules of decorum.

Each institution shall maintain documentation of the investigation and resolution process, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, audio recordings, and/or video recordings. Any documentation shall be maintained for seven years. Additionally, the following standards will apply to Title IX and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct hearings respectively:

**A. Title IX Hearings**

1. Where a party or a witness is unavailable, unable, or otherwise unwilling to participate in the hearing, including being subject to cross-examination, the hearing panel shall not rely on statements of that party or witness in reaching its determination regarding responsibility. The hearing panel shall not draw an adverse inference against the party or witness based solely on their absence from the hearing or refusal to subject to cross-examination.
2. The parties shall have the right to present witnesses and evidence at the hearing.
3. The parties shall have the right to confront any witness, including the other party, by having their advisor ask relevant questions directly to the witness. The Hearing Officer shall limit questions raised by the advisor when they are irrelevant to determining the veracity of the allegations against the Respondent(s). In any such event, the Hearing Officer shall err on the side of permitting all the raised questions and must document the reason for not permitting any particular questions to be raised.
4. Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior, shall be deemed irrelevant, unless such questions and evidence are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the alleged conduct or consent between the parties during the alleged incident.
5. The hearing panel shall not access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional made in connection with the party's treatment unless the party has provided voluntary written consent. This also applies to information protected by recognized legal privilege.
6. Formal judicial rules of evidence do not apply to the resolution process and the standard of evidence shall be a preponderance of the evidence.
7. Following a hearing, the parties shall be simultaneously provided a written decision via institution email of the hearing outcome and any resulting sanctions or administrative actions. The decision must include the allegations, procedural steps taken through the investigation and resolution process, findings of facts supporting the determination(s), determination(s) regarding responsibility, and the evidence relied upon and rationale for any sanction or other administrative action. The institution shall also notify the parties of their right to appeal as outlined below.

**B. Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Hearings**

1. The parties shall have the right to present witnesses and evidence at the hearing. Witness testimony, if provided, shall pertain to knowledge and facts directly associated with the case being heard.
2. The parties shall have the right to confront any witnesses, including the other party, by submitting written questions to the Hearing Officer for consideration. Advisors may actively assist in drafting questions. The Hearing Officer shall ask the questions as written and will limit questions only if they are irrelevant to determining the veracity of the allegations against the Respondent(s). In any such event, the Hearing Officer shall err on the side of asking all submitted questions and must document the reason for not asking any particular questions.
3. Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior, shall be deemed irrelevant, unless such questions and evidence are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the alleged conduct or consent between the parties during the alleged incident.
4. The hearing panel shall not access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional made in connection with the party's treatment unless the party has provided voluntary written consent. This also applies to information protected by recognized legal privilege.
5. Formal judicial rules of evidence do not apply to the resolution process and the standard of evidence shall be a preponderance of the evidence.
6. Following a hearing, the parties shall be simultaneously provided a written decision via institution email of the hearing outcome and any resulting sanctions or administrative actions. The decision must include the allegations, procedural steps taken through the investigation and resolution process, findings of facts supporting the determination(s), determination(s) regarding responsibility, and the evidence relied upon and rationale for any sanction or other administrative action. The institution shall also notify the parties of their right to appeal, as outlined below.

All Sexual Misconduct adjudication involving an employee Respondent, shall be addressed utilizing Board and institutional employment policies and procedures.

**Valdosta State University Title IX Coordinator**

Ms. Selenseia Holmes

saholmes@valdosta.edu / 229-333-5409

# TITLE IX POLICIES REGARDING THE RECRUITING OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

In compliance with the NCAA Board of Governors Policy on Campus Sexual Violence (NCAA Board of Governors Policy on Campus Sexual Violence | NCAA.org - The Official Site of the NCAA) the University, in choosing to recruit a prospective student-athlete or accept a transfer student- athlete must have a written policy (see Valdosta State University Athletics Policy below) that directs its staff to gather information that reasonably yields information from the former institution(s) to put the recruiting institutional leadership on notice that the prospect has been under investigation, disciplined through a Title IX proceeding or a criminal conviction for sexual, interpersonal or other acts of violence. Failure to have a written policy and to gather information consistent with that policy could result in penalties.

Valdosta State University Athletic Department Policy:

The Valdosta State University Athletic Department will utilize various mediums to attempt to ascertain whether a prospect has been under investigation, disciplined through a Title IX proceeding or a criminal conviction for sexual, interpersonal or other acts of violence. These mediums include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Athletic Department Education
  - Coaches/staff who are involved in the recruitment of prospective student-athletes will be educated on the NCAA Board of Governors Policy on Campus Sexual Violence (including reminders at all mandatory coaches' meetings). More specifically, this education will emphasize the requirement to gather information that reasonably yields information from the former institution(s) to put Valdosta State University leadership on notice that the prospect has been under investigation, disciplined through a Title IX proceeding or a criminal conviction for sexual, interpersonal or other acts of violence.
- Admissions Office Processes
  - All incoming students (not just prospective student-athletes) must complete an admissions process that includes, but is not limited to, questions regarding their involvement in previous disciplinary violation(s) at an educational institution, subject of any disciplinary or academic misconduct proceeding at their previous institution, or have been convicted, made a plea of guilty or accepted a deferred prosecution or judgement to a felony.
- Athletic Department Compliance Office Processes
  - The VSU Athletic Compliance Office will utilize processes to ascertain whether a prospect has been under investigation, disciplined through a Title IX proceeding or a criminal conviction for sexual, interpersonal or other acts of violence.

# ATHLETIC TRAINING

The Athletic Training department is committed to offering quality medical care to every one of our athletes. Even though we hope your athletic experience at Valdosta State will be injury free, it must be made clear that there is a risk factor: **BY PARTICIPATING IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS YOU MAY BECOME SERIOUSLY INJURED.** These risks of playing (or practicing) include, but are not limited to, death, severe neck and spinal injuries, severe head and brain injuries, severe injuries to bones, joints, and other areas of the body.

## STAFF

The athletic training staff is comprised of seven full-time certified athletic trainers, and one graduate-assistant. The Hughston Clinic will employ four of these full-time certified athletic trainers.

## SPORTS MEDICINE FAMILY

The Sports Medicine staff includes licensed physicians. The Student Health Center (SHC) is staffed with nurse practitioners and nurses, and has a physician serving as medical director. The SHC is open during normal business hours and is available only to student-athletes who take at least one on-campus course. Student-athletes **must** present a valid student ID to be seen at the SHC. Student Athletes must be referred to Student Health by their respective certified athletic trainer.

Dr. Kevin Collins of the Hughston Clinic serves as our head team physician. Dr. Matthew Heaton also serves as team orthopedic physician and Dr. Clay Hartley serves as a sports medicine fellow. They all see patients in the Hughston Clinic Valdosta Office. Dr. Ben Hogan, a local primary care physician, services as an Team Physician providing primary care and sports medicine services to student-athletes. He is on call when the SHC is closed and for referrals. He is also in charge of concussion management. **All** appointments with Dr. Collins, Dr. Heaton, Dr. Hartley, and Dr. Hogan must be scheduled by one of the full-time athletic trainers.

Valdosta State athletic training will strive to provide the best sports medicine care possible. However, you have some responsibilities also. What follows is a list of items you will need to understand during your time as a student-athlete at Valdosta State. This will act as an orientation and reference. This document will answer most of the questions you may have.

## TERMINOLOGY

The profession of athletic training has experienced many changes over the last few years. One of these has been the changes in terminology. "Trainer" is no longer an acceptable title. The proper title is "athletic trainer" or "AT." Also, there is no longer a "training room." Instead, the facility should be referred to as a "clinic." The students who will be helping us should be referred to as student workers.

## STUDENT-ATHLETE BILL of RIGHTS

- Competent Sports Medicine team
- Care, free from influence by coach/administration
- Your long-term and short-term health is priority
- Effective and Efficient Care
- Professional and encouraging interactions
- Prompt attention
- Accurate injury explanations and education
- Clean and disinfected AT Clinic and tools

## CHECKS and BALANCES

- You must report all injuries and illnesses immediately to your athletic trainer.
- You must abide by all athletic training rules/regulations.
- Athletic Training is not here to make you feel good; we are here to help you heal. If you do not have an injury, you will be asked to leave the athletic training facility. This is to make room for teammates who are in more need of care.
- You must treat the athletic training staff with respect at all times. We are medical professionals who are here to take care of you. If you abuse that relationship, you may have to receive care from someone else, and perhaps pay for your medical care.
- Stretching is time-consuming. Our time may be better used doing something else. We have several options that allow you to stretch yourself.
- Taping is at our discretion ONLY.

# ATHLETIC TRAINING (AT) CLINIC HOURS

Hours of Operation for the athletic training clinics depend on several factors such as day of the week, availability of athletic trainers, time of year, and changes to team schedules. The hours for each clinic will be posted outside that clinic, but may fluctuate without any previous notice. The following schedule is a general schedule that will give you an idea of general availabilities, but may not accurately reflect the availability of your athletic trainer at all times. Rehabs should be scheduled during the morning hours.

*Regular Hours of Operation*

(M-F) 9am-12n, 1-5pm
Rehabs are scheduled on an appointment basis.
Report to your Athletic Trainer

*Irregular Hours of Operation*

- Practices
  - Open 1 hour prior to practice
  - Close 30 minutes after practice
- Games
  - Open 2 hours prior to game time
  - Close 30 minutes after game
- Off Days
  - By appointment only

# ATHLETIC TRAINING (AT) CLINIC RULES

These rules are posted outside each athletic training clinic.

1. The Athletic Training Clinic is not a locker room, lounge, or hang out. This is a medical facility and will be treated as one.
2. The Athletic Training Clinic will be kept clean for your health's sake.
   a. Please shower and change clothes before coming into the clinic.
   b. Do not bring in dirty shoes or clothing.
   c. No shoes on equipment.
   d. No cleats, ever.
   e. Do not leave trash, equipment, or personal items in the clinic.
   f. No food or drink.
3. Arrive at your appointed time and leave promptly after completion of reason for visit. No loitering.
4. No foul language including cussing, sexual harassment, bullying, or complaining. Also, no loud voices, as this is a limited space.
5. No headphones, earbuds, personal music, videos, phone calls, etc.
6. Take care of the items you use and the orderly storage of them.
   a. Return items to the place where you found them and in the same condition/position in which you found them.
7. Self-treatment is never allowed.
   a. Only approved technicians may operate the modalities.

b. Treatment and rehabs may follow only the designated programs designed by an athletic trainer. The student-athlete should learn about the rehabilitative progress and may begin "the usual" is his/her routine, but should never complete a session without some consultation from an athletic trainer.

8. The student-athlete is responsible for reporting injuries/illnesses to his/her team's athletic trainer and to adhere to the athletic trainer's protocol.
9. Athletic training supplies are for medical purposes by approved personnel ONLY. They are not for cosmetic or personal use.
10. Anyone entering the Athletic Training Clinic must be and remain fully clothed.
    a. This includes footwear, shirt, and long shorts/pants.
    b. The only exception may possibly be in necessity of treatment, as directed by an athletic trainer.
11. Whirlpools and rehab pool may only be used under supervision of an athletic trainer.
    a. Be careful, as floor may be slippery.
    b. You must bring your own towel and make sure to dry off completely before leaving the wet area.
    c. Dress code (in the least) for the wet room is long shorts for guys, and one-piece swimsuit or long shorts and sports bra for ladies.

# MEDICAL INSURANCE

You must have primary medical insurance to participate in varsity athletics at Valdosta State University. If you do not have primary medical insurance, VSU will provide you with a policy. You will have to pay 50% of the premium for this policy, if you received

at least $1,000 athletic scholarship. If you do not receive at least $1,000 in athletic aid, you are responsible for the entire amount.

Valdosta State will pay up to $1,000 of medical costs for student-athletes who are receiving at least $1,000 in athletic aid and whose primary insurance pays first. This coverage only extends to those who get injured while participating in sanctioned team activities. If you get injured during any other activity, even extra-work with teammates, the university will NOT pay for medical bills. If you do not receive at least $1,000 of athletic aid, you will be responsible for all medical bills no matter when or where the injury occurs.

# MEDICAL BILLS

Valdosta State will pay up to $1,000 of medical costs for student-athletes who are receiving at least $1,000 in athletic aid and whose primary insurance pays first. This coverage only extends to those who get injured while participating in sanctioned team activities. If you get injured during any other activity, even extra-work with teammates, the university will NOT pay for medical bills. If you do not receive at least $1,000 of athletic aid, you will be responsible for all medical bills no matter when or where the injury occurs.

If you receive any medical bills for a coverable injury, please get those bills to your athletic trainer as soon as possible. Any delay in getting this bill to your athletic trainer could lead to a delay in getting the bill paid and lead to being contacted by bill collectors.

# THIRD PARTY REIMBURSEMENT

*What Will Be Cost to Students/Parents/Guardians?*
There will be NO INCREASED FINANCIAL BURDEN on either the student or his/her guardians. Only your insurance will be charged. At no point will you be expected to pay anything out of your pocket for care that an AT provides.

*What will be billed?*
We will only be filing claims for pre-participation physicals, post-surgical rehabilitation, and non-surgical rehabilitations of major injuries that require time-loss from participation (e.g. MCL sprain, high ankle sprain, tennis elbow, etc.). All of the services we file claims for will be the same as the ones normally prescribed by physicians. By law, we can only bill for what is "usual and customary."

*How will this affect my care?*
Valdosta State University has a long, proud history of great athletic trainers and high quality of care for its student-athletes. We will NEVER compromise that legacy. You will receive the exact same continued quality of care as always. The only thing that will change is the paperwork on the athletic trainers' part. Even if your student's insurance does not pay for any services, we will continue to provide those services to your student.

*Will the team physicians still be involved in my care?*
Yes. By law, athletic trainers must work under a supervising physician. All of our rehabs will continue to follow a protocol set by the administering physicians. We will continue our established program of referring students to the proper physician and completing any necessary follow-up care.

*What if my insurance doesn't cover the school's physicians and/or athletic trainers?*
We will continue to use our same referral model. If your insurance covers the physicians in Valdosta, we will refer to those physicians. If your insurance only allows your student to be seen at home, we will send the student back home to see a physician. If your insurance does not cover the athletic trainers at Valdosta State University, we will not file a claim with them. You may receive a letter in the mail from your insurance company stating they denied payment. In that case, we would write-off any remaining claims and no payments would be due by you.

*Will this affect the amount the school pays for athletic injuries?*
No. We will continue to pay up to $1,000 per injury for scholarship student-athletes who were injured during sanctioned athletic events and were referred by the athletic trainers. For example, if you got injured during a game and saw our physician, we would pay up to $1,000 for the office visits and radiology and surgery and whatever else was involved. (See our insurance FAQS.)

*Will I receive any bills for these services?*
No. You will never be billed for any services provided by our athletic trainers. You may, however, receive an Explanation of Benefits, or EOB, from your insurance company. This is a customary letter from your insurance company that outlines what they have paid for and what they have not paid. Usually, EOBs will have the statement "This Is Not a Bill" toward the top of the letter. There will be a line in this EOB, however, that says "Patient Responsibility" or "What You Owe." Normally, this would be the amount you owe the provider after insurance has made their adjustments and payments. However, Valdosta State will write-off that amount.

*What does "write-off" mean?*
Writing off a payment simply means we waive your responsibility to pay. Medical providers are required to charge a co-pay so that insurances are not the only ones having to pay for a service. Because your student already pays a "co-pay" in the form of a student

health fee, we are allowed to write-off or excuse any additional charges you may be responsible for. This also applies to your deductible. However, these write-offs are only for services rendered by VSU Athletic Training and not physician appointments.

*How can this possibly reduce my deductible?*
If you have a high deductible insurance plan, we can write-off that deductible to the extent of the claims we have filed. For instance, if you have an insurance plan that has a $3,000 annual deductible, you will have to pay $3,000 in medical bills before your insurance will pay their share. If we were to file $1,000 in claims for athletic training services, you would receive an EOB (see meaning earlier in this letter) stating that you owe this $1,000 as part of your deductible. We would write-off this deductible. In addition to not paying this amount, the good news is that now your remaining deductible is $2,000. In this scenario, your family will save $1,000 in deductible just because your student received care from an athletic trainer.

*Will this increase my premium costs?*
Health insurance is different from other insurances, such as car insurance. With individual policies such as car insurance, if you wreck your vehicle, your premium could increase. However, group insurances such as health insurance do not raise rates per incident. These rates are based on national norms.

# PRESCRIPTION/OTC MEDICATIONS

*Prescription*
Valdosta State will pay up to $1,000 of medical bills covered by a primary insurance plan for student-athletes receiving at least $1,000 in athletic aid, but we do not pay for prescription medications. The Health Center on campus does provide certain prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications for a discounted price.

*Over-the-Counter*
Valdosta State athletic training keeps some over-the-counter (OTC) medications on-site. We will provide these medications as needed for acute symptoms. However, these medications are not for continuous use. If you need to use a medication on a daily basis, you must purchase these medications on your own. The Health Center on campus does provide certain prescription and OTC medications for a discounted price.

# PROTECTED PERSONAL INFORMATION

Valdosta State takes the protection of your personal information very seriously. Our online databases are secured websites. Your protected information will not be sent via email and all care will be made to comply with HIPAA and FERPA laws.

# MEDICAL CLEARANCE

*Pre-Participation*
In order to begin any participation with your team on an annual basis, you must complete ALL the items in the following checklist. The waivers signed in these documents are effective for your entire athletic career at Valdosta State. If you ever change your mind about one of these documents, inform your athletic trainer, and he/she will give another waiver to fill out.

_____ Copy of front and back of your medical insurance card
_____ Neurocognitive Baseline Exam
_____ Concussion Acknowledgement
_____ Medical Insurance and Authorization Form
_____ Medication Exemption and Drug Testing Consent
_____ Authorization for Disclosure of Medical Information
Additional Paperwork for new student-athletes only
_____ Physical
_____Sickle Cell Information and Waiver
_____Minor Consent Form

*Post-Injury*
If you suffer an injury or illness as a student-athlete (whether or not the injury or illness is directly related to sport participation), you will not be allowed to resume participation until cleared by an athletic trainer or physician. Neither you nor your coaches are allowed to declare yourself fit for participation.

# DECLARATION of INJURY/ILLNESS

You are not allowed to declare yourself as ill or injured. Only an athletic trainer, physician, or other medical professional may make such a declaration.

# REHAB/TREATMENT

Rehab is considered a session which involves physical activity. Treatment is a session in which mostly the practitioner provides care. Both rehab and treatment times should be scheduled for morning Athletic Training Clinic hours. If you do not schedule a time, you may not be seen due to time constraints.

It is important to understand that some rehabs and treatments may be uncomfortable. All effort will be given to provide you care at minimal discomfort to you. However, in order for effective care, some treatments/rehabs may cause soreness, discomfort, bruising, etc. You should communicate well with your athletic trainer in order to optimize your patient care.

# TITLE IX

Valdosta State sports medicine believes in the healing power of the human touch. However, college athletics has seen a barrage of cases where human touch was not healing but instead harmful. Student-athletes are encouraged to alert the athletic trainer, their coaches, and/or administration of situations where touch makes them feel uncomfortable. The athletic trainers know to be careful about hand placement and other forms of touch. However, sometimes care can place the practitioner in an awkward position. The athletic trainer should always alert the student-athlete before getting into such positions. If the student-athlete is uncomfortable with that particular technique or would like another athletic trainer to do it instead, the wishes of the student-athlete will be honored. Some student-athletes simply do not wish to be touched at all, and such accommodations will be met as well as possible.

# CONCUSSION MANAGMENT PROGRAM

Valdosta State regularly updates its Concussion Management Program (CMP) to reflect the latest on concussion research. For sports that produce concussions most often (baseball, basketball, soccer, football, softball, volleyball, cheerleading), you will complete a baseline neurocognitive exam before you begin team activity. This is done using the ImPACT test which is arguably the most recognized exam available. After completing the baseline, you will be allowed to begin participation with you team(s). If you are suspected to have suffered a concussion during activity, you will be held out of activity for the rest of that day. This is to prevent a potential catastrophic event called Second Impact Syndrome. Your athletic trainer will then refer you to complete the ImPACT test again. The person who will administer the test will contact you to schedule an appointment for this exam. You must communicate well with these examiners to ensure you are seen in a timely manner. The results of the ImPACT test will be compared to your baseline to show any neurocognitive deficits you may still have. In short, we are looking to see how well your brain is functioning. Every concussion is different, and therefore, your rehabilitation during your recovery may differ from person to person, or even injury to injury. It is imperative that you adhere strictly to the rehab procedures given you by your athletic trainer. If academic accommodations are needed due to your impaired mental ability, the athletic trainer will make such a recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs. Although this is not a guarantee of academic accommodations, every attempt will be made to provide the best possible environment for the success of the student-athlete. You will complete regular ImPACT testing until you are determined to have returned to your baseline level of function. Once you are deemed to have fully healed and recovered, you will be allowed return to full activity. If your recovery takes longer than six months, we will sit down with you and discuss the long term health risks for continuing certain activity. If continued activity is deemed unsafe for your health, you will be medically disqualified from participation. This scenario is rare, and all care will be given to prevent such a situation.

# MENTAL HEALTH

Valdosta State is also concerned about the mental health of its student-athletes. Valdosta State has an excellent Counseling Center on campus (located on the second floor of the Health Center). We will continue to develop a Mental Health Plan to focus on providing you the best care possible.

# STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

The campus has a student health center. It is the large brick building on the north side of Georgia Avenue. The clinic houses nurse practitioners, as well as a laboratory for conducting tests. It also offers various prescription and over-the-counter medications. You must take at least one on-campus course to be eligible to visit the Student Health Center. The building also contains the campus Counseling Center on the second floor.

# PHYSICIAN REFERRALS

If you need to see a physician, your athletic trainer will set up the appointment. This includes appointments for second opinions or physicians near your home. If you do not schedule the physician appointment through your athletic trainer, you will be responsible for the medical bills and plan of care.

# SECOND OPINIONS

You have the right to a second opinion on any medical decision. We ask that you still schedule the second opinion through your athletic trainer, so that we can be sure to stay up-to-date on your plan of care. As long as you orchestrate your care through your athletic trainer, Valdosta State will continue to pay for your care according to the Medical Bills section listed above.

# SICKLE CELL TRAIT POLICY

All student-athletes must show proof of their sickle cell trait status. Sickle cell trait testing is done at birth and you my present this documentation as proof. You may also pay to get your own testing done and present this proof upon arrival to Valdosta State. You will be responsible for this charge. Valdosta State University has a lab in the Student Health Center which allows sickle cell trait testing done on campus. These are usually scheduled to be done along with the student-athlete's initial physical on campus. Once this initial exam's results have been received, the student-athlete does not need to repeat the process as long as he/she is at Valdosta State. The student-athlete will not be allowed to participate until we have received these results. We usually get the results back from the lab between 24-48 hours. If you are a transferring student-athlete, you may provide proof of sickle cell trait status from your previous school.

# HEAT STRESS GUIDELINES

We have two gets off guidelines below. The first is for indoor sports who are practicing or conditioning outside. The second set of guidelines are for outdoor sports to keep in mind at all times. Keep in mind that the numbers in the charts correlate with Wet Bulb Globe Temperatures (WBGT). This is the best mark to determine actual stress on your body due to the heat around you. We do not use "heat index" or "humidity" to determine heat stress. However, these two factors are indeed calculated within WBGT.

**WBGT READINGS: Activity guidelines and rest breaks for <u>indoor</u> sports choosing to train outside**.

| **<u>WBGT (degrees F)</u>** | **<u>Exercise Work/Rest</u>** |
|---|---|
| 70 – 72.9 | 45/15 min |
| 73 – 76.9 | 30/30 min |
| 77 – 79.9 | 20/40 min |
| 80 – 81.9 | 10/50 min |
| 82 – 83.9 | None |
| 84 – 86 | None |

After training for two weeks outdoors (10-14 days to acclimatize and must have 5 outdoor workouts in each week) transition to outdoor sport guidelines.

**WBGT READINGS: Activity guidelines and rest breaks for <u>outdoor</u> sports.**

| **WGBT Reading** | **Activity Guidelines & Rest Break Guidelines** |
|---|---|
| 0-82 | Normal activities: provide 3 rest breaks of at least three minutes every hour of practice. |
| 82-87 | Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise, watch at-risk players carefully. Three rest beaks of at least 4 minutes every hour of practice. |
| 87-89 | Maximum practice time is 2 hours. For football: helmets, shoulder pads, and shorts. Minimum of 4 rest breaks of 4 minutes each hour. |
| 90-92 | Maximum length of practice is 1 hour. No protective equipment can be worn and no conditioning activities. |
| 93+ | No outdoor activities. Delay practice to time with lower WBGT |

# LIGHTNING POLICY

A member of the Athletic Training Staff (certified or GA) will monitor the weather and make the decision to suspend activity in the event of imminent lightning. In the absence of the Athletic Training Staff, the monitoring of weather conditions is the responsibility of the coaching staff. If a student-athlete is outside without the supervision of a coach or AT, see *Lightning Detection Procedures for Athletes during Non-Supervised Activities*.

*The decision to suspend athletic activity is based upon*

For baseball and softball a strike within at the 12 mile mark allows time to tarp the fields and seek shelter safely. Any strike within an 8 mile radius will suspend activity and result in seeking safe shelter for all sports. For Golf, seek shelter when lightning occurs within the 12 mile mark allowing for evacuation to shelter by the 8 mile mark. For football games, evacuation of the stands will begin at the 8 mile mark to allow for fan to seek safe shelter.

and/or

Utilization of the Flash-Bang method revealing lightning within 6 miles (a 30 second or less count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder).

*Tarping the fields*

If a storm is approaching, the AT will notify the coaches/umpire when lightning is within the 20 mile mark warning range. If it is decided to tarp the field, it needs to be started no later than when lightning is detected at the 12 mile mark. Tarping must be completed prior to lightning reaching the 8 mile mark.

*Evacuation of the playing field*

Immediately following the announcement of suspension of activity all, athletes, coaches, officials and support personnel are to evacuate to an enclosed grounded structure. If you are unable to reach shelter immediately, seek a flat area (do not choose an open area where you will be the highest object) or a ditch without water, crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees, lower your head and wait for the storm to pass.

REMEMBER: an automobile, golf cart, or open shelter may not protect you from a lightning strike so these are not adequate shelters.

*At VSU*

- Tennis Game or Practice: Evacuate to PE Complex
- Softball Game or Practice: Evacuate to Softball Field House
- Baseball Game or Practice: Evacuate to Baseball Field House
- Cross Country Race or Practice: Suitable Structure, ditch without water, group of trees*
- Golf Match or Practice: Clubhouse, restroom, ditch without water, group of trees*
  Golfers: Drop your golf clubs. Metal conducts electricity.
- Soccer Game or Practice: Evacuate to Fieldhouse
- Fieldhouse Practice Fields: Evacuate to Fieldhouse
- Bazemore-Hyder Stadium: Evacuate to Locker Room

*Athletes should not stand in groups or near a single tree. There should be 15 ft. between athletes. (NLSI, 2000)

*Resumption of activity*

Activity may resume once a member of the Athletic Training staff gives permission. This decision will be based on: 30 minutes has passed after the last lightning strike within the 8 mile suspension radius.

*Other lightning safety tips*

1. There should be no contact with metal objects (bleachers, fences, golf clubs, bats)
2. Standing under trees and standing in a group should be avoided.
3. If there is no other shelter you may seek refuge in a hardtop vehicle. It is not the rubber tires that protect from lightning; it is the hard top metal roof that dissipates the lightning around the vehicle. (NCAA, 1999)
4. The existence of blue skies and/or absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike 10 miles from the rain shaft. (NCAA, 1999)
5. DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND
6. Avoid using a land line telephone.
7. Persons who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, you can provide care. CPR is what is most often required. Be sure to move the victim to a safe location.
8. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick grove of small trees.
9. ⅓ rule: ⅓ of strikes occur before the storm, ⅓ during the storm, ⅓ after the storm.
10. 80% of lightning victims are male.
11. ⅔ of strikes occur between 12 noon and 6 p.m., and the months of June through August.

12. An inadequate shelter (not grounded) is worse than being out in the open.

*Directions for lightning safety*

1. Prior to practice or competition, monitor weather forecast to include calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Monitor the weather for the following: sudden decrease in temperature, increase in air movement, sudden increase in humidity, visible dark clouds (though these do not have to be present for a lightning strike to occur)
3. REMEMBER, a golf cart, automobile, or open shelter does not provide protection from a lightning strike.
4. If there is no available shelter (e.g. cross-country or golf) each individual should seek an area that is flat and in the open. Crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees and remain in that position until the danger of lightning has passed.
5. Activity may be resumed only IF the danger of a lightning strike is no longer present.

*Lightning Detection Procedures for Athletes during Non-Supervised Activities*

(Examples: athletes using facilities in the off season, or outside of regular practice hours.)

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. The safest measure to take is to proceed indoors whenever you see thunderclouds forming and remain until the storm passes. Just because you cannot see lightning does not mean you are not at risk if you are outdoors. Other warning signs of impending bad weather include: sudden decrease in temperature, sudden change in humidity, increase in air movement, and visible dark storm clouds (though these are not always present during a lightning strike). The Athletic Training staff has a lightning detection policy in place for practices and games; however, we are aware that athletes often use VSU's athletic facilities when there is no supervision by the coaches. In the event athletes are using the facilities without supervision, the Athletic Training staff would like to educate you and encourage you to use FLASH-BANG method to monitor the proximity of the lightning. THE FLASH-BANG Method is an approximation of the distance of the lightning. NO METHOD OF LIGHTNING DETECTION CAN DETECT EVERY STRIKE.

*FLASH – BANG Lightning Detection Method*

This method of lightning detection should be used in conjunction with the Lightning detector.

1. Prior to practice or competition, monitor weather forecast to include calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Watch for the flash of lightning.
3. Begin to count (one, one thousand, two one thousand . . . . )
4. Stop counting when you hear the bang of thunder.
5. Take this number and divide by 5. This will give you an approximation of how far away the lightning is (5 seconds = 1 mile). EXAMPLE: You see a flash of lightning and you begin to count. You reach 45 before you hear the bang of thunder. 45/5 = 9. The lightning would be approximately 9 miles away. Using this method you would suspend activity with lightning at or within 6 miles.
6. Activity is resumed 30 minutes after the last lightning detected at or within 6 miles.

*The National Severe Storms Laboratory recommends that by the time the spotter obtains a "flash-to-bang" count of fifteen seconds, all individuals should have left the athletic site and reached "safe shelter.

# SUMMARY

Once again, the Sports Medicine/Athletic Training staff at Valdosta State University is here for you. Your health care is of the utmost importance and comes before winning. Our selection of physicians was made with that thought in mind. We realize the responsibility we hold in taking care of you while you are away from your homes. Our level of care and concern is understood, and we take pride in the fact that we are offering every student-athlete at Valdosta State the most current medical care in the profession of Sports Medicine.

# HIPAA

Valdosta State University has in place policies and procedures in order to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). These specific policies can be found on the university's web site in the department of Legal Affairs. It is the intent of the Department of Athletics to respect the confidentiality of student- athlete's health information and comply with HIPAA. It is necessary for our medical staff to communicate within the athletic department and sometimes to the media regarding the health status of student-athletes. The HIPAA forms are utilized to obtain permission from the student-athlete to release this information.

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
# DRUG TESTING POLICY

**I. Introduction:**

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Valdosta State University recognizes that drug use is a matter of deep concern in our society. The use of prohibited drugs, alcohol, and the abuse of drugs and alcohol and other controlled substances, as well as chemical dependency to such agents, constitute a threat to the integrity of intercollegiate athletics and represents a danger to the health, welfare and career of the Valdosta State University student-athletes. The main purpose of this policy is to protect the Valdosta State University student-athlete from the risks and dangers of alcohol and drug abuse through such measures as drug and alcohol education, drug testing, drug counseling and rehabilitation, and when appropriate, sanctions.

**II. Objectives:**

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has established the following Alcohol and Drug Policy and Program objectives:

1. Provide an alcohol and drug free environment.

2. Educate student-athletes, coaches, and staff members about the physical, social, psychological, financial, and legal problems associated with alcohol abuse and drug use.

3. Identify student-athletes who are abusing alcohol or drugs and assure prompt counseling and treatment.

4. Provide a program to assist individuals who use or abuse drugs or alcohol to recognize their problem and be referred for counseling and rehabilitation.

5. Provide a fair administrative process for sanctions and appeals.

**III. Application of Policy:**

All student athletes found in violation pertaining to drug abuse and testing will be subject to sanctions accumulating from the first violation.

All student athletes found in violation pertaining to the alcohol section will be subject to sanctions set forth in the policy.

**IV. Drug Testing**

Any prohibited drug on the NCAA Banned Drug Reference List (hereinafter "NCAA") and any subsequent additions to the original list, regardless of whether such drugs are prescribed or non-prescribed, legal, or illegal, and any other controlled dangerous substance may be tested. Included are "street drugs" (as defined by NCAA guidelines).

Testing for the presence of any prohibited drug by the NCAA shall be in addition to, and not in place of, any testing done by Valdosta State University under this policy. As a condition of participation in Valdosta State University athletic programs each student-athlete shall be required to sign a release/consent form (prior to the start of each year of athletic participation), which states that he/she is aware that urine testing for the presence of drugs is permitted by the NCAA and the VSU Athletic Department and participation in the drug testing program is mandatory.

Once the policy is signed by the student-athlete, the student-athlete thereafter will be subjected to unannounced, observed and/or unobserved, random drug testing for the presence of any prohibited drug. The determination of which student-athlete will be tested and the frequency of testing in response to an individualized reasonable suspicion shall be at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

In signing the release/consent form, each athlete understands that failure to undergo testing will result in sanctions pertaining to a first violation (positive test). Failure to undergo testing a second time will result in sanctions pertaining to a second violation (positive test). Failure to undergo testing a third time will result in sanctions pertaining to a third violation (positive test). A positive test will also result from leaving the drug testing site prior to producing a urine sample and/or the manipulation of your sample specimen in any fashion.

The results of the testing, by the certified laboratory, will be reported to the Athletic Director. The parent-guardian, team physician, sport head coach, and other university officials may receive the results, if it is deemed appropriate by the Athletic Director.

## V. Drug Testing Sanctions:

### A. First Violation (Positive Test):

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and if the student is a minor, Parents/Guardians may be informed of the positive results unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. The failure to report to counseling will subject the student-athlete to sanctions associated with a second positive test.

3. Student-athlete will be required to undergo bimonthly urinalysis, starting immediately, at the student-athlete's expense for a minimum of 8 weeks.

4. A first violation will result in one or more of the following sanctions:

    a. Suspension of the student-athlete from participation (athletic competition against outside teams) in the number of athletic contests equal to 20% of the teams regularly scheduled games. Suspension will be immediate and will carry over to the following season if the suspension is not satisfied within the current season.

    b. Immediate cancelation of 25% of athletic-related financial aid for the academic term in which the violation takes place.

### B. Second Violation (Positive Test):

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, Parents/ Guardians may be informed of the positive test unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. The failure to report to counseling will subject the student-athlete to sanctions associated with a third positive test.

3. Student-Athletes will be required to undergo weekly urinalysis for a minimum of 8 weeks, starting immediately, at the student-athletes expense.

4. A second violation will result in one or more of the following sanctions:

    a. Suspension of the student –athlete from participation (competition against outside teams) for a period of one year/365 days from the date of his/her positive drug test.

    b. Immediate cancellation of all athletic-related financial aid for the one-year/365 day term of the suspension

### C. Third Violation (Positive Test):

1. The student-athlete will be banned from all further athletic participation and activities and all athletic aid will be immediately cancelled.

Violations of the Valdosta State University Drug Policy are cumulative such that the number of violations of the policy, by a student-athlete, is calculated over each student-athlete's career at Valdosta State University, not on a yearly basis.

Each student-athlete must advise the Head Athletic Trainer prior to providing any urine sample of all medications, whether prescriptive or non-prescriptive, that the student-athlete is presently taking or has taken within the preceding thirty days, and the medical reason.

## VI. Marijuana

Effective April 2024, NCAA Division II adopted legislation that removes cannabinoids (which includes cannabis) from the list of NCAA banned substances. THC (the psychoactive compound in cannabis) will no longer be tested for during NCAA sponsored drug testing events. (*NCAA Sport Science Institute*) However, Valdosta State University student-athletes are subject to all local, state and federal regulations concerning the use of marijuana, which remains illegal in the state of Georgia. If the student-athlete tests positive for marijuana or is found to be in the possession of marijuana, the following sanctions will be implemented:

**A. First Violation:**

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, parent/guardians may be informed unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a second violation.

**B. Second Violation:**

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, parent/guardians may be informed unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a third violation.

3. A second violation will result in the following sanctions:

    a. Suspension of the student-athlete from participating (athletic competition against outside teams) in the number of athletic contests equal to 20% of the teams regularly scheduled games. Suspension will be immediate and will carry over to the following season if the suspension is not satisfied within the current season.

    b. Immediate cancellation of 25% of athletic-related financial aid for the academic term in which the violation takes place.

**C. Third Violation:**

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, parent/guardians may be informed unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will result in the student-athlete being banned from all further participation and activities and all athletic aid will be immediately cancelled.

3. A third violation will result in the following sanctions:

    a. The student-athlete will be suspended from further participation (athletic competition against outside teams) for a period of one year/365 days.

    b. Immediate cancellation of all athletic-related aid for the one year/365 day term of the suspension

## VII. Regulations Regarding Drugs

The Valdosta State University student-athlete is subject to all local, state, and federal regulations concerning drugs. If a student-athlete is charged with a drug offense, disciplinary procedures (immediate separation from the athletic department and cancellation of athletic financial aid, etc.) as deemed necessary by the Athletic Director may be implemented pending final disposition of all charges.

## VIII. Safe Harbor Program

The Safe Harbor Program is designed to allow a student-athlete to admit he/she has taken illegal drugs and wants to get help without being penalized per the Athletics Drug Testing Policy. This is a VSU program and cannot be invoked for NCAA drug testing.

1. A student-athlete may refer himself or herself for voluntary evaluation and counseling only once during their entire athletic career at Valdosta State. A student-athlete is not eligible for Safe Harbor after he/she has been informed of an impending drug test or after receiving notification of a positive drug test (either institutional or NCAA).

2. A treatment plan will be put into place for the student-athlete which may include confidential drug testing. If the student-athlete has a positive test upon entering the Safe Harbor treatment plan, that positive test will not result in any administrative sanction unless the student-athlete tests positive in a subsequent retest or he/she fails to comply with

the prescribed treatment plan. At such a time, the student-athlete would be subject to the penalties noted in the Drug Testing Policy.

3. A student-athlete will be permitted to remain in the Safe Harbor program for a reasonable period of time, not to exceed thirty (30) days, as determined by the treatment plan. A student-athlete will not be permitted to enter the Safe Harbor program thirty (30) days prior to Conference or NCAA post-season competition.

4. While in compliance with the Safe Harbor treatment plan, the student-athlete will not be included in the list of student-athletes eligible for institutional drug testing. However, student-athletes may still be selected for NCAA drug testing.

5. If the student-athlete tests positive for a banned substance after his/her time in the Safe Harbor program or fails to comply with his/her treatment plan, this will result in a positive test.

6. Utilization of the Safe Harbor program exempts the student-athlete from suspension of athletic competition. However, it will still count as a positive test in regard to the three-strike system. As an example, if he/she tested positive for cocaine as a freshman, utilized the Safe Harbor program as a junior and subsequently tested positive for cocaine as a senior, he/she would be subject to the sanctions of a third positive.

7. The Safe Harbor program cannot be used once a student-athlete has two past positive tests.

8. The Athletics Director, Head Athletic Trainer, and the student-athlete's Head Coach will be informed of the student-athlete's participation in the Safe Harbor Program. Other University personnel may be informed only to the extent necessary for the implementation of this policy.

**IX. Alcohol**

Valdosta State University student-athletes are subject to all local, state and federal regulations concerning the use/consumption of alcoholic beverages. If the student-athlete is charged or found to be involved with any of the following:

**Driving Under the Influence**

**A. First Violation:**

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, Parents/Guardians may be informed unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a second violation.

3. A first violation will result in the following sanctions.

    a. Suspension of the student-athlete from participation (athletic competition against outside teams) in the number of athletic contests equal to 20% of the teams regularly scheduled games. Suspension will be immediate and will carry over to the following season if the suspension is not satisfied within the current season.
    b. Immediate cancellation of 25% of athletic-related financial aid for the academic term in which the violation takes place.

**B. Second Violation:**

1. The Athletic Director, Head Athletic Trainer, Sport Head Coach, and, if the student is a minor, Parents/Guardians may be informed unless a valid subpoena or court order is obtained.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a third violation.

3. A second violation will result in the following sanctions:

    a. Suspension of the student-athlete from further participation (athletic competition against outside teams) for a period of one year/365 days.

b. Immediate cancellation of all athletic-related aid for the one-year/365 day term of the suspension.

**C. Third Violation:**

1. The student-athlete will be banned from all further athletes' participation and activities and all athletic aid will be immediately cancelled. Drunken and Disorderly Conduct

**Drunken and Disorderly Conduct**

**A. First Violation:**

1. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a second violation.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in community service for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

3. Student-athlete will be suspended from participation in contests against outside competition equal to 20% of the team's regularly scheduled games. Suspension will be immediate and will carry over to the next season if the suspension is not satisfied within the current season.

4. Immediate cancellation of 25% of athletic-related financial aid for the academic term in which the violation takes place.

**B. Second Violation:** Refer to Driving Under the Influence, Second Violation.

**C. Third Violation:** Refer to Driving Under the Influence, Third Violation

**Public Intoxication**

**A. First Violation:**

1. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a second violation.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in community service for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

**B. Second Violation:** Refer to Driving Under the Influence, Second Violation.

**C. Third Violation:** Refer to Driving Under the Influence, Third Violation.

**Minor in Possession**

**A. First Violation:**

1. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a second violation.

2. Immediate cancellation of 10% of athletic-related financial aid for the academic term in which the violation takes place.

**B. Second Violation:**

1. The student-athlete will be required to participate in appropriate counseling sessions with professional counselors for a length of time as determined by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in conjunction with the Valdosta State University Counseling Center. Failure to report will be considered a third violation.

2. The student-athlete will be required to participate in community service for a length of time as determine by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

3. Immediate cancellation of 50% of athletic related financial aid.

**C. Third violation:**

1. Immediate cancellation of all athletic-related financial aid for the one year/365 day term of the suspension.

2. Suspension of the student –athlete from participation (against competition against outside teams) for a period of one year/365 days from the date of his/her positive drug test.

If the student-athlete pleads guilty to, or forfeits bond to any other charge where intoxication is determined, one or more of the following sanctions will be imposed:

1. Suspension of the student-athlete from further participation (scheduled team practice and athletic competition against opposing teams) in all intercollegiate athletics for a period to be determined by the Athletic Director.
2. Cancellation of all or part of any athletic related aid.
3. Community service hours deemed appropriate by the Athletic Director.
4. Mandatory participation in an alcohol and drug awareness program designated by Valdosta State University with fee being paid by the student-athlete.

If a student-athlete is charged with any of the offenses in section VII above, disciplinary procedures (suspension of athletic competition and/or practice, loss of financial aid, community service, etc.) as deemed necessary by the Athletic Director may be implemented pending final disposition of all charges.

**X. Probable Cause**

Student-athletes will be drug-screened and/or evaluated if there is probable cause to suspect alcohol, drug use, or abuse. The coaching staff, athletic training staff, or athletic director may be aware of or see certain signs, symptoms or changes in behavior that may cause them to suspect substance abuse. These staff members have a duty to report any suspicions to the Sport Head Coach, Athletic Director, or Head Athletic Trainer. A decision will be made regarding the need for counseling and/or testing.

Such behaviors may include, but are not limited to the following signs, symptoms and behaviors:

1. Student-Athlete begins to show:
    - Poor motivation
    - Sloppy hygiene and appearance
    - Lack of hustle on the field or court
    - Irritability or loss of temper
    - Failure to follow orders or lack of discipline
    - Unexplained absences
    - Common and routine injuries which will not heal or which are recurrent
    - Has recurrent problems with:
    - Being late to practice, team meetings, or functions
    - Missing appointments
    - Ignoring curfews
    - Staying up too late
    - Falling asleep during day
    - Skipping meals

2. Appearance of the following signs and/or evidence of illness
    - Dilated or constricted pupils
    - Droopy eyelid or reddish eyes
    - Excessive scratching and breaking out of skin
    - Constantly runny, red nose
    - Recurrent bouts of flu or colds that require medical attention
    - Appears over-stimulated or "hyper"
    - Becomes withdrawn and less communicative
    - Repeated automobile and traffic violations

**XI. Review/Appeal Process**

If a student-athlete tests positive for a banned substance, he/she has the right to a review. The Athletic Director must receive a written request for a review within 48 hours of the notification of the positive test.

If the student-athlete wishes to appeal the methods of evaluation and treatment imposed, he/she must request a hearing before the

Appeals Committee within 48 hours of being notified of a positive screen.

The burden of proof is on the student-athlete to show any extenuating circumstances as to why the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics' evaluation and treatment program is not appropriate.

If the student-athlete wishes to appeal a disciplinary decision or sanction, the Athletic Director must receive the written request for appeal within 72 hours of the student-athlete's notification of the penalty.

The Athletic Director will notify the Appeals Committee of the appeal request. A hearing will be arranged within five (5) working days following the request by the student-athlete.

**APPEALS COMMITTEE:**

1. An Athletic Department administrator (one of the following serves as chairperson: Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, or Faculty Athletics Representative)
2. An uninvolved Coach
3. A representative of the University's Legal Counsel
4. A member of the full-time Athletic Training Staff
5. Chair, Student-Athletic Advisory Committee
6. Vice President for Student Affairs or Representative

**XII. Test Security**

The following actions will be considered a breach of testing security and will be considered a positive test subject to sanctions.

1. Leaving a drug testing site prior to producing a urine sample.
2. Manipulation of specimen (i.e. bringing urine into testing site, running tap water in to specimen container, etc.)
3. Failure to appear.

**HOW DRUG USE MAY AFFECT ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE**

**DRUG:**

**COCAINE**

**EFFECT:**

- Over-stimulates reflexes
- Distorts vision
- Hurries muscle movement
- Weakens breathing
- Long-term use weakens muscles and nerves and makes them prone to injuries
- Alters normal appetite

**MARIJUANA**

**EFFECT:**

- Slows reflexes
- Long-term use weakens muscles and nerves and makes them prone to injuries
- Slow or non-reactive pupil distorts vision
- Hearing impairments

**AMPHETAMINES**

**EFFECT:**

- Over-stimulates reflexes
- Distorts vision
- Alters normal appetite

**ALCOHOL**

**EFFECT:**

- Reduces mental alertness for approximately 24 hours after a binge or about three beers or drinks

**HOW MARIJUANA AND COCAINE CAN CAUSE ATHLETIC INJURIES**

**DRUG:**

**MARIJUANA & COCAINE**

**EFFECT:**

- Depletes energy
- Impairs visual perception
- Alters normal reflexes
- Drives out chemicals at nerve-endings Decreases immune and inflammatory mechanisms necessary for healing (i.e. routine simple injuries do not heal rapidly)
- Collects in fatty tissues around muscles, tendons, and ligaments (i.e. marijuana)
- Worsens normal simple injuries

**ANABOLIC STEROIDS**

This class of drug is a derivative of the male hormone testosterone. Testosterone will increase protein synthesis, when coupled with training and proper diet, may create an increase in lean muscle mass. Being a hormone, the anabolic steroid will interfere with the normal hypothalamic-pituitary-gonad thermostat and disturb the body's delicate hormone balance. This interference can produce detrimental side effects. Anabolic Steroids are banned by the N.C.A.A. and U.S.O.C.; all sports federations, and professional athletic organizations.

The Valdosta State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics will not condone or tolerate the use of Anabolic Steroids by the student-athlete.

All of the following have been linked to steroid use:

1. Aggressiveness leading to violence
2. Mood swings
3. Psychiatric disorders, psychotic episodes
4. Acne
5. Balding
6. Hypertension
7. High blood cholesterol
8. Cardiac arrhythmias
9. Diminished libido
10. Atrophy of the testicles
11. Impotence
12. Stunted growth
13. Kidney disease
14. Liver damage
15. Enlarged prostate
16. Prostatitis
17. Breast enlargement (males)

(In Females)

1. Menstrual problems
2. Breast atrophy
3. Excessive hair growth
4. Enlarged clitoris
5. Deepening of voice

**Misdemeanor Charges**

Incidents that result in misdemeanor charges that do not involve alcohol and or illegal drugs will have the following base penalties:

- Immediate suspension of games equal to 10% of the regular season number of contests scheduled.
- Cancellation of 10% of athletic-related aid for the semester in which the action takes place.
- Community service to be determined
- Each incident will be reviewed separately and additional sanctions are a possibility

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

**DRUG SCREENING PROGRAM**

**Test Notification / Test Refusal**

**NAME:** _____ **SPORT:** _____

**Date of Notification:** _____ **Date of Refusal:** _____

**Date of Test:** _____ **Time: Unannounced and observed**

**Test refusal will be considered a positive test!**

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have been informed that I have been chosen to participate in the Valdosta State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Drug Screening Program which involves testing through urinalysis.

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have been informed that failure to undergo testing will result in drug testing sanctions pertaining to a first violation (positive test). Failure to undergo testing a second time will result in drug testing sanctions pertaining to a second violation (positive test). Failure to undergo testing a third time will result in drug testing sanctions pertaining to a third violation (positive test).

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have been informed that leaving the drug testing site prior to producing a urine sample and /or the manipulation of your sample specimen in any fashion will be treated as a positive test and sanctioned accordingly.

_____ _____

**Student-Athlete's Name Printed** **Local or Cell Phone Number**

_____

**VSU Student ID #**

_____ _____

**Student-Athlete's Signature** **Date**

_____ _____

**VSU Representative's Signature** **Date**

Each student-athlete must advise an Athletic Trainer prior to providing any urine sample of all medications, whether prescriptive or non-prescriptive, that the student-athlete is presently taking or has taken within the preceding thirty days, and the medical reason.

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

**DRUG SCREENING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM**

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I _____hereby acknowledge that a copy of the Valdosta State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Drug Screening Policy and Substance Abuse Program (hereinafter "Program") has been made available to me electronically via the Athletic Departments website, or a hard copy. I further acknowledge that I have read the Policy and that I fully understand the provisions of the Policy.

I hereby voluntarily and without threat, inducement, or compulsion, consent to have a sample of my urine collected and tested for the presence of certain drugs or substances on a random, unannounced basis, in accordance with the provisions of the Drug Screening Policy, and at such times as required under the policy.

I further agree and consent to the disclosure of said records and results relating to me, **only** to those persons involved in the administration of the "Program", and **only** under the circumstances described in the "Program". This consent is given pursuant to all State and Federal privacy statutes and is a waiver of my rights to non-disclosure of such test records and results **only** to the extent of the disclosures authorized in the "Program".

I further state that I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent to sign this agreement. (If a minor under eighteen (18) years of age, parent or legal guardian signature must be provided.)

I do for myself, my heirs, and personal representatives further agree to defend, hold harmless, indemnify, forever release and discharge Valdosta State University, Board of Regents on behalf of its trustee, agents, and employees from all claims, and actions for damages arising out of my participation in the drug screening.

_____

Student-Athlete's Name Printed

_____

Student-Athlete's Signature Date

_____

Parent and/or Legal Guardian's Signature Date

# Valdosta State University
Guidelines Regarding **Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)**

## What Can Be Done

✔ **Compensation:** Permissible compensation includes cash, digital cash transfer, free or reduced cost product or service. Compensations must be commensurate with fair market value.

✔ **Social Media:** Student-athletes can promote a business, product, or service on all social media platforms.

✔ **Autographs:** Student-athletes can participate in autograph signing events for compensationor free/reduced cost products or services as long as they are not representing the University defined as practice, conditioning, competition, team travel, and other VSU promotional activities.

✔ **Appearances/Speaking/Camps:** Student-athletes can be compensated to appear or speak at an event, business, or other promotional activity. Student-athletes can receive payment to worka camp, appear at a camp, or run their own camp.

✔ **Professional Service Provider:** Student-athletes can hire professional representation for name, image, and likeness purposes only. Professional representation can include, but is not limited to, an agent, tax advisor, marketing consultant, attorney, brand management company, or anyone who is employed or associated with such persons.

## What Cannot Be Done

✘ **Trademarks:** Student-athletes cannot wear or incorporate any registered trademark, logo, verbiage, or design of VSU ***without obtaining the rights*** to use.

✘ **VSU Facilities:** Student-athletes cannot rent or use VSU facilities for in-person name, image, and likeness activities, unless approved in advance by VSU's Athletic Director.

✘ **Scheduling/Competition/Practice:** Student-athletes cannot miss class or required teamactivity for name, image, and likeness reasons. Promotion of product or service cannot occur during a competition or practice.

✘ **Restricted Categories:** Student-athletes cannot endorse alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, gambling, adult entertainment, and other categories inconsistent with VSU's values or mission or that negatively impacts or reflects adversely on VSU.

✘ **Team Issued Gear:** Student-athletes cannot sign gear, or any other item provided by VSU, in exchange for any form of compensation.

✘ **Professional Service Provider:** Student-athletes can hire professional representation for name, image, and likeness purposes only. Student-athletes will be ineligible for participation if he or she is represented by an agent for the purpose of marketing his or her athletic ability **in order to secure a professional sports opportunity.**

# Valdosta State University
## Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Disclosure Form

This form **must** be completed for each activity or contract for which you will be compensated.

## STUDENT-ATHLETE INFORMATION

Name: _____ Sport: _____ VSU Email: _____ @valdosta.edu Date: _____

I have read the Valdosta State guidelines regarding name, image and likeness: YES NO

I am an international student: YES NO

If yes, I have contacted the VSU International Office regarding my name, image, likeness activity: YES NO

DISCLOSURE INFORMATION
List all involved parties to the agreement or transaction and professional service providers.

| Name of Person | Name of Business/Entity | Role | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Describe the name, image, or likeness activity:

_____

What are the terms of the agreement or transaction?

_____

When will the activity begin? Date: _____

When will the activity end? Date: _____

Do you have legal professional representation? YES NO

If yes, please list name and name of business:

_____

How will you be compensated for this activity?

_____

What is the compensation amount?

_____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Will any VSU logos or trademarks be used in this activity? | YES | NO |
| If yes, did you receive approval from VSU's Athletic Director? | YES | NO |
| Will any VSU facilities be used in this activity? | YES | NO |
| If yes, did you receive approval from VSU's Athletic Director? | YES | NO |

Per the information provided above, I affirm:

- I have provided complete and accurate information regarding an and all activities involving use of my name, image, or likeness.
- I have provided complete and accurate information about individuals and entities involved in this activity and the compensation received as a result of participation.
- I have provided a copy of all contracts or agreements related to this activity to the VSU Athletics Compliance Office.
- This activity does not violate NCAA regulations regarding receipt of impermissible benefits or preferential treatment by me, my family, or my friends.

I acknowledge that my institution, or a designee of my institution, may review the accuracy of this information, and I consent to any investigation, review, or audit. I acknowledge that inaccurate or incomplete disclosure, or failure to cooperate could support a reasonable conclusion that compensation I receive constituted an inducement or attend or remain enrolled at a specific school, a substitute for pay for athletics performance or participation, or an otherwise illegitimate source of compensation for use of my name, image, and likeness, which could result in my being ineligible for intercollegiate competition.

_____ _____

Signature of Student-Athlete Date

_____

Print Name