

August 2021

Dear Players and Parents,

I am excited for the HUGE group of girls who want to be part of the Lady Mustangs volleyball team this year! This will be my 9th year as part of the coaching team at GFA, but only my third year as head coach. Coach Tye Green will be with us again this year as well. I will tell you that neither of us feel qualified to coach, but we can, through God's strength, lead them with integrity and encouragement. We will pray for them daily; we will pray for their spiritual, emotional and athletic growth. We ask you to do the same for us; pray that we will listen to and follow the Holy Spirit's leading in all situations, on and off the court.

To start, I want to say playing volleyball is more than just learning a game; it is a time for the girls to learn to deal with life and people in the real world. In life we win, we lose, we get frustrated with ourselves and the people around us; we get sad and outright mad; we have heartbreak of all kinds and joy beyond compare. This is what our season will look like...real life. We may get sad because we don't get the position or playing time we think we should instead of being happy for the person who does. We will get mad that we didn't get the point or there was a bad call by a referee. We will jump up and cheer when a girl who has struggled to get the ball over the net on their serve FINALLY makes it and we don't even care if we lost the point, we're just glad she did it! We will be heartbroken when we lose in the third set by just a few points to a team we've been determined to beat all season (or many seasons for that matter!). We will get discouraged because we keep making the same mistakes over and over; we'll get frustrated with our teammates for making the same mistakes over and over. This is life...this is volleyball.

Through it all, during this volleyball season and our lives in general, we have our Lord and Savior who works ALL things together for the good of those who love Him. Please remember that whatever comes our way, the only one who can defeat us is ourselves. If we are on the Lord's side, then who can stand against us...ONLY US. As humans we often defeat ourselves before we've even given ourselves the chance to try. This year I want our girls to be relentless in trying and never, ever give up! As a team (and there is no "I" in team) we will finish the race as the Apostle Paul would say. We may not win every game but we will not be defeated. We will finish each game with pride because we were brave enough to get on the court, tried our best, didn't quit trying and brought honor to God by our actions and attitudes on and off the court.

Whew...that was a lot! BUT... I hope I clearly conveyed that, as coaches, our hearts are for these girls and I pray our actions will always reflect that.

Attached you will find details about the season (things you'll need and what to expect), practice and games schedules, as well as a list of ways you can serve the team (and earn service hours while you're at it!). Please, we need your help! This is an "all hands on deck" team and there is something on the list of service opportunities that fits everyone's spiritual gifting.

I am looking forward to a great season with you and your girls. Please never be afraid to come to me in humility and a spirit of encouragement to show me an area where I have an opportunity to grow. Please call, text, email or catch me after practice if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

In His Service,

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Important GFA Volleyball Info

Goals:

Our number one goal will always be to reflect Christ in our actions and attitudes. Our second is to be brave enough to try our best. Our third goal will be to do better tomorrow than we did today.

League Play:

We compete in the White Tanks Athletic Conference. Games are played against smaller schools around the area (Arlington, Palo Verde, Surprise, Wickenburg, etc.). We usually have two games a week once the season begins. We will have a Varsity or "A" Team - which is what the other schools call their more experienced players (usually 8th graders). If we have enough players, we can also have a Junior Varsity or "B" Team (for other schools these are usually all 7th graders). Most schools we play don't have 5th or 6th graders, so they may have a size advantage on us but they won't have a heart advantage on us! ☺ WE HAVE MORE PLAYERS THAN NEEDED SO READ BELOW TO SEE HOW THE TEAM STRUCTURE WILL WORK THIS SEASON.

Practice:

We will practice Monday-Thursday from 3:30 – 5 p.m. The girls will be dismissed from their classrooms to the gym to get ready for practice. Practice is mandatory. We will be going over numerous skills the first two weeks of practice and then polishing those skills as the season progresses. Please avoid scheduling (if at all possible) appointments or other events during this time; remember, the more practice your child gets the better equipped she'll be for games. Please let me know in advance if your child is unavailable for practice.

Games:

As a parent of two former Lady Mustangs, I totally get wanting to watch your girls play, but depending on the size of our team, playing time may be limited. However, I will do my best to give every girl the amount of playing time that allows her to use her skills to best benefit our team. If there is ever a concern about the amount of playing time a girl gets, please come talk to me privately.

Transportation:

Parents are responsible for getting their girls to/from away games. I can carry three girls in my vehicle and am more than happy to assist as needed. Please let me know in advance so we have enough seatbelts for everyone. You may also make arrangements with other parents for transportation, just be sure to keep me in the loop so no one gets left behind. PARENTS MUST SIGN THEIR GIRLS OUT AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

Practice & Game Gear:

- Sneakers that will keep you comfortable, supportive and safe on the court.
- Comfortable, black shorts that are easy to move around in for game days. Cotton, nylon or spandex exercise shorts are best. Please make sure they are an appropriate length. Color for practice shorts doesn't matter, just keep them an appropriate length.
- Knee pads for games and practice.
- Reusable water bottle with your name on it for games and practices.
- Uniform shirts will be ordered on 8/11/21. Pictures are tentatively scheduled for the week of 8/16/21. There will not be retakes of the team photo. A firm date will be sent out ASAP.

Liability Waiver and Payments:

A liability waiver and payment are due at the time of registration. The last day to register for volleyball is 8/10/21

Team Structure

As stated previously, our team has grown so large that we need to restructure things so everyone gets a chance to play. The alternative is to require try-outs and cut players and we don't want to do that, so please bear with as we work through a great problem to have. 😊

Varsity competes for the Conference Championship and students must earn their spots for this placement. Our league prefers 8th graders to play on varsity so we will honor this. However, since this is a competitive league, 8th graders playing time will be based on their ability level. As players improve, playing time will increase. Players in grades 5-7 will earn a position on the team based on attitude and skills. The varsity team will play every game on the calendar.

While Junior Varsity does not compete for the Conference Championship, it is still competitive. Not all schools have a Junior Varsity team so the JV won't play when we're matched against West Valley Christian School. Players in grades 5-7 whose skills don't yet reach the varsity competition level will be divided into three squads – A, B, and C. Right now, our plan is for Squad A to play the first set of every game; B and C Squads will share the playing time of the second set as game play allows. The coaches will play the girls where their skills best serve the team and reserve the right to rearrange squads as needed. With so many girls on the team, it may be easy for us to make a mistake and miss rotating a player in. Please know if this happens, it is entirely accidental and we will make sure they get to play the next game.

On this team, attitude is just as important as skills and any attitude that does not honor Christ and encourage others will not be tolerated. Consequences for an attitude that tears down yourself, others or is disrespectful to the coaches may include removal from a game or decreased playing time. If you are removed from a game for an attitude issue, Coach will have a conversation with you so you know that's exactly why you were removed and have an opportunity to ask for forgiveness of those you hurt with your actions or attitude. While I pray this doesn't happen, we're all human and those of us who are a little more competitive or tend to be self-defeating are prone to say and do things that will bring the team down. We will address these issues as they arise with love, mercy and grace.