



**Servant Leadership | Work Ethic
Confidence | Perseverance | Enthusiasm**

This Book should be kept in every player's locker to be referenced regularly and accessed upon their coaches' request during the course of the season.



Program Mission

To create value for each individual player within a team concept while developing his understanding that preparation, serving others, strength in character, self-confidence, and focusing on the fundamentals and details are key ingredients to success on and off the court.

Goals

To support teammates with encouragement, constructive feedback, and unfailing dedication
To cultivate an environment for the individual athlete to thrive while keeping the team first
To develop servant leaders who grow in faith through service in the program and community
To develop self-confidence that breeds an attitude of perseverance on and off the court
To progress fundamental skills and improve basketball IQ
To instill enthusiasm for the game and pride in playing for oneself, Aquinas, and the community

Program Verse

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. -1 Timothy 4:8

Competing with oneself and opponents is valuable for many reasons; however, walking with the Lord in all things, including competition, holds an everlasting value. In the Aquinas High School boys basketball program, we will put God first in all things because not only does that hold value in the present, but it also helps lead us and our teammates, fans, and competitors to Heaven.

Off-Season Thoughts – Today Matters:

Improvement, consistent improvement, is done on a day-by-day basis. To improve anything in your life, you must work at it in some form in both a strategic manner and with consistency. In our program, we are looking for athletes that are committed to improving. We desire to have teams that will create a legacy in leaving the program better than when they arrived — this is achieved with consistent and constant improving. Improving is not a result-oriented program; it is a process-related experience. It is why so many fail to improve at a rate that they are capable. Working in the gym for two hours on a given night by yourself doesn't give you immediate results; there is no scoreboard to keep count of your made baskets, no crowd to cheer on your good play, no coach to oversee your dedicated effort. But those that pay the price — working daily on all aspects of their game, out of the sight of many — are the ones that reach their potential. If you have not accomplished what you desire, then you can be sure that you are not working hard enough:

If you want something you have never had, you must do something you have never done.

And don't sell yourself short — you can be great!

Program Philosophy

High school athletics offers athletes a valuable stage to learn life-lessons while being part of something greater than oneself. Competition offers an opportunity for an individual to push himself to achieve personal goals while still keeping the team before himself; the awareness that he is part of something bigger than himself allows the athlete to take pride in playing for God, his family, his teammates, and his school. While we will relentlessly strive for our ultimate goal of becoming a championship caliber program, success comes from more than wins and losses. Our program values the development of successful individuals who grow to achieve greatness as both individuals and teammates.

As an athlete representing Aquinas High School, the only Catholic school in the MVC, the athletes and coaching staff in this program will be pushed to hold themselves to the highest standard. Developing the traits below will serve as a base foundation for the program's ultimate success:

Servant Leadership: The most powerful motivational leader is the person who practices what is called "servant leadership." The player who sees himself as a servant to his teammates, and who does everything possible to help them perform at their best is practicing the highest form of servant leadership. Servant leadership works when leaders truly **believe and act upon a desire to make their teammates successful**. This occurs when players **lead by example** and treat teammates as equal partners. The **trust** that results from this leadership encourages his teammates to grow as servant leaders themselves, which in turn will cultivate a **championship culture** in our program.

"The amount of success you are capable of enjoying and the pleasure you are capable of feeling, is only equal to the number of people you are willing to share it with." –Coach Pat Summit

Work-Ethic: Maintaining a strong work-ethic is another attribute that all players in the program need to possess in order to reach our ultimate goal of success. Similar to an enthusiastic attitude, work ethic has nothing to do with a player's skill-set. Intensity and hard work will be asked of all players and staff each time we step foot on the court or the weight room. **Our effort will never be questioned**. Knowing the value of a strong work ethic will help all of us be successful beyond basketball. *"Most people have the will to win; few have the will to prepare to win." -Bobby Knight*

Self-Confidence: Today's society is extremely competitive. Now more than ever, it is important for young men to grow into confident individuals who face challenges and adversities with pride and grace. True competitors realize the push for greatness through these obstacles grows self-confidence in ourselves and our teammates. The best way to develop confidence in everything you do is to **prepare yourself to exceed your own expectations** – that is through your development as a player, athlete, student, teammate, son, etc.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." –Proverbs 4:13

Perseverance: Our season will be full of challenges, and our life's journey beyond the basketball court will be full of adversity. When we continue to give our utmost effort despite our circumstances, that is perseverance. It is not easy, but by implementing all other traits listed above as well as persevering, we are able to overcome. Being committed to a cause and having the strength to persevere in the end is a key to our ultimate success.

"Get a little bit better every day, and you've got something good going on." –Coach Don Meyer

Enthusiastic Attitude: Displaying an enthusiastic attitude is displaying a positive attitude; however, enthusiasm takes positivity one step further. The joy we get from surrounding ourselves with teammates we love while playing a game we love while serving the God we love should radiate in everything we do. The enthusiastic attitude we display every day is a choice- a choice that entirely depends on each one of us individually and has nothing to do with basketball knowledge or skill level. The best part of displaying an enthusiastic attitude is that it is contagious to those around us.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. Without enthusiasm you are doomed to a life of mediocrity." –Og Mandino

The number of days an athlete has as a competitor is much fewer than the number of days an athlete has on this earth. We are not called to be great basketball players; however, we are each called to use the opportunities that competition allows us to grow as individuals in the game and life itself. When we embrace and practice these traits individually, our program will be truly successful.

Program Expectations

Trust the Process

The basketball season is long, and at times it can become tiring. *When will all the work I have done pay off? When will I start seeing results? When will my time come?* Trust your coaches. Trust the plan they have for you. The results and pay-off may not come *when* you want it to, but trust that it *will* in fact come if you stick with the process. We often overestimate what we can do in one day or one week, but we often underestimate what we can do in one year. Are you putting in the effort that is consistently needed to improve?

Be Coachable

Being “coachable” is easily the most important characteristic a player must display. To be a coachable player, you must be able to turn criticism into a learning opportunity. The section in this packet titled “The Blugold Way” gives players some instruction on how to be coachable— study it, work on it every day.

Do Your Job

This is something you will hear often in our program. Players at each level have the same expectations when it comes to playing for our program: compete every play, be coachable, work hard every day, take care of yourself and your game, etc. But what is *your* job? What do you bring to this team that makes it whole? Not every player can be a prolific scorer, a starter, or even a consistent presence on the court. What is *your* job? Your coaches will help you realize your potential in all of the jobs we ask of you, but work on developing your own gifts and talents to benefit the team.

Prepare Yourself to Exceed Your Own Expectations

Often times, you are your own worst enemy. Developing and maintaining self-confidence can be tough, especially for young men. The one thing a player can do to become more self-confident is prepare. Prepare your fundamental skills, your mental state, your game-plan, your execution. Prepare yourself to exceed even your highest expectations. People are not confident when they are in uncomfortable environments, environments that they are not well-prepared for. *The last second shot is in your hands and a win is on the line- have you prepared for this moment? Your man has the ball in his hands while the clock is winding down and a win is on the line- have you prepared for this moment? You are at the Kohl Center competing for a state championship- have you prepared for this moment?*

Be a Great Teammate

It is so important that everyone in this program is a great teammate. There is also a whole section of this packet dedicated to being a good teammate. Remember, this is not a friendship; you can pick and choose your friends. This is a team. It is incredibly important that you are a great teammate to everyone in this program, and a great teammate to those you encounter throughout the school day.

Compete to Win Every Day

Competitors are always looking for their next challenge to conquer. You must have a desire to compete in everything you do. There comes a time in every competition where teammates must decide “It’s time to win.” In sprints, do you run to just get through it? Do you run to not be last? A competitor runs sprints to win. In warmups, do you shoot to *make* 20 3’s? Or do you shoot 20 3’s to meet the requirement? Competitors shoot to make every three and have the best percentage. Competitors always give their utmost effort and compete to win every practice, every game, every day.

Practice

Every practice is mandatory. Every team dinner and any team service project is also mandatory. If a player is not at a mandatory function for whatever reason, that player will meet with the coach and discuss the absence. The absence may result in the player moving further down the depth chart- this will be discussed with each player individually and at the coach's discretion. Players, not parents, must communicate all anticipated absences as soon as you're aware. DENTENTION IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE and will have consequences for the individual and team. Part of being a great teammate is being available for every practice.

All players must wear **HIS** AHS reversible jersey to every practice.

Be on time to every practice. In order to be on time, you must be early. Please be sure to be make time to take care of everything you need to do to be ready for action 5 minutes before your scheduled practice time. Taping, braces, extra stretching, water bottle full, etc should be taken care by this time. Players are on the floor and active at the time practice starts. Because you are ready 5 minutes before practice, does not mean that practice before you is done. Please respect the gym time of any practice before or after yours. Please stay out of the gym until the practice is complete and be off the floor by the time the next practice starts. Please use the lobby area and the area near the weight room to wait for your court time.

DO NOT CONGREGATE IN THE TRAINING ROOM! Only athletes who need the attention of the trainer, need medical supplies, or are filling water bottles are permitted in the training room. Please don't let this become a problem.

Game-Day Dress

All players are required to wear dress code or better to school on game days. All players should travel to away games and arrive for home games wearing school dress code, or if decided as a team, dress up in a shirt and tie for game days and travel. No sweats unless instructed by the head coach. Locker rooms will be provided at all game sites please bring your uniform and dress at the site. DO NOT WEAR YOUR UNIFORM ON THE BUS.

Game Dress Code

Uniforms at all levels should always be free of wrinkles, neat and worn tucked-in at all times. Please keep uniforms and warmups washed, smelling and looking clean.

- Players may wear an undershirt with their jersey, but it must be a match to their jersey color. While wearing navy, the undershirt must be navy, and while wearing white uniforms the undershirt must be white.
- Players who chose to wear compression tights: The tights must match the color of the uniform as outlined with undershirts.
- Arm sleeves, leg compression sleeves, etc.: These items may only be worn upon the recommendation of the athletic trainer or medical doctor and must be discussed with your coach.
- Head Bands – Must be discussed with your coach prior to wearing and be justifiable based on coaches discretion. Headbands, if approved must meet the color guidelines as outlined above with undershirts.

Game-Day Routine

- Players should be well rested the night before a game
- Players should hydrate well every day, including game days.
- Players should eat at least 3 hours prior to game time
- Report to the gym per coach's instruction. Varsity players will always arrive in time to watch the JV game.
- All Varsity players are expected to ride the bus home from every away game.

- All VR players must sit as a team across from the Varsity bench for the first half of the Varsity game. The JV players are also encouraged to join the VR players during the first half. No cell-phones are allowed, and no friends outside of the program will sit with the team at this time. Cheer on your Varsity team! Watch the game and the players who play your position- be a student of the game during this time. After the first half, you may join the student-section or leave the game if approved.
- Remember that when you are at another school or out in the community, you are representing the Aquinas Family- Be friendly, smile, say please and thank you, pick up after yourself and your teammates. Always be aware of how you are representing yourself, your team, your program, and the community. Be a Blugold!

Locker Room

- Every player is responsible for the upkeep of the locker room and his own locker- keep your space clean.
- All players are required to get their own locks for a locker in the locker room. Do not leave anything of value unattended and left in the open during games/practices. This includes your uniform! Keep the locker room tidy and picked up at all times.
- ALWAYS pick up the locker room and bleachers after your team is finished using the area. No one in this program is above picking up after the team. The custodial staff is not responsible for picking up after you.

Parental Support

Parents are a vital extension to the Aquinas Basketball Program. The program needs your positive encouragement & support! We are all on the same team and need to understand that the team will always come before an individual.

There may be a time during the season where questions come up about your son and the basketball program. Before a parent becomes involved with the coaching staff about concerns, the player must first meet with his coach/staff. Players are always welcome to bring any concerns to any member of the coaching staff in a face-to-face meeting. The conversation that takes place between coaches and the player is the first step in resolving the issue. The coaches involved will follow-up with the player after 48-hours to see if the concern is being resolved. If the issue is ongoing and not resolved, the parents may request a meeting with the player, coach involved, and Coach Reinhart. If the problem persists, the third level of support should be the Athletic Director.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss:

- Scheduling Conflicts
- Specific Concerns about the expectations of the coaching staff
- Any area in which the staff can assist in a player's growth and maturity

Inappropriate Concerns to Discuss:

- Playing Time (This is between player/coaches only)
- Team/Game Strategy
- Other Members of the Team

**** Always wait a minimum of 24 hours before contacting a coach to schedule a meeting or discuss concerns. Please do not attempt to discuss a concern with a coach before or after practice or a game. These can be emotional times and nothing good will be accomplished. Please email to set up a meeting with Coach Reinhart or a member of the staff. ****

As a parent, you may not realize the impact you can make on our program. Your positive support both publicly and at home with your athlete will directly lead to enhancing the culture of our program and helping us to reach our fullest potential.

On the flip side, if athletes hear negative talk of their play, their team, their teammates or their coaches at home...that sentiment tends to permeate through the program and hinder performance, progress and development. Please be a fan and supporter and leave the coaching and X's and O's to the coaches.

Be a Great Teammate

Being a great teammate takes no talent, but it does take great effort. Every player in this program must strive to be a great teammate every single day. Great teammates have the ability to affect a team in a very meaningful and impactful way. It's not always easy. In fact, sometimes it is very, very hard to be a good teammate.

Being a Great Teammate is a Full-Time Job:

You can't be considered a great teammate if you are only fulfilling that role on a part-time basis. It is easy to be a great teammate when things are going your way — you are in the starting line-up...your shots are falling...coach is calling your number. But can you be a great teammate when you are playing poorly? You can't let frustrations and emotions affect how you handle your responsibilities of being a great teammate. Whether you are a starter or last off the bench has absolutely no bearing on your ability to be a great teammate.

You have to be a great teammate to everyone!

This is not friendship. You can pick and choose who you want to be friends with, but in terms of being a great teammate, you don't have many options. Remember, the first part of the word — **TEAM**mate. In fact, it is incredibly important that you are a great teammate *especially* to those who may not deserve it because they need you the most. This will be challenging, but it is essential in being a great teammate.

You have to be a great teammate everywhere!

It is not enough to be a great teammate on the basketball court at practice or during games — though great teammates always shine through during adverse situations on the court.

I'll tell you where great teammates are really needed — in the locker room. I fully believe that more games are won and lost in the locker room than many realize. It's a special place that is owned and operated by the players. Rarely are coaches present in the locker room. After a rough practice or tough game, who are the leaders and what direction are they leading? Do you have quality teammates in the locker room to keep the team focused and positive? Do you have teammates holding each other accountable, or just criticizing one another?

You have to be a great teammate away from the gym- in the locker room, in the classroom, on the bus, on Social Media, etc.

We are a family. We don't always get along. We don't always agree. But we come together to find solutions in adversity and move forward because we care for one another. We have one common goal, and we are willing and excited to put ourselves behind the team in order to make this family the best it can be.

Philippians 2:2-5 – The Common Good > Your Good

2 Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full unity and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or vanity, rather humbly count others more significant than yourself. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind and attitude among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.



The Blugold Way

On the Court, a Blugold Always ...

- Displays the characteristics of being a good teammate
- Hustles to every drill
- Hustles to every time out
- Focuses-in on every time out- eyes on the person speaking, not in the stands
- Stands to cheer for every hustle play, big baskets, and key stops
- Stands for every substitution
- Acknowledges a teammate's success with cheering and high-fives
- Looks his coach in the eye when they are speaking
- Acknowledges that he understands what coach is telling him
- Asks questions when he doesn't understand what coach is telling him
- Understands the game plan- what defense/offense we are in, even when he's not in the game
- SPRINTS to help a teammate off the floor when he dives or is fouled
- Keeps a positive attitude and reaction to every call a referee makes- even missed calls
- Displays positive body language
- Hustles to get a stray basketball after a dead ball
- Hustles to be the first player on the floor for a loose ball
- Hands any loose basketball to the referee- always
- Helps another player off the floor from the opposing team
- Focuses all energy toward the team in practice, warmups, shoot arounds, and games

Off the Court, a Blugold Always ...

- Displays the characteristics of being a good teammate
- Takes care of business in the classroom and as a member of the AHS community
- Speaks positively about teammates, coaches, and the program
- Holds himself responsible for the representation of the program in public
- Picks up any trash his teammates or classmates leave behind
- Acknowledges teammates, friends, coaches, teachers, and staff in the hallways
- Thanks bus driver when he leave the bus, and greets the bus driver as he gets on the bus
- Holds himself responsible for the upkeep of the locker room and gym
- Displays an enthusiastic attitude
- Finds ways to serve his teammates and others

