

STUDENT-ATHLETEHANDBOOK



ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL
COLLEGE

2020-2021

Intercollegiate Athletics & Recreational Sports Directory

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Table of Contents

I.	ABAC Mission Statement	2
II.	ABAC Athletics at a Glance	2
	a. Statement of Philosophy.....	3
	b. Statement of Purpose	3
	c. Objectives.....	3
	d. Athletics Mission Statement	4
III.	Student Responsibility	4
IV.	Student Code of Conduct.....	4
V.	Athletic Addendum to Student Code of Conduct	5
	a. Letter of Intent (LOI) Agreement	6
	b. ABAC Athletic Training Services	7
	c. Weather	7
	d. Social Media Responsibility	7
	e. Use of Drugs.....	8
	f. Class Attendance.....	8
VI.	EEO Statement	9
VII.	Discriminatory Harassment.....	9
VIII.	Sportsmanship Policy	9
IX.	NJCAA Information.....	9
X.	Academic Support Resources	10
XI.	COVID-19 ABAC Reopening Plan.....	10
XII.	Team Information and Rules	10

I. ABAC Mission Statement

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is a State College within the University System of Georgia. ABAC’s mission is to provide excellent education by engaging, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and providing relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life.

II. ABAC Athletics at a Glance

ABAC has a rich tradition of successful intercollegiate athletic programs. Five national championships and a long-standing winning tradition serve as highlights for the intercollegiate athletic program at Abraham Baldwin. The Golden Stallions and Fillies are always strong competitors. ABAC teams compete in men’s baseball, men’s golf, men’s tennis, women’s fast pitch softball, women’s soccer and women’s tennis. All full-time students are invited to try out for the intercollegiate athletic teams and are strongly encouraged to contact the head coach PRIOR to the start of the semester. The Golden Stallions have won national championships in men’s tennis in 1984 and 1999. The softball Fillies claimed national titles in 1991, 1995, and 1996. ABAC is a member of the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association and

Region XVII of the National Junior College Athletic Association. Abraham Baldwin showcases its athletes in some of the finest outdoor venues available among state colleges in Georgia. These include professionally lighted baseball and softball fields, 12 lighted tennis courts, varsity soccer field, all-purpose intramural field, half-mile track, intramural softball field, Thrash Wellness Center, Foundation Legacy Swimming Pool, Gressette Gymnasium, and Forest Lakes nine-hole golf course.

a. Statement of Philosophy

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College believes that athletics is an important part of the college experience. Over the years ABAC has created a balance between academics and athletics where the student-athlete has the best possible opportunities for success in the classroom and on the playing field. ABAC is dedicated to meeting the needs of students, promoting academic excellence, and serving the community as a source of knowledge, expertise, and culture. Athletic programs provide an active learning experience in building skills and attitudes such as persistence, teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, courtesy, determination, time management, and personal discipline. Athletics develops character and maturity as well as athletic excellence and physical health and is important in gaining community support for the college at local and state levels and fosters pride among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and citizens of Tifton and Georgia.

The ABAC athletic program is committed to providing equal opportunities of participation and accessibility to all students and spectators and raises the bar relative to respect for all associated with the institution and its competition.

b. Statement of Purpose

At ABAC, student-athletes will be given the opportunity and encouragement to complete a college degree which will prepare them for further study or for occupational careers and which will provide them the opportunity to develop athletic abilities in an environment consistent with high standards of academic scholarship, sportsmanship, and leadership. The primary purpose of the athletic program is to provide those experiences which complement and support student-athletes in their pursuit of a collegiate education.

c. Objectives

The objectives of the athletic program are:

- To encourage academic scholarship and sportsmanship among student-athletes, students, faculty, staff, and spectators at athletic events.
- To provide academic counseling, advisement, and support for student-athletes.
- To field disciplined, competitive athletes and teams who are recruited, coached, and supported by professionals dedicated to the observation of all applicable rules.
- To schedule appropriate competition for the athletes and teams.
- To update and maintain intercollegiate athletics in order to accommodate the athletic and recreational needs of a diverse student, faculty/staff and community.

- To strive for improvement in the system of intercollegiate athletics by cooperation and promotion of sportsmanship with other institutions.
- To endeavor to provide financial assistance as needed by student-athletes.
- To comply with Title IX of the Higher Education Act (see ABAC Title IX Sexual Misconduct Guidelines & Procedures link <https://www.abac.edu/human-resources/#Title-IX>)
- To strive for excellence through Regional and National Championships.
- To foster relationships with our local community and alumni.

d. Athletic Mission Statement

It is ABAC Athletics' mission to offer a regionally (GCAA) and nationally (NJCAA) competitive intercollegiate athletic program. Our focus is on building relationships with local and surrounding communities while providing a worthwhile experience for our student-athletes, teaching them the meaning of integrity and ethical conduct, the basic principles of amateur competition, sportsmanship, fair play, and the principle of equitable opportunity for all students including women and minorities. We seek to enhance the academic endeavors of ABAC by helping through our success to attract promising students. Above all, we recognize that the College's obligation is to provide our students with a level of quality education which leads to recognized academic achievement, contributes to their social development, and prepares them to continue their academic and athletic pursuits.

III. Student Responsibility

All students are responsible for reading the Academic Catalog (<https://www.abac.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/#>), official announcements, official bulletin boards, and the Student Handbook (<https://www.abac.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/>). Also, students should be aware of the current requirements for their program of study, credits, degree requirements, quality points, and other policies and procedures relating to life at the College. ABAC has established a free student email account. *The College will use this email account as an official means of communication with students.*

IV. Student Code of Conduct: *(see Statement of Mutual Responsibility Form)*.

All students are subject to the regulations outlined in the *Student Handbook* which are available at <https://www.abac.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/>. Students are also subject to city, state, and federal law. The College will not intervene nor ask special treatment for students who have violated any law.

Academic honesty is one of the conduct expectations for ABAC students in order to foster respect and integrity. Academic irregularities include, but are not limited to, giving or receiving of unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any academic assignment; taking or attempting to take, stealing, or otherwise obtaining in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the education process; selling, giving, lending, or otherwise furnishing to any person any question and/or answers

to any examination known to be scheduled at any subsequent date; fabricating, forging, or falsifying lab or clinical results; plagiarism in any form related to themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other assignments; breaching any confidentiality regarding patient information.

All ceremonies of induction, initiation, orientation, or private actions by individuals which tend to cause or allow mental or physical suffering are prohibited. Hazing is any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities may include but are not limited to the following: use of alcohol; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities carried on outside or inside of the confines of the chapter house; wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with academic achievement, fraternal law, ritual or policy or the regulations and policies of the educational institution or applicable state law. ABAC does not allow hazing and fully investigates reports received in an effort to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. Reporting hazing is critical for students and employees. If you wish to make an anonymous report, we will evaluate the report and determine what follow-up is necessary to address the concerns. We would encourage you though, to submit your name and contact information to allow us to call or email should we have additional questions regarding the information in the report. All members of the ABAC community are strongly urged to report suspected instances of hazing. Reports can be made by using any of the following methods:

- Contacting the Office of the Dean of Students by emailing deanofstudents@abac.edu or calling (229) 391-5128.
- Submitting an online Hazing Report Form through the following link: <https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/s54u81kwTHBPo3WD8q9d4c71>
- Contacting ABAC police by calling (229) 391-5060.

- V. Athletic Addendum to Student Code of Conduct (*see Statement of Mutual Responsibility Form*). Student-athletes are one of the most visible groups in the college community due to their public exposure via the competitive arena and the media. Consequently, their actions are often subject to scrutiny by other members of the campus community. Student-athletes are, therefore, placed in a position which requires exemplary behavior. Basic courtesy and responsibility as a representative of ABAC Athletics require that all student-athletes:
- Treat instructors and classmates with courtesy and respect.
 - Arrive to class on time and not leave early.
 - Be prepared for class.

- Be attentive in taking notes and active in participating in class discussions.
- Notify instructors in advance when competition or travel requires missed classes.
- Discuss with instructors in advance the procedure to be followed if competition necessitates missing an examination or assignment deadline.

When student-athletes do group work with other student-athletes, their behavior invites judgments of student-athletes as a group. The behavior of each student-athlete should reflect positively on ABAC Athletics in general and specific sports in particular. Behavior has a definite impact on the reputation of ABAC Athletics and the attitude the campus community has toward the entire athletics program.

Similarly, student-athletes' conduct will be closely scrutinized during campus events, travel, and competition off campus (*see Student Travel Agreement*).

Student-athletes are often looked upon as role models, particularly by young children, and it is important that personal conduct be above reproach at all times. It is expected that representatives of ABAC, either at the College or on road trips, will:

- Abide by the Student Code of Conduct and Athletic Addendum.
- Abide by all team rules, training rules, and travel rules as outlined by the head coach. (Student-athletes absolutely must comply with the directions of college Officials.)
- Dress appropriately.
- Be courteous, patient, and cooperative with fans, officials, community, and media personnel.
- Refrain from use of inappropriate language, signs or symbols of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Refrain from loud, attention-drawing, or discourteous behavior when traveling, staying in hotels, or visiting other campuses.
- Refrain from the following:
 - Alcohol, tobacco and drug use.
 - Conviction of an indictable offense.
 - Destroying, stealing, or defacing property.
 - Illegal gambling.
 - Personal web pages and/or social media with questionable content.

a. Letter of Intent (LOI) Agreement

The LOI serves to document the commitment between a member college and a student-athlete. The LOI is valid for one year beginning August 1. If at any time the athlete chooses to discontinue their commitment to the ABAC Athletic Program he/she may be obligated to pay remaining amount of scholarship monies from the date of departure. Amount will be pro-rated based on a 15-week semester. Prior to leaving campus at the end of the school year, each player with an LOI must meet with the Head Coach to discuss the status of the following year's LOI.

b. ABAC Athletic Training Services

We have a full-time Athletic Trainer here at ABAC. There should be no reason for an athlete to be late to practice because they are seeing the trainer. The Athletic Trainer will have treatment availability most mornings and prior to practice. Student-athletes are expected to seek treatment when not in class or practice. Student/athletes are expected to follow the Athletic Trainer's protocol in addressing and preventing injuries. It is important that the student-athlete initiate health concerns amongst the Athletic Trainer, Health Center, and Head Coach.

c. Weather

If at all possible, the Athletic Trainer will notify teams of impending dangerous weather. If lightning reading is within 10 miles, all student-athletes must immediately exit the field and seek shelter in athletic fieldhouse, institutional building, vehicle, or appropriate four-walled shelter. Anytime lightning is spotted, or thunder is heard, all should seek immediate shelter. To find out about inclement weather affecting class, you can call the Inclement Weather Hotline at 229-391-5225. Most of the time, the ABAC Homepage will also have notifications of any cancellations.

d. Social Media Responsibility

With the rising popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, student-athletes should take responsibility for the content of individual pages. Questionable content can present a negative image of student-athlete as an ABAC student-athlete, and therefore a negative image of ABAC Athletics. You should also be aware that you and your friends are not the only people who view your information. Employers view these pages as part of background checks on possible employees. People who would do you harm also use these pages as means of locating you. If you are ever in doubt of the appropriateness of your online public material, consider whether it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as the athletics department and the Institution. Remember to always present a positive image and refrain from actions which may embarrass yourself, the team, your family, or the Institution.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following:

- Posting photos, videos, comments or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, tobacco, e.g., no holding cups, cans, shot glasses etc.
 - Posting photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material and innuendo.
 - Posting pictures, videos, comments or posters that condone drug related activity. This includes but is not limited to images that portray the personal use of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.
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- Using inappropriate or offensive language in all comments, videos and other postings. This includes threats of violence and derogatory comments against race and/or gender.
- Posting information, photos, statements and items that could embarrass or ruin the reputation of you, your team, the athletic department or Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. This includes statements, information, photos and items that may be posted by others on your page.

Student-athletes who do not conform to the stated expected behavior of this code may be subject to discipline. The discipline may range from a warning to dismissal from the team, and/or reduction/withdrawal of athletics related financial aid (*see Social Network Memorandum Form*).

e. Use of Drugs

It is the fundamental belief of the NJCAA that athletic participation is a privilege and that those athletes who use illegal performance enhancing and/or recreational drugs substantively violate that privilege. In response to any violations of this nature that occur and are detected in NJCAA-sponsored or sanctioned events, continuation of rights and privileges or participation by the individual or the institution will be reviewed or revoked, as appropriate.

The possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, controlled substances banned by the NJCAA, or drug paraphernalia while in or out of season is prohibited. The ABAC Drug Policy is a Suspected Use Policy: ABAC does not random drug test but reserves the right to test any athlete if there is reasonable suspicion he/she is using illegal substances. Each instance will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The totality of circumstances will be studied. It is the Institution's accepted responsibility to provide a competitive environment that is free from drug and substance use and abuse. A student-athlete who is suspected of using illegal substances may be subject to testing upon approval by the Head Coach, Director of Athletics, and necessary college administrators. If a student-athlete refuses testing, the athlete will be subject to sanctions imposed by the Head Coach and Director of Athletics. In all cases, student-athletes will be afforded full rights of due process (*see Substance Abuse Informed Consent Statement Form*).

f. Class Attendance

In keeping with the Intercollegiate-Athletics philosophy of "student first, athlete second," the educational experience for the student-athlete will be emphasized at all times. Coaches will make every effort to minimize student-athlete absences from class and exams in scheduling athletic competitions. When practice schedules conflict with class schedules student-athletes are required to attend class. All student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. If a class missed due to a scheduled road trip or home competition, student-athletes should notify their instructor *prior* to the absence to make plans to complete all work as

assigned. If student-athletes miss class due to an illness, then he/she must inform their coaches as soon as possible. It is also recommended the student-athlete visit the Health Center on Campus for evaluation. If class is missed due to sickness, then the student-athletes will NOT practice but is expected to attend team functions unless Health Center personnel, Athletic Trainer, and/or Head Coach state otherwise.

VI. EEO Statement

ABAC is an Equal Opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any person with respect to employment or academic standing because of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, genetic information, or status as a war veteran.

VII. Discriminatory Harassment Diversity includes more than race, gender and age; at ABAC, diversity is about inclusion and respect for people. Our goal of inclusion and respect for people from different backgrounds and perspectives will ensure our institution fully leverages the abilities of all faculty, staff and students (*see Notice of Non-Discrimination link and Discriminatory Harassment Form*).

VIII. Sportsmanship Policy (see <http://stats.njcaa.org/eligibility/index>). Coaches, Players, and institutional personnel must remember that they are representatives of an institution of higher learning, its faculty, administration and student body. As such, they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which would reflect credit on their team, institution, region and the NJCAA. Student-athletes, coaches and institutional personnel who are representing the NJCAA or NJCAA member colleges are subject to all NJCAA rules, regulations and penalties as stated in the NJCAA Handbook as well as local, state and federal laws. Inappropriate and unacceptable behavior by coaches, players or institutional personnel will not be tolerated before, during, or after contests; at the hotel or in public while representing their college. Unacceptable forms of behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting.
- Taunting.
- Inappropriate celebration.
- Disrespectful attitude toward opponents, officials, tournament administrators
- Use of profane and vulgar language.
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol, tobacco (including but not limited to e-cigarettes, vaping, etc.).
- Disrespectful attitude toward host hotel personnel.
- Unlawful activities.
- Physical abuse or damage to college property or host hotel property.

IX. NJCAA Information (see <http://stats.njcaa.org/eligibility/index>).

- X. Academic Support Resources (see <https://www.abac.edu/academics/academic-support/>). Academic Support is made up of various services and programs created to empower students to achieve their full academic potential during their time at ABAC. In addition to an academic advisor, students will also have access to an Academic Support Counselor, an ally and guide to help navigate the college roadmap from orientation to graduation.
- XI. COVID-19 ABAC's Reopening Plan <https://www.abac.edu/coronavirus/#Reopening-Plan-Fall-2020>
- XII. Team Information and Rules

