



## The Phoenix Way

At Unity Christian Academy, the Athletics and Co-Curriculars programs exhibit “The Phoenix Way” during all competitions and team activities. The Phoenix Way is the Champion’s Culture that our coaches and student athletes embody. UCA believes that if we practice and compete according to The Phoenix Way then each of our student athletes will maximize their God-given gifts and become the champion of their story, with success both on and off the field.

The Phoenix Way is built on the foundation of Committed Coaches and Engaged Parents.

Our coaches are committed to building not only successful programs, but also building strong

**ENGAGED PARENTS**

**COMMITTED COACHES**

Christian citizens. All UCA coaches are engaged and passionate about our students and the activity they are leading. They will be prepared for practices and competitions and will communicate proactively with parents and students. Coaches will make sure students respect the game and foster a strong culture.

At UCA, not only are the coaches committed, we also require our athletes’ parents’ engagement. Each sport season (Fall, Winter, Spring) will have a mandatory parents’ meeting. Students will not be able to participate in their sport until a parent/guardian attends a meeting. Additionally, each program will have a Team Parent/Guardian (mom, dad, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc) to assist with coordinating families to support the athletes (team spirit wear, team parties, etc.). Finally, parents will collaborate with coaches to set a positive environment at our competitions, even in the face of unfair adversity.

On this strong foundation, UCA adds the five pillars to our culture:

- Discipline
- Hard Work
- Joy
- Character/Attitude
- Camaraderie



## Discipline

Discipline is the most wide ranging pillar because it encompasses control of the self, of one's environment, and the improvement of one's abilities. Athletes will train to control themselves, their reaction to their environment, and improve their abilities. Athletes are expected to be on time and prepared for all practices and competitions. Preparation is physical and mental. Physical preparation requires proper nutrition, sleep, and equipment. Mental preparation requires focus on the task.

Also, athletes must be disciplined in their reactions with those around them. This means actively participating in building team culture, seeking to improve their associative play with teammates, building their sports "IQ", and improving on their own sport-specific technique.

## Effort

Effort is not "work" nor is it given by "trying". Effort only occurs through difficulty. A commitment to effort is to arrive at the door of discomfort and then to work at pushing it open. Effort is achieved when you realize that your limits are just perceptions.

Athletes display Effort by being early to practice, refusing to be outworked in practices and games, and training with intensity regardless of whether or not the coach is looking.

## Joy

To play a sport well requires Joy. Without joy, the sport loses its meaning. However, Joy is more than just "fun". Joy is felt in each moment of games AND training. It is felt through victories, defeats, easy days, and hard ones. Just as Christ calls us to take Joy even in suffering, so-to athletes take joy in their team and sport regardless of circumstance.

Joy is at the heart of each of the other 4 categories and is achieved through Discipline, Effort, Attitude, and Camaraderie.

## Character / Attitude

Character is the inner essence of a person. Attitude is the person's external expressions and interactions with their current environment. Both Character and Attitude are essential to The Phoenix Way.

In Romans, the Bible says that maturity of Character produces joy and confidence (Romans 5:4 AMPC). While this is in reference to spiritual growth, it also applies to natural growth, integrity and selflessness. The internal fortitude of Character allows athletes to not only persevere through difficulty, but to also uplift and encourage their teammates; putting others before themselves.

Attitude is more than "good" or "bad". A commitment to attitude means actively choosing every second to embrace challenges with naive optimism, putting others' struggles before your own, and honestly reflecting on your own efforts and results.

Athletes display their attitude with their words and actions toward everyone else involved in the sport. UCA athletes do not argue with or disrespect referees and they treat opposing teams, staff, and fans with respect.

## Camaraderie

The people you have around you and your relationships with them can determine the course of your season or your life. As such, athletes are committed to building relationships with their teammates and supporting each other through thick and thin. There is no place for bullying here, but rather athletes are to live into their Christian calling of caring for even the least of these.

Athletes are expected to love each other and to push each other to be better. When there is conflict, it is expected to stay on the playing field and be worked through in love and respect. These relationships extend to teammates and participants that are part of our extended network and community enrollment families.

Putting all of these things together is The Phoenix Way and builds the Champion's Culture!

*“Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of being.”*

*-UCLA Coach John Wooden*

