



Valley Christian Football Expectations

What does it mean to be a Trojan?

The game of football is valuable only to the extent that it equips and trains individuals to exemplify high character, solid integrity, and steadfast dependability in all areas of life. The following is an outline of my personal management strategy, which exists for the purpose of using high school football to help the boys who enter the Valley Christian football program to develop into tenacious and loving “Men of the Valley.”

1. Characteristics of a “Man of the Valley;” we are...

-Tenacious Men: We are passionate, enthusiastic, competitive, and tough. We do not quit and will not be discouraged. This is true in all areas of life.

“For the spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.” -II Timothy 1:7

-Loving Men: We are compassionate; we show more concern for others than we do ourselves. When things get tough, we encourage each other.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” -Colossians 3:12

-Men of Integrity: We are honest and do the right thing in all situations.

“Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or left; keep your foot from evil.” -Proverbs 4:25-27

-Men of Our Word: If we say we will do something, we do it. We can be counted on to get the job done.

“Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.” -Matthew 5:37

-Men of Loyalty: We are selfless and low maintenance; we declare our allegiance to the mission of the team. No “Disease of Me.”

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” -John 15:13

-Men of Discipline: We train to do the necessary things when they are difficult; we are habitually punctual.

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” -Hebrews 12:11

-Hebrews 12:11

-Men of Academia: We take care of business in school. If we need help, we ask – no excuses.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...” -Colossians 3:23

-Respectful Men: We address coaches “Yes sir” and we look people in the eye when they address us. We respect each other by “speaking life;” there is no social stratification within our program – we are all brothers.

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” -Romans 12:10

-Men of Humility: There is no person or task below us; love and serve everyone. On-field celebrations should be with teammates and not about an individual.
“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”
-Philippians 2:3

“Every time you compromise character your compromise leadership.” -Bill Hybels

2. Traits and behaviors that will not be tolerated within the Valley Football program:

-Selfishness: This program is bigger than any individual member; it is the job of the coaching staff and your teammates to worry about your needs, it is your job to be focused primarily on the needs of the team and your teammates.

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
-Philippians 2:4

-Apathy: You must take ownership of your development as an athlete and as a person; you must want to be coached and motivated. If someone else wants your development more than you do, we have a problem.

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
-Galatians 6:9

-Foul Language: Discipline your mind and tongue to speak only those things that are edifying and uplifting to all people. Absolutely no curse words, racial slurs, or homophobic slang terms.

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”
-Ephesians 4:29

-Disrespect: Respect people, property, and our football-learning environment. This is particularly important as it pertains to maintaining our facilities and equipment.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”
-1 Peter 4:10

-Distractedness: When someone is addressing the team, you will give that person your eye contact and focus; no one is adjusting pads or talking to a buddy.

3. Valley football “5 Commandments” to ensure a positive and healthy environment:

-Communication: This is important on several levels. Players should always tell coaches (ideally at least 3 hours in advance) if they will miss a practice or workout. Coaches need to constantly communicate with players regarding team vision and goals as well as individual goals and progress. Coaches also need to communicate consistently with parent community. Parents should feel comfortable reaching out and communicating with coaching staff.

-Punctuality: Be on time. This is important because it involves both respect for others and discipline.

-Attitude: This is a dynamic element of our disposition that we can control. Be resolved to respond with a positive attitude regardless of the circumstances. Only uplifting self-talk is allowed.

-Effort: You are fully in control of the amount of effort you give. Our program will be most successful when players coach each other and hold each other accountable to “Living Life Without Regrets.”

-Have fun!: Football is the best game in the world and it is meant to be played with enthusiasm, energy, and enjoyment! Have fun with your friends and coaches, and have fun because you know you are giving your best for the sake of the team. Our definition of success is grounded in going through the process and giving all our effort to be the best we can be – this definition frees us to have fun and stand tall regardless of the outcome of a given competition.

4. Proactive steps we will take to encourage good behavior and pre-emptively prevent bad behavior:

-Ownership: We will meet with the senior class (or a select leadership council, pending the year and dynamic of the team) before the season begins to engage in coach-led conversation around team expectations and the consequences of falling short of said expectations. The seniors/leaders will then present this information to the team, with the full support of the coaching staff. Involving players in the creation of standards and consequences increases buy-in and motivation to produce positive behavior.

-Senior retreat and team retreat: Before the season begins we will conduct a senior retreat, followed by a full team retreat. On the senior retreat we will discuss what the seniors would like the team to be and to accomplish, along with their desired culture for the team for the upcoming season. We will also help empower the seniors to lead all or portions of the team retreat. Following the senior retreat we will take the whole team on a retreat which will include elements of team bonding, fun, spiritual and character development, and a “rite of passage” ceremony in which all players will make a commitment to each other including what their teammates can count on them to do and be for the season. The coaches will guide this ceremony to include an element of commitment to positive behavioral choices throughout the coming year.

-Spiritual and character formation plan: As a part of our spiritual and character formation plan we will discuss weekly themes from scripture pertaining to growth in maturity and character. We will have weekly small group discussions, weekly coach-led devotionals, and a game-day chapel each week to implement the topic for a given week. This will lay the groundwork of encouraging players to choose good behavior for the sake of growing in their character.

-Mentor groups: Each player will be placed into a mentorship group with 5-7 other players and led by one coach. These will provide the structure for our weekly small group discussion times and be a framework with which we can individually invest in each player. Coaches will be expected to pray for, encourage, and interact with the players in their mentor group on a daily basis. Players will be accountable to their mentor coach.

-Partner with parents: We will partner with the parents of our players to hold the young men accountable to our standards of behavior. Through weekly parent communication emails, one-on-one conversations with parents, and speaking

directly to the parent community on the field after games we will bring them into the fold as “the primary educators” of their children.

-Daily “speak life” encounters: Our coaching staff will actively seek opportunities to build players up for consistent good behavior. We will build and maintain good relationships with other teachers, administrators, and support staff to have an accurate “finger on the pulse” of the behavior of our players within the school community. We will seek feedback and then verbally build players up.

5. Though athletes are expected to consistently choose good behavior, there will be times when it becomes appropriate to offer positive consequences for players who are doing a wonderful job of exuding the character and decision-making of a “Man of the Valley.”

Those positive consequences will come in the form of:

-Individual praise: We will be on the lookout for players doing the right thing and will be diligent to never miss the chance to approach a young man who we just saw make a positive choice and build him up for doing so.

-Public praise: In situations where a player has gone above and beyond, we will publicly recognize him before or after a team workout or in a team communication. We will be judicious about the frequency of using this strategy.

-Phone call or email to parents: When a player has consistently done truly great work for a span of several days or weeks, I will email or call his parents to express to them the positive behavior he has been showing – taking care to share a few specific examples of good behavior by the player.

-“Shark Tank” award: We will give the “Shark Tank” award to the practice player of the week each week. At times we will reserve this award for a player who has shown particularly exemplary behavior (on and off the field) that week.

-Year-end “Pillar Awards”: At our end-of-season banquet we will award our four most prestigious team awards to the young men who most exemplify each of our four cultural pillars.

6. The team as a whole is expected to uphold the cultural expectations we set. In order to positively reinforce adherence to our standards, there will be times when we will use the following measures to reward the entire team for exhibiting good behavior:

-Team ice cream: On several occasions during the season we will either bring ice cream in for the team or take all of the guys to a nearby restaurant to reward them with ice cream. We will explain the behavior that initiated the reward.

-Later Saturday start time: We will normally begin Saturday morning film and recovery sessions at 8:30 AM, but will push it back occasionally to reward the team for consistent positive behavior. This is a multi-faceted reward as it allows the players to get a little more sleep and also expresses trust because it makes it possible for them to stay out later on Friday night. What we are communicating is that, because of their good behavior, we not only want to reward them, but we trust them to continue their good decisions.

-Fun or goofy drills at practice: High school boys are still kids. To reward the whole team on special occasions, we will feed into the child-like aspect of their still-developing personalities and plan a fun drill (watermelon relay, dizzy bat

relay, O-line vs. D-line 1-on-1 pass routes, etc.) to involve the entire team in a fun drill full of laughter.

7. There are times when an athlete starts to “drift” and needs a supportive disciplinary measure to kick-start his own self-control. The pre-emptive tactics we will use are:

-Goal reminders: We will help players set individual goals and commitments to the team at the beginning of the year. If a player begins to drift I will open his commitment card and revisit it with him to remind him of what he hopes to accomplish and what he committed to his teammates.

-One-on-one conversation with the player and/or his parents: Sometimes a player just needs someone to recognize that he is drifting and care enough to ask why. If I believe the young man is in real danger of slipping from drift to free-fall, I will involve his parents in the conversation right away.

-Time away from the team to improve: If the drift of the player is causing his schoolwork to suffer, I will institute mandatory after-school time with teachers to make academic progress. This will cause him to miss time with the team in meetings and the weight room, but will also send the message that he needs to get his priorities in order and provide motivation for him to put an end to his drift so can rejoin his teammates.

8. Most of the specific negative consequences I will institute when a player does not abide by team standards will have been pre-determined by the senior class and/or the athletic department. Punishment will be viewed as a last resort, and will not be threatening but will be conducted in a matter-of-fact manner that conveys follow through by the coaching staff on behalf of the agreement they reached with the senior class. These consequences are:

-Individual meeting and/or parent meeting: At times this will also include a dean or administrator of the school if the offense is serious and breaks school rules. This is often the first step to reaching a common understanding, bringing the parents into the conversation, and beginning to process where to go next.

-Extra conditioning: This consequence is reserved for non-serious offenses that should be addressed immediately and then moved past.

-Public apology to the team: In cases of more severe infractions, players will be required to stand before the whole team and apologize for not abiding by the standards agreed upon by all.

-Suspension from participation: This could either be a practice, a portion of a game, a full game, or multiple games depending on the severity of the offense and the standards established by the seniors for that particular season. Players will have specific responsibilities assigned to them during the time they are unable to participate (chores, water boy, meeting with a teacher, etc.).

-Regular meetings with a mentor: In the most severe cases, I will require the offending player to have weekly meetings with an adult mentor of their choosing to continue to process the decision they made, its larger ramifications, and how to grow. I will check in regularly with the mentor to get updates.

-Reflection paper: For certain transgressions I will require the player to use his time off, or earn his participation back, by completing a reflection paper

assignment in which I provide a prompt in the attempt to produce deeper reflection and processing.

9. We will strive to establish and maintain a positive climate for the athletes in our program by:

-Consistent enthusiasm: The coaching staff will commit to leading with passion and enthusiasm all the time. There are no “off days” for the coaching staff.

-Coaches’ covenant: The coaches will discuss and agree on a set of commitments they will make to the players and the broader community of the football program. This Coaches’ Covenant provides an outline of what players can expect from their coaches and accountability for coaches to deliver.

-Players’ covenant: After the coaches produce and present their covenant, the players will complete the same exercise. The Players’ Covenant will detail their commitments to each other and the cultural ideals they will uphold in the name of preserving and strengthening the ethos of the program.

-Community service: We will participate in one service-oriented activity during the summer (work project, volunteer, putting on a camp for individuals with disabilities, etc.) and will also complete one work project whenever we travel to an away game out of state; we want to make the communities we visit better than we found them.

10. Parents are the primary educators of their children; as such, they are valuable partners in the efforts to coach the members of our team. Parents will be welcomed, embraced, and included as part of the football program. Specific strategies to foster this ideal:

-Post-game team huddle: All parents are invited to join us on the field after each game for our team gathering. All comments made by coaches will be in front of parents, and even directed to them at times.

-Open practices: Parents are welcome to come and observe any practice or workout session from the sideline as long as they do not interfere.

-Consistent communication: We will provide a parent communication at least once each week with pertinent scheduling details, announcements, and weekly themes or points of emphasis for the team.

-Approachability: I am happy to meet with any parent for any reason. There are no topics I will not discuss with a parent as long as I feel the best interest of the student is not being threatened. My preference is always to have the player present in the meeting as well.

-Team parent(s): We will have one or multiple “team parents” to help the coaching staff with coordination and leadership of the program. One of the key functions of the team parent will be to create and facilitate opportunities for other parents to be involved. The more parents we can get close to the program and helping out, the more buy-in we will have from them.