

Greetings and welcome to an exciting new year of athletic competition at Ontario Christian Middle School. During this past year a lot of time and effort went into evaluating and deciding on the course of action to take with our middle school athletic department and I am pleased to say that a number of steps have been taken to ensure a quality opportunity is available for all of our student-athletes during the 2008-2009 school year.

As always, our main priority in athletics is to honor and glorify God with our play, as well as our other actions on and around the courts and fields in which we participate. With this in mind I am pleased to announce that we will be changing leagues this season and will now be competing in the Christian School League which is made up of seven other junior high and middle schools. The most exciting prospect of this new association is the fact that we are joined in competition with like-minded schools whose priority is to be God honoring in their approach to athletics, just as we are.

With this change come other changes as well. The most noticeable will be in the make-up of our teams. Rather than organizing our teams into 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade squads, as was the case in the past, we will now have a varsity and junior varsity team in the various sports. This means teams will be blended, with both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students participating on both teams. The positive outcome should be more balanced play among the teams as they compete against the other schools within the league. The other benefit that we are extremely excited about is the formation of three new programs in the upcoming year with the addition of baseball, softball, and track and field. This will provide more athletic play for more students while also providing a better opportunity to prepare our students that participate in these sports for high school. With high school in mind let me also say that great steps are being taken to align our programs with that of the high school. Coaches from both campuses have begun to and will continue to meet together to plan practices and develop plans that will ensure the students are better prepared to step into the high school sporting environment when that time comes.

As we move in this new direction I would also like to encourage you to consider joining the school's Booster Club. The Booster Club strives to offer our student-athletes with support throughout the year by providing for needs that are not met in other ways. Historically there has been a low percentage of participation from the middle school level and I would like to see that change. The Booster Club has supported us in many ways and it is in our best interest to show our appreciation by also being involved. Please consider this as you find more information at <http://www.ocschools.org/boosters.cfm>.

This is a brief overview of the major changes and of the primary questions I have been receiving. If you have any specific questions please feel free to email me at [dbelden@ocschools.org](mailto:dbelden@ocschools.org). In the meantime I want to leave you with one last thing to help this year go smoothly. As we continue to move in a technologically advanced society please use our school website and all of its resources at [ocschools.org](http://ocschools.org). You can link to all the required forms and documents pertaining to participation, access schedules, find driving directions, get updates, and much more. The middle school athletic pages can be found through either the athletic link on the home page or from the middle school homepage.

David Belden  
Athletic Director  
Ontario Christian Middle School