Tennis Parents and Players,

Please read the attached information and keep on file during the season.

Please tear off, sign, and return this cover sheet (on the 1st day of practice; not before) - indicating that you (both parent & player) have received and read the attached information.

Parent Printed Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Athlete Printed Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TENNIS HANDBOOK**

Coach Brian Dobbs  
cell: 605-691-6314, email: [brian.dobbs@k12.sd.us](mailto:brian.dobbs@k12.sd.us)  
See my website [**https://bd095.k12.sd.us/**](https://bd095.k12.sd.us/) for this and other tennis info.  
  
All players and parents should download the BAND app on their phone and set up an account. Parents can then search for Brookings Bobcat Tennis and join the group. Players will receive a QR Code or an email invitation from me to join the group. If you are under the age of 20, BAND won’t allow you to do a search. If you are under 13, BAND won’t allow you to even join a group. So, for some of our 7th graders – you can either enter a birthday that would make you currently 13 years old, or parents can relay messages on BAND to you. If any parents are unfamiliar with BAND and are concerned about their child using it – I’m not a complete expert on it, but it seems quite safe to me. There really isn’t anything kids can access other than messages from coaches/advisors. All BHS activities are using BAND. Once you are in BAND, if you click on the title of the group it will take you to a new screen which will show my cell #, email address, and a link to my website (which is where you can see the online schedule).

**Physicals & Forms**  
Physical form (you need a hard copy) and the Activity Participation Form(completed online) must be turned into the activities office prior to the first practice for your child to be able to participate. Some chiropractors in town will do physicals on short notice and fairly cheap (usually $20). I do not deal with physicals or the Activity Participation Form – please direct any questions to the BHS front office. Make sure you get a physical form from BHS if you did not already receive one (can be downloaded online) to take with you for the doctor to complete and then turn that in to the BHS front office (the physical form does not go to me). To find the Activity Participant Packet, go to the BSD website – go to departments – go to Activities/Athletics – then click on Activity Participation Form.

**Practice (at Hillcrest Park)**  
***Girls(Fall)*:** Practice will run from 4:00 – 5:30 both before school starts and after school has started. We usually have about 2 weeks of practice before school even starts. We will practice every school day and will usually not practice on holidays. Players and parents should pay close attention to my BAND messages for weather cancellations.  
***Boys(Spring)*:** We will practice from 4:00 – 5:30 every school day and will usually not practice on holidays. The first couple weeks may be hit and miss with the weather. Players and parents should pay close attention to my BAND messages for weather cancellations.

**GEAR**1) Kids need athletic attire – their own racket and court shoes (or a crosstrainer) – running shoes are not against the rules, but they don’t work very well for tennis – too much side to side movement and ankles tend to roll. There is a drinking fountain at the courts, but I would prefer kids bring their own water jug if possible that they can have on the court with them – so they don’t have to leave the court for a drink.

I recommend a full size racket for all kids grades 7-12 (27” length with a 4&3/8 grip – 4&1/4 for a smaller hand). Dunham’s has decent rackets or Volin’s in Sioux Falls specializes in tennis equipment (they also do stringing). Coach Brenna Langland will string rackets if she’s available (605-691-4420). Other options for stringing in Sioux Falls are Volin’s (605-332-7693) or Match Pointe (605-338-4036). Most kids will not break strings during the season (except for some of the varsity boys). I advise getting your racket restrung with fresh strings before the season – and if you do tend to break strings, you need 2 rackets and a plan for how to get your rackets restrung when you do break them.

2) Storing your equipment at the courts is not an option – you will have to transport your racket and anything else with you each day. For kids without their own car, if you can’t fit all your gear in your locker, ask a teacher if you can keep your things in their classroom OR ask the office if they will hold your things during the day. You could also use a gym locker if that’s an option.

\*Boys season in spring – there is no bathroom or drinking fountain for the first few weeks of practice, so go to the bathroom before coming to practice and bring water. The first few weeks are often chilly and you may be able to practice without needing much for water.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Kids must transport themselves to practice at Hillcrest. One option is to take a school bus that makes a stop at Hillcrest. Changing before you come to Hillcrest is encouraged, but you can change in the bathrooms if they are open. Or you could just wear clothes to school that are also appropriate for practice. I would prefer kids NOT be making stops at home on their way to practice if possible – if you do, that should not be an excuse to be late. Bus riders should be the only ones who might arrive a few minutes late from time to time.

**MEETS/TOURNAMENTS**

1) Varsity is the top 6 – non-varsity players will not play in every meet – depends on the numbers the other school has. Kids will be told as far in advance as possible of their playing status in a given meet. There is no practice on competition days unless told otherwise.

2) Remember to notify your teachers as early as possible if you are going to miss class. Don’t count on me to remind you to do this.

3) When you are dismissed from school early for a meet, use the time before the report time(home) or depart time(away) to get changed (use the locker room) and to eat if necessary (depending on the time of day). Report time for home meets is the time to be on the courts, not the time to be pulling into the parking lot.

4) When we host triangulars, we usually play 1st and 3rd and have a break during the middle segment. Players can stay at the courts or leave, but they are NOT supervised during this time.

5) For away trips, we always depart from BHS south lot. Middle schoolers – we pick up at front of MMS (after high schoolers have loaded up) if it’s during school day hours. If it’s a Saturday or an early morning departure, we expect everyone to just meet at BHS south lot. Arriving home – kids without cars will contact parents via cell phone when we are about 15 minutes from town. Parents will pick up their kids at BHS south lot.  
**Checklist of items to have for practice, meets, and travel.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rackets (advanced players need a backup) | Hat |
| Shoes | Warm clothes (for cold weather) |
| towel | Snacks (preferably healthy) |
| Water (medium or large container) | Money |
| Gatorade (for hot weather) | Cell phone |
| Uniform (bring all school issued clothing) |  |
| sunscreen | *Add more to this list for your personal use*…………… |

**TRAVEL/OVERNIGHTS/FOOD**

1) For non-overnight trips, please limit yourself to your tennis bag, a water jug, and a book bag if you want to bring some school work.

2) For overnight trips, players need to limit luggage to their tennis bag, a school backpack, and a luggage bag (a flexible duffle bag is preferred over a suitcase).

3) We do not go out to eat on non-overnight trips within an hour distance of Brookings– so bring food along. We would only stop at some fast food drive-thru for trips to places like Mitchell, Yankton, Aberdeen (that are more than an hour away). Sioux Falls, Watertown, Huron, Madison – we do not stop.

4) For some of our triangulars/quadrangulars that can last for several hours, make sure you are prepared with plenty of fluids and plenty of packed food. Even if we are at home, you may not always have time to leave the courts in between matches.

5) When we are out of town on overnight trips (like ESD or State), we will eat breakfast in the hotel and will go out to dinner at night. Lunch and snacks – bring some of your own and bring money in case there are concessions. Going to subway for example at lunchtime would depend on some variables – you could not count on coaches being able to take you out to lunch (and you may not have enough time between matches anyway), so you would need to be prepared to just eat at the courts (your own packed food or concessions) or have a parent run out and get you something.

\*Home meets – the shack is only for coaches and storage. Players should not use the shack to store their gear – and food is definitely not allowed in the shack. We’ve tried this before – too many kids were not interested in cleaning up after themselves.

**VARSITY PLAYERS**

1) Missing practice or a meet should be extremely rare, and should be for a very good reason. Attendance at ESD and State is **MANDATORY**. If you have any concerns that you may not be able to play at ESD or State, then you should tell me at the beginning of the season – playing varsity may not be an option for you in this case.

2) Keep in mind that events can be postponed due to weather, so keep your calendar as clear as possible and plan on some adjustments to the schedule due to rain-outs, etc.

3) Varsity players are expected to stay at the courts during a meet to support their teammates until everyone is done playing. They should plan to help take down scorecards and help with other minor clean up jobs before we all leave the courts. Exceptions can be made occasionally, but should be rare and for good reason – and Coach Dobbs needs to be notified. JV players are encouraged to stay also, but will be given more freedom and flexibility to leave since their playing opportunities are fewer.

**Tryout/Challenge Match Policy for Varsity Positions**If you are absent for any practices that involve challenge matches before the first competition of the season, you will be reducing your opportunities to earn a particular spot on the team. Once we reach the first competition of the season, if we’ve had sufficient time to play challenge matches and determine a lineup, but you have missed practice(s), you cannot expect that there will be extended opportunities for you to challenge other players.

Challenge matches will be the primary tool for determining our varsity lineup. However, there are other factors that can be considered. Those factors would include the following…….

1. Attitude – your demeanor towards the coach and your teammates.
2. Work ethic – effort and level of seriousness in practice; and are you helpful with things like setting up nets, picking up balls, or putting scorecards away?
3. Desire to learn and improve – do you listen to the coach and make serious efforts to learn the game and improve?
4. Sportsmanship – do you have temper tantrums on the court? Do you support your teammates in losing situations or do you blame them and criticize them? Do you stay to the end of meets to support your teammates and help the team with clean up, or do you regularly find excuses to leave once your matches are done?

In summary, challenge matches alone do not guarantee you a particular spot on the team. If you are in need of significant improvement in the above areas, you may be subject to the coach’s discretion as to where you belong in the lineup.  
  
**SUB-VARSITY Players (this includes Middle Schoolers) – This is for those not on Varsity**  
The team will be capped at a maximum of 24 players total (MS and HS combined). If more than 24 sign up, we will reduce down to 24 during the first week of practice. Reductions will be based on coaches observations of skills and potential. There will be no guarantee of challenge matches and there definitely would not be time for everyone to play everyone. Kids who come out for tennis should be committed to being at at least 90% of practices. Kids who miss a lot of practice will be dismissed from the team. Kids who come out for tennis should preferably have some prior exposure to the sport and have a serious interest in the sport. They should also be ready to take practice seriously.  
**Middle Schoolers** – most of your tennis will just be coming to practice. We try to schedule 1 or 2 middle school events, but usually only take 6-8 kids to those events. Middle schoolers could play JV during our varsity meets sometimes – that would depend on our high school numbers and the talent level of our middle schoolers. So most seasons, many of our middle schoolers may not play any official competition. They would just be trying to gain some experience through practice. If we have any experienced middle schoolers, they are allowed to try out for varsity positions.

**Summer/Off-Season Tennis Options**

1) Get together with a friend/teammate here in town and play at least 4 times per week.

2) Play in as many area USTA tournaments as possible (at least play the Brookings tourney in early July)  
       -see my website for a link to the USTA website.  
  
\* For other opportunities, check out the Match Pointe Indoor Tennis Facility at the Sanford Athletic Complex on the north side of Sioux Falls (quick easy access from Brookings).  They offer year-round lessons, leagues, ball-machine use, court rentals, racket stringing, etc.