

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL COACHES

COACHES: THE SELECTION PROCESS

The coach has the greatest responsibility as well as the greatest opportunity to guide and influence the student athlete. Coaches assume the role of teacher, mentor and minister to the athletes in their charge. A coach's attitude and spirituality are critical to modeling good Christian faith-based sportsmanship, both in word and deed. The careful selection of coaches is vital if the athletic program is to reflect the Mission and Philosophy of the school's interscholastic athletic program.

Criteria for the selection of coaches must include:

- » The ability to model Catholic values
- » The ability to articulate and model the school's Mission and Philosophy and goals of the program
- » The ability to responsibly supervise and instruct the youth in his/her care
- » An understanding of the basics of the sport to be coached
- » The ability to develop the potential, confidence and skills of each athlete
- » The ability to separate winning from the important goals and values of the program

After a careful screening and selection process, coaches are appointed by the athletic board/committee or by the athletic director with the approval of the pastor and/or the principal. Head coaches should be 21 years of age, and they all must submit all of the necessary documentation and training. Before coming into contact with any children, all paid and volunteer coaches must:

- » Complete an eApps online criminal background check application
- » Attend Virtus Training within 60 days of beginning service

- » Read and sign the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel
- » Complete the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System Form – CANTS
- » Complete Mandated Reporter Training (employees only)
- » Present themselves for digital fingerprinting within 5 days of hire (paid employees)

See page 9 for Safe Environment Compliance Procedures.

Each school must conduct their own coach training program prior to the start of the sport season as a means of making sure each coach understands his/her responsibility as an extension of the school, the staff, and the religious tradition of the Parish Community. In addition, the school should make arrangements for coaches to attend a formal clinic or in-service in their particular sport. The benefits of sending coaches to a professional organization that focuses on appropriate teachings and principles of effectively leading youth sports programs are extremely significant. It is recommended that the coaches are certified by a national governing body or a national coaching program in the sport they coach. In addition, it is recommended that coaches receive training in first-aid, CPR, and on blood-borne pathogens. Of equal importance, all coaches must be familiar with the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, and every coach must clearly understand their legal responsibilities.

Further Training opportunities for youth coaches can be found on page 55.

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

The Coaches Council of the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has established

the following Code of Conduct to which coaches at all levels are to be held accountable:

- » Have the knowledge and preparation to effectively lead your teams
- » Be responsible to ensure that the health, well-being and development of your athletes take precedence over the win/loss record
- » Accept that you serve as role models and there must be congruency between your actions and words
- » Provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for practices and competition
- » Exemplify honesty, integrity, fair play, and sportsmanship regardless of the impact that might have upon the outcome of the competition
- » Maintain a professional demeanor in your relationship with athletes, officials, colleagues, administrators and the public and treat them with respect and dignity
- » Be committed to the education of athletes and encourage academic achievement
- » Follow current safe training and conditioning techniques
- » Exhibit sound injury and risk management practices
- » Demonstrate an understanding of growth and development stages of your athletes
- » Place the athlete's needs and interests before your own
- » Remember that competition should be a healthy and enjoyable experience for all

COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaching is not just about winning games. In fact, winning is a very small component to the job. Successful coaches help athletes master new skills, enjoy competition with others, and help young athletes feel good about themselves. Successful coaches are not only well versed in the techniques and skills

of their sport. They also understand how to effectively teach those skills through age appropriate exercises and drills. Most importantly however, successful coaches go far beyond teaching athletic techniques by teaching and modeling skills needed for successful living in our society.

Below is a list of major responsibilities and behaviors that all coaches MUST adhere to:

Act in Accordance with Catholic Character

Coaches are expected to model Christian sportsmanship knowing that the school is judged more by the coach's sportsmanship than by their record. The coach must instill and guide the team members with a sense of fair play and model winning and losing in a respectful, courteous and gracious Christian manner.

Model Superior Sportsmanship, Humility, and Graciousness, both in Victory and Defeat

Coaches should never instruct or encourage student athletes to violate either the spirit or the letter of the rules of the sport or of the league. It is unacceptable for coaches to "run up" the score on inferior opponents. Coaches are expected to substitute players when the opposing team is significantly behind. Coaches must show respect for game officials and opponents at all times; publicly shaking hands with the officials and the opposing coach before and after a game gives clear witness to this respect. All coaches must refrain from public protest that may lead to similar behavior from students, parents or other spectators.

Properly Supervise Student-Athletes

Rarely, if ever, should athletes be left unsupervised. In the event of a serious emergency, the coach should attempt to get another adult to supervise the team. If this is not possible, athletes may have to be left alone for a reasonable period of time, providing that the athletes have been instructed on what to do in the coach's absence. Clear expectations of behavior in emergency situations should be reviewed with the athletes. In addition, coaches must be physically and mentally present when supervising athletes. Being preoccupied, completing unrelated tasks, using cell phones, texting, or engaging in conversation with others does not allow adequate supervision.

Adhere to Professional Conduct

The coach is responsible for student conduct and behavior during practices and games. Under no circumstances should coaches tolerate words that demean other players (name-calling, taunting, etc). Likewise, any action that is physically dangerous, for example deliberately trying to injure an opponent during a game, is absolutely prohibited. Coaches must strive to be fair and unbiased in their relationships with student athletes and their parents. Coaches must also strive to faithfully and fairly adhere to the guidelines for “playing time” for each student athlete, giving each athlete an appropriate opportunity to participate. It is expected that coaches emphasize the development of self-confidence, self-discipline and sportsmanship, and that they make team participation a learning experience for all.

Possess Basic Knowledge in Skills, Tactics, and Strategies

It is to be expected that coaches are knowledgeable of the rules of the sport and techniques for teaching the fundamentals of the sport. They should use tactics and strategies that are appropriate for the age and skill levels of their athletes. Winning takes secondary importance to the athletic, social, and emotional development of all those involved. Coaches should teach the rules of the sport and develop each player’s skills within the framework of a team concept.

Possess Basic Knowledge in Training, Nutrition, and Injury Prevention

Proper physical conditioning of the student athletes must be emphasized. All practices should begin with dynamic stretching and warm-up exercises and end with cool down activities. Water must be made available to all participants, and coaches should allow athletes to take as many water breaks as needed. Coaches should never allow injured players to return to competition unless cleared by a physician or certified trainer.

Comply with Established Policies, Philosophies, and Procedures

All coaches must adhere to and support the local interscholastic athletic Mission and Philosophy Statements, as well as all local and league policies

and guidelines. Coaches should attend various information meetings to become familiar with these prior to assuming coaching responsibilities. In addition, all coaches are expected to publicly support the school’s administration, athletic director, and/or athletic committee.

Possess a Basic Understanding of Risk Management Procedures

Coaches are responsible for the safety and welfare of the team. Coaches must insure the proper use of the facilities where practices and games are held. Coaches practicing at parish/school facilities should understand the proper procedures for entering and securing the building. Coaches should be familiar with the School Emergency Plan and periodically rehearse the plan with the team. Coaches must carry with them pertinent information on every athlete in their care in case of an emergency. The emergency card should list obvious problems such as asthma, heart problems and diabetes. The card should also specify allergies, including bee stings and foods, as well as list of emergency phone numbers for each athlete. A FIRST AID Kit should be at all games and practices. However, coaches should never administer medication. Coaches must document all injuries by filling out an accident report and/or other necessary paperwork with the school office.

Possess Basic Athletic Administration Skills

Coaches should keep a written documentation of accidents and injuries and notify the parents and the school administration when these occur. While it may be impossible to document every injury and its source, an honest effort to document and notify parents and the school administration in a timely manner is important for the safety and well-being of the student athletes. Coaches should keep objective and factual written documentation of problems concerning student athletes’ attitude and/or behavior. These records are important when discipline matters might lead to the suspension and/or expulsion of a student from the program. It is important for coaches to communicate the schedule of practices and games (or any cancellations or alterations to the schedule) in a timely manner. Coaches cannot assume that players will get an oral message home; written

communication, including emails, is highly encouraged.

Understand Appropriate Disciplinary Procedures

Coaches must discipline inappropriate student behavior or disrespect. However, coaches should never resort to physical or verbal abuse or profanity. Every coach needs to understand the difference between punitive touching (physical discipline) and corrective touching (correcting an athlete's hold on a ball or bat); one is prohibited while the other is not. Coaches should also take caution in how and when they make physical contact with an athlete so that the action is never misinterpreted in a sexual manner.

Coaches are prohibited from the following:

- » To use inappropriate, abusive or vile language, or to engage student athletes in inappropriate conversations unrelated to the sport
- » To berate and harass officials, opposing coaches, or personnel from other schools
- » To undermine the authority of the School Administration, Athletic Director, and/or the Athletic Committee
- » To deny adequate playing time to students who are cooperative in effort and attendance
- » To give preferential treatment to the most gifted athletes
- » To submit rosters that are not signed by the pastor and/or principal (or athletic director)
- » To play students who are not on their regular school roster or to roster students on two school teams in the same sport
- » To forfeit games without following local procedures
- » To join another league or an additional tournament without the approval of the athletic board/committee, athletic director or pastor and/or principal

PLAYING TIME

Playing time is a frequent source of misunderstanding and conflict among coaches, students and parents.

The athletic director or the athletic board/committee, with the approval of the pastor and/or the principal, must develop detailed guidelines for playing time and clearly communicate these guidelines to all parties.

In grades 4, 5 and 6, all players are expected to be awarded equal playing time. The focus at this level is on development, and every player at the 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade level must get an equal opportunity to play. In grades 7 and 8, playing time should be a reflection of ability, effort, attendance at practices, and commitment to the team. Coaches at the 7th and 8th grade level should work collaboratively with parents in helping all student athletes understand that not everyone who is on the team will play equal amounts. However, playing time for all is expected at the 7th and 8th Grade Level. For example, simply putting a player in the game for two minutes and calling that playing time is not acceptable. "Winning at all costs" or the exclusion of participation of eligible players, is never tolerated. Athletic guidelines should clearly state consequences for coaches who repeatedly ignore this directive. Instances of non-compliance are to be carefully documented with a written notice given to the offending coach.

In order to better facilitate the athletic development for all participants, athletic directors and coaches should encourage league officials to allow extra time at the end of a contest for non starting players to play an additional amount of time. Naturally, the score would not be kept for this additional period or quarter. For example, playing a 5th quarter in basketball would allow those who need further court time an opportunity to improve their skills.

Missing practice without cause or excessive absences can result in reduced playing time. Playing time may also be reduced as a disciplinary action, most especially when a player loses self-control or engages in other conduct unbecoming a Christian student athlete. Generally, however, every eligible athlete plays in every game (including tournaments).

CONDUCTING TRY-OUTS

Grade school athletic programs throughout the Archdiocese are not encouraged to cut a player based

on athletic ability. Because the focus of Archdiocese athletics at the 4th-8th grade level is more on development, rather than winning, coaches should find a spot for everyone who shows the willingness and desire to be a part of a team. Being a part of an interscholastic athletic team is a major component to the school experience; preventing any aspiring student athlete from participating denies them of this right.

DIVIDING TEAMS ACCORDING TO SKILL LEVEL

Dividing teams according to skill level is highly discouraged. However, when schools have a large number of participating student-athletes in THE SAME GRADE LEVEL, it may be necessary to create two teams for the sole purpose of ensuring a significant amount of playing time for all. THIS IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE INSTANCE WHERE SCHOOLS CAN OFFER AN 'A' TEAM AND A 'B' TEAM. If teams are formed by skill level, (an "A" team consisting of more game ready players and a "B" team consisting of players who need additional skill development) it is still expected that students would see a fair amount of playing time on either of the teams for which they qualified. In addition, parent/guardian coaches (most especially those who are coaching their own children) should never be responsible for dividing up teams based on skill level. Deciding who plays on the "A" Team and "B" Team must be made by the Athletic Director, Athletic Board,

and/or school principal. Lastly, these teams should never be referred to as "A" Teams and "B" Teams, but rather given some other identifiable name, such as a color, to differentiate the two.

Talented athletes should never be asked to play up with older players unless he/she is needed to play with the older team due to a lack of participating athletes at that level.

MONITORING COACHING PERFORMANCE

The athletic board/committee or athletic director should develop guidelines and procedures to regularly monitor and evaluate their coaches. While the specific procedures for disciplining and discharging a coach may vary within different school communities, all schools must document all incidents of misconduct. If a coach is unable to perform his/her duties according to the spirit and guidelines of the local athletic program, a process for disciplining and/or removing a coach should be clearly outlined and followed by the athletic board/committee or the school principal. Coaches who have been negligent or deficient in carrying out their responsibilities should not be retained. Ordinarily, coaches who have been removed from their position should not be involved in any other aspects of the athletic program.

I, _____, acknowledge the above and agree to adhere to all roles and responsibilities of a Catholic School Coach.

Signature

Date