

ST. PIUS X PARISH AND ST. LEO THE GREAT PARISH ATHLETIC PROGRAM HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The St. Pius X Parish and St. Leo the Great Parish Athletic Program Handbook ("Handbook") contains essential information about the athletic programs sponsored by St. Pius X Parish and St. Leo the Great Parish (each individually "Parish" and collectively "the Parishes"). All children participating in the athletic programs sponsored by the Parishes and their parents/guardians must read the Handbook. It is expected that all parents/guardians and students will comply with the Handbook in addition to supporting the religious, Christian and Catholic nature of the athletic program sponsored by the Parishes.

The information contained in the Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The Athletic Committee reserves the right to add to, modify or abolish any portion of the Handbook provisions without notice. Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future endorsement.

ADMINISTRATION

The Athletic Committee reports to the Pastors of the Parishes. The Athletic Committee administers the athletic programs sponsored by the Parishes.

DUTIES

The members of the Athletic Committee, their offices and their duties shall be:

Athletic Director

The Athletic Director shall be responsible for the overall operation and function of the Athletic Committee. The Athletic Director shall preside at all meetings; prepare an agenda for each meeting; assign responsibilities and tasks; appoint sub-committees; and have the primary responsibility for planning and setting of objectives. The Athletic Director shall direct all aspects of the Parish athletic programs. The Athletic Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the athletic budget, athletic policies, parity within programs, field & facility scheduling, coaches, players, equipment and team placement. The Athletic Director shall maintain clear communication between the members of the Athletic Committee, coaches, participants, parents, St. Pius X / St. Leo School ("SPSL"), the Pastors and religious education students.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep a record of all Athletic Committee funds received and disbursed; prepare the annual budget and monthly reports of expenditures and receipts; deposit all receipts of the Athletic Committee; and present all obligations of the Athletic Committee to the Parish bookkeeper for payment.

Sports Commissioner(s)

Each sport administered by the Athletic Committee shall be the responsibility of a Sports Commissioner(s), who shall have the primary responsibility for that sport's program. Each Sport's Commissioner(s) is chosen due to his/her enthusiasm for the sport that he/she represents and for his/her past support and dedication to the various Parish athletic programs. Each Sport

Commissioner shall cooperate with the Athletic Director in administering and managing his/her sport.

ORGANIZATION AND PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of the athletic program sponsored by the Parishes is to supplement the spiritual and academic curriculum at SPSL. The athletic program enhances the physical development of the participating children and promotes a sense of Parish spirit, pride, and unity.

This athletic program is striving to be the most extensive and well-balanced Parish program in the City of Omaha for both boys and girls. A variety of sports are offered, and participation is encouraged.

Athletic calendars are shown below for both girls and boys, illustrating the different sports that are offered during the year.

<u>BOYS</u>			<u>GIRLS</u>	
FALL				
Grades 6-8	Cross Country		Grades 6-8	Cross Country
			Grades 3- 8	Volleyball
WINTER				
Grades 3-8	Basketball		Grades 3-8	Basketball
SPRING				
Grades 7-8	Track		Grades 7-8	Track

Fees for sports offered through the Parish athletic program will vary for each sport. No player will be turned away due to inability to pay. If necessary, payment arrangements can be made by contacting the Athletic Director.

The Athletic Committee will annually evaluate the sports included in the athletic program and the grade participation levels for each sport in the athletic program.

The sport seasons are broken into a variety of sports because the Athletic Committee strongly believes that year-round specialization or concentration on any one sport at grade school age is detrimental and inhibiting to the children.

In addressing the question of how seriously the Athletic Committee approaches athletic programs sponsored by the Parishes, we need to consider some questions. Do our teams play to "win at all costs" or solely to instruct the children in the basics of the sports, while totally disregarding the score of the game? The answer for the Athletic Committee lies somewhere between these philosophical extremes. The age of the players on the team, among other factors, determines how seriously the game is played. For younger children, sports are almost totally instructive in nature, and the score of the game should be of small consideration. At this level, if the player has finished the season with an improved basic knowledge of the sport and has enjoyed playing the season, it

was a successful season, regardless of the win-loss record of the team. Players should be improving their skills in the sport, along with their level of sportsmanship in playing as each season passes.

In Grades 3-4, instruction, enjoyment and good sportsmanship still play a much larger role in the approach than does winning.

In Grade 5-6, the enjoyment of competition begins to play a role for the student athlete in addition to instruction, enjoyment and good sportsmanship, although development is still the focus.

In Grades 7-8, the adolescent shows an even greater enjoyment in the competition of the game, though teaching the skills of the various sports, and certainly, good sportsmanship continues to be most important. We want the children to learn how to be both good winners and good losers and to realize that the scoreboard only tells part of the story. We must not forget the purpose of the athletic program is only one part of the total Parish experience. We want the Parish athletic program to be one of the many positive aspects of Parish life. It is our philosophy to be "competitive," defined as being the best you can be always, regardless of the outcome.

ATHLETIC RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following is a non-exhaustive list of rules that must be followed by those participating in the athletic programs sponsored by the Parishes. These rules are self-imposed. Though the rules may at times place teams at a somewhat competitive disadvantage to the other teams we play, the Athletic Committee feels these rules are beneficial in keeping athletics in proper perspective.

RULE 1

Interscholastic

Teams will be divided according to the league rules. League rules will vary from league to league and sport to sport. See specific sport for details.

Players cannot be downgraded within an age group or to a younger group in any league. No "A" player can play on a "B" league team. Conversely, any "B" player who plays in an "A" league game becomes an "A" player and is no longer eligible to play in the "B" league.

An 8th Grade player cannot be moved down to the 7th Grade team under any conditions. A 7th Grade player may move up to an 8th Grade team if: (A) There are insufficient Eighth Grade players to fill out the roster; (B) There are too many 7th Grade players; and (C) Moving a player up would benefit both teams. No player can be moved up without the permission of his or her parents and the consent and approval of both coaches involved.

A good faith effort will be made to allow each player playing time in each game/match with no single player playing or no single player not playing the entire game/match.

RULE 2

Until a team plays its first game, teams may practice as often as necessary, within reason. This allows a team sufficient time to prepare for the coming season.

Practice times are determined by:

(A) Availability of the coaching staff.

(B) Number of teams participating; and

(C) Facility availability

Practices are generally for 1.5-2 hours each for 7th and 8th Grade teams. Shorter practices are recommended for lower grades. The general guideline is that we would like to have the last practice end no later than 10:00 p.m. No practice, league game or intramural event will begin before 12:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Any exceptions to these rules will be coordinated with the Athletic Director.

RULE 3

Teams may play in a variety of different pre-season, post-season, and holiday tournaments. Listed below is the number of tournaments allowed. Tournament entry will be determined by the team coach and athletic director. The fee charged will cover the following:

3rd-8th Grade 1 Tournaments, plus a League Tournament

Any team that would like to compete in more than one league or more than the number of tournaments noted above will need to coordinate with the athletic director. Fees will be adjusted accordingly.

RULE 4

Whenever possible, students will have a minimum of one week between the end of one sport and the beginning of practice for the next.

LEAGUE AFFILIATIONS

The athletic programs sponsored by the Parishes will only participate in leagues that provide participants with an opportunity to compete on the fields and in gymnasiums in an atmosphere of Christian sportsmanship, competition, and fellowship. An additional league may be considered for participation but will be determined at the discretion of the athletic director.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are the heart and soul of the athletic program sponsored by the Parishes. Parents of participating children are often asked to assist in various ways. Parents provide the staffing and support needed for a successful athletic program.

It is important that parents ensure their child regularly attends practices as scheduled by the team coach. Occasionally, parents may be called upon to drive members of their child's team to games or to practices. Please help in this area if you are able.

Parents can be of great help in the care of the uniforms. Sports uniforms are provided for your child to wear **DURING THE GAME ONLY**, not in practice or for normal play purposes. Please observe laundry instructions attached to the uniforms. It is vital that the uniforms be returned promptly at season's end. All uniforms are to be properly cleaned and returned to the child's coach

after the last game of the season or as directed. Remember that parents must pay for the replacement cost of all uniforms damaged or not returned.

It is important to remember that the coach oversees the team during practices and games. Parents are reminded to please not interfere with the coach at these times. During games, and immediately before and after the game, please refrain from entering the team area. Please observe the "24-hour rule" by waiting to talk to a coach for at least 24 hours after a game.

Lastly, parents are expected to be good fans at the games. The Athletic Committee encourages parents to cheer the teams and their opponents enthusiastically and in a spirit of positive and Christian sportsmanship.

Code of Conduct

(Coaches, parents, fans)

I will remember that young people play sports for enjoyment. As such, the goal is to provide our youth with the opportunity for fun and healthy competition in the spirit of sportsmanship.

I will not have unrealistic expectations and will understand that doing one's best is more important than winning. As a result, I will project a mature, positive, and supportive attitude for the players while showing respect for everyone.

Since young people learn by example, I will always exhibit good sportsmanship and character while being a good role model for all present.

I will respect the decisions made by the game officials and will encourage all others to do the same.

Attendance at a game/event is a privilege, not a right. As such, I am expected to represent my child, family, team, school, parish, and self with honor and class.

I will not use inappropriate, threatening, or derogatory language, either out loud, or directed at the players, coaches, officials, or other spectators before, during, or after a game.

If my conduct during a game/event does not contribute to a positive environment, I may be asked to leave the game/event and I may be barred or banned from attending future games/events. There is no appeal for suspension.

COACHES

Parents may be asked to assist in coaching an athletic team that is sponsored by the Parishes. The Athletic Committee hopes parents will be willing to help if asked to do so. Expert knowledge of the sport is not always required. There may be opportunities to help another, more-experienced individual who has volunteered to coach. Every team needs more than one coach. At the same time, do not coach unless asked to do so, especially from the sidelines during games.

Coaches are expected to abide by the rules set down in this Athletic Handbook. Coaches are required to support the seasonal sport concept of the Parishes. Coaches should not encourage athletes to play any one sport year-round.

For Parish sponsored athletics, winning is not the top priority. A coach will not be denied the opportunity to coach again because he/she did not win enough games in the previous season. Coaches are viewed as teachers of the sport involved and should strive to set a good example for their players in their language, their sportsmanship, and their respect for the philosophy of the athletic program.

The Athletic Committee's goal is to have dedicated coaches. We do this primarily to help bring more knowledge to the sports and to refine the skills of the players.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in the athletic program sponsored by the Parishes, the child must either (1) be a member of one of the Parishes and a registered student at SPSL School; or (2) be a Catholic attending religious education classes at one of the Parishes.

Any student who is underachieving in academics, or who is failing to comply with the disciplinary standards at school, will receive appropriate consequences from the teachers and/or school administration.

If a student is suspended from school or religious education classes, the school administration will inform the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will coordinate with the student's coach to ensure the student is automatically suspended from all Parish sponsored athletic activity during the days the student is suspended from school. The student must serve an automatic one game suspension. If there is a game during the day(s) the student is suspended from school, the automatic one game suspension will be served during that time. If there is not a game during the day(s) the student is suspended from school, the automatic one game suspension will be served during the first game that occurs after the student's suspension is completed.

If a student is expelled from school or religious education classes, the student is no longer eligible to participate in Parish sponsored athletics.

As a part of the moral growth of students, parents and coaches must respect and support the disciplinary action taken by the school.

Parents have the ultimate voice in whether their child participates in athletics. If a parent is unsatisfied with his/her child's academic progress or his/her behavior to the extent that the student's participation should be withheld, the parent should advise the coach, and the coach shall honor the parent's wishes. In this instance, the child may resume participation only when the parent advises the coach that it is acceptable for the child to do so.

Questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the Athletic Director.

Please remember that participation is a privilege, not a right. If a child participates in the Parish sponsored athletic program, the child and Parent(s) make a commitment to the program. As a result, the following policy outlines the commitment of a student-athlete participating in the Parish sponsored athletic program:

Student-Athlete Commitment Policy

The Athletic Committee is committed to providing the student athlete with a comprehensive athletic experience in each sport. It is very important for each student athlete participating

on any of the Parish sponsored athletic teams to recognize the commitment level of the Athletic Committee as well as their coaches and be committed to practices and games.

For the highest level team of seventh and eighth grade girl's volleyball, girl's basketball, boy's basketball, (the "A" teams) there will be the highest level of commitment from the Athletic Committee and the coaches. This will also require the highest level of commitment from each student athlete participating on these teams.

The Athletic Committee expects each student athlete on the highest level team to make that team their top extracurricular commitment during the season while that team is participating. This policy is intended to promote fair and consistent guidelines regarding participation on the top level team. The Athletic Committee, in conjunction with the coaches, reserve the right to make judgments concerning individual cases for the good of the program and the particular athlete.

Coaches will set practice times within the guidelines of the program. Ordinarily no player can miss any practice, game, match or meet without obtaining permission in advance from the coach. Excessive absences may result in dismissal from the team, with no refund of fees.

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball is a fall sport for girls in Grades 3-8 competing in the PAL ("Parochial Athletic League"). Games are played in the gyms of the various participating parishes including the SPSL gym. Games will be played weeknights and weekends. Teams will be divided into AAA, AA, A and B.

The Athletic Director is responsible for placing student athletes on teams. No student athlete will be "cut" from a Parish sponsored volleyball team because of a lack of ability. An effort will be made to have as many teams as needed. If the number of players involved dictates, additional teams may be formed within a grade or by combining two grades.

BASKETBALL

Basketball is the winter sport for both girls and boys in Grades 3-8. All teams play in the Parochial Athletic League ("PAL") and at times, other leagues. The Athletic Director is responsible for placing student athletes on teams.

There will be two (2) teams for both boys and girls at the 7- 8 grade level. Depending on the number of players that try out, "cuts" might have to be made. Seventh & eighth grade teams will be assigned to participate in a division (AAA, AA, A or B) by PAL league rules. Placement on a team will be based on skill levels, attitude and work ethic.

5-6 grade student athletes will be placed on the team where that athlete will have the best opportunity to be successful. The number of teams as well as the number of players on each 5-6 grade team will be determined after an organized assessment session. No cuts will be made in 5-6 grade.

3-4 grade teams will be divided evenly if there are enough players for multiple teams. No cuts will be made in 3-4 grade.

Each team will be given as much practice time as available per week with priority in scheduling coming from eighth grade down.

TRACK

Track is a spring sport for boys and girls in 6-8 grades. It is a very short season of about a month. Track starts in mid-March and ends in mid-April. No one is “cut” from our track teams because of a lack of ability.

Cross Country

Cross Country is a fall sport for boys and girls in 6-8 grades. It is a very short season of about a month. Cross Country starts in mid-August and ends in mid-October. No one is “cut” from our track teams because of a lack of ability.

LIABILITY

The Parishes have and assume no liability for any injury to players or spectators. Insurance is the responsibility of the parents.

THEFT / VANDALISM

All players are cautioned to take care of their personal property. Neither the coach nor the Parishes are responsible for property left unattended at games and/or practices.

COMPLAINTS

Any complaint about a coach or Parish sponsored athletic program should be addressed in the following manner:

1. Player speaks to the coach first to attempt to resolve the problem.
2. Parents speak to the coach to attempt to resolve the problem.
3. Parent speak to the appropriate Sport Commissioner to attempt to resolve the problem.
4. If the problem is not still unresolved, the individual should talk to the Athletic Director.
5. If that fails, a presentation can be made to a Pastor(s).

All communications regarding complaints should be made at a scheduled time, not immediately before or after a practice or game, unless previously scheduled at that time.

GYM USAGE

The St Pius X / St Leo School gym shall be primarily used by athletic teams sponsored by the Parishes. The SPSL gym may be utilized by teams consisting of current St Pius X / St Leo Students and/or those enrolled in a Parish Religious Education program. Athletic teams which are wholly comprised of St Pius X / St Leo School Alumni may also be allowed to utilize the SPSL gym if all of the following conditions are satisfied: (1) all SPSL alumni gym usage shall be coordinated through the Athletic Director and the SPSL School Principal; (2) all SPSL Alumni participants sign a liability waiver before the SPSL gym is utilized; and (3) no more than two (2) SPSL Alumni teams are using the SPSL gym during any sports season.

SUMMARY

