

# ST. MARGARET MARY'S PARISH ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

## ADMINISTRATION

The Athletic Committee reports to the Total Board of Christian Education and administers the athletic programs for St. Margaret Mary parish.

## DUTIES

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

President: The President shall be responsible for the overall operation and functioning of the Committee. The President 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.

Vice President: the Vice-president shall preside at meetings in the absence of the President, and is responsible for special assignments given by the President.

Secretary: the Secretary shall record the minutes of Committee meetings, notify members of all meetings and meeting agendas, and be responsible for the safekeeping of all official Committee records.

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

### Athletic Director

The Athletic Director (AD) shall direct all athletics (Intramural and interscholastic) and the Chairpersons in charge thereof. The AD shall be in charge of all aspects of the program. Responsibilities include: the athletic budget, athletic policy, and parity within programs, field & facility scheduling, coaches (recruitment, selection and management), players, equipment and team placement. In addition, the AD is to maintain clear communication between the sports chairpersons, coaches, participants, parents, school, and religious education students. The AD acts only with the consent of the Committee.

### Assistant Athletic Director

The Assistant Athletic Director performs duties as directed by and in the absence of the Athletic Director. The assistant AD is also responsible for the recruitment, selection and management of coaches.

### Sports Chairperson

Each sport sponsored by the Committee shall be the responsibility of one or two Chairs, who shall have the primary responsibility for that sport's program. Each sport Chairperson 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 programs of SMM. The sports chairs will cooperate with the Athletic Director in administering and managing his/her sport, including helping with recruiting coaches as necessary. The sports chair will address issues not able to be handled at the coach level. In addition, the sports chair is responsible for organizing a meeting (prior to the start of the season) with all the coaches involved in his/her sport. The purpose is to review the Athletic Handbook, coach's plans for the season and encourage better communication between everyone involved.

### Coaches

Coaches are volunteers who are in charge of their respective team. They share a responsibility with the SMM Parish Athletic program and parents to teach their sport, promote good sportsmanship, encourage positive attitudes and build strong values. Coaches should lead by example. Coaches are expected to hold a parent/player meeting prior to the start of the season. Doing so will allow the coach to communicate his/her expectations to both the parents and players, learn more about the athletes on the team and answer any questions. The main purpose is to boost communication between all parties involved. If a meeting is not feasible, the coach is expected to send an information letter to all participants prior to the start of the season. More information on coaching is available in the athletic section at [www.smmomaha.org](http://www.smmomaha.org)

Board of Education Representative

The representative will be the liaison between the SMM School Board and the Athletic Committee.

**PURPOSE and MISSION**

The purpose of the athletic program at St. Margaret Mary's is to supplement the spiritual and academic curriculum.

The mission of the SMM athletic program is to enhance the physical development of the child, and promote a sense of parish spirit, pride, and unity.

The program is one of the most extensive and well-balanced parish programs in the city for both boys and girls. A variety of sports are offered and participation is encouraged.

Below are the different sports that are offered during the year:

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

**FALL**

Grade K            Micro Soccer  
Grades 1-8        Soccer  
Grades 7-8        Football

Grade K            Micro Soccer  
Grades 1-8        Soccer  
Grades 5-8        Volleyball

**WINTER**

Grades 3-4        Intramural Basketball  
Grades 5-8        Basketball

Grades 3-4        Intramural Basketball  
Grades 5-8        Basketball

**SPRING**

Grade K            Micro Soccer  
Grades 1-8        Soccer  
Grades 7-8        Track

Grade K            Micro Soccer  
Grades 1-8        Soccer  
Grades 7-8        Track

The seasons are broken into a variety of sports because it is strongly believed that specialization or concentration on any one sport at grade school age is detrimental and inhibiting to the children.

**COMPETITIVENESS**

For children in Grades K -- 4, the sports are almost totally instructive in nature, and the score and outcome of the game should be of small consideration. At this level, if the player has finished the season with an improved knowledge of the sport and has enjoyed playing the season, it was a successful season, regardless of the win-loss record of the team. Overall, coaches focus more on helping players improve their skills in the sport, and do their best to teach good sportsmanship.

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

In Grades Seven and Eight (junior high) the athlete shows a greater enjoyment in the competition of the game. Teaching the skills of the various sports, and certainly, good sportsmanship continues to be

important. At the Junior High level, it is our philosophy to be competitive. "Competitive" means the team strives to win the game. There will be situations when athletes will be back-up players while others start. Each team member is expected to accept the role the coach outlines for him/her, even if that role means less playing time than others on the team. Team members are expected to support coaching decisions and exercise good sportsmanship.

We want our 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 that the purpose of the athletic program is only one part of the total parish experience. We want our sports program to be one of the many positive aspects of SMM parish life. Cooperation and communication between coaches and parents is vital.

## **ATHLETIC RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **RULE 1**

No one is "cut" from teams because of a lack of ability. Everyone makes a team and has the chance to play any sport in which he or she wishes to participate. Should too many players sign up on the designated date for a given sport, these athletes will be accommodated as best we can by adding additional teams.

**Intramural** -- Every attempt will be made to balance all the teams within an age group. It would be perfect if all games were decided in the last seconds by a point.

**Interscholastic**--Teams will be divided according to the league rules. League rules will vary from league to league and sport to sport.

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. There are two times when players will be asked to move up and play with a higher grade:

- 1) When there are insufficient players in the higher grade to fill out the roster
- 2) There are too many players in the lower grade and moving a player or players up would benefit both teams. No player will be moved up without permission of his or her parents. If no player wants to move up, the teams will be combined and play in the higher division.

### **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. Once the first game is played, practices are limited to four times a week for junior high and three times weekly for all other grades.

Practice times are determined by:

- (A) Availability of the coaching staff
- (B) Number of teams participating
- (C) Facility or field availability

Practices are limited to two hours per time. Shorter practices are recommended for lower grades. The general guideline is that we would like to have the last practice end by 9:30 p.m. According to Archdiocesan policy, no practice, league game or intramural event will begin before 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. On Wednesday any practice or game must conclude by 6:30 PM to accommodate religious education and parish youth programs.

### **RULE 3**

Basketball and volleyball teams may play in a variety of different pre, post, and holiday tournaments. Listed below is the number of tournaments recommended. There may be opportunities for additional tournament play. It will be up to the coach and players whether or not they wish to play beyond the recommended number of tournaments for their grade. Additional fees may be incurred by those who participate.

8th Grade - 5 Tournaments, plus League Tournament  
7th Grade - 3 Tournaments, plus League Tournament  
6th Grade - 2 Tournaments, plus League Tournament  
5th Grade - 1 Tournament, plus League Tournament

### **LEAGUE AFFILIATIONS**

St. Margaret Mary's will only participate in leagues that provide its members an opportunity to compete on the fields and in the school gymnasiums in an atmosphere of Christian sportsmanship, competition and fellowship. SMM participates in the PAL League in football, volleyball, basketball, and track. The soccer league is the CYSL. SMM also participates in the CYO for basketball.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents are big part of the athletic program at St. Margaret Mary's. From parents come the staff and support needed for a successful program. Parents of participating children are often asked to assist in various ways: gate/ticket sales, scoring, and concessions. A schedule is mailed to parents regarding these assignments. Please fulfill your commitment or trade with another parent.

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

#### **Safety:**

The Athletic Committee requests that parents inform the player's coach of any known medical condition that they should be aware of before the sports activity begins. Coaches are not medical personnel. They rely on parents to provide accurate information on a player. Parents are responsible for making sure that their child, who needs any type of medical apparatus (inhaler, etc...), has it with him/her at all practices and games.

#### **Uniforms:**

You can be of great help in the care of the uniforms. These uniforms are provided for your child to wear in game only, not in practices or for normal non-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 you must pay replacement cost of all uniforms not returned or if they are damaged.

#### **Sideline coaching:**

It is important to remember that your child's coach is in charge of the team during the practices and games. Please, do not interfere with the coach at these times. During games, please refrain from entering the team area. The coach has enough on his/her mind during the games, and cannot be expected to answer parents' questions or to take suggestions at this time.

#### **Sportsmanship:**

Lastly, it is hoped that parents will be good fans at the games. We would like to encourage parents to cheer the SMM teams and their opponents enthusiastically and in a spirit of positive and Christian sportsmanship. Let your child and his/her teammates and coaches know you are 100% behind them.

### **COACHES**

\*\*\*All coaches and assistant coaches are required to participate in the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training Program. This includes any re-certification as well. This is to be completed before any contact with the players. Contact the Parish office for more information (402-558-2255).\*\*\*

The sports chair for any sport is the coach's main contact. All issues not resolved at the coach level must be brought to the attention of the sports chair. The majority of our coaches are parents. We hope you will be willing to help if you are asked to do so. Expert knowledge of the particular sport is not always required.

Perhaps you could help another, more-experienced parent who has volunteered to coach. Every team needs more than one coach.

Coaches are expected to abide by the rules set down in this handbook. Coaches are required to support the seasonal sport concept of the parish and not to encourage the playing of any one sport year round. At St. Margaret Mary's, winning is not the top priority. No coach was ever denied the opportunity to coach again because he 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 program. For more information on the role of the coach, visit the athletics web page at [smmomaha.org](http://smmomaha.org).

St. Margaret Mary's goal is to have dedicated coaches at the junior high level (7th & 8th Grades). We do this primarily to help bring more knowledge to the sports and to refine the skills of the player. Junior high coaches must make tough decisions when it comes to deciding who plays and for how long. There are various factors that are considered in regard to playing time and coaches should be able to explain to players and parents the player's role on the team and the amount of playing time he/she might expect. The Athletic Committee expects coaches to be as fair as possible, but in the end, the coach's decision must be respected.

In addition, the Athletic Committee expects coaches to communicate to players and parents his/her expectations of the players, coaching philosophy, team rules, etc. at not only the beginning of the season, but throughout as well. The coach is expected to keep contact with the Sports Chair throughout the season.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Any child having difficulty with achieving at the acceptable level in academics, or complying with the disciplinary standards of the day school, will receive appropriate action from the school principal. As a part of the moral growth of the student, parents and coaches are to respect and support the disciplinary action taken by the school authorities.

Suspension from day school or religious education classes, or dismissal from the same, is an automatic suspension from any SMM athletic activity during the time the student is not allowed to attend school. A student who has an academic grade point average of 1.6 or is failing with an F in any subject is declared ineligible for any parish athletic program. This includes practices and games. Progress reports are issued four to five weeks into every quarter. At that time, if ineligibility is determined, a student needs to improve his/her grade(s) to an acceptable level and demonstrate the ability to keep schoolwork current and grades acceptable. The principal will determine when the student has reached eligibility status again.

To participate in the athletic program at SMM, the child must be a member of the parish attending either day school or a Catholic attending religious education classes. There are and have been exceptions to this policy. Football has had exceptions to these rules. These exceptions are based on CYO rules concerning neighboring parishes that do not field teams in a particular sport. SMM has modified its rules as follows: Children in other parishes may participate in our programs if their parish does not offer the program provided we are not at a predetermined number of parish players after the last day of registration.

- (A) Football: If we have less than 38.
- (B) A qualified player is qualified until the end of his/her eighth grade year.
- (C) Coaches will not actively recruit players to the program.

If you have any additional questions concerning eligibility, please contact the Athletic Director. Please remember that participation is a privilege, not a right. If your son or daughter participates in a sport, both of you make a commitment to the program.

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

It is the Athletic Committee's recommendation that no SMM athlete be registered in more than one SMM Interscholastic sport per season. The exception is track.

It is our feeling that it is impossible for a player to participate on a SMM team and a select team or another preferred activity at the same time and do either justice. We encourage athletes to make a decision and then give whichever team or activity his/her best effort.

### **VOLLEYBALL**

Volleyball is a fall sport for girls in Grades Five, Six, Seven and Eight. SMM plays in the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). Games are played in the gyms of the various participating parishes including ours. Games will be played weeknights and weekends.

### **FOOTBALL**

Football is a fall sport for boys in Grades Seven and Eight. The league is called the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). SMM will carry as many SMM parish players who wish to participate as long as they fall under the above eligibility guidelines for grade level. SMM can, at the discretion of the coach, fill their roster up to 50 players.

Football is a contact sport and, as such, requires protective pads and equipment. Physical conditioning before the start of the season is stressed more in football than in other sports. Practice starts approximately three weeks before the season opens. Even during the regular season, 20 minutes of each practice will be devoted to exercise.

Due to the rigid technical rules of football, each play requires every player on the team to perform to his best ability. This enhances a strong sense of personal discipline and an even greater sense of the inter-reliability of the players on the team. The players learn this, and as a result, an extremely close feeling of teamwork and team pride marks the successful football team. It is these qualities of teamwork, team pride, and physical conditioning that the football program at SMM endeavors to achieve.

### **SOCCER**

Soccer is both a fall and a spring sport for both boys and girls from first through eighth grades. The league is the CYSL (Catholic Youth Soccer League). Games are played at SMM and at a variety of fields around town. Because of league requirements and the large numbers of players, soccer sign-ups are very early. It is important that you sign up at this time if you wish to play. Late sign-ups will be put on a team only if there is room. Soccer is an excellent conditioning sport that involves speed, control, coordination and teamwork.

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten micro-soccer are run as an intramural instructional program. It is simply a great introduction to the sport. Games are usually played on Sunday afternoons at SMM.

Signup dates are mandated by the State of Nebraska and these deadlines are not flexible. It is critical that students sign up for soccer by the deadline dates, as noted in the Parish bulletin.

### **BASKETBALL**

Basketball is the winter sport for both girls and boys in Grades Five, Six, Seven and Eight. All of our teams play in the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). The season is our longest. It runs from November through mid-March. SMM will attempt to have as many teams as we have players. Because of the increasing interest in basketball -- and the number of players involved -- additional teams may be formed within a grade or by combining two grades.

League rules require a minimum of eight players per team. We would like to see at least 10 players on a team. Each team will be given as much practice time as available per week with priority in scheduling coming from eighth grade down.

Fifth & Sixth Grade Teams - These are non-competitive teams and we will divide these teams equally. Players will receive equal (as much possible) playing time -- if they attended practices, meetings, etc.

Seventh & Eighth Grade Teams - Teams will be divided into AAA, AA, A and B by league rules.

Placement on a team will be based on skill levels, attitude and work ethic. When possible, the selection

committee is made by non-parents with knowledge of the sport. At no time is a parent allowed input on team selection.

### **TRACK**

Track is a spring sport for both boys and girls in grades Seven and Eight. The team is co-ed and practice begins mid-March, three days a week. There are four to five track meets in the season, with the season concluding the first week of May. Track is the only dual sport at SMM--athletes are allowed to run track and still play either soccer or baseball.

NOTE: Efforts should be made to avoid both practice, game and meet conflicts between track, baseball and soccer so that our players can participate in these sports.

### **LIABILITY**

The parish has and assumes no liability for any injury to players. Insurance is the responsibility of the parents.

### **THEFT / VANDALISM**

All players are cautioned to take care of their personal property at practices and games. Neither the coach nor the parish is responsible for a player's personal property, under any circumstances.

### **TEAM PARTY**

Teams are encouraged to host a post-season party in order to facilitate the return of uniforms and to recognize athletes for achievements/give awards. Plans for these celebrations are made through individual teams or sport and not the Athletic Committee.

### **ISSUES/COMPLAINTS**

Any parent having a complaint about a coach or the program is expected to follow these steps:

1. If you have an issue with your child's participation in a SMM sports program - PLEASE speak or write to your Child's team's Coach first in an effort to communicate your concerns and resolve any issue(s) as soon as possible.
2. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and/or rectified at the Coach level – PLEASE then speak or write to the Sports Chairperson for the respective sport, in a similar effort to communicate your concerns and resolve the issue(s).
3. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and/or rectified at the Sports Chair level – PLEASE then speak or write to the Athletic Director in an additional similar effort to communicate your concerns and resolve the issue(s).
4. If the issues(s) cannot be resolved at the Athletic Director level – PLEASE then contact the President of the Athletic Committee and ask to present your issue(s) to the Committee at its scheduled monthly meeting.
5. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved at the Athletic Committee level – PLEASE then contact the Total Board of Christian Education to request a presentation to this entity at its next scheduled meeting. This presentation can be organized through the Total Board Representative who acts as the liaison between the Total Board and the Athletic Committee. Contact information can be found at the front of the Parent/Student Handbook.

\*\*\*When the above process is followed, every attempt will be made to achieve a solution in accordance with the philosophies and guidelines notes in the handbook.\*\*\*

### **SUMMARY**

The information presented in this handbook is a picture of the athletic program of St. Margaret Mary Parish. It is an attempt to illustrate, for the information of the parents of our children, just what sports are offered and the importance of athletics to the total educational experience of the children. We have tried to explain the philosophical approach the parish takes toward sports; how these sports are financed, and what the functions are of the Athletic Director, the Athletic Committee, the Sports chairmen and the coaches. Should you have a specific question on a topic not covered in the hand book, please contact the Athletic Director. A concerted attempt will be made to provide a complete answer for you.

In short, SMM athletics is a comprehensive and organized program designed to enhance the physical development of the child, and promote a sense of parish spirit, pride, and unity. We feel the program is unequalled, and sincerely hope our children take advantage of it. The success of the program depends on each of us to make it work!

### **VINCENT MAINELLI AWARD**

The Vincent Mainelli Award is the highest award that can be given by St. Margaret Mary's Athletic Committee. It does not honor basketball, volleyball or football skills. It honors the intangibles -- the things that every coach looks for in an athlete -- the qualities that make a person stand out from the crowd.

The Mainelli award is given annually to the eighth grade boy and girl who have shown the highest levels of spirit, dedication, leadership and sportsmanship throughout the year.

All eighth grade coaches have input. The Athletic Director with the approval of both the school and athletic committee makes the final decision.

### **THE ST. MARGARET MARY STUDENT ATHLETE SPARTAN SCHOLARSHIP**

The SMM Student Athlete Scholarship is a two-year \$1,500 grant (\$750 per year for two years). The criteria include that the candidate, an eighth grade student in St. Margaret Mary's parish, be working to his or her potential, both academically and athletically. The student shall have participated in the SMM sports program within the last two years. In addition, the financial need of the candidate(s) will be a strong consideration. The money is to be used to further a Catholic education. Candidates for this scholarship will be decided upon by committee. If the committee decides that there are two equally deserving candidates, the money will be divided equally. Any child wishing to apply for this scholarship must do so in writing before May 1st. Scholarship winners will be announced during the annual awards presentation for the eighth grade.

### **PARENTS' CODE OF ETHICS**

I Hereby Pledge To Provide Positive Support, Care and Encouragement for My Child Participating in Youth Sports By Following This Code Of Ethics:

- É I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports events.
  
- É I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
  
- É I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
  
- É I will provide support for coaches and officials working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
  
- É I will demand a drug, alcohol and tobacco-free sports environment for my child and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all youth sports events.
  
- É I will remember that the game is for children and not for adults.
  
- É I will do my best to make youth sports fun for my child.
  
- É I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
  
- É I will promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience within my personal constraint by assisting with coaching, being a respectful fan, providing transportation or whatever I am capable of doing.