

**DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD**  
**Elementary School Athletic Programs**  
**Philosophy, Goals, Rules and Regulations**

**ARTICLE I – BELIEFS**

The athletic programs of the Elementary Schools of the Diocese of Rockford are founded on these beliefs:

- the existence of God
- the dignity and worth of the human person
- the collegiality of people
- the right of God's people to mature in society and in the Church
- the responsibility of parents in transmitting these beliefs to their children

**ARTICLE II – PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE**

The athletic programs of the elementary schools of the Diocese of Rockford exist to promote the spiritual, moral, social and physical development of students guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Such programs shall serve the following purposes:

- develop a healthy response to God and society
- show the goodness of God alive in our world
- deepen self-knowledge
- promote growth in social skills and moral development
- promote physical development and increase potential for improvement in sports
- experience God-given talents with fellow athletes
- develop within each student a philosophy of teamwork and fair play
- develop common goals
- create a spirit of camaraderie
- recognize personal responsibility based on truth and justice
- afford athletes the opportunity to participate and earn the respect and companionship of their peers
- discover and improve individual skills in each person
- promote self-confidence and poise as team members
- promote excellence through participation and learning while competing with other teams
- teach good fundamentals, team spirit and sportsmanship
- promote understanding and knowledge in healthy living and sound physical development
- improve the ability to respond to the needs of others

### **ARTICLE III – ADMINISTRATION**

In accord with Rockford Diocesan Policy 6200 “All elementary and high school athletic programs associated with Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockford shall be under the jurisdiction of the local school principal. The athletic director will be accountable to the principal.” The Superintendents Council of the Diocese shall serve as the Board of Directors for diocesan elementary school athletics. This Council shall make decisions on matters that are not resolved by the local school principal and/or the local conference of Catholic schools. All local policies must comply with and compliment diocesan policies. All deanery and/or local league policies must be submitted to the Catholic Education Office annually for review.

### **ARTICLE IV – ATHLETIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Section 1.** A candidate for an athletic team may not practice or play in a game until s/he has filed with the school a certificate of physical fitness issued by a licensed medical doctor for the current school year and a proof of insurance waiver signed by the parent/guardian. As of July 1, 2011 all student-athletes in the State of Illinois must comply with mandated school policies regarding concussions and head injuries. This applies to students in both elementary and high schools. Principals, coaches and athletic directors should refer to Diocesan Policy 5175 for details of this mandatory policy. Also, see attached Concussion Information and Parent Release Form that must be distributed to every parent.

Any student athlete who misses a contest due to an injury or a health issue must provide the principal, coach and athletic director a doctor's note clearing them to resume playing.

**Section 2.** Lower grade (through 6<sup>th</sup>) programs shall have as their primary emphasis instruction and participation. Upper grade (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) shall emphasize instruction, participation, and competition. At the lower grades (through 6<sup>th</sup>) in order to emphasize instruction and participation, playing time in a given contest is to be equitable among all athletes on a team.

**Section 3.** Coaches and athletic directors must cooperate in teaching methods, styles of play, etc. so as to provide the best opportunity for athletes to develop proficiency and character

**Section 4.** It shall be the responsibility of the host school to lead those assembled in a public prayer and the recitation of the pledge of allegiance or playing/singing of the national anthem.

**Section 5.** It is mandatory that all team members who are listed in the official scorebook for each contest be given playing time. Playing time at the lower grades (through 6<sup>th</sup>) is defined in Section 2 of this article above. In the upper grades (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) every member listed in the book must enter and play in the game/match/contest before it ends. Likewise, it is mandatory that all team members who are listed in the official scorebook sit out a portion of each contest. Exception: When the number of team members is equal to the number of athletes necessary to field a team. The head coach of each team is responsible for implementing this rule.

**Section 6.** Host schools are responsible for having a designated person in charge of the game facility at all times. Such person will notify visiting coaches of his/her role. The individual in charge of paying game officials must pay them by check only. Cash payments of officials are NOT allowed.

**Section 7.** Each school shall establish, implement and communicate scholastic eligibility requirements for its students. Such scholastic eligibility requirements are to be included in the school's handbook which is distributed to families each school year.

**Section 8.** Each school shall establish, implement and communicate conduct eligibility requirements for its students. Such conduct eligibility requirements are to be included in the school's handbook which is distributed to families each school year.

**Section 9.** Religious activities take precedence over all athletic activities.

**Section 10.** Any Invitational Tournament sponsored by a Diocesan school must follow Diocesan rules and regulations. (See Article VII, Section 4.) Diocesan schools that participate in contests/tournaments with non-Diocesan schools or sponsored by non-Diocesan schools must compete in such contests following these Diocesan rules and regulations.

**Section 11.** A properly equipped first aid kit must be available to coaches at all practices and contests. Every school gymnasium must have a properly functioning A.E.D. (Automatic External Defibrillator) unit in or near the gym. All adults who oversee athletics (i.e. coaches, athletic directors, principals etc...) must be adequately trained to utilize the A.E.D. in an emergency.

**Section 12.** Club teams, AAU teams, etc. (those operating independently from school/parish teams) must not be sanctioned by the elementary schools. In addition, to minimize confusion, such teams are not to be allowed to practice or play games in Diocesan elementary school facilities. Also, as a reflection of the philosophy and purpose of the Rockford Diocesan Elementary Athletic Policy, the Catholic Education Office recommends

that participation on school teams take precedent over club, travel or A.A.U. teams.

**Section 13.** Consequences for violations of these Diocesan Rules and Regulations are to be developed and determined at the local level by the school principal. However, at a minimum, for violations of Article IV, Section 5; Article V – Requirements for Coaches and Athletic Directors; and Article VII – Sport Limitations and Specifics, the school in violation shall be required to forfeit the contest in which the violation occurred and the head coach of the school in violation shall be suspended for the following contest.

**Section 14.** “Slaughter Rule” – If a team is ahead by 25 points at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (for all regular season and tournament games) the clock will continue to run through the entire 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Neither team will run a full court press. The team with the higher score will remove as many starters as possible. Official time outs will continue.

## **ARTICLE V – REQUIREMENTS FOR COACHES AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS**

**Section 1.** Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. An assistant coach may be under 21 provided an adult is at every game and practice when the head coach is unavailable. There must be a minimum of 2 adults at every practice and game.

**Section 2.** At least one adult female must be in attendance at all girls' team practices and contests. At least one adult male must be in attendance at all boys' team practices and contests.

**Section 3.** All coaches or other adults involved in student supervision must complete all diocesan requirements – Protecting God's Children training, criminal background checks, sexual misconduct norms receipt, Social Media Pastoral Code acknowledgement receipt, bloodborne pathogens training, and any other requirements that currently or in the future may exist or be implemented.

**Section 4.** Coaches shall display good sportsmanship to instill in each student a sense of responsibility for being good examples to one another. Coaches are always to be positive in coaching and encouraging a good attitude towards officials. Sportsmanship covers not running up the score on another team. Obscene language and behavior will not be tolerated. Coaches are not to incite the fans toward opposing coaches, players or officials. Athletic Directors are instructed to caution coaches and remind them of their responsibilities and accountability in this regard.

**Section 5.** All coaches will answer directly to their Athletic Director who will in turn answer to his/her Principal. The local school principal is responsible for

implementing the requirements for coaches and for determining and applying appropriate consequences for any violations that may occur.

**Section 6.** Diocesan rules governing sportsmanship and coaches shall apply in all cases.

## **ARTICLE VI – SPECTATOR GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Section 1.** All spectators are expected to exhibit acceptable conduct at all times and may be removed by the game officials or authorized personnel of the host school.

- A) Fans are expected to be courteous and respectful of the host school facility and those in authority
- B) Obscene language and behavior will not be tolerated
- C) Kicking and stomping on bleachers is unacceptable
- D) Local host rules regarding food and drink in gyms must be observed

**Section 2.** All student spectators must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

**Section 3.** Diocesan rules governing sportsmanship and spectators shall apply in all cases.

## ARTICLE VII—SPORT LIMITATIONS AND SPECIFICS

The Diocese enacts the following sport limitations and specifics:

- Section 1.** If a school has many students at a particular grade level, there are to be multiple teams at that level so as to encourage greater participation. There is to be no cutting of players in the athletic program.
- Section 2.** Any contests and practices scheduled on Sundays shall begin at 1:00 P.M. or later.
- Section 3.** Playing/Practice Time for Diocesan Schools: Each school team shall have a maximum of four days of practices/contests in a given week – Sunday through Saturday. Practice times shall be limited to no more than 90 minutes per session. This applies to Cheerleading/Pompon/Dance Squads.
- Section 4.** Diocesan athletic rules provide guidelines as to limitations on the number of contests (every interscholastic competition/scrimmage shall be considered a contest):

### Football

The total number of regular season contests may not exceed nine

### Soccer

The total number of regular season matches may not exceed seventeen

### Volleyball (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Levels)

The total number of regular season contests may not exceed:

- a) Twenty-one matches and no tournaments; or
- b) Nineteen matches plus one tournament; or
- c) Eighteen matches plus two tournaments; or
- d) Sixteen matches plus three tournaments; or
- e) Fifteen matches plus four tournaments

No volleyball team shall play in more than five different matches during any given tournament.

### Volleyball (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Levels)

The total number of regular season contest may not exceed:

- a) Eighteen matches and no tournaments; or
- b) Sixteen matches plus one tournament; or
- c) Fourteen matches plus two tournaments.

No volleyball team shall play in more than five different matches during any given tournament.

Basketball (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Levels)

- a) Twenty-one games and no tournaments; or
- b) Nineteen games plus one tournament; or
- c) Eighteen games plus two tournaments; or
- d) Sixteen games plus three tournaments.

No team shall play in more than five different games during any given tournament.

Basketball (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Levels)

The total number of regular season contest may not exceed:

- a) Eighteen games and no tournaments; or
- b) Sixteen games plus one tournament; or
- c) Fourteen games plus two tournaments.

No basketball team shall play in more than five different games during any given tournament.

Cheerleading / Pompons / Dance Teams

Regular season contests plus two competitions per squad per year.

Track & Field and Cross Country

Established school teams should engage in at least three interscholastic contests, however, for the purpose of these rules and regulations, no diocesan school team shall compete in more than eight interscholastic meets/contests.

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