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A. Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to St. Dominic's Athletic Association. We believe it is our responsibility to keep you accurately informed of the Association's policies and procedures. This booklet is a summary of the principles for which we stand, the benefits to which you are entitled, and the obligations you assume as a member.

B. Mission Statement and Philosophy

The St. Dominic Athletic Program offers us an opportunity for building our Christian community through participation in athletics.

It is a parish and school based program that is available to St. Dominic grade school and parish LLF students. Sports included in the program are Volleyball, Basketball, Track and Baseball. Volleyball, Basketball and Track are open to students in grades 5-8 while Baseball is open to students in K4-Grade 3. This program will provide an environment where players are given equal opportunity to participate and develop their skills.

The program is designed to promote parish, school, and team spirit with support and enthusiasm from the clergy, school staff, parents, coaches, and student athletes. Our goal is to offer participating student athletes a positive learning experience for Christian development by:

- Promoting the idea that athletic competition should be fun.
- Teaching the fundamental skills and strategies of the sport.
- Encouraging sportsmanship, self-discipline, and perseverance.
- Helping each player develop a healthy desire to compete.
- Learning to deal with the emotions of winning and losing.
- Learning teamwork and how to contribute to a team's success both as a leader and as a follower.
- Fostering personal growth, physical fitness, and a positive self-image

It is especially important in youth sports to remember that while winning is important, it is not the main goal of our program. We do not support the "win at all costs" philosophy. The Athletic Program at St. Dominic will adhere to the policies outlined in the following documents:

- Archdiocese of Milwaukee Policies and Regulations for Athletics
- St. Dominic Athletic Association By-laws and Handbook.
- League rules for volleyball, basketball, and track.

These publications can be reviewed on the St. Dominic School or Archdiocese websites.

For your Athletic Association to provide the best programs available for your children, it is very important that you get involved. Many people think the only way to help, is to coach. This is not the case. In fact, there are many types of jobs available. Please consider volunteering for a position with the Athletic Association or one of the many other jobs that support our program.

C. Pastoral Staff Responsibility

The Pastor of the parish has overall responsibility for all St. Dominic athletic programs. The Pastor has established the Athletic Association and delegated to it the responsibility for directing St. Dominic's athletic programs. The Pastor monitors the Athletic Association's activities, approves its policies and has the final decision on any disagreements that may arise.

The pastoral staff recognizes that athletics can be a valuable element of the total educational process. This process concerns the total person's growth as an individual – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially. Participation in sports provides an opportunity to utilize and further develop the skills being taught in the classroom.

D. Athletic Association Board Responsibility

The Athletic Association operates under the direction of the Pastor. The Pastor retains overall authority for the St. Dominic athletic programs. The Athletic Association is governed by bylaws, the Board is elected by the association membership and monthly meetings are open to all Association and Parish members. Principle responsibilities of the Board include:

- Directing all Athletic Association programs.
- Financing Athletic Association programs through fees, admissions, concessions and fund raising.
- Recruiting and selecting coaches, coordinators and volunteers.
- Insuring compliance to Archdiocese and St. Dominic Policies.
- Keeping the pastor, school staff and Association members informed of its activities and maintaining open communication channels.
- Responding to questions and concerns.
- Ensuring athlete's registration paperwork is complete before the start of each sports season.

E. Student Athlete Responsibilities

Participation in team athletics is a privilege and involves commitment. Athletes agree to conduct themselves as follows:

1. Athletes are expected to attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach. Some examples of excused absences could be special family events, school activities or other conflicts that in the opinion of the coach are a valid reason for missing a practice or a game.

2. Athletes who are absent from school due to an illness on a practice or game day may not participate in either event on that day.

3. If the athlete cannot attend a practice or game, he or she must give the coach as much advance notice as possible in order to reduce the impact of their absence on their team. If we are to have smaller teams and more playing time for each child, it will be necessary for every athlete and parent to consider their participation in this program a priority over other recreational activities during the season. **Failure to attend practices on a regular basis may result in diminished playing time.**

4. Athletes are expected to comply with all St. Dominic grade school and LLF policies. If a student athlete does not meet the minimum requirements of their program as determined by the appropriate grade school or LLF program administrators and the program administrators decide to limit the student athlete's privilege of participating in St. Dominic athletics, the program administrator will notify the student athlete and his/her parents, the program administrator will then also notify the St. Dominic Athletic Director who will notify the appropriate Sport Coordinator and Coach.

5. Athletes are expected to respect themselves by complying with the drug free, alcohol free, and smoke-free policies.

6. Athletes are expected to show good conduct at all times including during practices, sporting events and travel to and from games.

7. Athletes are expected to show respect for coaches, referees, opposing players, teammates, and others at all times.

8. Athletes are expected to support all St. Dominic's teams and treat all visitors as guests.

9. Athletes are encouraged to develop their skills outside of regular practice.

10. Athletes are expected to show respect for parish property and the property of others.

This includes taking care of the uniform and equipment provided for their use and returning them in good condition.

Failure to adhere to the athlete's responsibilities will result in appropriate consequences, which could include limited playing time, limited participation, or suspension from St. Dominic's athletic programs.

F. Parent and Guardian Responsibilities

Parents of St. Dominic's athletes must be committed to the mission of the St. Dominic Parish and to the Mission and Philosophy of the Athletic Association and are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and Christian values to their children.

1. Parents are required to provide the appropriate registration materials and fees, along with a medical consent and athlete's health information form as required by the League and Association. Under no circumstances will an athlete be allowed to tryout, practice, play or receive a team uniform until all registration materials are submitted to the Sport Coordinator.

2. Parents are required to attend the coach's pre-season team meeting. The coach will provide you with team information, player and parent responsibilities, and team rules. This is a mandatory meeting and at least one parent must attend.

3. Parents are encouraged to attend and support sporting events in which their children are participating.

4. Parents are expected to provide transportation for their children to all practices and sporting events. It is your responsibility to make sure the coach is present before you leave your child at the gym. Please pick up your child promptly after practice.

5. Parents are required to work the concession or gym admission areas during the sport season their child is participating in. Every effort will be made to provide a time for you to work when your child is playing. However, from time to time it may be necessary for you to work when St. Dominic's teams are not playing at our facilities.

6. Parents are required to abide by the Athletic Association Handbook including the communication process described in the section entitled Communications.

7. Parents are expected to set a positive example of respect and good sportsmanship towards all athletes, coaches, referees, opposing players, and fans.

8. During games, parents are not to interfere with the work of the coaches or referees.

Please, no coaching or refereeing from the stands.

10. Parents are financially responsible for the replacement of lost or misused uniforms and/or equipment.

11. Parents are to comply with the drug free, alcohol free, and smoke-free policy on parish premises.

12. Parents are required to notify the team coach of any change in a player's eligibility.

Failure to adhere to the prescribed parent responsibilities will result in jeopardizing student athlete's participation or parent's attendance at sporting events.

G. Coach Responsibilities

Coaches of St. Dominic's teams must be committed to the mission of the St. Dominic Parish and the Athletic Program and are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and Christian values. St. Dominic's coaches are required to commit to the following:

1. Coaches are required to complete the Milwaukee Archdiocese Core training certification. The St. Dominic Athletic Association requires that this training be completed during the first season of coaching. Coaches that have not received training will not be allowed to coach.

2. Coaches are required to annually attend the Athletic Association sponsored or other accredited coaching clinics in their respective sport. Coaches who do not meet this requirement will not be considered in “good standing” and will jeopardize their coaching positions.

3. Coaches must prepare for each practice, set goals, and outline drills to achieve these goals. The basic skills of the sport should be taught to all players and all players should have the opportunity to work on them.

4. Coaches must respect officials, opponents, athletes, and the rules of the game.

5. Coaches are responsible for the actions and whereabouts of all athletes during the time set for practice and games. Safety is of utmost concern.

6. Coaches are responsible for all equipment checked out to the team and for the condition and security of the practice area.

7. Coaches must comply with the drug, alcohol, and smoke-free policy on parish premises.

8. To the best of their ability, coaches are expected to teach to all athletes the fundamental skills and strategies of the sport encouraging teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal growth among team members.

9. For the safety of our coaches and athletes, it is required that all practices be conducted by two responsible parties; one adult 21 or over and another responsible party 16 or older. Any one-on-one coaching must be done within view of the team or with another adult present.

10. Coaches will open and secure the gym as outlined in the Gym Usage Procedures.

11. If a coach is ejected from a game twice in one season, the Coach Selection Committee will suspend that coach from coaching duties pending review.

12. Coaches are required to adhere to all St. Dominic Athletic Association policies. These policies may set a higher standard than the Archdiocese policies. These policies including playing time and participation by athletes will be strictly enforced.

13. Coaches must make every effort to schedule practices around day school and LLF schedules.

Failure to adhere to these coaching responsibilities may result in suspension or dismissal from coaching or other appropriate consequences to be determined by the Athletic Association.

H. General Policies

Communications

Open communications are imperative to the operation of a successful program. Concerns should be addressed on a timely basis but not immediately following a negative incident to allow for a cooling off period. Most issues can be resolved through discussion between players, parents, and the coach, but given the emotions that can arise immediately following a sporting event no negative communication should occur between a parent and coach on the same day as the event. Please do not let your concerns about your athletic program go unanswered. If you have an issue with the sports program and the issue cannot be resolved through discussions with the coach or sports coordinator, you may address your concern to the Athletic Association in the following manner:

1. Present the issue in written form to the President or Athletic Director.
2. If necessary, final resolution of the matter will be determined by the Athletic Association Governing Board.

Please refer to the St. Dominic website for the names of the Athletic Association Sports Coordinators and Governing Board members.

Selection of Coaches

A roster of coaching talent will be established each year. This roster will be used to fill coaching positions for the following season. A subcommittee, selected by the Athletic Board President and including the sports coordinator and Athletic Director, will recommend coaches for approval by the Athletic Association Governing Board. Coaches must be in “Good Standing” to be considered for a coaching position. Parents and players will complete evaluation forms after each sport’s season. Results of these evaluations will be used to determine if a coach is in “good standing”.

Costs

The Athletic Association will review the fee structure annually. Our objective is to provide all eligible, interested student-athletes the opportunity to participate in St. Dominic’s athletic programs. Please contact an Athletic Association Board member in writing if the fees may cause you financial difficulty. All communications will be kept confidential.

Uniforms

The Athletic Association will provide game uniforms (jersey and shorts) to student athletes for basketball. Shirts will be provided for volleyball, track and baseball.

Physicals

All athletes are required to ensure they have a current physical form on file with the Athletic Association. This form is available on the St. Dominic web site.

Gym Usage Policy

The Gym Scheduler will accept requests for use of the gym and provide regular updates to the Athletic Association Board. Priorities will be given to:

1. Parish day school.
2. Athletic Association requirements.
3. LLF requirements
4. All parish sponsored groups based on availability.
5. Non-parish sponsored groups based on their relationship to the parish and availability.

I. Team Membership

Registration Information

Student athletes are to register for their respective sport as outlined in the registration materials. Approximate registration times are:

- Volleyball (Grades 5-8) – May
- Basketball (Grades 5-8) – September
- Track (Grades 5-8) – February
- Baseball (Grade K4-Grade 3) – March

In the event that a family joins St. Dominic Parish without changing their home address, there will be a 6-month waiting period before the student-athlete can play on a St. Dominic’s sports team. Exceptions to this rule will require Governing Board

approval.

Approximate Dates Each Sport Starts and Ends

The following dates are for information purposes only and may vary from year to year.

- a. Volleyball tryouts and practice start in August. League play starts in September and the season ends in early November.
- b. Basketball tryouts and practices start in November as soon as the volleyball season is completely over. League play starts during early December and ends in late February or early March.
- c. Track practice starts after the basketball season is over. The first track meet takes place in April and the season ends during the month of May.
- d. Baseball starts in June and ends during the month of August.

Team Size

The number of interested athletes and the availability of league openings, gym time, coaching staff, and funding will determine the number of teams that will be fielded for an individual sport. Every effort will also be made to field teams that will give the athletes maximum playing time. The following team size limits will be followed as closely as possible. The minimum number of players per team will be eight. However, because of the variables we are faced with, team sizes may vary from year to year.

J. Team Selection and Tryouts

ALL LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE PUT ON A WAITING LIST PENDING REVIEW BY THE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION.

There are no cuts in our program for registrations received before the due date. Tryouts are used to evaluate the athlete's talent in order to properly form teams.

Each year, talent will divide the 5th and 6th grade teams equally. Coaches are expected to change the mix/configuration of their teams in 6th grade to allow children to develop under multiple coaches and to meet and interact with as many children as possible.

Each year, the **7th and 8th** grade teams will be divided according to ability. The tryout process will accommodate the stronger and weaker team concept. Teams will be selected based on last year's performance and the tryout evaluations of the coaches and an independent evaluator. Final team placements are determined by the Athletic Association and league requirements.

1. If there are enough athletes registered from a grade, multiple boys or girls teams will be formed. If there are multiple teams from a grade, it will be mandatory that those athletes attend tryouts. If there is only one team from a grade, tryouts are not necessary.
2. If tryouts are necessary, the head coaches and an independent evaluator will conduct the tryouts to determine the talent split for that grade.
3. A request for a make-up tryout date can be made. Please contact the sports coordinator. The St. Dominic website will have the tryout dates posted.
4. All required registration materials and fees must be turned in prior to team selection tryouts.
5. Parents and other interested parties will not be allowed to observe tryouts unless he or she is involved as a head coach.

6. The child of the head coach will automatically be on his/her team. Selection of assistant coaches and managers will be done after tryouts and should not be a primary factor in selecting teams.

7. Team tryouts will last up to 90 minutes for 5th and 6th grades and up to 2 hours for 7th and 8th grades. Athletes will be evaluated and selected on athleticism, skills and attitude. Results will be tallied and teams selected.

8. The Sport Coordinator and Athletic Director will approve final rosters.

K. Playing Time Policy and Guidelines

Playing Time Policy - Grades 5 and 6

The spirit and intent of St. Dominic's playing time policy for 5th and 6th grade is that all athletes should experience a balanced amount of playing time. Coaches are expected to work toward equal playing time over the course of the season where the season is defined to include all league and tournament games.

Playing Time Policy - Grades 7 and 8

The spirit and intent of St. Dominic's playing time policy for 7th and 8th grade is that all athletes should be given the opportunity to contribute to the team's success during both practices and games. Playing time is earned and is recognition for working hard.

Playing Time Policy - All Grades

The attitude, effort, attendance and conduct exhibited at games and practices will influence an athlete's playing time in all grades. Our programs will focus on instruction and development. Athletes should receive meaningful minutes that promote their personal development along with that of the team. Developing athletes who show dedication to the sport and practice good sportsmanship and teamwork should be placed above winning.

Every effort will be made by the coaches to follow the spirit and intent of our playing time policy. If you feel that your child's coach is not allocating playing time according to the spirit and intent of our playing time policy or if you feel that there are other problems that need to be addressed, please talk to the coach and express your concerns. If you still feel that there are problems, please follow the procedure outlined in the Communication Section of this Handbook.

Playing Time Guidelines

Playing time guidelines for those athletes who live up to their student-athlete responsibilities are:

Volleyball

Grades 5 and 6

Equal playing time over the course of league season and tournament games. All student-athletes should have the opportunity to start and play all six positions including the serving position.

Grades 7 and 8

If team size is 11 or fewer players, it is suggested that athletes should play at least the equivalent of one and 1/2 games per 2 matches. If team size exceeds 11 players, it is suggested that athletes should play at least the equivalent of one game per 2 matches for regular league games. Tournament playing time is at the discretion of the coach.

Basketball

Grades 5 and 6

Equal playing time over the course of league season and tournament games. All student-athletes should have the opportunity to start. Players should play meaningful minutes in both halves.

Grades 7 and 8

Suggested minimum playing time is 6 minutes per game for regular league games. Tournament playing time is at the discretion of the coach.

L. Tournaments

In compliance with Archdiocesan regulations, the St. Dominic Athletic Association will limit team participation in tournament play to the following:

Volleyball

Grades 5 and 6 - 2 tournaments

Grades 7 and 8 - 3 tournaments (not counting 8th grade invite to Seton Tournament)

Basketball

Grades 5, 6 - 3 tournaments

Grades 7, 8 - 4 tournaments (not counting the Padre Serra Tournament)

1. No team may enter a tournament through the use of private funds. The St. Dominic Athletic Association will approve and pay for all tournaments.
2. The St. Dominic Athletic Association reserves the right to reduce and limit the number of tournaments St. Dominic's teams can play in, during a given season.
3. The Milwaukee Archdiocese runs an end of season basketball invitational tournament called the Padre Serra Tournament for 8th grade teams. An invitation to this tournament has to be earned and is considered an honor. Playing in the Padre Serra does not count against the four-tournament limit and playing time is at the coach's discretion.

M: Weather related cancelations.

Due to weather related school closings practice can be held upon board approval. If practice is held it is optional for the player to attend.

N. Disclaimer

From time to time, changes in Archdiocese regulations may occur which will result in revisions to this handbook. The most updated version of this handbook can be found on the St. Dominic website. If a conflict occurs between statements in this handbook and the Archdiocese regulations, the Archdiocese regulations will prevail.