

St. Mark's Athletic Handbook

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St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran School

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GOALS OF OUR ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The Word of God is also the Word of Life and a Christian philosophy of life should govern and encompass every aspect and dimension of our school programs which certainly includes the athletic activities of our school. After review of our athletic program through parent input in the spring of 2014, the Board of School Ministry and athletic director of St. Mark's have prepared this handbook to guide the coaches, parents, and athletic of our athletic program. The ultimate goals of our athletic program are:

1. To help children to recognize and appreciate in themselves and others the gifts they have received from God.
2. To develop character traits such as self-discipline, self-esteem, responsibility, leadership, team-work, and self-control under pressure, defeat, and failure, as well as proper acceptance of success and victory.
3. To develop to a greater degree the fundamental skills and knowledge of the rules appropriate to each grade level.
4. To help prepare our students for participation in advanced levels of athletics.
5. To provide a Christian witness to all our members and to our community and to demonstrate by example the fruits of Christian faith in athletic competition.

“ . . . I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last.”

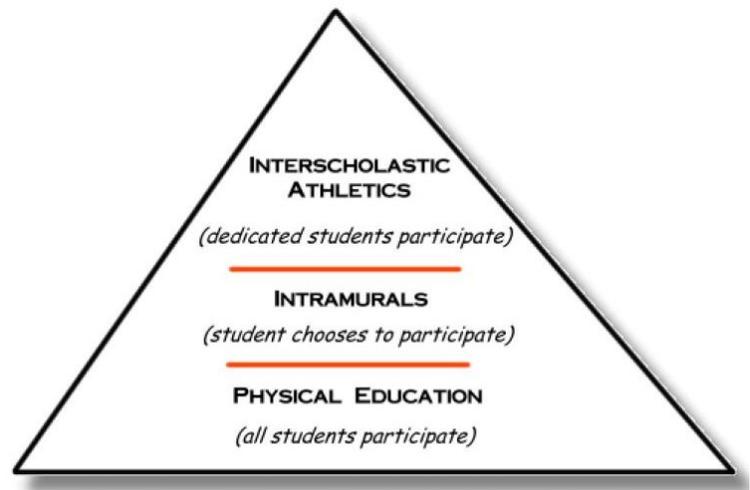
– John 15:16

PHILOSOPHY OF OUR ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

St. Mark's Lutheran School has an athletic program to allow students in grades 5-8 to use their God-given gifts to His glory. However, interscholastic athletics are not a requirement of the curriculum as physical education is. The tiered pyramid shows the levels at which children participate and the levels of commitment.

Physical education is part of the school's curriculum. It is a requirement of every student of St. Mark's to participate in this class. That is why it is at the bottom of the pyramid, all students must participate.

As you skip to the top of the pyramid, you reach interscholastic sports level. That is the participation of the school in athletic competitions against other schools. This level is a student and parent choice. However, it needs to be understood that this level requires discipline and dedication on the part of the student and parents.



Competitiveness at the various levels of interscholastic sports is different. The goal at B team level is to introduce the athletes to the basic skills and rules of the sport and develop those skills and understanding over the course of the season. Players who faithfully attend practice; work hard and listen will play in all games with nearly equal playing time. *During tournaments, the coach's directive is to advance in the tournament. Every player will get in, but playing time may not be equal.*

The A team level is the most competitive for our conference. Therefore we strive to be as competitive as possible with our A teams. With that in mind, not all players may be played in the game. The coaches will seek to play all players, but in a closely contested game, that may not be possible.

When it comes to what grade can play at what level, the conference rules govern some of those participation requirements. For the conference, the team splits can be as follows:

- A teams: Grades 7 and 8
- B teams: Grades 5 and 6

It is the goal of St. Mark's to instruct students in the philosophy and skills of the game to prepare them to play at a higher level. Therefore, St. Mark's will not move up an individual(s) based on their talent (move a B team player to A team).

When the participating class sizes are large, A2 or B2 teams may be created to accommodate. For instance, if there are 10 6th grade boys and 17 5th grade boys out for basketball, a "tryout" would be held to create the two teams. The regular B team would be those 5th and 6th graders who are ready to compete at that level. The B2 team would be for those 5th and 6th graders who are not ready for the regular B team and would benefit from playing at a less intense level. This tryout would be lead by the coaches and overseen by the athletic director. The athletic director and coaches will create the rosters for the two teams following the tryout.

At St. Mark's, we do not as a general rule "cut" players from the team although this may be necessary in a year with a large number of interested participants in a given class. Generally, anyone

who is interested in the sport will be able to participate as long as they meet the handbook requirements. However, we want to keep our team sizes and a manageable level for both the coaches and the athletes to best instruct and participate. To that end, in a given year where team sizes are large, we would first try to split the grade between two teams as outlined above before having to cut.

ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

1. Students have the opportunity to register for sports in May of the previous school year, school registration in August, and up to two weeks before the start of that sport's season. After the sports' season has started, students will no longer be able to join the team. Exceptions will be handled by the athletic director and if necessary the school administrator.
2. Students who wish to drop out of a sport need to do so two weeks or more before the start of the upcoming season. This is done to help the athletic director finish planning for the upcoming season.
3. All necessary forms (physical or waiver, emergency, and concussion forms) are completed and returned to the athletic director before the first practice. An athlete may not participate in a practice or game until this is accomplished.
4. Parents/Guardians along with the athlete(s) have watched the sports' video that accompanies each season (fall, winter, spring). The parents and athlete(s) then sign the form and return it to the athletic director stating that they watched the video. An athlete may not participate in a practice or game until this is accomplished.
5. If athletes have practices starting after 3:45 PM, they must leave the school grounds after the school day and return no sooner than fifteen (15) minutes before practice. Players are to leave the school building within fifteen (15) minutes of the conclusion of practice. If parents are unable to pick up their child within fifteen minutes, the child should arrange to ride home with another student and be picked up there. *(Parent volunteers may be used to supervise athletes in the Commons waiting until 3:45 PM practices to start. Permission must be granted by the school administrator and athletic director, and volunteers must have completed St. Mark's Volunteer Training Program.)*
6. Players should not use the telephones at school to arrange transportation after practice or games. Transportation arrangements should be made prior to the event.
7. Please review the school cell phone policy as stated in the *Parent and Student Handbook*.
8. Parents/Guardians, together with the athlete, are responsible for transportation of the athlete to and from all games and practices.
9. There are no practices conducted on Saturday or Sunday in any season, or Wednesdays during Lent and Advent. No practices are scheduled over school vacations. However, optional open gyms times may be scheduled over school vacations.
10. No games are scheduled on Wednesdays during Lent and Advent seasons.
11. To encourage responsibility, leadership, and teamwork, members of St. Mark's athletic teams must make it a priority of attending their school teams' athletic event, whether games or practices, before any activity outside of school. A violation of this will be cause for removal from the team.
 - a. When a student participates on a team(s) outside of St. Mark's and there is the potential for schedule conflicts between the two, the school would desire the athlete to participate with the outside team or St. Mark's team, not both. This is preferred to avoid athletes

missing St. Mark's athletic activities that would cause problems for the coaches and teammates.

12. Uniform care is the athlete's responsibility. Any uniform not returned, or returned in an unusable state, will be replaced at the athlete's expense.
13. Any incidents involving drugs, alcohol or weapons will follow the directions as printed on in the *Parent and Student Handbook*.
14. As a student-athlete, the student's first responsibility is to their academics. Therefore, the "Academic Excellence Policy" in the *Parent and Student Handbook* will govern a student's academic eligibility for athletics.
15. As stated in the *Parent and Student Handbook*: "Students have the privilege to represent St. Mark's in extracurricular activities. Their behavior reflects directly on St. Mark's and their Savior Jesus Christ, whom we serve. A student can be declared ineligible based on their attitude, or any incident that harms the mission of St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran School."
16. These eligibility standards do not replace or diminish the *Parent and Student Handbook* that is given to each student and parent. Rather these guidelines are in addition to those guidelines.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

– 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

As an athlete, you are responsible for a team. A team cannot improve as a unit unless all athletes are present and on time for every practice and game as encouraged by the school and coaches. If you are unable to attend practice or will be tardy, parents/guardians or the athlete must notify the coach at least one day before the absence (illness, weather, emergencies would be exceptions). Excused absences would include dentist and doctor appointments, emergency situations, etc. Please communicate with the coaches!

Unexcused absences from practice(s) or game(s) will result in the following penalties:

1. First offense: Player will receive limited playing time in the following game as decided by the coach and athletic director.
2. Second offense: Suspension from the following game. The player may NOT suit up or sit on the bench with the team.
3. Third offense: Removal from the team for the remainder of the season.

If a child is absent from school due to sickness, he/she may not participate in practice or at a game that night even if they are feeling better. At times, a child may be ill in the morning and be able to return to school later on during the school day. That situation will be handled in this way. If the child returns to school:

1. Before/by 12:00 PM, they are cleared to practice or play in their game.
2. After 12:00 PM, they are NOT cleared to practice or play in their game.
3. For clarification, if a child is sick all day Friday and has a game(s) on Saturday and/or Sunday, they are cleared to play.

COACHING EXPECTATIONS

1. Coaches are representatives of St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran School and Christ. They are approved by the pastors and Board of School Ministry. They are informed of the goals and expectations at a preseason coaches' meetings held by the athletic director. There is a high expectation for modeling Christian living placed upon our coaches.
2. Coaches...
 - a. Will be a member of St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church that is regular in church attendance and the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Will encourage prayer before all athletic events.
 - c. Will submit forms for a background check.
 - d. Will have attended and be up-to-date with Volunteer Training with the school administrator.
 - e. Will have a knowledge of this handbook and the School Handbook, and be in agreement with it.
 - f. Should have a general knowledge of the sport they are coaching.
 - g. Will encourage all athletes at all levels.
 - h. Will demonstrate organization and responsibility for his/her team at all practices and games. This includes active communication with parents and the athletic director.
 - i. Will be informed about the handling of Bloodborne Pathogens.
 - j. Will be knowledgeable about the risk of concussions and head injuries using the information and literature from the WIAA and NFHS.

PARENT / GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

1. It will be the responsibility of the parents to watch, care for, and discipline their children before and after all home and away games. If the child's parent/guardian is not able to attend the athletic contest, the parent/guardian will be responsible for finding a "caregiver" when the child is not under the direct control of the coach.
2. Parents/Guardians together with the athlete are responsible for transportation of the athlete to and from all games and practices.
3. The parents/guardians will be knowledgeable and discuss with their child(ren), the risk of concussions and head injuries using the information and literature from the WIAA and NFHS.
4. Parents/Guardians along with the athlete(s) will watch the informational sports' video that accompanies that current season (fall, winter, spring).
5. Due Process. It is the hope that healthy relationships are maintained by all those involved in our sports programs. Communication is the key. Any problems which do arise should be worked out in a God-pleasing way. Parents/Guardians are asked to resolve conflicts using the following order:
 - a. Discuss the matter in private with the coach. The child(ren) should not be present unless necessary. (Matthew 18:15)
 - b. Contact/meet with the athletic director along with the coach.
 - c. The athletic director, along with the coach(es), will involve the school administrator.
 - d. Meet with the Board of Education.
6. Volunteering is needed to make our athletic program run well and keep our athletic fees low. Therefore, each family that has a child participating in any sport, will need to sign up to help

with home games and tournaments (concessions, admissions, scoreboard worker, scorebook, line judge, etc) for at least 3 one hour time slots per child over the course of that sports' season. The Booster Club along with the athletic director will arrange the online sign up.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Badgerland Lutheran Athletic Conference

The Badgerland Lutheran Athletic Conference (BLAC) was started in the fall of 2006. This conference consists of 20 schools which are divided into different divisions for the different sports.

Fall sports offered are boys' and girls' cross country, boys' and girls' soccer, and girls' volleyball. Winter sports are boys' and girls' basketball, and girls' cheerleading. Spring sports include boys' and girls' softball and track.

A. Girls' Volleyball

1. Volleyball is offered to girls in grades 5-8.
2. Girls may not participate in cross country or soccer if they are participating in volleyball.
3. Spandex or tightly fitting short shorts are not to be worn for games or practices. A and B teams will have shorts provided. All other teams are to have a pair of all/mostly black shorts to wear with their uniforms for games.
4. The season is from the beginning of the school year to approximately the middle of October.
5. A schedule for practice and games will be given prior to the beginning of the season.

B. Cross Country

1. Offered to girls and boys in grades 5-8.
2. Girls may not participate in volleyball or soccer if they are participating in cross country.
3. The season is from the beginning of the school year to approximately the middle of October.
4. A practice and game schedule will be sent home prior to the season.
5. Practices will be outside after school. If weather conditions are poor (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, rain, or 30+ MPH sustained winds), there will be no practice or practice will be moved to the gym if it is available. All participants should be ready to be outside at all times.

C. Soccer

1. Offered to girls and boys in grades 5-8.
2. Girls may not participate in volleyball or cross country if they are participating in soccer.
3. The season is from the beginning of the school year to approximately the middle of October.
4. A practice and game schedule will be sent home prior to the season.
5. Practices will be outside after school. If weather conditions are poor (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, rain, or 30+ MPH sustained winds), there will be no practice or practice will be moved to the gym if it is available. All participants should be ready to be outside at all times.

D. Basketball

1. Offered to girls and boys in grades 5-8.
2. Girls may not participate in cheerleading at the same time.
3. Season begins roughly the second week of November and concludes around the middle of February.
4. A practice and game schedule will be sent home prior to the season.

5. A2 and B2 team basketball players must have a pair of all/mostly black shorts to wear with their uniforms for games.
6. In the event that school is closed due to weather, all practices and/or games are canceled for that day.

E. Cheerleading

1. Offered to girls in grades 5-8.
2. Girls may not participate in basketball at the same time.
3. They will cheer at all home games.
4. They will not cheer at away basketball games EXCEPT the BLAC and Lakeside Lutheran Tournaments in February.
5. In the event that school is closed due to weather, all practices and/or games are canceled for that day.

F. Slow Pitch Softball

1. Offered to girls and boys in grades 7-8.
2. Practices will start around the middle of April and go until the third weekend in May.
3. Boys and girls may participate in track and softball at the same time.
4. The gym may be used for early season practices due to weather conditions.
5. Practices will be outside after school. If weather conditions are poor (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, rain, or 30+ MPH sustained winds), there will be no practice or practice will be moved to the gym if it is available. All participants should be ready to be outside at all times.

G. Track

1. Offered to boys and girls in grades 5-8.
2. Practices will start around the middle to end of April and go until the second weekend in May.
3. Boys and girls may participate in track and softball at the same time.
4. The gym may be used for early season practices due to weather conditions.
5. Practices will be outside after school. If weather conditions are poor (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, rain, or 30+ MPH sustained winds), there will be no practice or practice will be moved to the gym if it is available. All participants should be ready to be outside at all times.

OTHER SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES

Every coach greatly appreciates having a good student manager. If any child wants to be part of a team with less active participation, he/she is encouraged to consider being a student manager. Simply make your desire known to the school athletic director. Only two student managers per team.

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

– Colossians 3:17