

Immaculate Heart of Mary



Athletic Handbook 2022-2023

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Introduction

This athletic handbook has been prepared for the benefit of all athletes and coaches involved in the athletic program at IHM. Please read through the contents of this book carefully with your student athlete. Make sure you understand the purpose, philosophy, and policies of our sports program. By working together, we hope that your experience in the sports program at IHM is a positive and enjoyable one.

Have a great year,

Gus Wasinski
Athletic Director

Holly Lake
Principal

Fr. Troy Nevins
Pastor

K.C. Cuncannon
Association President

"Every Christian is called to become a strong *athlete of Christ*, that is, a faithful and courageous witness to his Gospel. But to succeed in this, he must persevere in prayer, be trained in virtue and follow the divine Master in everything."

-St. John Paul II, Jubilee of Sports People, October 29, 2000

IHM SPORTS PHILOSOPHY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

IHM sports philosophy is to complement the development of the “whole child” and to help develop all participants’ self-esteem.

The primary function of elementary athletics at IHM is not the development of exceptional athletes. Rather, it is the development of student athletes who genuinely display the Christian qualities of good sportsmanship and fair play in every aspect of life. The successful operation of IHM athletics depends upon a true commitment to this philosophy from all persons involved.

Sportsmanship is defined as the quality of responsible behavior characterized by a spirit of generosity and genuine concern for an opponent. Within the framework of the IHM athletic program, the responsibility for good sportsmanship is vested in all those associated with the program. It is the duty of everyone concerned with IHM athletics:

- To emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
- To eliminate all possibilities which tend to destroy the best values of the game.
- To stress the values derived from playing the game fairly
- To show cordial courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
- To establish a congenial relationship between visitors and hosts.
- To respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
- To achieve a thorough understanding of acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
- To encourage leadership, use initiative, and good judgment by the players on the team.
- To recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional wellbeing of the players.
- To remember that an athletic contest is only a game, not a life and death situation for a player, coach, team, or spectator.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ATHLETE

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline. To compete as an athlete for the school is a privilege and not a right. As part of participating in IHM athletics, all athletes must be aware of the Christian Role Models they become to other students or adults. Through athletics, many disciplines may be learned. All participants in the athletic program must strive:

- To meet all the IHM eligibility requirements as outlined in this handbook.
- To attend and participate in all practices as determined by the coach/and or league.
- To maintain a positive Christian attitude toward coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, spectators and all parties involved.
- To show a willingness to learn, listen to the coaches, and play to the best of your ability.
- To respect the property of the school and the authority of the school officials

ATHLETIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT

Parents of athletes may be the most important factor in determining an athlete's success. A parent of an athlete has the following responsibilities:

- To let your child know they are loved, win or lose, scared or heroic.
- To allow your child to be able to do their best without fear of failure or disapproval.
- To be completely honest when evaluating your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and skill level.
- To be helpful, but do not "coach" them on their way to the match, game, etc. because it will cause a distraction from what the coach is telling them.
- To not compete with the coach. Young athletes will come home with many stories of "coach said this." or "coach said that" which is often difficult to take.
- If a problem arises with a coach, maintain a professional manner and follow the chain of command. Proper chain of command is Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, and then Pastor.
- To assist the player in understanding the commitment required to be a part of a team and help in this area whenever possible.

When a certain level of disenchantment with the coach does set in, some parents side with the youngster. This is a mistake. Use this as an opportunity to discuss with the child the importance of learning how to handle problems, deal with criticism, and understand the necessity for discipline, rules, and regulations.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACH

In order for good sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that all IHM coaches subscribe to the IHM philosophy and code of conduct, and teach those principles through word and deed. Specifically, it is recommended that all coaches:

- Share a short prayer with teams before and after the games and practices. This recommendation is strongly encouraged. Remember we are to compete as Christians.
- Always set a good example for others to follow. Teach the values of honest effort in conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules. Instruct the player in their sportsmanship responsibilities. Respect each player, including those with less athletic skills than others.
- Maintain a positive Christian attitude toward players, opponents' spectators, officials, and all parties involved. Discipline those students who display unsportsmanlike behavior, if necessary, forfeit their privilege of representing IHM. Be a perfect host to opponents, treat them as guests.
- At every opportunity, remind spectators that the opposing team deserves their respect and courtesy. Respect the officials' judgment and interpretation of the rules. Public protest can only lead to similar behavior by the players and spectators. Publicly shake hands with the officials and opposing coach before and after the contest. Insist upon high scholarship and enforcement of all eligibility rules. Use a Christian manner of speech and action, which will in itself will be a teaching tool
- Follow the IHM and league rules for each sport including minimum playing time.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SPECTATORS

The enthusiasm for sports among IHM spectators indicates that they play a vital role in the development of good sportsmanship. It is recommended that all spectators:

- Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
- Respect, cooperate and respond appropriately to all participants including cheerleaders.
- Censure fellow spectators whose behavior is inappropriate.
- Respect the property of the school and the authority of school officials.
- Show respect for an injured player when he/she is removed from the contest.
- Do not applaud errors by opponents or penalties inflicted upon them.
- Do not heckle, jeer, or distract members of the opposing team.
- Never criticize the players, coaches, officials, or anyone else for the loss of a game.
- Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach. Refrain from being a second guesser.
- Avoid profane language and obnoxious behavior.
- Maintain a positive Christian attitude toward coaches, players, opponents, officials, spectators, and all parties involved.

GRAND RAPIDS AREA CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY ATHLETIC COUNCIL (GRACEAC)

GRACEAC is the governing body of IHM athletics. It has been in existence for over 25 years. It supports the efforts of its member schools in maintaining quality athletic programs in their schools while fostering Christian attitude.

The primary goals for GRACEAC are:

- To establish reasonable athletic policies.
- To promote wholesome, competitive athletics.
- To assist schools with their athletic programs.

The council has representatives from all of the Grand Rapids area's Catholic Schools and has a board of seven elected members which include: principals, athletic directors, coaches, and the coordinator of athletics.

The primary function of GRACEAC is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure fairness in competition and for student athletes, and to balance athletics with other educational programs and activities.

The council continues to be responsive to requests for rule modifications from member schools, appointed committees and athletic organizations. The council has attempted to seek the greatest good for the greatest number and to ensure that competition is carried out in a sportsmanlike manner.

IHM athletics follow all GRACEAC Policies.

IHM ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION “Building Christian Athletes”

The purpose of the athletic association is to:

- Provide financial support for IHM athletics and the physical education program.
- Promote the highest level of sportsmanship between athletic participants and spectators.
- Promote athletic activities.
- Recognize achievements of all athletic participants.

Any parent that has a student participating in athletics is a member of the athletic association. In fulfilling their obligation periodically throughout the school year, each parent member may be asked to volunteer to staff positions necessary to carry on events at IHM's facilities.

Financial support is raised through fundraisers held during the school year. This supports pays for all expenses for IHM athletics including:

- Uniforms
- Equipment
- League Fees
- Any miscellaneous fees.
- Physical Education equipment and supplies.
- IHM athletic awards, letters, and pins.

We encourage everyone to be active in the athletic association. It is our intent to make participation in IHM athletics a positive and memorable experience for all students.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Athletic Eligibility

In order to participate every athlete must have a physical health form on file with the athletic director dated after May 15 of the current school year.

Athletes must be a student at IHM School, or parish member enrolled in Religious education classes at IHM.

Team Eligibility

There are two ways that a student may become ineligible for sports, academically or behaviorally.

There are two levels to ineligibility; Level I Probation and Level II Suspension.

Level I

- Athletic Probation: a one week trial period where students are allowed to redeem themselves by becoming an outstanding representative of their team and school. They may participate in all athletic related activities at this time.

Level II

- Athletic Suspension: The student athlete may still practice with the team and attend other athletic events, but may not play in the next game.

Academic Ineligibility

Academic Ineligibility may be determined by the teacher(s) and principal on a week to week basis after the first game of the season. Grades will be evaluated each Thursday, notices of ineligibility will be sent home on Friday. Ineligibility will run from Monday to the following Sunday unless otherwise stated. A violation occurs when a student's cumulative grade drops below passing (C- or lower is considered below passing) in any core academic subject.

The first offense may result in a Level I probation.

If a student's grade is above failing in the following week, they will be at full eligibility again.

However, a second consecutive week with a failing grade may result in a one game Level II suspension.

Behavioral Ineligibility

The first detention during the season may result in a Level I probation.

Each additional detention during the season may result in a Level II suspension.

The principal and/or the athletic director may suspend a student for more than one game for serious offenses.

Ineligibility will ultimately be decided on by the principal and athletic director. The goal and hope is always to have student athletes participate if possible.

The replacement of uniforms that have not been returned is costly and places a burden on the athletic budget. With your cooperation we believe that we can make uniform distribution and return a simple process.

1. Each sport season, athletes will be assigned a uniform. Each student is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their uniform throughout the season. IHM athletic uniforms are to be worn for game competition only!!

2. Following the season your uniforms are to be turned in to your coach at the date and time he/she specifies. If uniforms are not returned the following penalties will be assessed:

- The student will be billed the cost of the missing uniform.

If the uniform or payment are not received.

- The student will not be allowed to participate in the upcoming sports season.

NO CUT POLICY

Recognizing that all students who have the desire to participate should be encouraged to take part in the athletic programs, a no cut policy, other than that for disciplinary reasons, shall be a part of all athletic programs.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPANT ADDITIONS

A Student will not be allowed to join a team after the first week of practice. Special exceptions may be approved by the athletic director.

SCHOOL CLOSING

When Immaculate Heart of Mary School is canceled due to inclement weather, all IHM related activities are canceled for that day and evening.

ABSENCE AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION

A Student Athlete must attend at least half of the school day in order to participate in any sports practice or game held that same night.

IHM TEAMS PLAYING EACH OTHER

The athletic director will try to ensure that Immaculate Heart of Mary teams do not play each other in an athletic contest, and shall try to ensure that IHM teams are always placed on opposite sides of any tournament. However due to league size or restrictions to the schedule, this may not always be possible. In the event that IHM teams play each other they are expected to treat each other with the same respect that they would show to any other opponent.

TEAM SPLITTING POLICY

To ensure maximum participation for all, the Athletic Director may decide to split specific grade level teams into multiple teams. The teams will be split evenly following proper procedure. This process will be overseen by the Athletic Director and Principal when deemed necessary.

PRACTICE TIME

IHM follows all GRACEAC policies for practice times during preseason and regular season.

PLAYING TIME FOR 5TH GRADE SPORTS

IHM's sports philosophy is to complete the development of the "Whole Child" and to help develop all participants' self-esteem.

In view of this, coaches of sports programs for 5th grade should strive for equal playing time for all players, assuming that player conforms to school and team eligibility requirements

No child will be forced to play by this policy.

IHM Eligibility Requirements:

- Physical on File.
- Satisfactory Grades and Behavior.
- Attendance and participation in practice.
- Positive attitude towards teammates and coaches.
- Showing a willingness to learn and listen to coaches.
- Showing a willingness to play.

PLAYING TIME

IHM follows all GRACEAC policies for playing times during games.

The minimum participation standards apply to all regular season games, invitational tournaments, and city tournaments.

It shall be the joint responsibility of each Coach, League, Principal and Athletic Director to make sure that the policy of "Total Participation" is upheld and that playing time rules are followed correctly.

TAUNTING

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others. Taunting includes conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic background, religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include but are not limited to “trash talk”, physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, reference to sexual orientation, “in your face” confrontation by one player to another, standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player.

Sports officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending person. A warning may be given but is not required before ejection. Likewise, spectators may be removed from the contest area with or without warning.

TOBACCO, MARIJUANA AND ALCOHOL USE

For coaches, officials, parents, and spectators of all games and sporting events, the use of tobacco and/or marijuana products of any kind within sight of players and spectators, and/or, being under the influence of alcohol is prohibited.

Enforcement:

Tobacco: Anyone using a tobacco product must cease using or be removed from the contest area.

Marijuana: Anyone using marijuana must cease using or be removed from the contest area.

Alcohol: Anyone under the influence of alcohol will be removed from the contest area.

Any violation of the taunting and/or the tobacco and alcohol policy must be reported to school and league officials.

An Athlete's Prayer

God,

Let me play well but fairly.

Let competition make me strong, but never hostile.

Forbid me to rejoice in the adversity of others.

See me not when I am cheered,

But when I bend down to help my opponent up.

If I know victory, allow me to be happy.

If I am denied, keep me from envy.

Remind me that sports are just games.

Help me to learn something that matters once the game is over.

And if through athletics I get to be an example

Let it be a good one.

Amen.