

ST. JOHN'S CRUSADERS



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Athletic Handbook

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St. John's Lutheran School

Parent-Athlete Handbook

St. John's Ev. Lutheran School
1278 Dewey Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
Ph: 414-258-4214
Fax: 414-453-9322
Email: school@sjtosa.org
Website: www.sjtosa.org

Pastor: Joel Leyrer
Pastor: Steven Pagels
Pastor: Joshua Yu
Principal: Scott Uecker
AD: Dave Leyrer, CAA

Message from the Athletic Director

What an opportunity your child has to participate in athletics at St. John's!

By being a part of a team, regardless of the time spent in competition, your child can learn many valuable life lessons – such as citizenship, sportsmanship, appreciating good play by an opponent, working together for a common goal, responsibility, accountability, loyalty, humility, learning to accept instruction and criticism, respect for others, winning and losing with dignity, self-control, and being responsible for one's own actions. If parents and coaches work together for the benefit of the children, their athletic experiences can prove to be a very positive and educational process.

Remember that sports, although they may imitate life, are NOT life. They are beneficial and important, but they are not MOST important. Coaches, parents, and students must keep athletics in the proper perspective, and always keep their Savior the number one priority. Long after the score is forgotten, how we have behaved as Christian athletes, coaches and fans will most be remembered.

Keep in mind your motivation in life – that is to glorify God. Should we want to do our best and strive to win? You bet! God expects and deserves no less than your very best efforts to use the gifts he has give to you. God expects excellence; therefore we ought to excel through Christ! Keep your motivation for excellence based on your desire to serve God with your gifts. He will bless those efforts!

In Christ,
Dave Leyrer, CAA
Director of Athletics

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”
I Corinthians 10:31

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents, teachers and students an understanding of the goals, objectives, and philosophies of St. John's athletic program. It is also meant to provide guidance to the Athletic Director, coaches and faculty representative concerning the make-up and participation of athletic teams at St. John's Lutheran School.

Once the decision is made to participate in athletics there are often many questions that students and parents may have regarding the St. John's athletic program. In order to assist in making the athletic experience a positive one, this handbook has been assembled to answer questions about the guidelines and philosophy of the St. John's athletic program.

General Philosophy

As Christian parents and teachers, it is our responsibility to encourage our children to use all their gifts and abilities, and to provide opportunities for them to do so. Participation in athletics is on way for children to use their athletic abilities to God's glory. The emphasis of our athletic program at St. John's is to not only promote Christian fellowship with other schools, but also to aid Christian students in learning the skills necessary to compete with other young people. Some of these skills include teamwork, organizations, decision making, dedication, commitment, discipline, and stewardship of healthy bodies. Our children can be taught how to "do" sports in community programs, but only we can teach them the God-pleasing way to do it. Therefore it is our sincere desire that the benefits they reap from our athletic programs will prove favorable to their future as Christian young people growing up in a very competitive world.

Our athletic programs are designed for all children beginning in the fifth grade (depending on the sport) and continuing through their eighth grade year. If we do not have enough participants for a given sport, or a coach approved by the Athletic Director, that sport may be dropped for a season.

Attitudes and Values

We believe that a winner is one who is humble in victory and gracious in defeat.

As representatives of our school and our Lord, students, parents, and coaches should exhibit Christian behavior at all times. Disrespect towards coaches, officials, other players, or fans will not be tolerated. Misuse of property or equipment also will not be tolerated.

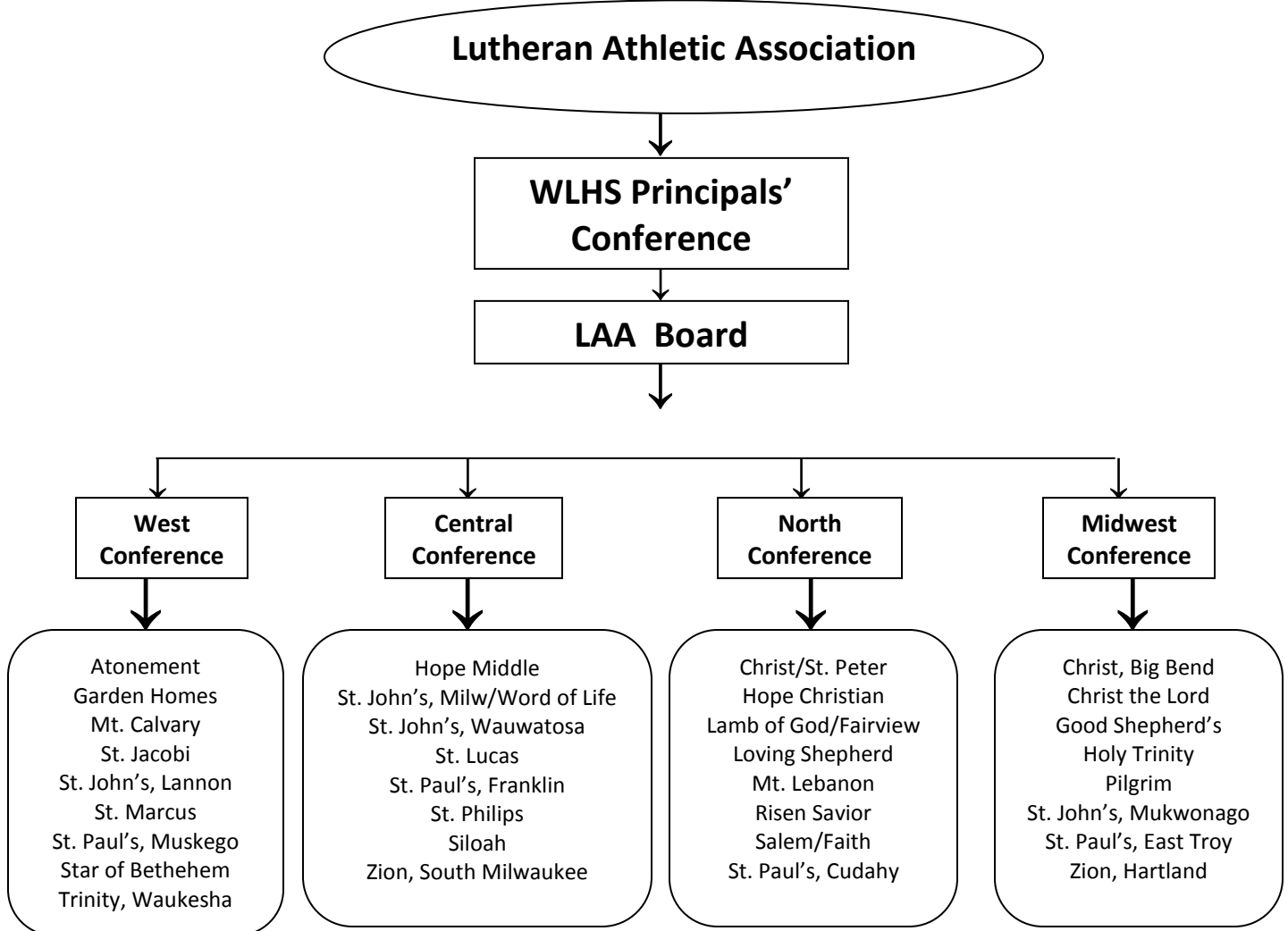
Athletics provide students with a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction.

Athletics teach students to use their God-given talents as directed by God Himself. At the same time, they will learn to appreciate that everyone is blessed with various gifts and abilities.

Athletics help foster Christian fellowship and friendship among students here at St. John's, as well as with students of other Christian Day Schools. Athletics also give students an opportunity to put their faith into action and be a Christian example to non-Christian witnesses.

Athletics teach that a participant has a responsibility toward his/her coach and teammates. This is most evident in faithful attendance to practices and games.

Organization



The Lutheran Athletic Association (LAA) is organized with the above structure. The operation of the LAA is overseen by the WLHS Principals' Conference, while general functions of the Association are carried out by the Athletic Board. This Board consists of 5 members – 1 principal + 4 athletic directors (1 from each of the base conferences).

The LAA is also divided up into four (4) base conferences. The basic functions and responsibilities of each conference are carried out at the conference level. St. John's is a member of the **CENTRAL CONFERENCE**. Current officers for the Central Conference are as follows:

- Conference President: Dave Leyrer (St. John's, Wauwatosa)
- Conference Vice-President: Ryan Randall (St. Lucas)
- Conference Secretary: Chris Luebke (Siloah)
- LAA Board Representative: Dave Leyrer (St. John's, Wauwatosa)

Levels of Competition

As a member of the Lutheran Athletic Association (West Conference), St. John's offer participation in all of its sports programs. The following sports are available to students within the listed grades:

FALL (Aug – Oct):	Girls' Volleyball	7 th & 8 th grade: A-team 5 th & 6 th grade: B-team
	Boys' Soccer	5 th – 8 th grade
	Cross Country (Grs. 3-8)	NOT A CONFERENCE SPORT
WINTER (Nov-Mar):	Boys' & Girls' Basketball	7 th & 8 th grade: A-team 5 th & 6 th grade: B-team
	Girls' Cheerleading	7 th & 8 th grade: A-team 5 th & 6 th grade: B-team
	Boys' Wrestling (Grs. 1-8)	NOT A CONFERENCE SPORT
SPRING (Apr-May):	Boys' & Girls' softball	5 th – 8 th grade
	Girls' Soccer	5 th – 8 th grade
	Coed Track	6 th – 8 th grade

Students in grades 7 and 8 will have the opportunity to use their skills in a competitive setting at the A-team level. Depending on the number of participants, the A-team may be divided into two teams. This will be done by the coaches involved as well as the Athletic Director. The A2-A1-team will be based primarily on ability and competition in order to focus on advancements in skill development.

Students in grades 5 and 6 will have the opportunity to use their skills in a competitive setting at the B-team level. Depending on the number of participants, the B-team may be divided into two teams. If possible, the teams will be divided by class – 6th grade on the B1 and 5th grade on the B2. If there is a lack of participation at a certain grade level, a system will be set up by the coaches involved as well as the Athletic Director. Students at the B-team level will develop the fundamental skills through active participation.

Academic Requirements

Children should realize that classroom responsibilities must be met before participating in any of our programs. This is based on the idea that participation in our athletic programs is a privilege, not a right of the student. A student may be kept from participating in any extra-curricular school activity, including sports, if the administration, or faculty, believe the student should not be accorded the privilege of representing our school. Factors such as incomplete work, low grades, uncooperative or disrespectful attitudes may result in the suspension or expulsion from participation in extra-curricular activities. If faculty imposes a suspension from an extra-curricular activity, a consultation with the parents will establish a mutually agreed upon length of the suspension and/or the improvement standards that must be met to terminate the suspension. Efforts will be made to schedule this meeting before the suspension is imposed. Appeal of a suspension will be considered by a committee of the Athletic Director, Principal and Board of Education Chairman. During an academic suspension, the student will be allowed to practice, but will not be eligible to participate in any games or competitions.

Attendance Requirements

Participation in practices and games hinges on school attendance. In order for a student to participate in a school-day practice or competition, the student must be in attendance before 10:30am. Field trips, alternate learning experiences, medical/dental appointments, and special family situations (i.e. funerals and weddings) are generally considered excused absences. A student who is ill or has an unexcused absence the day of an event, will not be allowed to participate in that day's event. Please communicate all known absences ahead of time with your child's coach and/or Athletic Director.

Behavioral Requirements

In the spirit of Christian faith and love, it is expected and encouraged that the following God-pleasing behaviors and priorities be exhibited by the members of our teams:

- Witness their love for their Savior by representing Him, their parents, their school, their team, and themselves well
- Using speech that always honors and never dishonors the Lord
- Display respect for rules, officials, coaches, and all who are in authority
- Display a spirit of cooperation and teamwork
- Follow the rules and guidelines found in this handbook

Only those who are receptive to the discipline of those in authority will get the privilege to represent their school. Students failing to show cooperation and Christian conduct may jeopardize the amount of playing time they would otherwise expect.

Repeated failure to live up to these requirements may result in suspension from a team for a time or for the remainder of the season, whether these failures are noted by classroom teachers, coaches or any authority at school.

Playing Time

Since the B-team level is a t amore developmental stage, it is deemed most appropriate to provide players a certain amount of playing time for each competition. Students involved at B-level sports are guaranteed an amount of playing time in each athletic event. Exceptions to this include: medical reasons, number of participants, conference rules, discipline, and attitude. Tournaments are considered special at this level and treated different than regular season games. They are competitive in nature and, as such, playing time in tournament games is determined by the coach(es) and generally based on the athlete's ability and game situations.

At the A-team level, students will be played in a situation where they can succeed. They will generally play according to their level of ability and as game situations dictate. Although playing time is not guaranteed, it is our sincere desire to provide as much playing time as possible for each player. Please understand, however, that practices are an integral part of the athletic processes where coaches determine the abilities and capabilities of their athletes as well as building team cohesiveness. Missing practices for any reason may jeopardize the amount of playing time they might expect.

In summary, B-teams are considered primarily developmental, while A-teams are considered competitive in nature. This philosophy is consistent with other Lutheran grade schools in the Milwaukee metro area and which are members of the Lutheran Athletic Association.

Uniforms

All uniforms will be handed out and collected by the Athletic Director or designated coach.

The individual athlete is responsible for the proper care and possession of his/her uniform. Most uniforms should be washed in warm water, inside out, and tumble dried with no heat. Please refer to the specific care instructions located on each uniform

Uniforms should never be altered in any fashion, unless it is cleared by the Athletic Director first.

Uniforms are not to be worn to school, practices, or for leisure. They are intended for game use only. Students failing to follow this guideline will be asked to change immediately. Exceptions to this rule are granted to cheerleaders only, provided it is the day of a Pep Rally.

If a child loses, misplaces, or damages a uniform beyond normal wear, he/she will be required to pay for the lost or damaged uniform before another uniform is issued.

Extra uniforms are not taken to away games. If an individual forgets his/her uniform, the athlete may not, depending on the sport, be allowed to participate.

All uniforms must be returned to the school within one week of the ending of the child's sport. It will be assumed that uniforms not returned after one week are lost and will need to be replaced. Parents will be notified by letter in such a circumstance and will be billed for the full replacement cost of the missing uniforms(s).

Multiple Activities

We are aware that most active and willing students involve themselves in many activities with the result that occasionally there will be a conflict in practices and/or competitions. Therefore it is our responsibility to help guide and direct students in their choices so these conflicts will be minimized. However, we should not discourage students from developing and demonstrating multiple talents and abilities.

The following guidelines are provided to help students, parents, and coaches to deal fairly and consistently with conflicts that may arise with these multi-talented students:

For activities offered with St. John's:

- In the event that a student is scheduled for a practice and a performance at the same time, the performance should always take precedence with no penalty to the student in the activity for which he/she is not participating.
- In the event a student is scheduled for activities of equal classification (i.e. two practices or two competitions occurring simultaneously) the child should be allowed to make a choice without penalty from either of the coaches of the two activities.

For activities offered outside of St. John's:

- We understand that students can also become involved in activities offered within their community and outside of St. John's guidance (i.e. Little League, Kicker, AAU, Jr. Vikings). If an outside activity conflicts with a sport in which a student wishes participate, it will become necessary for the student, under the direction of his/her parents, to make a commitment between one activity or the other.
- Students and parents should contact the Athletic Director in the event of a known conflict in order to make a knowledgeable decision and an appropriate commitment to one team or the other.

Transportation

Rides to and from games, practices, and tournaments are not provided by St. John's or its coaches. Students and parents are responsible for arranging their own transportation to such events.

Tournaments

As a member of the LAA – West Conference, St. Jon's will participate and support all conference tournaments and events. As a member of the WLHS Federation, St. John's will also participate and support all tournaments and events hosted by Wisconsin Lutheran High School.

All other tournaments will be handled under the discretion of the Athletic Director.

Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities

Rights (*The athlete has the right to expect the following*):

- To witness Christian attitudes in athletic practices and competitions
- To attend safe, disciplined, and well-planned practices
- To have a coach who is knowledgeable about the sport
- To expect instruction and drills that are intended to improve and refine their overall skills
- To participate as part of a St. John's team in order to glorify God
- To respectfully express concerns and suggestions at appropriate times

Responsibilities:

- To maintain Christian attitudes and sportsmanship
- To maintain academic standards set in the classroom and at home
- To maintain Christian behavior in school, at practices, and all athletic events
- To take written communications home
- To listen and respect the coaches, officials, and fellow competitors
- To wear proper attire to practices and games
- To protect and care for uniforms and school property (home and away)
- To be at practices and games on time and ready to play

Coaches' Right and Responsibilities

Rights:

- To have a schedule of games and practices prior to the season
- To communicate problems and/or suggestions to the Athletic Director
- To request additional practice time
- To expect Christian respect from all players and parents
- To have respect and encouragement/feedback from the Athletic Director

Responsibilities:

- To be a Christian role model and a living example of sportsmanship
- To remember that the coach is the primary influence on the players
- To make participation competitive yet fun
- To be a leader who cares about people and fair play
- To maintain a positive appearance
- To treat all players with same respect, regardless of skill level
- To remember that the game is to glorify God and benefit the children, not the adults
- To encourage players to play to the best of their God-given ability
- To never humiliate a player, opponent, or official
- To discipline any player who intimidates another player or official, or displays unsportsmanlike conduct
- To respect the official's judgment
- To attend all coaches meetings with the Athletic Director
- To ensure player's safety and proper supervision during all practices and games

Athletic Directors' Rights and Responsibilities

Rights:

- To have the respect of all coaches, players, and parents
- To openly communicate with coaches, players, and parent
- To be made aware of any disciplinary problems with players either in the classroom or in practices/competitions
- To be supported by the Principal, pastors, staff and Board concerning all matters in the handbook
- To have control over equipment expenses and needs

Responsibilities:

- To administer school policies governing athletics in cooperation with the principal and coaches
- To act as liaison between principal, coaches, students, and parents concerning athletic policies, eligibility, disciplinary action, and scheduling
- To be a Christian role model and an example of sportsmanship to coaches, parents and students
- To contact students, teachers, parents and coaches in regards to player ineligibility
- To notify the Principal and/or the Board of Education regarding disciplinary action against players and/or coaches
- To maintain confidentiality in matters concerning coaches, students, and parents
- To schedule all athletic activities (practices, games, tournaments, etc.)
- To give schedules and schedule changes to players, parents, and coaches
- To hire officials for all "home" games
- To organize, direct, and manage all games and tournaments hosted by St. John's
- To select and train, if necessary, all coaches prior to their specific sports season
- To give coaches opportunities to grow and advance as sports leaders (i.e. clinics & courses)
- To provide feedback to coaches at conclusion of season
- To inform coaches of location of medical info. And first aid kits
- To purchase and maintain uniforms, equipment, and supplies for the athletic department
- To act as the primary contact for all gymnasium and school scheduling
- To require authorized adult supervision at all times during any gym use
- To supervise or appoint supervision to all athletic events
- To provide preseason meetings for all coaches
- To clearly define and explain expectations and procedures to all coaches
- To represent St. John's at all conference and Association meetings

Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

Rights:

- To have the respect of all coaches, players and, Athletic Director
- To openly communicate with coaches and the Athletic Director
- To be made aware of any disciplinary problems regarding your child
- To have a schedule of games and practices prior to the season
- To have your child attend safe, disciplined, and well-planned practices
- To have your child guided by a knowledgeable coach
- To respectfully express concerns and/or suggestions at the appropriate times

Responsibilities:

- To model and display sportsmanship and appropriate game behavior at all times
- To be a Christian role model and example of sportsmanship
- To remember that your role is that of spectator and fan, not a coach, player, or official
- To provide or arrange transportation to and from all practices and competitions
- To provide or arrange supervision of their children before, during and after games and practices
- To remember that the coach is the primary influence on the players during their season
- To allow the coaches to do the coaching
- To be supportive of your child regardless of his/her performance
- To be supportive of your child's coach(es)
- To be supportive of your child's teammates
- To be supportive of your child's opponents
- To be supportive of all officials and referees
- To refrain from criticizing officials, coaches, other parents, and your own child's teammates
- To encourage and support your child's efforts
- To attend any parent/coach meetings
- To encourage your child to perform to the best of his/her God-given abilities
- To never verbally or physically humiliate, embarrass, or agitate an official, coach, parent, or player
- To support the St. John's athletic program through volunteer work (i.e. working concessions, score table, supervision during games, etc.)

Sportsmanship Guidelines

St. John's Lutheran School believes that athletic competition should be governed by Christian values as well as the basic principles of good sportsmanship. The following has been prepared to ensure that players, parents and coaches have a common understanding of those principles.

Christian sportsmanship is the way that participants, coaches, and fans represent themselves, their team, their school, and their Savior. It is a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and Christian integrity. It is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine Christian love for others, such as:

- Playing fair and being a good citizen
 - Treating others as you wish to be treated
 - Respecting others and yourself
 - Imposing self-control, being courteous, and gracefully accepting the results of your actions
 - Displaying ethical and Christian-like behavior by being good and doing what is right in God's sight
- “Without sportsmanship, there is no sport”**

To demonstrate good sportsmanship, a *participant* must be:

- Responsible for personal actions
- A team player
- Coachable and accepting of direction
- Respectful of other competitors and teams
- Willing to accept victory or defeat
- Mindful of academic responsibility
- Respectful of officials, authority, and decisions

To demonstrate good sportsmanship, a *coach* must be:

- Responsible for personal actions
- Respectful of participants and fans
- Supportive of all participants in victory or defeat
- Respectful of officials, authority, and decisions

To demonstrate good sportsmanship, a *spectator* must be:

- Responsible for personal actions
- Respectful of all participants, fans, and coaches
- Supportive of their team in victory or defeat
- Respectful of officials and their decisions

Parents and spectators, by their behavior and reaction, determine to a large extent the reputation for sportsmanship of their child's team and school. Parents should keep in mind that athletes are friendly rivals as members of opposing teams and should be treated as such. In many cases, these players and their rivals will be future teammates or classmates when they progress to high school. It should be our responsibility to help foster these friendships for future years.

A result of inappropriate spectator behavior could be removal from a game or possible denial of attendance of future athletic activities.

St. John's is committed to upholding the ideals of good sportsmanship and Christian values. Therefore, it is important that the actions of the participants, coaches, and spectators be a positive reflection on St. John's School as well as our Lord and Savior.

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely challenging, as well as rewarding, vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other, providing greater benefit to the children. As parents, when your child(ren) become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication You Should Expect From Your Child's Coach:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the team
- Locations and times of all practices and games
- Any discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation
- Expectation of parent's role in the athletic program

Communication Coaches Expect From Parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific needs of the athlete
- Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your children become involved in the programs at St. John's, they will experience some very rewarding moments. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way your child wishes. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior
- Level of competition

It can be difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Our coaches are not professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those below, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Matters concerning other students athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

If You Have a Concern to Discuss with the Coach:

- Call or speak to the coach to set up an appointment
- Please **do not** attempt to confront a coach before or after a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Please wait 24 hours before addressing such issues.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

- Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
- At that appointment it will be determined if any further action is necessary.
- St. John's Lutheran School, in conjunction with the Athletic Department, follows the chain of command listed below. We ask that you observe the order of this line of communication.
 1. Assistant Coach (if issue is with the assistant coach)
 2. Head Coach
 3. Athletic Director
 4. Principal
 5. Board of Education

Research indicates that a student involved in interscholastic athletics has a better chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful athlete are exactly those that will promote a successful life after their playing days are over. We hope that the information we have provided will promote positive communication between parents and coaches, and make your experience with sports less stressful and more enjoyable.

Parent-Athlete Handbook Sign-Off Form

I certify that I have read, understand and agree to abide by all of the information contained in the Parent-Athlete Handbook. I further certify that if I have not understood any information contained in this handbook, I have sought and received an explanation of the information prior to signing this statement.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Student-Athlete's Signature

Date

This form must be completed by the parent/guardian and student-athlete, then submitted to the Athletic Director prior to a student being declared eligible for athletics.

Coach's Signature

Date

This form must also be completed by all coaches and submitted to the Athletic Director prior to a coach beginning his/her duties.

Received by Athletic Director

Date