



HANDBOOK¹
ST. MARY SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Revised November 2025

ST. MARY PARISH
Hyde Park

&

ST. MARY SCHOOL
U.S. Department of Education
National Blue Ribbon School
1986, 1994, 2006 & 2023

Celebrating over 100 years of Excellence

¹ Approved by Archdiocese as Charter Compliant, 2016.

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WELCOME

Purpose of St. Mary Sports Association²

The purpose of the St. Mary Sports Association or “SMSA” is to serve St. Mary by furthering the mission of the Catholic Church and providing sports experiences for the youth of St. Mary Parish and St. Mary School (collectively, “St. Mary”) that are firmly rooted in the Catholic faith tradition, based on the goals of the Catholic youth ministry, and aligned with the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church in accordance with The Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Youth Athletics, promulgated on March 1, 2014 (the “Charter”).

SMSA seeks to provide St. Mary youth with opportunities to participate in athletics and to learn the rules and fundamentals of their sport, the tenets of good sportsmanship, the discipline of hard work, the benefits of physical fitness, and the enjoyment of team work under proper supervision and guidance. In and through the experience of Catholic youth athletics, children and their families will better follow Christ, be drawn closer to the Church, and will grow in character, virtues, and Christian service.

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook (the “Handbook”) is intended to provide information about SMSA and its operation and to set forth the policies and procedures for the organization. For more information about SMSA as an organization, please refer to St. Mary Sports Association Constitution and Bylaws (the “Bylaws”). The policies and procedures set forth herein are in accordance with the terms of the Bylaws and The Charter. In the event of a conflict between these documents, the Charter, the Bylaws and the Handbook shall control in that order.

St. Mary Sports Association Membership

Anyone over the age of 18 may join and become a member of SMSA for an annual membership fee to support the activities offered and sponsored by SMSA. There are multiple membership opportunities which allow for variable levels of support. Upon payment of the annual membership fee, members will receive Gym Pass privileges, which entitle them and their immediate family to free admission to all St. Mary home athletic contests held at St. Mary gym, and/or any other SMSA sponsored tournaments held at St. Mary. Officers, commissioners and coordinators serving SMSA, the Parish pastor, the School principal, and the Parish Director of Religious Education shall be considered members of the SMSA and are entitled to the privileges of membership.

² See The Charter, Section 1.2 & 6.2.2

Governance of St. Mary Sports Association

SMSA is governed by the St. Mary Athletic Commission (“SMAC”), which is made up of officers and commissioners responsible for the regular business of the Sports Association, and an Executive Committee to promote and supervise the activities of SMAC and the Sports Association.

The pastor of St. Mary Parish, the principal of St. Mary School, and the director of religious education are non-voting ex officio members of SMAC.

SMAC members, other than the ex officio members, are elected to serve limited and staggered terms to promote continued growth and vitality of SMSA and are appointed by the Executive Committee.

SMAC members are assisted by various coordinators and/or committees whose members are approved by the Executive Committee.

Request for Volunteers

SMSA appreciates and welcomes the involvement of all members of the St. Mary Parish, St. Mary School, and others in our community who wish to help SMSA achieve its goals. SMSA is always in need of volunteers to assist the organization, and no prior knowledge, skill, or interest in athletics is required for a significant number of the tasks for which SMSA always needs volunteers. If you would like to get involved with or otherwise to assist SMSA in any capacity, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the SMAC Executive Committee.

ST. MARY SPIRIT

School Song

Cheer, cheer for St. Mary School
Love Spoken Here is always the rule.
We are loyal, we are true
St. Mary grade School, we love you.
We give our best in all that we do.
When things get tough, we always come through.
Green and gold we'll always be
Friends to eternity.

School Mascot

Cougars

School Colors

Green & Gold

ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION POLICY³

As general policy, SMSA aims to be inclusive of athletes who wish to represent their parish and/or school in athletics. SMSA will err on the side of inclusiveness when faced with decisions regarding the placement of student athletes on teams.

Registration

Registration for St. Mary sports is an important part of forming athletic teams to represent St. Mary. Due to the critical role that registration plays in determining the size and number of teams, adherence to registration deadlines must be met in order to ensure participation on a St. Mary team. In accordance with the general policy to be inclusive noted above, late registrants will be given due consideration by the commissioners to find an opportunity to play; however, placement on a team is not guaranteed. In addition, a late fee will be added for any registrations outside the registration window. Exceptions will be considered if commissioners need to recruit additional players in order to fill teams.

The registration windows are generally scheduled as follows:

- Fall Sports – Girls Volleyball, Boys & Girls Soccer; April 1 - April 30
- Winter Sports – Boys & Girls Basketball; Sep 1 - Sep 30
- Spring Sports – Boys Volleyball, Baseball, Softball, Boys & Girls Soccer ; Jan 1 - Jan 31

Neither refund nor credit for future registration will be provided if a registrant decides after the registration deadline not to play. Extenuating circumstances, such as injury, family move, etc., may be considered by the relevant commissioner and SMAC Executive Committee. However, reasons such as conflicts with other sports commitments or placement on a team that is considered undesirable by the registrant will not warrant a refund or credit.

Parish and School Membership

A child is eligible to participate on a St. Mary-sponsored team under any of the following circumstances:

- The child's parent or legal guardian is a St. Mary-registered parishioner. If the parents or legal guardians are registered at more than one parish, the child shall play with only one parish per school year (July through June), regardless of sport. Also, if the parents or legal guardians are St. Mary-registered parishioners and the child attends a school other than St. Mary, the child may participate on either a St. Mary team or a team of the school the child is attending.

³ See The Charter, Section 4.2

- The child attends St. Mary School, unless the child is a member of another Catholic parish, in which case the child must play for the child's home parish unless the child's parish does not offer the particular sport at issue.
- If the child's parents or legal guardians are not registered with a Catholic parish and the child is not attending a Catholic school, the child may participate on a St. Mary team by application to and permission granted by St. Mary Pastor, SMAC, and the league in which the team will participate. A child is expected to play for the Catholic parish/school that is closest to the child's primary residence, unless the parish/school does not have a team or does not accept the child, in which case the child is expected to play for the next closest parish/school and so on.

In addition to the foregoing eligibility requirements,

- If the child's parents or legal guardians are registered at more than one parish, the child shall play with only one parish per school year (July through June), regardless of sport, unless the family residence moves to a different locale and parish, in which case a change is permitted, or St. Mary does not sponsor the particular sport the child wishes to play.
- If the child's parents or legal guardians are St. Mary-registered parishioners and the child attends a school other than St. Mary, the child may participate on either a St. Mary team or a team of the school the child is attending.
- A child who is a member of another Catholic parish or school is not permitted to play for a St. Mary-sponsored team if the child's parish or school offers the same sport, without approval on a case-by-case basis by the child's parish Pastor or non-parish school principal, SMAC, and the league in which the team will participate.
- If St. Mary cannot provide a complete team in a particular sport but has children interested in playing, St. Mary can seek to place them on another parish team geographically adjacent to St. Mary or form a combined team with one or more adjacent parishes, in which case all children from St. Mary are expected to play for that team. Likewise, if an adjacent parish cannot provide a complete team in a particular sport but has children interested in playing, St. Mary may allow (but has no obligation to do so) those children to play on a St. Mary team.

Religious Education

- Catholic children must be enrolled in and regularly attend the religious education of the child's parish or school in the current school year, which may be scheduled during the summer or the school year. Three or more unexcused absences from religious education sessions will result in suspension from the team absent exceptional circumstances, which for children who are parishioners or students of St. Mary will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by St. Mary's DRE.

- Non-Catholic children enrolled in Catholic schools are eligible to play provided they attend the school's religious education classes in the current school year.
- Non-Catholic children whose parents have enrolled in RCIA or are otherwise in the process of becoming Catholic, are eligible to play provided they are enrolled in and regularly attend the parish's religious education in the current school year. Three or more unexcused absences from religious education sessions will result in suspension from the team absent exceptional circumstances.
- Children who are not registered with a Catholic parish and not attending a Catholic school are not required to attend religious education and may participate on a St. Mary team by express permission by St. Mary pastor, SMAC, and the participating league.

EVENT SCHEDULING POLICY⁴

The scheduling of athletic activities (including games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) shall not violate any of following Archdiocesan policies as set forth in the Charter:

- Reasonable efforts shall be used so that athletic activities (defined to include games, practices, tournaments, and other meetings) shall not be scheduled to start at St. Mary or any other facility owned by a parish or a Catholic school in the Archdiocese on Sundays and Holy Days before 11:30 am.
- Reasonable efforts shall be used so that athletic activities held on-site at St. Mary shall not be scheduled during Saturday and Sunday afternoon and evening liturgies if doing so would adversely affect worship at St. Mary (e.g., because of noise or parking problems).
- Athletic activities shall not be scheduled on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.
- Athletics activities shall not be scheduled when the children involved normally would be attending religious education, sacramental preparation programs and the like. If conflicts occur, programs of religious education, sacramental preparation and the like take precedence. Coaches are expected to support the faith formation of their players, and in no case are children to be penalized for missing a practice or game due to participation in such programs.

⁴ See The Charter, Section 5.2.6

PLAYING TIME POLICY⁵

Definitions⁶

“Competitive” - A Competitive team is a team that is formed based on skill in relationship to an athlete's peers. The designation of Competitive team shall be communicated to athletes and parents in advance of league play.⁷ Positional play is typical on a Competitive team and, unless otherwise mandated by the league in which the team plays, there are no minimum playing time requirements. No Competitive teams shall be formed prior to 5th grade, or as otherwise defined by the league.

“Recreational” - A Recreational team is any team that is not designated a Competitive team. The designation of Recreational team shall be communicated to athletes and parents in advance of league play.⁷ Positional play is acceptable. Roughly equal playtime is expected, and in no case should playing time be less than one (1) game (in the case of volleyball) or one (1) quarter (in the case of basketball or soccer) of the game, except in cases of disciplinary action. Playing time need not be continuous.

Prior to 5th Grade

Unless otherwise defined by the league, in most cases, multiple Recreational teams will be formed in a grade, and all such teams shall be considered balanced teams, with equal balance of skills across all teams, as required by league structure. No Competitive teams may be formed prior to 5th grade.

- For Recreational teams prior to 5th grade, players are expected to have roughly equal playing time in practices, games, and tournaments, which should be monitored and maintained in some fashion by the particular coach(es).

5th through 8th Grade

Within parameters set by the leagues in which St. Mary teams play, a grade may form multiple teams, which may include singular or multiple Competitive teams, singular or multiple Recreational teams, or a combination of Competitive and Recreational teams based on evaluations.

For teams designated as Competitive teams, in grades which multiple teams are formed, no guarantee of playing time exists, unless mandated by the league in which the team plays.

⁵ See The Charter, Section 4.4

⁶ Derived from GCCYS League Structure

⁷ See The Charter, Section 4.4.2

Coaches may limit playing time as a disciplinary measure (e.g., as a consequence for missing practices, consistent tardiness, other infractions).

For teams designated as Recreational teams, players are expected to have roughly equal playing time in practices, games, and tournaments monitored and maintained in some fashion by the particular coach(es). Coaches may limit playing time as a disciplinary measure (e.g., as a consequence for missing practices, consistent tardiness, other infractions).

However, if there are insufficient registrants to form multiple teams in a particular grade, no registrant shall be denied participation on the one team that is formed. An assessment by the commissioner and coach shall then be made as to whether the singular team be designated as Competitive or Recreational ahead of league play, subject to compliance with the league.

If a grade's singular team is designated a Competitive team for league purposes, where no playing time requirements exist, SMAC nevertheless encourages that all players be afforded a minimum amount of playing time equal to one (1) game in volleyball; one (1) quarter in basketball and soccer. In such circumstances, consideration should be given such that players receiving only the minimum playing time in more competitive matches are afforded additional playing time in less competitive matches when possible.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY⁸

Discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, gender and race is contrary to Catholic moral teaching, is unacceptable in Catholic youth athletics, and will not be tolerated in any manner, including but not limited to, scheduling of practices and games, team formation, and playing time.

⁸ See The Charter, Section 4.5

POLICIES ON SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN⁹

*Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection (the “Decree”)*¹⁰

All mandates of the Decree shall be followed, including but not limited to the following:

- All coaches and other Regular Volunteers, as defined in the Decree, must be SafeParish certified.
- A coach or other Regular Volunteer who transports children in that capacity must not transport one child alone and must be accompanied by another adult, unless that coach or regular volunteer is traveling in a caravan where there is one adult in every vehicle. Further, children must not be transported without permission from the child’s parent or guardian.
- A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by St. Mary or other institution of the Archdiocese only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on a standard Permission, Release and Medical Power of Attorney form.
- For practices and games and other St. Mary-sponsored activities, at least two adults, both of whom are SafeParish certified , who are not related to each other, must be scheduled to be present for any such activity.
- Single-sex athletics must have at least one adult of the same gender as the players.

Concussions

Before practice or play begins for each sport or season, the parent or guardian of each participating child should review and sign the head injury information sheet required by Ohio Revised Code Section 3707.52, a copy of which is available at <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/child-injury-prevention/youthconcussions> .

If a player exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury during a practice or game, the player shall be removed from the practice or competition by either the coach or the referee or official. Parents will be notified of the injury as soon as possible. Under Ohio law, if a player is removed from practice or game because of concussion-like symptoms, the individual who removed the player must not allow the player, on the same day the player is removed, to return to practice or the game or participate in any other practice or game for which the coach or referee is responsible. Thereafter, under Ohio law, the coach or referee shall not allow the player to return to any practice or game for which the individual is responsible until both of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) The student's

⁹ See The Charter, Section 4.3

¹⁰ <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/safe-environment/decree-on-child-protection>

condition is assessed by a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider; and (ii) the player receives written clearance that it is safe to return to practice or competition from a physician or other authorized licensed health care provider.

Bad Weather

When thunder is heard or a lightning bolt is seen at a practice or game, teams must suspend play and take shelter immediately. Once play has been suspended, play or practice will not resume until approximately 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder was heard or lightning flash was witnessed. When there are high temperatures, coaches should exercise prudence by taking reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of all involved, such as monitoring athletes closely, limiting practice duration, allowing lighter clothing, and providing frequent fluid breaks for rehydration.

Transportation

The same laws, policies and guidelines that govern other Archdiocesan programs, schools, and ministries are in effect for athletics programs under Catholic parish or school auspices, as follows:

Laws: In an automobile, all passengers must wear seat belts, with no more than one passenger per seat belt, and schools must transport by bus (by mandate of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Revised Code).

Policies: If it becomes necessary for any priest, deacon, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third-party contractor, employee or volunteer to provide transportation for children, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:

- Priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third-party contractor, employees, or volunteers must never transport one child alone. It is expected that there will be at least two adults in every vehicle that transports children. In exceptional situations, one adult may transport children in a vehicle, provided a caravan of vehicles goes directly from point A to point B, with no stops in between.
- Children must be directly transported to their destination, or make only previously planned stops (e.g. stopping for food or gas on a long trip). If an emergency stop must be made, all reasonable efforts must be made to ensure that two adults are present (e.g. calling another car in the caravan to pull over as well).
- Children must never be transported without written permission from the child's parent or guardian.
- Clerics, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or any volunteers must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children while in the vehicle.

- 15-passenger vans have been prohibited since May 2005, per the recommendation of the General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Archdiocesan Recommendations and Clarifications.
- For liability reasons, the Archdiocese prefers that buses rented from a third-party who supplies the driver are used for transportation.
- When Church leaders are providing transportation for an event, a teen may drive herself (and siblings) only with written permission of the parent or guardian. They may not transport other passengers.
- The driver's insurance is the primary insurance coverage, not the Archdiocese.
- If an event begins and ends at the site of an activity, the Church leader does not need to organize the transportation.
- Church leaders shall not organize transportation for parish or school events using drivers under the age of 21.

Gender Dyshphoria

In being consistent with Catholic doctrine and following Archdiocesan policy, St. Mary Sports Association supports athletes with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy and compassion. Policy does require that these athlete's biological sex will determine: names and/or pronouns used, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, any St. Mary-sponsored sports teams, and sleeping accommodations while on overnight trips. St. Mary Sports Association would provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any athlete who desires increased privacy.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY¹¹

All who are involved in Catholic Youth Athletics are expected to conduct themselves as examples of Christian behavior. The following Code of Conduct extends to all events or activities sanctioned or sponsored by athletics organizations, including but not limited to meetings, games, practices, travel to and from events, attendance at another team's game, camps, players' clinics, officials' clinics, and during other related activities. Any violations of this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by SMAC and/or the league in which the subject team participates, if applicable.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics

All involved in Catholic Youth Athletics are expected to treat everyone with respect and love according to the Great Commandments and demonstrate good sportsmanship, patience, manners and an attitude indicative of the spirit and mission of the Catholic Church.

Compliance with Laws, Rules and Policies

All involved in Catholic Youth Athletics are expected to comply with Catholic canon law; Archdiocesan laws and policies; federal, state, and local laws and ordinances; the mission, goals, principles, and policies of the Charter; the Bylaws; and this Handbook.

Specific Violations

- Eligibility – Teams must comply with the eligibility policies of the Charter as set forth herein.
- Recruiting – Parishes and schools may not recruit for athletic purposes or to enhance a team's competitive advantage.
- Leaving the field of play – No team may leave the field, floor, game or tournament because of dissatisfaction with the officials or their decisions.
- Losing control – Coaches are expected to control their own conduct and the conduct of their players and report to SMAC and the league instances where opponents, officials, parents, or fans have failed to control their own conduct.
- Running up the score – A team is not permitted to humiliate an opposing team by playing in such a way so as to intentionally run up the score after the outcome of the game is no longer in question.

¹¹ See The Charter, Section 8

- Inappropriate communication and behavior – The use of inappropriate, insulting, disrespectful, bullying and demeaning language or behavior before, during or after meetings, practices or games by players, coaches, officials, parents, fans, site personnel, volunteers, or others involved in any parish athletics program is prohibited. Also prohibited are physical intimidation and the use of profane, vulgar, abusive or sexually-oriented language, in oral, written or electronic forms of communication (such as texting or email), by players, coaches, officials, parents, site personnel, volunteers, or fans.
- Escalating behaviors – Behavior that incites others to act in ways that are in direct conflict with the spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics is prohibited.
- Vandalism and theft – Vandalism, theft, or destruction of property at any athletics venue shall not be permitted.
- Alcohol, tobacco, illegal controlled substances – Alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal controlled substance is not permitted to be consumed or used during practices and games where children are present. Athletics organizations are expected to establish and communicate zero tolerance policies regarding the consumption or use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal controlled substances during practices and games where children are present.
- General Violations – Activities that are contrary to the mission, goals, principles, values, provisions or spirit of Catholic Youth Athletics as described in the Charter are prohibited.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct¹²

Coaches are responsible for their own behavior and the behavior of their players during practices, games, meetings, and tournaments while children are in their care, and parents are responsible for their own behavior and the behavior of children in their care. Participation on a team and attendance at practices and games are privileges, not rights for players, coaches, parents and fans.

In the case of a violation of the Code of Conduct, a coach or other official or authorized leader may choose to deliver a warning, or if the violation warrants it the individual may be ejected and suspended, as follows:

- Ejection – A coach, parent, or fan who is ejected for any reason must leave the premises (including the field of play, stands, and adjacent areas such as nearby parking lots) and may be subject to suspension for the next scheduled game, per league requirements, which may include an appeal process. A player who is ejected from the game is not required to leave the premises. If, however, a player (or child fan unaccompanied by an adult) is ejected and required to leave the premises, that child should be supervised by at least two adults until the child is directly under the supervision of a parent or guardian, in compliance with the Decree.

¹² See The Charter, Section 6.2.12

- Suspension – An individual who is suspended shall be prohibited from attending the next game. Suspensions for egregious violations may include multiple games, practices, and other team activities at the discretion of SMAC. Suspension shall follow ejection as a consequence of the violation. Any violation of the suspension or a subsequent violation shall trigger an escalating series of responses, as follows:

Violation	When/Where	Sanction
First	Before, during, or after a game or practice.	Ejection for the rest of the game, subject to suspension for the next game.
Second	Before, during, or after game or practice.	Ejection for the rest of the game, subject to multi-game suspension.
Third	Before, during, or after a game or practice.	Ejection for the rest of the game, subject to indefinite suspension.

COACHING POLICIES

General Expectations

All coaches are expected to abide by and uphold the terms of this Handbook and the Bylaws, represent the team with a high level of sportsmanship, integrity and respect towards team, parents and opponents at all times, support and assist in the spiritual, emotional, social and physical development of all players by providing opportunities for athletic skills training, character development, and spiritual growth, and ensure that prayer happens at each practice and game.

Selection of Coaches¹³

Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age and in compliance with the Decree. Assistant coaches must be at least 19 years of age, a high school graduate and in compliance with the Decree.

The selection of coaches will be based on the following criteria:

- Virtues—the person lives the values and virtues of the Catholic faith whether or not a member of the Catholic Church.

¹³ See The Charter, Section 6.2.10

- Capabilities—the person is knowledgeable about and has experience with coaching children in the particular sport.
- Rapport—the person exhibits a positive rapport with both children and adults
- Maturity—the person exhibits appropriate maturity (e.g., level-headed, able to control temper, take responsibility for mistakes, accept criticism).
- Commitment—the person is able to commit the time necessary for preparation, practices, and games.

As a best practice, non-parent coaches should serve a minimum of one (1) year as an assistant coach prior to being considered for head coach position. The commissioner of the sport and the SMAC Executive Committee will duly consider candidacy from any non-parent coach who applies to be Head coach.

Requirements and Responsibilities

Coaches are encouraged to attend at least one meeting held by SMAC during the year in which the person coaches, and shall familiarize themselves in regard to the mission, principles and goals of Catholic youth athletics and the requirements and, if applicable, updates of the Charter, the Handbook and the Bylaws, as well as any related issues.

Coaches shall be SafeParish certified, current on training, and in compliance with the Decree.

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players during practices, games, meetings, and tournaments.

Coaches shall demonstrate good sportsmanship, patience, manners and an attitude indicative of the spirit and mission of the Catholic Church.

Coaches shall comply with the Code of Conduct set forth in the Charter, and more specifically, not engage in any of the following prohibited activity:

- Use an ineligible player;
- Leave the field, floor, game or tournament because of dissatisfaction with the officials or their decisions;
- Intentionally run up the score after the outcome of the game is no longer reasonably in question;
- Use or allow the use by players of inappropriate, abusive, insulting, disrespectful, or demeaning language or behavior before, during or after meetings, practices or games
- Physically intimidate or allow players to physically intimidate others

- Engage in or allow players to engage in behavior that incites others to act in ways that are in direct conflict with the spirit of Catholic youth athletics
- Use or consume or allow players to use or consume alcohol, tobacco, or illegal controlled substances during practices or games.
- Engage in activities that are contrary to the mission, goals, principles, values, provisions or spirit of Catholic youth athletics as described in the Charter.

Coach Evaluations

Pursuant to the Charter, each season, SMAC will conduct and obtain anonymous written evaluations of coaches from parents whose children played that season. The purpose of the evaluations is to help SMAC identify any issues that may need to be addressed and to assist coaches with areas that may need improvement. A copy of the evaluation form is available upon request.

POLICIES ON LEAGUE AND TOURNAMENT PLAY

St. Mary teams will participate only in leagues approved by SMAC. Tournament participation is limited to tournaments sponsored by such leagues or parishes and/or schools within such leagues. No financial or other obligation shall be placed upon parents to participate in more tournaments than those sponsored by St. Mary or paid for by SMAC.

In addition to tournaments sponsored by St. Mary, SMAC will fund registration fees for participation in two tournaments per team per season. Upon a coach's request, additional tournaments may be considered by the relevant commissioner, SMAC Treasurer, and the Executive Committee. Such requests must be received and approved prior to tournament registration.

UNIFORM POLICY

St. Mary uniforms are for parish and/or school-sanctioned activities (e.g., games, tournaments, pep rallies, etc.). Teams and, thus, players are not permitted to wear their uniforms outside of St. Mary-sanctioned activities. Parents may be held responsible for reimbursing SMAC for the cost of a full or partial replacement if a participant's uniform is not returned within the designated turn-in period after the conclusion of a season.

GRIEVANCE POLICY¹⁴

St. Mary is committed to a safe and healthy environment for children, parents, coaches and spectators at all athletic events in which teams and players within the SMSA participate. Effective communication between athletics organizations, leagues, parents and children, inspired by Christian ideals, is an essential element of Archdiocesan athletics programs. Moreover, the Catholic principle of subsidiarity calls for matters to be handled at the lowest possible level, so that grievances are best managed and settled locally between people of good faith.

In the event of a problem or conflict with coaches, athletes participating on a St. Mary team or any parents thereof, or any athletes or parents on the opposing team, the following steps must be followed to ensure that the grievance is properly considered and addressed, if appropriate:

- The complainant must first address and discuss the problem with the head coach of the St. Mary team on whose team your child is participating, but not before 24 hours after the problem arose, if the conflict is with the St. Mary coach. If the problem involves the head coach, the complainant may first address and discuss it with one or more of the assistant coaches or with the St. Mary commissioner for that particular sport, but not before 24 hours have passed since the problem arose. If the problem is with an assistant St. Mary coach, the complainant must first address it with the head coach of that team.
- If the problem remains unresolved or it involves all of the St. Mary coaches, the complainant must address and discuss it with the SMAC commissioner for that particular sport.
- If the problem still remains unresolved, the complainant must address and discuss it with the SMAC President, and upon any request made to the President, the problem will be presented to the Grievance Committee, which shall consist of the President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, the Director or Religious Education, and Pastor or his designated representative. A meeting of the Grievance Committee will take place and a decision will be issued to the complainant no later than 7 days after the request is made to the President, unless the complainant or others involved wish to appear at the meeting or the Grievance Committee determines that the attendance of others is appropriate and those individuals have agreed to appear.

If the complainant or others involved wish to appear or the Grievance Committee determines that the attendance of others (who agree to appear) is appropriate and the schedules of these individuals does not permit the meeting to take place within 7 days, the meeting will be scheduled as promptly thereafter as possible to permit everyone to attend.

¹⁴ See The Charter, Section 6.2.17

A majority vote of the Grievance Committee shall be considered dispositive of the problem presented by the complainant and final, unless there is a claim that due process as described in the Bylaws or this Handbook or that other provisions of the Bylaws or Charter were violated, in which case an appeal may be made to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Youth Athletics Commission as envisioned by the Charter. This grievance process shall be based on a presumption of good faith, Christian charity, personal responsibility, adherence to the principles of the Charter, and a commitment to both the well-being of the children and the common good of the faith community.

SPORT COMMITMENT POLICY

During the registration process and at the discretion of the Commissioner and the Board, parents may be asked to select the level of commitment for their athlete. This commitment level may be worded as follows:

- Fully Committed - This will be my son's/daughter's primary sport and they will be at practices and games regardless of conflicts with other athletic/extracurricular activities.
- Not Fully Committed - This is NOT my son's/daughter's primary sport. If practice schedules cannot be worked out to not conflict with their primary athletic/extracurricular activity, he/she will miss those practices and may miss games for conflicts.

This information may be used by the Commissioner, evaluators and proposed coaches in the formation of teams. In grades prior to 5th grade, or when otherwise forming balanced teams, an effort will be made to split the less committed players. In 5th through 8th grade, or otherwise defined by the league, depending upon the makeup of the class of athletes and the anticipated level of play for the top and/or secondary teams, teams may be formed with consideration for ensuring that there are enough committed players to consistently hold full squad practices and field teams for games without the risk of forfeit. The level of commitment provided at registration will not necessarily preclude an individual from participation on a top level team, but it may be considered in formation of the teams.

We trust that parents will answer the commitment question with honesty. On Competitive teams, the coach always reserves the right to adjust playing time to reward the level of commitment. If the commissioner and SMAC determine that the player's level of commitment does not agree with the answer given at the time of registration, SMAC may take necessary action to adjust teams (before league deadlines) or make other accommodations to make the experience fair for the committed players. Furthermore, SMAC reserves the right to override future commitment declarations for the same athlete based upon experiences from past seasons. The family will be afforded every opportunity to defend their position prior to such action.

Survival

The commitment level indicated at registration shall survive any tryouts, evaluations and rostering of teams. Any student who elects to participate in a tryout and evaluation for a top level Competitive team and who, following that tryout and evaluation, is not offered a place on the roster of that top level Competitive team and who, following notification that they have not been offered a place on the roster, chooses at that time to withdraw from the sport for which they tried out entirely for that season, will not be permitted to participate in a tryout and evaluation for a top level Competitive team for a period not less than 13 months, but remains eligible to participate on lower level Competitive teams and/or Recreational teams. Additionally, no refunds will be provided regarding a student who chooses to withdraw from a sport after tryouts are completed, without express approval of a refund by the Board.

ANNUAL AWARDS POLICY

The SMSA participates in the 8th grade graduation ceremony or hosts an annual banquet at the end of each school year to recognize our graduating 8th grade athletes. Every student who participated in a SMSA sponsored sport in 7th or 8th grade is invited to attend. Each student receives a certificate and is eligible for the individual awards (subject to change).

Categories

- THE DOE AND LARRY HEALY OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
- OUTSTANDING SPORTSMANSHIP AND POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE
- OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD
- OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC ATHLETE AWARD
- OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD

Eligibility

Any athlete who participated in a SMSA-sponsored sport during his or her 7th or 8th Grade year, or an approved St Mary Parish affiliated partnership, such as Cougar Football or Cougar Cheer.

Decision Process

Ballots are sent to the coaches of the eligible athletes during the 7th and 8th grade years. Each coach is asked to rank, in order, the top four (4) athletes they coached for each category, although they are not obligated to fill in all (4), or even any, of the categories if they are not comfortable doing so. This includes both head coaches and assistant coaches.

The categories on the coaches' ballots are:

- Athletic Excellence
- Sportsmanship & Positive Mental Attitude
- Leadership.

Ballots are also sent to the St. Mary Junior High teachers (6th -8th grade), including the specialty classes like Art, Phys Ed, Music, etc. These same ballots are also sent to Fr. Ken, Ms. Rosemond, and the SMAC's Spiritual Liaison for Athletics. As with the coaches, these voters are asked to rank, in order, the top four (4) athletes for each category, to the extent they are comfortable doing so.

The categories on the teachers' ballots are:

- Excellence in the Classroom
- Community Service
- Leadership.

Calculation

The results are compiled in a spreadsheet that weighs each vote based on the ranking received; however the "Leadership" scores are averaged because both Coaches and Teachers vote on that category. The SMAC President compiles the votes unless there is a conflict of interest, and therefore the task would be undertaken by the Vice President.

The young man and woman with the highest results in each category is chosen for the award, with the proviso that no student athlete may win more than one award.

Finally, the young man and woman who achieved the highest overall score will be awarded our annual \$1,500 scholarship to the parochial or private Catholic school they will be attending this fall. If the winner will not be attending a Catholic school, the scholarship – but not the award – will be granted to the second-place overall winner.