

OCS

Owensboro Catholic Schools

2008-2009

Faith
IN EDUCATION

OWENSBORO CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Owensboro Catholic Middle School

2540 Christie Place

Owensboro, KY 42301

Phone: 270-684-0480

The Owensboro Catholic Schools share in the mission of the Church in cooperation with families to provide a religious and academic education which prepares students to become responsible members of family, Church, and community.

Central Office

1524 West Parrish Avenue

Owensboro, KY 42301

Phone: 270-686-8896

OCMS Sports Handbook July 2008

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Section 1. Catholic Identity

The Owensboro Catholic Middle School (OCMS) sports program, like the school as a whole, is provided for the ultimate purpose of developing student athletes as young Christian men and women. Likewise, the school is governed by the guidelines of our Christian faith as imparted to us by the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Owensboro.

In view of this, the following guidelines apply to all OCMS sports programs:

1. The coaches are at all times to be examples of Christianity to the student athletes and must show this example to them.
2. There are to be no games or practices on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation. Any exception to this rule must be requested of the principal of OCMS.
3. Coaches are to make prayer a priority and a Christian witness. Thus, the coaches are to pray with the students at all games and practices.
4. For all contests in any sport in which a public address system is available, the competition is to begin with a public prayer.

Section 2. Season Scheduling Limits

The parameters for middle school sports seasons are to be as follows:

- ⇒ **Fall Sports** (Cross-Country, Football, Golf-OCHS, Soccer-OCHS, Volleyball)
 - Beginning on July 15th and ending on October 15th
 - An exception is to be made in Cross-Country, allowing an extension until the Middle School state meet.
- ⇒ **Winter Sports** (Boys & Girls Basketball, Swim-OCHS)
 - Beginning on October 15th and ending on February 15th
- ⇒ **Spring Sports** (Baseball-OCHS, Softball-OCHS, Tennis-OCHS, Track)
 - Beginning on February 15th and ending on May 15th
- ⇒ **Combined Fall & Winter Sports** (8th Grade Cheerleading)
 - Beginning May 1st and ending on February 15th

In no case may a season (including post-season tournaments) extend beyond the last day allowed for regular season games in that sport at the varsity level as set by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA).

The seasons, within each school year, are not to extend beyond the boundaries outlined here. Coaches may offer for the student athletes, off-season clinics, tournaments, training, open-gyms, etc.; but any such activity must be strictly optional for the student. Any involvement in these off-season activities is to be the athlete's decision, and participation is not to have any bearing on the athlete's making the team the following season, playing time or any other aspect of involvement on the team.

The purpose of the previous paragraph is to allow the student athlete to freely compete in sports in any of the three sports seasons. A coach may not keep an athlete from freely competing in any sport in the off-season.

If there is any overlapping of sports seasons for any reason (such as fall cross-country or participation in high school sports), the precedence is to be given to the sport that is nearly ending. Athletes completing a sport's season are not to be required to attend practices for the new sport until the previous sport's season is completed. For those students trying out for basketball, while still participating in a fall sport, arrangements are to be made individually with the student athlete and his/her parents to give them a fair chance of being chosen for the basketball team.

Section 3. Conference Participation

The OCMS basketball, football, track and volleyball teams compete in the Midwest Kentucky Middle School Athletic Conference. These teams are bound by the parameters of this conference in all matters, so long as they do not conflict with the policies of OCMS athletics.

The OCMS Boy's soccer program participates in the Western Kentucky Middle School Soccer Conference and is likewise bound by the parameters of that body.

Section 4. Sports Physicals

A student athlete is not to begin practice for a sport until he/she has turned in a KHSAA physical form to the coach allowing participation in that sport. It is the coach's duty to see that this is enforced.

For sports programs that require tryouts, a student athlete must have a completed KHSAA physical before athlete may tryout.

A physical form is good for one calendar year from the date in which the student athlete received the physical. Thus, an athlete who competed in a fall sport does not need a new physical for a winter or spring sport.

Sports physicals are required for any student participating in an intramural sport at Owensboro Catholic Middle School.

Section 5. Responsibilities of the Athletic Director (AD)

Like the coaches and student athletes, the AD must exhibit Christian witness in dealing with coaches, officials, other Athletic Directors, student-athletes and parents.

It is the responsibility of the AD to deal with concerns addressed to him by parents. The AD and the principal are to hear any reasonable concerns expressed to them and to resolve them in an appropriate manner.

While scheduling of games may be done in conjunction with the coaches of individual sports, the responsibility of developing the final schedule belongs with the AD.

The AD, in conjunction with the principal of OCMS, is responsible for the enforcement of OCMS's academic policy as it relates to student athletes and as it is further discussed below in Section 8 (Academic Eligibility Policy).

Working with the principal of OCMS, the AD is to select and hire coaches who are knowledgeable in their particular sport, and who will act in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 (Catholic Identity).

Section 6. Responsibilities of the Coach

Like the AD and student athletes, the coach must exhibit a Christian witness in dealing primarily with the student athletes but also with other participants in the middle school athletic program. Coaches are to live their role as an example of Christian living and are not to display inappropriate actions, language or conduct in that role. Coaches are expected to follow the same code of Christian conduct in practices and contests.

To collect and turn in to the AD, as soon as practical after the beginning of practice completed physicals for all student athletes competing in that sport.

By the first scheduled contest of the season, the coach is to have insurance forms for all student athletes. Forms are to be kept in the coaches' possession at all competitions (home and away) and are also to be available at all practices in case of serious injury to a student athlete.

Before the beginning of the season's practice, all head and assistant coaches must have personally completed the required forms necessary. These include, but are not limited to:

Employment application

- Physical
- Certificate of attendance at any Safe Environment Workshop as required by the Diocese of Owensboro for any adult working with youth.
- Criminal Records check
- Any other form(s) required by the Owensboro Catholic School System.

Coaches are to provide athletes with a practice and game atmosphere free of emotional and/or physical abuse.

At least one coach must remain after practices, after games and after returning from away games until all student athletes have been picked up. This is an important liability issue.

In sports where there are tryouts, it is important that student athletes (and their parents) be assured that all students have an equal opportunity to make the team. There can be no indication that any student's making or not making a team has been pre-determined prior to tryouts.

It is the head coach's responsibility to maintain discipline among the student athletes at practices, games or other team functions.

During all practices, games or travel as a team, a coach or faculty member must be responsible for all student athletes. Responsibility cannot be delegated to a parent or other adult for the student athletes.

Coaches are also responsible for abiding by the guidelines enumerated below in Section 10 (i.e. Transportation Policies).

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Student Athlete

Student Athletes are also expected to follow a code of conduct befitting the Christian attitude as it is taught in our Catholic schools.

Student athletes are to conduct themselves in a proper manner in school. The OCMS principal has the responsibility to suspend or otherwise discipline a student in regard to sports, due to the student's conduct in the classroom or at other school activities.

It is the responsibility of the student athlete to maintain grades at an acceptable level while participating in a sports program. More specific details are provided below in Section 8 below (Academic Eligibility).

Student Athletes are expected to treat their teammates in an appropriate civil manner. Athletes are to compete and practice in an atmosphere that is free from abuse from other teammates.

Student athletes are to remember that their actions are a reflection of their school, school system and Church, and must therefore conduct themselves accordingly at all team activities.

Section 8. Academic Eligibility Policy

Student athletes' grades in all courses will be checked every week for possible F's or D's during the sports season in which the student is competing.

If an athlete has any two grades of D or below, the student will be listed as ineligible.

The above ineligibility will last for a minimum of one calendar week, beginning the following Monday and continuing until the Sunday after that Monday.

At the end of the next calendar week, a suspended athlete will have ALL of his classes checked for possible D's or F's (not just the classes they were previously failing).

If, at the end of that week, a student has improved his/her grades so that he/she has no more than two deficiencies, the student is again eligible to compete.

Definition of Ineligibility:

1. The ineligible student may not participate, or even be present at any practice during his/her suspension.
2. The ineligible student may not be present at any game as a player. This includes such things as riding with the team on away trips, being present on the bench (either in uniform or in street clothes) or being in the locker room with the other athletes.
3. During an athlete's suspension, the athlete is expected to attend after school study halls with the Dean of Students or other designated faculty in an effort to improve his/her grades.

Any reasonable effort to work with teachers, parents, coaches and administration by the student to improve the student's grades will be encouraged.

The student, parents of the suspended student and the coach will be informed as soon as possible of the suspension and of its ramifications.

The suspension policy is not meant to be punitive, but rather is meant to encourage the student to succeed academically by using participation in sports as a positive incentive.

The Athletic Director, under the guidance of the OCMS principal, is the primary enforcer of the academic eligibility policy.

This handbook pertains exclusively to competitive school teams and not to intramural sports.

Section 9. Non-Academic Eligibility Policies

In some cases it may be appropriate and acceptable for a student athlete to move up to the high school level in a sport such as basketball, soccer or track even though the sport is available at the middle school. In such cases, the following guidelines will apply:

- ◆ "Moving up" or "playing up" can only be done with the approval of the student's parents, and the principals from both schools and coaches. The refusal on the part of any one of the four will prevent "moving up".
- ◆ Any sport that plays within the confines of the Midwest Kentucky Athletic Conference, an athlete may not play up to any high school level (freshman, JV, or Varsity) in any single game and play back down at the middle school level, as mandated by the Midwest Kentucky Athletic Conference.
- ◆ Grade school student athletes must also have the permission of parents and both principals before being allowed to play up. In sports programs where the grade school offers a team in that sport, a specific reason must be demonstrated for moving the student athlete up to middle school participation.
- ◆ Grade school students who move up to middle school sports are governed by the academic policies of the grade school program.

Policies of the grade school program

If a sport is offered at both the 7th and 8th grade levels (i.e. football, basketball, cheerleading and volleyball), 7th graders will not be allowed to move up as a general rule. Exceptions to this rule can be given consideration as long as parents, principals and athletic directors agree. If any one of the three does not agree, the move up will not be allowed. The two grades should be kept entirely separate for the purposes of competition (although they may practice together at any time).

These additional provisions govern individual sports relative to "moving up" in sports:

- ♣ **Football and Soccer**– 6th grade students may tryout for middle school football and soccer provided the 6th grade does not have a team at their level.
- ♣ **Basketball, Volleyball and Cheerleading** - no grade school student may move up to these middle school sports for any reason provided the numbers of middle school athletes will support that sport. If for any reason the number of student athletes fall below the required amount to support a team, grade school students may play up with the permission of the principals, parents and coaches.
- ♣ **Cross-Country and Track** - Grade school athletes are allowed to compete in these sports if they obtain the permission of the principals, parents and coach.

A student athlete may not participate in Middle School athletics if he or she has turned 15 years old before August 1st of a given school year.

Section 10. Transportation Policy

All student athletes must ride the team bus to any game outside of Daviess County. Student athletes must also ride the bus home from games unless riding home with their own parents (i.e. not grandparents, not brothers or sisters, not family friends and not other student athlete parents). Coaches are to record (sign out) student athletes when parents do take their own children home.

Any exception to the above rules (relative to transportation) can only be made with advanced permission from the OCMS principal.