

Decatur Catholic Coaching Handbook



2024 - 2025



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to coach within the Decatur Catholic athletic community. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with general policies and procedures of the Decatur Catholic Athletic Program that govern and impact your responsibilities as a coach. This handbook is not an all-encompassing document and may not cover every possible situation or unusual circumstance. It is a general source of information to help guide you through your Decatur Catholic coaching experience. For more detailed information, please refer to Decatur Catholic Athletic Handbook located at decaturcatholicathletics.com.

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Name	Title	Phone	Email

MISSION- DECATUR CATHOLIC ATHLETICS

The mission of Decatur Catholic Athletics is to help our youth build character, good sportsmanship, and self-confidence. The youth will learn responsibility & teamwork in a competitive environment while gaining a strong sense of community. All of this will be accomplished while maintaining and promoting Catholic beliefs/teachings.

GENERAL INFORMATION-DECATUR CATHOLIC ATHLETICS

Decatur Catholic Athletics desires to offer and enhance athletic opportunities for students and families as well as to create a stronger Catholic community. Decatur Catholic Athletics complies with the rules and regulations of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and with all IESA (Illinois Elementary School Association) regulations. The following sports will be offered at all schools in a cooperative manner through the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) and our Decatur Catholic Schools:

- Baseball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Girls' Basketball
- Boys' Basketball
- Girls' Volleyball
- Track and Field
- Scholastic Bowl
- Soccer – Kindergarten -8th Grade (Non-IESA)
- Softball

GENERAL INFORMATION- DIOCESAN ATHLETIC POLICY

Athletics §5561 *The Handbook of Catholic Education Policies*

The purposes of school-sponsored athletic programs are to teach the skills of games, to foster healthy exercise, to teach fair play, and to give enjoyment to students. Athletic programs which deny to certain

students these opportunities, or that exert undue pressures on students, are inconsistent with these purposes. School-sponsored athletic programs are part of the school curriculum and are subject to policies of the pastor and board as well as to the general administrative responsibilities of the principal of the school.

Further, school-sponsored athletic programs are to be guided by the general curriculum goals of the school and should in no way detract from the academic and religious goals of the school. Academic and religious policies and norms for students participating in these programs shall be established by the pastor (board) and principal and enforced by the principal.

The following are requirements of elementary school-sponsored athletic programs:

- signed Athletic Handbook Agreement Form
- sports registration form completed and returned to student's school
- registration fee paid for **each** sport
- physical examination within the appropriate school year
- supervision by qualified adult coaches who understand the sport and have completed required Diocese and IESA trainings
- students shall be grouped into teams on the basis of grade level
- proper physical conditioning prior to participation in games
- appropriate equipment, including properly fitting protective gear, and well-maintained facilities

In those cases where the number of students prohibits play under the current policy, exceptions to the two clauses marked may be permitted by mutual agreement of the local pastor, Athletic Director and local school principal/s in accordance with the purposes outlined in this section.

- reasonable scheduling of practices and games- generally, this would exclude games requiring substantial travel time on weekdays unless followed by a free day
- athletic schedules will be given to all principals, secretaries, Athletic Directors, and coaches

The following practices are prohibited in elementary school-sponsored athletic programs:

- denial of play for student who cooperate with coaches through effort and practice
- high-pressure contest, excessive publicity, elaborate recognition ceremonies, or exploitation of children in any manner

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

The Decatur Catholic Athletics Program is guided by diocesan, IESA, and local governances.

The expected chain of command is:

- Diocesan Leader/ Bishop/Board
- Local Reverend/ Priest/Pastor/ Board
- Principal
- Athletic Director
- Head Coach

- Assistant Coach

GRADE LEVEL AND SKILL EXPECTATIONS

- Grades 4-5- skill development, basic understanding of sport
- Grade 6- transition to skill development to sport specific skills/knowledge
- Grades 7-8- sport specific skills, competitive level, IESA governance and expectations

WHAT DO I DO FIRST?

1) Complete Training

The selection of coaches will be completed during the summer prior to the school year. Coaches must submit an application to be considered for a grade level coaching assignment. Decatur Catholic Athletics abides by the IESA regulation requiring all coaches either to be certified teachers or to have completed an approved coaching education program. After coaching assignments have been made, coaches must complete the following **BEFORE** the start of their assigned season.

Decatur Catholic Athletics abides by the IESA regulation requiring all coaches either to be certified teachers or to have completed an approved coaching education program. This will apply to all coaches in the Decatur Catholic Athletics program. Required details are noted in the next section:

Coaching Educational Requirements:

- Background check/fingerprinting
- Protecting God's Children class
- IESA Coaching Course Essentials
- NFSHA Concussion Training (every 2 years)

Approved Coaching Education Courses:

The IESA Board of Directors has approved the following courses for IESA middle school coaches:

- IHSA/Human Kinetics Coaching Essentials Course
 - o Cost: \$ 19.95 (prices may be different)
 - o Completed online (avg. 3 hours)
- IHSA/NFHS Coaching Principles Course
 - o Cost: Various
 - o Completed online

Please visit www.iesa.org and access the "Coaching Education Requirements" link and the "Human Kinetics Coaching Education Course" link for further details.

Proof of completion for the aforementioned requirements should be submitted to the Athletic Director prior to the start of the season. Failure to do so will result in vacancy of the coaching status.

2) Schedule Practices- Approximately three weeks prior to season's start

In collaboration with the Athletic Director, all grade level coaches of the same sport and same gender must

meet to determine a master practice schedule in which everyone has equal opportunity to the sport venue. This meeting should take place **approximately three weeks** before the scheduled start of the season. When an overlapping of seasons occurs, it is expected that all coaches work together to ensure equal opportunity. The Athletic Director shall serve as the mediator in such events that a consensus is not reached. It is recommended that practice schedules be completed and available during the athlete/parent/guardian meeting. When scheduling practices, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Weekly practice schedule must be shared with the Athletic Director, school secretary and principals! No 5th or 6th grade practice can last beyond 8:30 p.m.
- No practices can begin before 4:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes on a school day due to the use of the gym by the Extended Care Program.
- Practices are sports specific. Only teams involved and others assisting should be in the gym.
- Number of Games in a Season: Decatur Catholic Athletics abides by all Diocesan and IESA regulations regarding the number of games and tournaments (including regular season tournaments) to be played in a season.

3) Meet with Athletes and Parents/Guardians-Approximately two weeks prior to season's start

In collaboration with the Athletic Director, you will need to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the athletes and parents/guardians **approximately two weeks** before the scheduled start of the season. School principals should be notified of this day/time and location for them to disseminate the information to their school families. The Athletic Director will help you in the scheduling, location, and content of the meeting. **It is critical that you review the Decatur Catholic Athletics Handbook prior to the meeting, as it contains valuable information not covered in this handbook.** Suggested administrative points to cover at this informational meeting include:

- discuss Decatur Catholic Athletics Handbook-available by hard copy or electronically- have copies available of the Handbook Agreement Form
- method of communication- email, app, text, etc.
- practice schedule, expectations, and items to bring
- game schedule and arrival time
- selection of and playing expectations of multiple teams at one grade level
- uniforms
- notification of absence
- sign up for home game coverage (select all that apply specific to the sport)-concessions (2 or more persons), clock/score table (1 person), score book (1 person), front gate admission (1 person)
- first aid kit
- other important information you deem relevant

In addition to the aforementioned administrative points, it is strongly recommended that the

following be completed PRIOR TO the parents/guardians departing from your meeting:

- completion of the Decatur Catholic Athletics Statement of Understanding form
- submission of the athletic fee for EACH sport played
- proof of current physical examination
- discussion with parents/guardians of athletes who have documented medical issues

STUDENTS CANNOT PRACTICE UNTIL ALL FORMS AND FEES ARE COMPLETED.

4) Prepare for the Start of the Season-No later than one week prior to the season's start

Now that you have completed your training, scheduled practices, and met with athletes and parents/guardians, you must familiarize yourself with the physical set-up and associated expectations of your athletic venue.

Venue Access

For indoor sports, you will need to work with the host school's principal to obtain a swipe card or key to enter the building and the equipment storage area. For outdoor sports, you will need to work with the host school's principal to obtain keys to storage facilities and/or additional locks within the athletic venue.

Equipment

You will collaborate with the Athletic Director and the host school's principal to determine what equipment is available, what equipment is needed, and what expectations exist for equipment maintenance.

Uniforms

You will need to gain access to the uniforms for your team through the guidance of the Athletic Director. Upon distribution of uniforms, you will need to record the athlete's name, number, and uniform sizes according to the process dictated by the Athletic Director. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for the upkeep and cleaning of uniforms. A \$50.00 fine, per uniform piece, will be levied on the parents/guardians if uniforms are not turned in at the end of the season in usable condition. Failure to pay the fine will result in withholding the student's report card.

Building Use Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all organizations or groups which use the school building, including athletics. These rules must be enforced by the Athletic Director and coaches and apply to both practice

and games. Anyone who cannot comply with these rules will be required to leave the school building and grounds. We are very proud of our schools and request the respect and cooperation of everyone who uses the facilities. Therefore, the following rules are in effect **AT ALL TIMES** for everyone who uses the buildings:

- No running in the building.
- Locker rooms must be picked up and left in an orderly fashion after games.
- No climbing on furniture, bleachers, counters, or stair railings.
- No skates, skateboards, or bikes allowed in the building.
- No loitering in the lobby and/or restrooms.
- No littering- Please throw wrappers, etc. in wastebaskets provided and please clean up any messes.
- No damaging or removal of school property.
- No disrespect to adults who ask for compliance with these rules.
- Players only on the court on game days.
- Players participating in the following game will be allowed to shoot with their coach's supervision.

ALL FACILITIES ARE SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENTS.

5) DURING THE SEASON

Supervision

- Coaches must be in the gym before students are allowed in the gym. A coach must stay with the players until all have left the school area.
- Coaches MUST BE IN THE GYM before students are allowed in the gym. A coach MUST STAY WITH THE PLAYERS until all have left the school area.
- Security is a serious concern. Please be certain that all doors and windows are closed and locked before leaving the building.
- Never lend a school key to another person or let an unauthorized person or group into the school building.

Eligibility

- A list of ineligible students participating on current athletic teams will be given to the appropriate coach/athletic director by the principal on the Monday beginning their ineligible week.
- Coaches will have the authority to make decisions affecting players. For example, a player who is not present 10 minutes before a game, or a player who has not attended a sufficient number of practices prior to the game will not be allowed to play.
- In grades 5 and 6, every student who qualifies in terms of eligibility and who cooperates with

the coach through effort and practice will be allowed to play in EVERY GAME in which he or she is present.

- Refer to the Decatur Catholic Athletics Handbook for specific eligibility criteria.

Behaviors

- There are no practices or competitions on Sunday.
- Coaches and players are encouraged to pray before and/or after competitions/practices to support Christian behaviors. Refer to the host school's priest for the prayer.
- Players must notify the coach if they are unable to attend a game or practice.
- Coaches are responsible for turning lights on and off and locking the gym after practice sessions.
- Swearing, name calling, or any other derogatory remarks directed towards players, coaches, officials or spectators **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED** from students, coaches, or others representing Decatur Catholic Athletics whether at home or away. Those who persist in this behavior will be ejected from the game or, in extreme cases, removed from the team or from the privilege of watching the event.
- Coaches may not schedule additional games or make changes to scheduled games once the schedule has been approved.
- If it is necessary to have two or more teams from the same grade level, coaches are highly recommended to communicate with parents/guardians about the selection process and season expectations.
- The Athletic Director or principal are the only authorities who can cancel a game.

Game Time

Prior to the start of the game, please ensure that positions are filled to cover the event. Additionally, please be aware of the administrative representative that is present that can help manage any unexpected occurrences. Also, be confident in the Emergency Action Plan (EAPS) of your venue that is discussed later in this handbook. For specific expectations for playing times per sport, please refer to the Decatur Catholic Athletics Handbook.

6) **ENDING THE SEASON- No later than 1 week after season's end**

Within one week after the season has culminated, you will need to complete the following:

- Collect and record all uniforms- It is recommended that you collect the uniforms after the last game/event to ensure that all uniforms get returned.
- Return your swipe card and/or keys to the host school's principal.
- Return any equipment you may have that is owned by Decatur Catholic.
- Breathe a sigh of relief for a challenging job well done!

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS (EAPS)

Emergency Action Plans (EAPS) are site specific, detailed instructions on how school/athletic

personnel should appropriately manage an emergency or unforeseen situation. Development of and practice of these EAPS are critical to ensure a seamless resolution of the situation and to ensure the safety of all parties involved at the athletic event. The EAPS should be reviewed and practiced annually to look for areas of improvement and strength.

Sport	Location	EAP Location
Basketball (Boys)	Holy Family & OLOL	
Basketball (Girls)	Holy Family & OLOL	
Cross Country	Varies	
Golf	Hickory Point Golf Course	Refer to Golf Course Manager
Scholastic Bowl	Holy Family	
Soccer (K-8 th)- Non-IESA)	Holy Family fields	
Track & Field	OLOL fields	
Volleyball (Girls)	Holy Family & OLOL	