



**HOLY CHILD
SCHOOL AT
ROSEMONT**

The joy of achievement

Todd Wolov
Varsity Football Head Coach

Dear Holy Child parents,

I am reaching out to you as head football coach on behalf of our community to address a concern that many parents of athletes contemplate as they sign their children up for sports. The topic of concussions in football is prevalent in the media and we, as a staff, take great pains to keep our student-athletes as safe as possible while providing them with the optimal learning and playing experience. Fellow coaches Steve Clarke, Joe Savitsky, and I draw upon over sixty years of experience coaching football from youth to high school in order to create the safest playing environment possible.

Every year, we undergo our own Heads Up to Youth Sports concussion training sponsored by the CDC, and our nurse tests each athlete prior to the season in order to establish a concussion baseline. We teach the most up-to-date and safest way to tackle, which has its roots in the sport of rugby and is supported by Heads Up Football and USA Football. Furthermore, our league enforces a strict weight limit upon ball carriers, and the officials we use are acutely aware of the brand of football that we play. There will always be inherent risks in any physical activities and sporting events that involve our student-athletes, but we work diligently to try to mitigate these risks as much as possible. Over the last three years, on 13 annual teams, among 130 athletes each year, we have had only three sports-related concussions, two of which have been from football. In that time period, our students have experienced the same number of concussions due to activities that have occurred outside of the school setting. We feel that the sport of football (and the way that we teach and coach it) is an important vehicle in the growth and maturation of our boys in many crucial areas and that those benefits far outweigh any perceived risks for grade school football.

The lessons that football teaches are valuable, and as such it is a priceless, co-curricular experience for our boys. Playing football offers our boys the opportunity to build and strengthen relationships. The teacher-coach role model and mentoring that we provide is a rapidly dwindling entity which allows us to deepen our relationships with our students. We are currently the only team in our league that employs its teachers as football coaches as well. This works to insure that we are using football as a tool in the overall development of our student-athletes. Football also allows the boys to build stronger relationships with each other. It provides them an opportunity to learn how to lead at an early age, as well as how to defer and follow for the good of the group when necessary.

The sport of football is a tremendous asset in helping our boys to build resilience. They learn to compete against themselves on a daily basis while taking risks, failing, and coming back stronger. Every time we literally get knocked down and pick ourselves up to try again, we are incrementally adding to our reservoir of mental toughness and conditioning. This attribute will then be available to

our boys in the future when life metaphorically knocks them down. Learning at an early age to commit, sacrifice, and face adversity are badly needed skills that our football players will be able to access in the future. While our league games have been difficult match-ups for us in recent years, our players have continued to work hard and persevere. We are adding Jenkintown and Bryn Athyn to our schedule because we feel that these two teams will be similar to us in size, talent, and philosophy which make them important additions as we move forward. We look forward to the competitive balance that playing these two teams will bring to our program.

Finally, participation in football builds both self esteem and school spirit. Football, unlike other sports, offers everyone the chance to garner ample playing time. At a small school, such as Holy Child, every athlete becomes a vital and valued member on the football team. Every player knows that they have made a contribution to something larger than themselves. Younger students have the opportunity to cheer on their grade level buddies at Saturday morning games, during our pep rally, and at our annual homecoming game and festivities, all of which adds to a feeling of togetherness that permeates our hallways and galvanizes our community.

I look forward to seeing all of your sons on the gridiron for many years to come.

Thank you,
Todd Wolov