

# Notre Dame High School



## Parent / Athlete Handbook

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***“The Irish”***

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## Notre Dame High School Athletic Offerings

<u>FALL</u>	Varsity	JV	9 <sup>th</sup>
Boys Cross Country	X		
Girls Cross Country	X		
Cheerleading	X	X	X
Girls Field Hockey	X	X	X
Football	X	X	X
Boys Soccer	X	X	X
Girls Soccer	X	X	X
Girls Tennis	X	X	
Girls Volleyball	X	X	X

### WINTER

Boys Basketball	X	X	X
Girls Basketball	X	X	X
Cheerleading	X	X	X
Boys Diving	X		
Girls Diving	X		
Ice Hockey	X	X	
Boys Swimming	X		
Girls Swimming	X		
Boys Winter Track	X		
Girls Winter Track	X		
Wrestling	X	X	

### SPRING

Baseball	X	X	X
Softball	X	X	X
Boys Golf	X		
Girls Golf	X		
Boys Lacrosse	X	X	X
Girls Lacrosse	X	X	X
Boys Tennis	X	X	
Boys Track & Field	X		
Girls Track & Field	X		

## **Philosophy of Interscholastic Athletics**

At Notre Dame High School, everyone involved in the teaching and coaching of athletics possesses a unique opportunity to teach positive life skills and values. Therefore, the educational experience demands highly qualified coaches. Desire, dedication, and self-discipline need to be developed in order to ensure the commitment and personal sacrifice required by athletes. Making such a commitment helps nurture integrity, pride, loyalty and overall character. The final outcome is a better Christian citizenry carrying these values throughout their lives.

It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one criterion when determining a season's success. Guiding the team to attain maximum potential is the ultimate goal. To this end, the coaching staff must teach student-athletes to prepare their minds and bodies in order to reach maximum potential, and then be modest in victory and steadfast in defeat.

### **Freshmen Team Philosophy**

At this level, there is an increased emphasis placed upon team play, physical conditioning, and refinement of basic skills. Winning at this level is considered important, however players should be taught how to cope with game situations and how to win and lose properly. Every effort should be made to play all participants. It is recognized, however, that they may not all play equal roles in each game.

### **Junior Varsity Team Philosophy**

The Junior Varsity level is intended for those individuals who display potential for continued development into productive Varsity level performers. Although team membership varies according to the structure of each program, sophomores occupy the majority of roster positions. Freshmen may be included on the Junior Varsity roster if they display the appropriate level of talent.

At this level, athletes are expected to make a visible commitment to the program, team and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play in addition to socio-emotional development. Junior Varsity programs must strive for a balance between player development and striving for victory.

Realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful Junior Varsity team and player. For all team members, meaningful contest participation

will exist over the course of a season; however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for a six day a week commitment that is also expected at the Varsity level. With the goal of becoming a Varsity player clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the Junior Varsity level.

## **Varsity Team Philosophy**

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sport's program. Normally, seniors and juniors make up the majority of the roster. Occasionally, a sophomore and more infrequently a freshman may be included on the team providing that an advanced level of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate socio-emotional development is demonstrated. Extra care must be taken by Varsity Coaches in supervising freshmen on a Varsity squad.

Squad size at the Varsity level is limited. The number of participants on any given team is a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play in the contest. It is vital that the Coach clearly and individually communicate each team member's role on the team. The number of roster positions is relative to the students' acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team's goals. While contest participation over the course of the season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the Varsity level is never guaranteed.

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on the Varsity team, as is the realization that a Varsity sport requires a six-day commitment. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sports seasons.

## **Team Selection**

The following procedures are to be followed by all coaches:

1. All candidates will be given a minimum of three practices to try out for a team.
2. Each coach will discuss the tryout procedures with candidates and should include the following:
  - a. Minimum and maximum number of players that will be kept.
  - b. What objective rating procedures will be used.
  - c. What subjective rating procedures will be used.
  - d. Selection dates
  - e. How candidates will be notified whether or not they have made the team.
3. Coaches should not post a list of who has made the team or who has not been selected. Each player must be spoken to in person regardless of status.
4. Each player who has not been selected has the right to discuss the decision made with the coach. Additionally, parents may make an appointment to discuss the decision with the coach.

5. In a meeting, coaches should be able to produce their rubric or rating system displaying their objective criteria.
6. It will always be noted that there is a subjective nature in coaching and team selection.
7. Conferences with players or parents should always include an assistant coach.
8. The Junior Varsity Team should be primarily made up of sophomores. Placing a junior on the JV must be done for strategic reasons. Any juniors placed on JV Teams that have been in the program for three years cannot be cut as seniors.
9. Being a freshman on a freshman team or being a sophomore on a JV team is **NOT** a bad thing! Playing time in games is important to each player's growth and development. Sitting on the bench on the Varsity will not make you a better player.
10. Some of our teams are considered participatory or "no cut." This includes Cross Country, Football, Wrestling Swimming, and Track & Field. "No cut" does not mean "no discipline." Student-athletes are still required to attend all practice sessions and contests.

## **A Guide to Sports Parenting**

At Notre Dame High School, we hold our administration, teachers, students and coaches to a higher standard of behavior. It only follows suit that parents should be held to a higher standard of behavior as well.

### **Before The Game:**

- A. Tell your child to "give it your best shot and have fun."
- B. Make a commitment to honor the game in action and language no matter what others may do.

### **During the Game:**

- A. Do not add to your child's confusion by giving him or her instructions during the game. Let the coach take care of player mistakes.
- B. Cheer and acknowledge good plays for both teams.
- C. Mention good calls by officials to other parents, but refrain from commenting on what you perceive to be officials' mistakes.
- D. Find ways to gently correct the unsportsmanlike behavior of other parents and spectators.
- E. Do not do anything in the heat of the moment that you will regret after the game. Ask yourself, "Will this embarrass my child or the team?"
- F. Have fun and enjoy the game.

### **After the Game:**

- A. Thank the officials for doing a difficult job.
- B. Thank the coaches for their efforts. Understand that after a game is not the proper time to question a coach. Post-game is often an emotional time for all involved.
- C. Congratulate your opponents on a good game.

- D. Congratulate your child and his or her teammates for their efforts regardless of the result.
- E. Compliment individual players on their standout plays and displays of sportsmanship during the game.
- F. Do not give too much advice. Instead ask your child what he or she thought about the game and be a good listener.

**During the Car Ride Home:**

- A. Point out a good play that your child made either as an athlete or a good sportsman during the game.
- B. Avoid criticizing or correcting mistakes.
- C. Ask open-ended questions about how the game was played, not how many points were scored. Some good questions are:
  - Did you have fun?
  - Did you give it your best effort?
  - What did you learn from the game?
  - What was the best play you made and how did it feel?
  - Did you bounce back from your mistake

## Eleven Guidelines for Parents

1. Make sure your children understand that win or lose, you love them.
2. Be realistic about your child's physical ability.
3. Help you child set realistic goals.
4. Emphasize improved performance, not winning.
5. Do not relive your athletic past through your child.
6. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
7. Control your emotions at games and events. Yelling at officials, coaches, athletes or athletic department personnel will not be tolerated and may cause you to be removed from a contest. A pattern of disrespectful behavior may cause parents, family members or fans to be suspended from attending games.
8. Be a "cheerleader" for your child and the other children on the team.
9. Respect your child's coaches. Communicate in a positive way.
10. Be a positive role model. Be a "team fan" not a "my kid" fan.
11. Consumption of alcohol before, during or after a game on school grounds is strictly prohibited. Remember where you are.



# **A Parent's Guide to Dealing with Coaches**

## **Communication parents should expect from the coach:**

1. The coach's philosophy.
2. The coach's expectations for your son or daughter.
3. Locations and times of contests and practices.
4. Team requirements such as fees, special equipment needed, school and team rules and off-season expectations.
5. Procedures if your child suffers an injury during participation.

## **Communication coaches expect from parents:**

1. Concerns about their child expressed directly to the coach at the appropriate time and place.
2. Concerns about the coach's philosophy and expectations.
3. Notification of any conflicts well in advance.

## **Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:**

1. The mental and physical treatment of your child.
2. What your child needs to do to improve.
3. Aspects of your child's behavior.

## **Concerns that are NOT appropriate for discussion and must be left to the discretion of the coach:**

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Any situation that deals with other student-athletes.

## **To discuss a concern with a coach, a parent should follow this procedure:**

1. Call the coach to set up an appointment.
2. If you cannot reach the coach, call the Director of Athletics and ask him to set up a meeting with the coach for you.
3. Think about what you expect to accomplish as a result of the meeting.
4. Stick to discussing the facts, as you understand them.
5. Do not confront the coach before, during or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both parent and coach. Such meetings rarely resolve the situation and often worsen it.

## **What should a parent do if the meeting with the coach does not provide satisfactory resolution?**

1. Call the Director of Athletics to set up a meeting with the AD, coach and parent present.
2. At this meeting, an appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

**Athletic Code of Conduct:** After a team has been selected, the Athletic Code of Conduct must be distributed and covered at a team meeting. Each athlete and a parent/guardian must sign the contract in order for the athlete to participate. Copies of the Code will be supplied by the Athletic Department.

- ✓ All athletes are required to be alcohol-free, tobacco-free, drug-free and anabolic steroid-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the season. Athletes who use and/or are in possession of these items are subject to disciplinary action and may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion from their team. The purpose of this rule is to foster the health and fitness of the athlete.
  1. On the first infraction, the athlete will be required to participate in counseling. For the athletes' safety and for the safety and well-being of others, I may be suspended by the coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Principal.
  2. On the second infraction within a school year, the athlete will become ineligible to participate on a ND team for a period of 12 months.
  3. Athletes are always subject to the discipline policies outlined in the ND Student handbook.
- ✓ HAZING: ND will not tolerate hazing of any kind to our student athletes. Students who disregard this rule are subject to suspension and/or expulsion from their team, as well as appropriate school disciplines set forth by the Administration.
- ✓ Athletes are representatives of ND and at all times must present themselves in a positive and sportsmanlike manner. All athletes, spectators and coaches must show proper respect for opposing teams, their coaches and officials alike.
- ✓ Appropriate demeanor must be maintained at all times. No abuse, distasteful or obscene language or actions will be permitted. All athletes are expected to arrive and return to the school as part of the team. The coach may allow a student athlete to return home from an away event **ONLY with a parent**. At this point, the parent of the child will assume all responsibility. **At no time are students allowed to drive themselves to or from athletic contests. We encourage all team members, whenever possible, to use the assigned school transportation. This promotes team unity, ensures proper supervision and allows for greater safety of our students.**

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ It is the responsibility of the head coach to decide which student/athlete will participate and at what level of play, as well as the amount of playing time that the student will have. Questions regarding this area will be addressed directly to the head coach in a mutually acceptable timeframe (not after a game or practice) and in an appropriate, professional manner. If these concerns are not addressed in a satisfactory manner, the *next* course of action is to meet with the Athletic Director, then, if necessary, the Principal.

- ✓ Athletes will be on time for practice and will be prepared every day. They should prioritize their affiliations with community teams, placing the needs of the ND team first.
- ✓ Athletes are responsible for the care and use of all equipment issued. Equipment and uniforms are to be worn and used only at ND events. Athletes will be held accountable for any equipment/uniform mistreated or not returned.
- ✓ Failure to comply with any policy, regulations and/or requirements stipulated by Notre Dame High School or any of the rules stated above or attached to this contract that have been stipulated by the coach regarding dress code, curfews, detentions, etc., will result in disciplinary action including suspension or dismissal for a designated time as determined by the head coach and/or policy set forth in the student handbook.

#### **PROCEDURES**

- ✓ All participants must have a signed Physical form, Health History form, Parent Consent Form, Transportation form, NJSIAA Consent to Random Drug Testing Form and Student/Athlete contract on file in the athletic office in order to participate in interscholastic sports programs.
- ✓ Athletes must meet Notre Dame High School and NJSIAA eligibility requirements (as outlined in the student handbook and NJSIAA handbook).
- ✓ Athletes must abide by ALL school policies; these policies are located in the student handbook.
- ✓ All injuries are to be reported immediately to your coach and to the Athletic Trainer for proper examination and if needed, a referral to the appropriate medical personnel or services.
- ✓ Students are to be in school by 10:00AM if they wish to participate in a scheduled practice or game on that day. The Athletic Director must approve any exception.

## **Bullying and Hazing**

**Bullying** – A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. Bullying includes: physical aggression, social aggression, verbal aggression, and intimidation, written aggression, sexual harassment and racial and ethnic harassment.

**Hazing** – Any humiliating or dangerous activity directed at someone in order for them to join a group. Hazing includes: being physically abusive, being yelled, cursed or sworn at, deprivation of food, sleep or cleanliness, destroying or vandalizing property etc.

Any form of bullying or hazing is strictly forbidden in Notre Dame High School Athletic Programs. Any student engaging in bullying and hazing will be immediately suspended from their athletic team. That student's future on the team will be determined by the coach, athletic director and the school's appropriate administrator.

## Transportation

All athletes are expected to arrive and return to the school as part of the team. After receiving a written note with a signature, the coach may allow a student athlete to return home from an away event **ONLY with a parent**. At this point, the parent of the child will assume all responsibility. **At no time are students allowed to drive themselves to or from athletic contests. We encourage all team members, whenever possible, to use the assigned school transportation. This promotes team unity, ensures proper supervision and allows for greater safety of our students.**

## Schedule Changes and Cancellations

Schedule changes and game cancellations can happen for a number of reasons and sometimes at the last minute. The weather is usually the main factor. However, issues with fields, issues with officials, issues with transportation, and issues with other schools are also factors.

In the case of weather, cancellations are normally not finalized until 1:00 pm. Parents are encouraged to check the Notre Dame web site and sign up for instant e-mail notifications. Announcements will be posted on the main Athletics Page. Announcements will be made to the students just before the 2:15 pm bell.

## Grades and Eligibility

Per NJSIAA Rules, each student-athlete must pass a minimum of 15 credits per semester and 30 credits for the year. Notre Dame strictly adheres to this policy. Since Notre Dame is on block scheduling our student-athletes take final exams in January and again in June. While the NJSIAA permits student-athletes to complete the season in which they are participating when declared ineligible, Notre Dame does not. This affects our winter sports teams. When grades are posted in late January, academically ineligible student-athletes are immediately removed from teams. The coach will be notified by the Athletic Director if any of his/her players become ineligible. The Athletic Director receives a list of names from the Guidance Office. Guidance Counselors directly notify the students.

A student-athlete will know where they stand at all times as their grades are updated and posted regularly on the school's web site. Coaches can obtain these grades easily via the student or by asking the Director of Athletics. A good coach always knows where his/her athletes stand academically.

Tutoring is always available to students that need the extra help. In addition, there is an Academic Strength and Conditioning Center after school where students can go for

additional help from teachers. Many of our teachers offer extra help during Activity Period.

## **Important Documents**

In order to participate in a sport at Notre Dame High School the following seven forms must be completed and turned in to the Athletic Department before tryouts. All of these forms are on the Athletics page of the Notre Dame web site.

- Sports Related Concussion Acknowledgement Form
- Pre-participation Physical Evaluation – History Form (4 pages)
- Health History Update Questionnaire
- Sudden Cardiac Death Pamphlet Sign-Off Sheet
- Consent to Random Drug Testing
- Transportation Form
- Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Copies of the forms are located on the Athletic Home Page of the ND web site. The Athletic Office gives specific deadlines for these forms to be in. Parents should comply to limit confusion when tryouts arrive.

## **Conflicts with Club Teams**

The Athletic Department realizes that playing on club teams in many sports is crucial to college recruitment. In some sports, particularly ice hockey, there is a great deal of overlap that may become problematic. There is a degree of overlap in soccer too. Club programs in other sports tend to operate outside the high school season.

When there is a great deal of overlap, the coach, player and parents must meet to lay out and agree to plan for the season that works best for all parties involved. We also recognize that plans change during the course of the season due to weather cancellations and reschedules.

We would hope that Notre Dame High School Athletics would be the top priority for the student. If the planning process does not work, the parents and student may be left with a decision where a commitment has to be made one way or another.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising for athletic teams is strictly prohibited per the President and Advancement Office. If exceptions are made, they must be granted by the President and Advancement Office.

The concession stand at football games etc. is run by the athletic department and serves as a revenue source to benefit all teams. Teams may sign up to work individual games. After working the game, that team will receive a gift for their specific use.

**Notre Dame High School does not have a Parent Booster Organization.**

## **Post Season Banquets**

Those teams wishing to have a post season celebration may do so in the Notre Dame High School Cafeteria only. Fundraising and using money for the rental of a catering facility is prohibited. Flik or a local restaurant may be used to cater a celebration.