

CANNON

ATHLETICS

Cannon Middle School Athletics Guidelines

General Information

Middle School athletic teams are composed of students in grades seven and eight and serve as an introductory level of interscholastic competition.

The program emphasizes:

- Skill development
- Individual improvement
- Self-confidence
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship

The ultimate goal is to prepare student-athletes for participation at the junior varsity and varsity levels.

A selection process is utilized by coaches during designated tryout periods.

Typical Practice Times: 2:30–4:15 p.m. daily

When programs have three levels (Middle School, Junior Varsity, and Varsity), it is beneficial for the long-term development of the program that:

- Seventh and eighth graders participate at the Middle School level.
- Sixth graders may participate in certain sports if the sport has a roster hardship. Further information below.

Roster decisions will be made collaboratively by coaches and the Director of Athletics, considering:

- Meaningful playing opportunities
 - Skill development within the program
 - Academic and behavioral standing
 - Social-emotional maturity
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Tryout Process

- Student-athletes can only be on one team at a time. Student athletes cannot play multiple school sports in the same season.
 - Tryouts will last three days for those teams making cuts.
 - Tryouts are closed to parents and other outside personnel.
 - If a student-athlete misses the designated tryout period their spot on the roster is not guaranteed. Certain exceptions are allowed but being out of town for family vacation is not one of them.
 - Cannon coaches will be making the final evaluations.
 - Cheer may bring in outside judges as part of the evaluation process.
 - If a student-athlete is cut from one team and another team has space they may switch to that team pending coach and athletic director approval.
 - The head coach will notify each student-athlete via email regarding selection or non-selection.
 - A rubric or evaluation guide will be used to assess each participant's strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Student-athletes who are not selected will receive constructive feedback.
 - Those seeking additional guidance may request a one-on-one meeting with the coach.
 - Parents may not request meetings with coaches or athletic administrators regarding tryout outcomes.
 - Student-athletes are encouraged to self-advocate by communicating directly with their coach.
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Eligibility

Eligibility decisions are made by the Athletics Administration in collaboration with the Middle School Academic Administration.

Coaches and parents should not intervene in eligibility determinations.

Parent Involvement

Players play. Coaches coach. Officials officiate. Spectators spectate.

Parents should not approach coaches regarding playing time. If a player wishes to understand how to earn more playing time, they should schedule a meeting with their coach to discuss areas for improvement.

Parents may not approach or yell at officials or coaches before, during or after games.

Parents must wait twenty four hours after a game before reaching out to a coach to initiate a meeting.

If a parent requests to meet with a coach the following individuals must be present:

- Athletic Director
 - Head Coach
- Student-Athlete
 - Parent

Team Manager Eligibility Guidelines

Guideline Overview: The role of team manager is a valuable opportunity for students to contribute to the team in a supportive, non-playing role. Effective immediately, only 7th and 8th graders who meet specific criteria will be eligible to serve as team managers.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. **Grade Level:** Only students in the 7th or 8th grade are eligible to be considered for a team manager position. Middle School students cannot be managers for upper school teams.
2. **Tryouts:** A student must have participated in team tryouts and must not have been selected as a player. Managing is a role offered only after a student has completed the tryout process.
3. **Coach's Invitation:** Students will only be considered for a manager position if they are directly invited by the coach after tryouts. Team

manager positions are no longer open to general interest or requests from students.

4. **PE Class:** If a manager only attends games, they still need to attend PE class during the school day.

Additional Notes:

- This guideline is designed to maintain focus on both the commitment and experience of the students trying out.
 - Selection is at the discretion of the coach, based on team needs and the student's suitability for the role. Coaches may elect to not have student managers.
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Playing Time

Playing time is determined at the discretion of the coaching staff.

Factors include:

- Player skill and game knowledge
- Effort and work ethic in practice and the weight room
- Attendance and punctuality
- Attitude, effort, and coachability

While equal playing time is not guaranteed, coaches are expected to provide fair and developmentally appropriate opportunities for all players.

For example, if a team leads by several goals, coaches should use that opportunity to involve less experienced players.

Eighth Graders on Varsity Teams

Eighth graders may try out for a varsity team with the exception of football. These tryouts are on an invite only basis from the program director.

To be considered, the student-athlete must:

- Demonstrate the ability to make a significant contribution (starter or regular playing time)

- Be in good academic and behavioral standing
- Display high levels of social-emotional maturity

The head varsity coach must obtain approval from the Director of Athletics before any eighth grader is placed on a varsity roster.

During the season, roster adjustments may occur between Junior Varsity and Varsity squads for eighth-grade student-athletes due to injuries or program needs.

Decisions will consider:

- Readiness and maturity of the student-athlete
- Contribution to the varsity team
- Impact on the middle school team
- Academic and behavioral standing

A meeting including the head varsity coach, Director of Athletics, parent/guardian, student-athlete, and a Middle School representative is required before any roster change is finalized.

The detailed step by step process is listed below:

Cannon School Guidelines for 8th Grade Participation in Varsity Athletics

The Charlotte Independent School Athletic Association (CISAA) has approved the participation of 8th graders in non-football Varsity sports beginning Fall 2024. Varsity football remains restricted to grades 9–12 per NCISAA policy.

Eligibility Criteria for 8th Grade Varsity Participation

To ensure readiness and maintain program integrity, the following steps must be followed:

1. Coach Initiation

- The coach must identify & email the athletic department requesting permission for an 8th grader to try out.
- The coach must explain:
 - Why the athlete is being considered.
 - The projected impact on the team.
 - Potential effects on upperclassmen.

Notes:

- 8th graders may not be called up to sit the bench or serve only as practice players.
- Parents or student athletes cannot self-select to try out for varsity. This process is coach driven and 8th graders must be invited to join the team.

2. Academic & Behavioral Review

- The athletic department will consult with middle school academic staff to assess:
 - Academic performance – Poor grades or behavior disqualify a student from trying out.
 - Social and emotional maturity – The student must be developmentally ready for varsity competition.
- If either requirement is unmet, the student may not try out.

3. Parental Consent

- Upon approval, the coach will contact the parents to request permission for tryouts.
- It must be clearly stated:
 - Tryout permission does not guarantee a roster spot.
 - The student must be an impact player to make the team.

4. Final Meeting

- If parents agree, a meeting will be held with:
 - The parents
 - The student-athlete
 - The coach
 - The Athletic Director
- This meeting will outline the expectations and realities of varsity participation.

Additional Guidelines

- If an 8th grader plays more than three varsity games, they become ineligible to return to middle school competition for that season (CISAA rule).
- 8th graders are eligible for All-Conference and All-State honors and may be added to Varsity playoff rosters after completing their middle school season.

- 8th graders will remain in PE classes with their classmates and will lift during the academic day with their PE class. They will have a study hall from 2:30-3:00 daily.
- Coaches are responsible for supervision of the 8th graders after school until practice or other team activities begin.

Cannon School Position on JV teams & 8th Graders

While other CISAA schools may allow 8th graders to play on JV teams, Cannon School will only permit 8th graders to play above the middle school level if they earn an impact role on a Varsity team. This policy supports the mental and physical well-being of our students and preserves the integrity of our athletic programs.

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Program Director Signature: _____

Athletic Director Signature: _____

Hardship Policy & Sixth Grade Participation

An exception may be made to allow sixth graders to participate in certain sports if a hardship is declared and approved by conference athletic directors.

A hardship is defined as having an insufficient number of participants to field and sustain a team for the season.

Updated 2023 Notes:

- No 7th or 8th grader may be cut to make room for 6th graders.
- When 6th graders participate, roster limits will apply.
- If 6th graders are used and Cannon offers two teams for a specific sport, they must participate on the lower level team. For example, In basketball that would mean 6th graders could only anticipate on the gold team if needed.

Fall Season Roster Limits

Sport	Roster Limit	Notes
Cheerleading	No limit	—
Cross Country	6th grade not allowed	—
Soccer	22	—
Volleyball	12	—
Girls Tennis	12	—
Football	25	—
Girls Golf	6	—

Winter Season Roster Limits

Sport	Roster Limit	Notes
Girls Basketball	10	—
Boys Basketball	10	—
Cheerleading	No limit	—
Swimming	12 (<i>Effective Nov. 2024</i>)	—
Wrestling	6th grade not allowed	—

Spring Season Roster Limits

Sport	Roster Limit	Notes
Baseball	18	—

Boys Lacrosse	22	—
Girls Lacrosse	22	—
Soccer	22	—
Softball	18	—
Tennis	12	—
Track & Field	6th grade not allowed	—
Boys Golf	6	—

NCISAA-Recognized Varsity Sports (Grades 7–12)

- Girls Golf
- Varsity Softball

Students in grades 7 or 8 may participate on varsity teams in these sports if a hardship requires additional players to field a full roster.

Sports Offered and Roster Guidelines

Cannon School offers 15 sports and maintains 21 Middle School teams throughout the academic year.

Roster limits are reviewed periodically and may change based on participation or program needs.

Fall

Sport	Number of Teams	Max Roster
Cross Country (Co-Ed)	1	40

Cheerleading	1	16
Football	1	50
Girls Golf (7–12)	1	Plays with Varsity
Boys Soccer	1	22
Girls Tennis	1	15
Girls Volleyball	1	12

Winter

Sport	Number of Teams	Max Roster
Cheerleading	1	16
Boys Basketball	2 (Maroon & Gold)	12 each
Girls Basketball	2 (Maroon & Gold)	12 each
Wrestling (Boys & Girls)	1	30
Swimming (Boys & Girls)	1	32

Spring

Sport	Number of Teams	Max Roster
Baseball (Boys)	1	18
Golf (Co-Ed)	1	12
Boys Lacrosse	1	40

Girls Lacrosse	1	40
Softball (Girls)	1	18
Girls Soccer	1	22
Boys Tennis	1	15
Track & Field (Boys)	1	40
Track & Field (Girls)	1	40

