

St. Thomas the Apostle Athletic Handbook

"Sport trains body and spirit for perseverance, effort, courage, balance, sacrifice, honesty, friendship and collaboration. Give thanks to God for the gift of sport, in which the human person exercises his body, intellect, and will; recognizing these abilities as so many gifts of his Creator."

—Pope John Paul II

ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

St. Thomas the Apostle School and the Peoria Diocesan Catholic Schools are dedicated to the development and growth of the whole person.

Jesus' teachings remain at the heart of virtues that ultimately contribute to making the athletic program a Catholic Christian experience. The program exists to develop and enhance the relationship between faith development and daily living.

First and foremost, parents and legal guardians are the first teachers and models of faith development.

Myriad opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development exist within the religious and academic environment.

Athletics, as an extra-curricular school activity at the elementary level, is a privilege, one that is earned and fostered by a student's Christian character and academic efforts. Athletics will be recognized as a supportive component to the total educational process, offering balance rather than prominence within its educational scope and practices.

St. Thomas the Apostle strives to provide our students with an environment in which students can grow and challenge their understanding of themselves as individuals and Catholic community members. Many and varied opportunities are offered so that each student who desires to participate will have a chance to represent St. Thomas. Students will be challenged to learn new skills, to appreciate teamwork and cooperation, and to share in the fun and challenges of competitive play.

Additionally, students will get the opportunity to experience competition that is sportsmanlike and respectful. Our program strives to reinforce essentials of: Perseverance, Responsibility, Integrity, Innovation, and Collaboration. The goal of our competitive teams is to play our best every game. We want all of our athletes to have a positive experience and we work toward this by setting clear guidelines, goals and objectives for our athletes, parents, coaches and athletic directors.

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OBJECTIVES

A balanced extra-curricular program, a privilege in which elementary students may choose to participate, exemplifies and witnesses to the meaning of living in a Catholic Christian community by:

- Allowing participation of students regardless of their athletic abilities.
- Developing character qualities within the realm of Catholic Christian traditions.
- Providing opportunities for development of fundamental skills and self-confidence.
- Developing habits of health, hygiene and safety.
- Providing opportunities for student-athletes, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), coaches, moderators and spectators to celebrate their school communities with *Christ present among us*.

At the minimum, outcomes flowing from the Athletic Philosophy and Objectives will include:

- Character formation.
- A healthy sense of competition.
- Development of basic skills.
- Team work.
- Sportsmanship.
- School pride.
- Self discipline.
- Enjoyment.

GOVERNANCE

The St. Thomas Pastor has authority over the rules and policies set forth in this handbook.

St. Thomas the Apostle shall maintain membership in the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA). Membership in the IESA should abide by that association's regulations unless or until such regulations conflict with diocesan policies as referenced in this document.

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LINES OF AUTHORITY

Recognizing that the Pastor is ultimately responsible for all parish activities, the Principal will provide the leadership and responsibility for all athletic programs at St. Thomas the Apostle.

These responsibilities will then extend next and directly to the Athletic Director to schedule, maintain, and administrate the day-to-day activities of the program. Coaches and moderators, students-athletes and their parent(s) or guardian(s) will work directly with the Athletic Director. An assistant Athletic Director may be appointed and directly works with the Athletic Director.

If any parent, guardian or student-athlete should have concern or complaint regarding a coach, which cannot be resolved by first speaking to the coach, they should communicate directly with the Athletic Director. If there is no satisfactory resolution, or if the issue involves the Athletic Director, the parent or guardian should then contact the Principal.

In no way should the parent circumvent the line of authority.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CODE OF CONDUCT: STUDENTS/ATHLETES.

A. General.

Students who demonstrate Christian conduct and achieve academically according to their abilities may participate in athletic activities.

Only full-time students enrolled at St. Thomas the Apostle may participate in our athletic programs.

Previous to the beginning of practice of each sport during the school year, participants will be required to have on file with the school office:

- Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver.
- Acknowledgement and Adherence Form regarding the St. Thomas Athletic Handbook, signed by the student-athlete and his or her parent or legal guardian.
- Medical Information and Emergency Form.
- Annual Proof of Sports Physical Examination, signed by a licensed physician AND completed no longer than 395 days prior to the last scheduled game, including IESA tournament.
- Paid the required activity fee for the enrolled sport.

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The student/athlete may not practice or play any game until all these requirements are met.

B. Eligibility.

Eligibility of student-athletes in athletic activities shall be determined by the Assistant Principal and is based upon both academic standing and conduct. Effort and attitude are also considered. School policy shall be a “three strike” policy.

1. First offense. One warning is given per sport or activity. The student is given one week to show improvement.
2. Second offense. Will result in a one-week suspension from activity (practices and games).
3. Third offense. Will result in a permanent dismissal from the activity.

The Athletic Director will be notified on Monday, if possible, who shall in turn notify the coach of the offense. The Assistant Principal shall notify the athlete's parents or guardians. Attitude, effort, and improvement shall be considered prior to the assessment of the second and third offenses, and is at the sole discretion of the Assistant Principal.

The student who is academically ineligible may attend any activities, however, the student shall wear street clothes and may not participate. The student must also sit with the team/group. Any student who is ineligible for poor behavior may not attend any school-related activities until cleared by the Assistant Principal.

St. Thomas shall adhere to any eligibility rules, if any, issued by the IESA so long as it does not contradict Peoria Diocesan rules.

C. Concussion Protocol.

Under the NFHS rules, in conjunction with the IESA and Illinois state law, concussion protocol requires, “any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, and behaviors consistent with a concussion, such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, balance, etc. shall immediately be removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.”

In applying that rule in Illinois it has been determined that only certified athletic trainers and physicians licensed to practice medicine in all branches in Illinois can clear an athlete to return to play the day of a contest in which an athlete has been removed from the contest for a possible head injury. In cases when an athlete is not cleared to return to play the same day as he/she is removed from a contest following a possible head injury (concussion), the athlete shall not return to play or practice until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider to return to play. For the purpose of this policy, licensed health care providers consist of physicians licensed

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to practice medicine in all branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all branches in Illinois.

Baseline: Back to School: Student has returned to normal school activities, is no longer suffering concussion symptoms and has been approved by the medical provider to begin sporting activities.

Step 1: Light Aerobic Activity: Student should do light aerobic exercise to increase heart rate.

Step 2: Moderate Activity: Student should progress with activities that increase heart rate and include head and body movement.

Step 3: Heavy, Non-contact Activity-Begin heavy non-contact activity including sprinting/running, high intensity stationary biking, non-contact sport specific drills.

Step 4: Practice and Full Contact- Student returns to controlled practice and full contact activities.

Step 5: Competition- Student returns to competition.

Return to Learn Protocol

Please be advised that coaches may not authorize athletes to return to the classroom. Students must get medical clearance before returning to class. When a student who believes to have suffered a concussion returns to school, school personnel are required to take certain steps to ensure that students receive appropriate services and accommodations. St. Thomas School will follow the guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Most students will only require informal academic accommodations when recovering from a concussion.

CDC recommended accommodations for these students include:

- Rest breaks as needed
- Fewer hours at school
- Being given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receiving assistance with school work and/or
- Reduce time spent on the computer, reading, or writing

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The student's parent/guardian and coaches should monitor the student for concussion symptoms when he/she returns to the classroom. If any of the concussion symptoms return, or if a student exhibits any new symptoms, the student should seek medical attention.

The Athletic Director and every coach must complete concussion training as specified in the Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act. This includes members of the concussion oversight team.

The oversight of any student who injures their head and displays symptoms of a concussion shall be with the concussion protocol committee which shall include, but not limited to, the Principal, Athletic Director, and Assistant Athletic Director. These individuals have the legal responsibility and authority to remove any athlete from any game or practice based upon their sole assessment of the athlete.

Please understand that the concussion protocol committee shall always error on the side of caution, as the health and safety of our student-athletes is paramount.

St. Thomas requires a written note on file from a licensed healthcare professional releasing the affected student-athlete to return to play, as well as detailing the level of participation from light activity to full competition. Once a student is released, the Principal shall notify the Athletic Director, who will in turn notify the appropriate coach(es).

Please see IESA notices in the appendix.

Please visit <https://www.iesa.org/activities/concussion.asp> for more resources regarding concussion, responsibilities, and protocol.

D. Game Attendance.

While in the gym, irrespective of participation or as a spectator/fan, students may not leave the building and come back. They are not allowed to be out in the parking lot during or between games. Students must stay and watch the game or go home.

While in the gym, the student-athlete must conduct themselves properly: cheering, no booing, no fighting, no horseplay, etc.

During game play, no student-athlete may get up and move around or cross the playing floor.

E. Various.

Student-athletes shall report any injury, no matter how serious, to their parent/guardian, coach, Athletic Director, and/or Principal.

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Under no circumstances shall any medications and/or supplements be supplied, recommended, permitted, or dispensed to student-athletes. The only exception is from a parent/guardian.

F. Absences.

Students must be in attendance for a half-day (in school by noon) in order to compete in games or practice that evening. There are reasonable exceptions (funerals, physician appointments, etc), but must be pre-approved with the Principal.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CODE OF CONDUCT: **PARENTS.**

A. General.

Parents or legal guardians are the first teachers of faith formation in their children's lives.

Display of Christian conduct is paramount to modeling what is expected of one's own child. Parents and legal guardians represent themselves, their children, the coaching staff and the school community. Encouragement and positive role modeling through acceptable words, actions, and support of the local school's policies and administrative regulations, give evidence and example of commendable sportsmanship.

It is a gift to student-athletes when their parents and legal guardians emphasize good sportsmanship rather than excessive competition and when they praise rather than criticize the efforts of their children, their children's teammates, opposing team members, coaches and officials.

It should be remembered at all times that the program belongs to the children.

Parents shall:

- Treat players, coaches, opponents and officials with respect and dignity. Booing is prohibited.
- Not coach their student/athlete or any other player from the sidelines during games or practice. Please allow our coaches to do the coaching.
- Discuss any concern or problem first and directly with the head coach. These discussions shall not take place directly before or after a game, and are best when an arranged time is made. If the issue is unresolved, the next step is to speak with the Athletic Director, and if that discussion too is unsatisfactory, then with the Principal.

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- Ensure their student/athlete attends all practices and be on time for all events unless otherwise pre-arranged with the coach.
- Accompany their child while on the St. Thomas campus during games. Children are NOT to be dropped off at the gym and be left unsupervised, regardless if they are participating in the sport or not. The supervising adult is expected to stay with the child the entire game. Most certainly, your child can be dropped for practice or warm-ups for games.
- Report any injury to the coach and Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will notify the Principal in writing of the injury. The school will work with all appropriate parties, when necessary, to complete a School Accident Report.

Any inappropriate behavior may result in ejection from the game by the referee, assistant Athletic Director, Athletic Director, Principal, or any assigned supervisor. Repeated offenses may result in a lengthy or permanent ban by the Principal.

B. Concessions/Gate Service.

St. Thomas greatly depends upon its parents in order to achieve the highest level of professionalism and experience for our children in athletics.

For basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading, we charge admittance to the gymnasium for our games and offer a concession stand which must be manned by parents. Depending upon how many games and how many athletes we have per sport, we generally require parents to work 2 to 3 shifts per year.

Before each season, the Volunteer Coordinator (an appointed position) will send to all parents a signup for which they may choose their required slot(s).

Please know that a member of the family MUST work their anointed/chosen slots, and we are greatly appreciative, but please know failure to signup and participate will result that your child will not be allowed to play.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CODE OF CONDUCT: **COACH.**

A. Requirements.

In order to guard against incidents of sexual abuse of minors, Safe Environment Training (SET) is required of adults (18+) who work and volunteer with STS youth on a regular basis. The training establishes acceptable behavior that is legal, professional and responsible. It includes standards of conduct regarding sexual abuse and harassment. (cf. Diocese of Peoria Policy C-402).

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Coaches are one of our greatest assets and we greatly value their efforts and time. We ask prior to any season begins practice, our coaches:

- Complete “Safe Environment” online training course. Go to <https://peoria.cmgconnect.org> and register an account prior to completing programming. Further instructions are found in the school Google Drive.
 - Complete the “Safe Environment” video programming. Print certificate and send to STS office.
 - Complete CANTS form. This form must be sent to STS office.
 - Complete background check questionnaire.
 - Complete “Bloodborne Pathogens” video and questions.
- IESA Requirements (ONLY required of those coaching 7th and 8th grade)
 - Complete once-per-lifetime IESA Human Kinetics Coaching Essentials Course.
 - http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/IESA.cfm
 - Cost to be reimbursed by STS if you so choose.
 - Print completion certificate and send to Athletic Director and STS office.
 - Complete state-mandated Concussion Testing at <https://www.iesa.org/members/surveys/concussion/survey.asp>. You will need STS Password in order to complete— acquire that information from the Athletic Director. This must be done every two years.
- Please read and/or sign the following forms found at:
 - COVID waiver, Witness Statement, Safe Environments Verification Statement, Harassment Policy, Sexual Abuse Policy, Bullying Prevention, Code of Pastoral Conduct, and Communication Policy.
 - These forms are found at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15WEWBVfWFB7VpQ67akRNCYrfdlUpWRtL?usp=sharing>
 - Return all signed forms (COVID, Witness & Safe Environment) to the St. Thomas office.

B. Expectations.

- Coaches are responsible to abide by the rules of conduct embodied in the spirit of this document.
- Coaches will balance individual growth, social development, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills in working with individual players and the team as a whole.
- Coaches will train players to play with good sportsmanship and to abide by the rules of the game.

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- Coaches will promote a positive atmosphere in all STS sports activities.
- Coaches will devote the time and skill necessary for the good of the player and the overall team.
- Coaches will push and challenge each player in the program to be the best they can be.
- The coaching staff's main goal is to get each player to play to their full potential and put each player in a position to help the team to be successful.
- Coaches will treat players, parents, officials, and opponents with respect.
- Coaches will maintain an open-line of communication with their parents and players.
- The safety and well being of student-athletes shall be the first priority in the decision-making process.
- A list of scheduled practices, including time and location, will be made available to parents and students. These times shall be provided only by the Athletic Director.
- Any additional practices or requests for games must be made through the Athletic Director.
- A pre-season parent meeting will be scheduled. General team rules, coaching philosophy, expectations, and schedules will be discussed and handed out.
- Coaches must be prompt. If a problem arises for the scheduled game or practice, please call the Athletic Director so that supervision can be arranged or the activity can be cancelled.
- Disruption of the school's academic program is to be minimal. Occasionally, because of distance, an away game may require an early dismissal of student-athletes. This is only arranged through the Athletic Director and subject to the approval of the Principal.
- For all gymnasium usage, coaches must take responsibility for the cleanliness and security of the gym.

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- At the end of a game or practice, the coach must make sure all equipment is secured, and that facility is free of team-related trash.
- Coaches must be sure the facility is locked after all practices.
- Coaches are to inform the Athletic Director of any problems concerning student-athletes, fans, officials, parents, facilities and/or safety.
- Coaches are never to leave their team unsupervised.
- Two coaches, or one coach and a parent, must ALWAYS be in the locker room with student-athletes. A coach may NEVER be alone with student-athletes in the locker room.
- The coach will never give keys/fobs to a student.
- The coach must return all equipment, uniforms, and keys/fobs at the end of the season.
- Coaches will be responsible for providing/verifying a team roster with the Athletic Director, with uniform numbers.
- Coaches must proactively provide outcomes, including scores and whatever other information required by the IESA of each individual contest, to the Athletic Director immediately following that contest.

C. General.

The Athletic Director will make a broad call, via traditional school communication outlets, for coaches for each particular sport and level prior to the school year, accumulate all names without prejudice, and submit all names to the Principal and Athletic Committee. Head coaches shall be selected and approved via the Athletic Committee.

The head coach of each sport may choose their own assistant coaches solely at their own discretion, but is subject to subsequent oversight and approval of the Principal and Athletic Director. All assistants must complete all training and protocols to which the head coach is required.

Coaches will vacate the gym immediately at the end of their assigned practice time, and shall show respect for the incoming team by honoring their practice time.

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ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Athletic Director will be selected and approved by the Principal and the parish Priest, and will be directly responsible to the Principal and parish Priest.

The Athletic Director will oversee all aspects of the athletic program, working in close collaboration with the Principal in matters beyond routine responsibilities. Examples of collaboration include fundraising decisions, purchase of uniforms, purchase of equipment, athletic activities that require transportation to out of town locations and significant concerns warranting administrative guidance.

The Athletic Director will maintain a permanent record of coaches' certifications. A copy of the record should be filed with the school.

The Principal will informally evaluate the Athletic Director periodically.

The Athletic Director shall be subject to all training, protocols, and certification as all coaches, including SET, diocesan mandates, and IESA requirements.

The Athletic Director shall have, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- Prepares an annual athletic budget for the following year including registration fees, anticipated gate and concession income and anticipated expenses in conjunction with the Principal and parish bookkeeper/treasurer.
- Coordinates with the Principal the athletic program schedule in relation to the school calendar and extra-curricular activities beyond athletics.
- Develops a master schedule of all athletic events, including practices, games, tournaments and use of facilities. Seeks approval of the schedule from the Principal who communicates it to the parish, parents and guardians, faculty, and staff.
- Collaborates with the Principal and Athletic Committee regarding qualifications, selection and duties of coaches and moderators; makes recommendations of coaches to the Principal and Athletic Committee for approval.
- Communicates with coaches, at minimum, on a weekly basis to ascertain their needs, discuss problems, and give suggestions when appropriate.
- Maintains First Aid kits and Emergency Information packets for coaches and moderators.
- Hires all officials and personnel required for home games; organized all other aspects for home games including, but not limited to, scorekeepers, clean up, turning out lights and securing all doors.

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- Attends and reports information at Athletic Committee meetings.
- Collaborates with the Principal about all aspects for an annual athletic banquet if one is held at the local level; discusses the number and types of awards.
- Is present at all home games or home-sponsored meets or has selected someone who has been approved by the Principal, most likely the Assistant Athletic Director, to take his or her place; enforces the policies and regulations for spectator behavior.
- Makes disciplinary recommendations to the Principal regarding student-athlete misbehaviors that go beyond the local school's written expectations.
- Keeps an inventory of all uniforms and equipment; maintains a listing of assigned uniforms and determines an expeditious return of them at the end of each season .
- Attends all required conference extra-school meetings.
- Is keenly aware of IESA rules and regulations, and attends mandatory IESA meetings annually.
- Maintain all necessary reporting on the IESA website. Moreover, that is the sole responsibility of the Athletic Director only, and logon information should never be provided to any coach other than a unique concussion password for necessary training.
- Performs any other responsibilities that are required.

ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

St. Thomas the Apostle shall maintain an advisory Athletic Committee consisting of the Principal, Athletic Director and school parents/parish members.

The purpose of the committee shall be to support the athletic program in all facets reasonable.

The number of members should be reasonable and prudent and are solely invited to participate by the Principal.

The committee shall approve a slate of submitted names annually to be invited by the Principal to coach their desired respective sport.

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The committee shall provide support for volunteer organization, concessions, and any other function mutually agreed upon.

Simple majority and Robert's Rules of Order govern the committee.

VARIOUS TOPICS

A. First Aid.

It is the responsibility of St. Thomas the Apostle to provide First Aid supplies for all sporting contests.

A First Aid box, located on premises, that can be accessed only by the Athletic Director, the Principal, Assistant Athletic Director or assigned moderator, should contain student-athlete emergency information.

OSHA guidelines must be followed in the event of bodily spills. Disposable gloves and biohazard bags for containment of blood and bodily fluids are mandatory.

Everyone who is at reasonable risk of exposure shall participate annually in a Blood-borne Pathogens information meeting. This universal precautions training will provide basic information regarding exposure to Blood-borne Pathogens including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) through bodily blood and fluid spills.

B. Uniforms.

The Principal shall be responsible for approving the purchase of team uniforms. Uniforms will be issued annually. A timetable for their expedient return should be determined by the Athletic Director.

Normal wear and tear is expected. In the event the uniform is returned in less than acceptable condition, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be assessed the cost for its replacement.

Students may not wear uniforms to and from the games or at any other time unless expressly permitted by the Athletic Director or Principal.

Some costs for the completion of the entire uniform will become the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). For example, such items may be shoes, socks, warm up tops and outfits as well as ball caps.

C. Playing Up.

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In the event that a grade level does not have sufficient members to form a team for games and practice, the Athletic Director and the Principal may allow student-athletes to play up; however, those playing up will be from the next lower grade level only.

Any exceptions to this requirement shall be granted only by the Principal on a case-by-case basis. The total number of team members will not exceed a reasonable number if there was a need to have lower grade student-athletes play up. The Principal shall determine the appropriate number with assistance from the Athletic Director.

D. Tryouts.

In the event it is determined that a team requires players from the grade below, tryouts must be widely advertised with a time, date, and place. Tryouts must be conducted fairly and assessed solely by the coach and his coaching staff.

E. Practices and Games.

No practices or games may be held on Sunday and with no exception.

No practices or games may be scheduled or played on Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Thursday, or Good Friday.

Open gyms, during the off-season, may be scheduled only with permission of the Athletic Director and Principal. Per IESA rules, open gyms are supervisory in nature and no coaching may occur.

The Principal, in conjunction with the Athletic Director, will solely determine any cancellations of any practices or games due to severe weather.

F. Fundraising/Support from Business.

The Principal shall approve businesses who wish to support any logos or signs placed in gymnasiums, products promoted through concessions, and business names sponsoring ticket stubs and/or programs.

The Principal will make final decisions regarding the type and number of fundraising projects.

G. Disputes Between Schools.

In the event of a dispute between schools with opposing teams, the schools' Principals and Athletic Directors shall initially meet to address the concern. The Principals will resolve the matter internally.

IESA guidelines should be utilized if the schools involved in the dispute both hold IESA membership.

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H. Travel.

Games that may require overnight stays may not be made for any sporting event at the elementary school level.

I. Playing Time.

5th Grade: Is always equal play time. Tournaments can be play-to-win if the rules of those tournaments stipulate such.

6th Grade: Is equal play time, but “win the last quarter/match.” Tournaments can be play-to-win if the rules of those tournaments stipulate such.

7th Grade: Is always play-to-win.

8th Grade: Is always play-to-win.

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APPENDICES.

A. IESA Concussion Rules



IMPLEMENTATION OF NFHS SPORTS PLAYING RULE FOR CONCUSSIONS

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) institutes a national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional."

DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION - A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete doesn't have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. *NOTE: The persons who should be alert for such signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion in an athlete include appropriate healthcare professionals, coaches, officials, parents, teammates, and, if conscious, the athlete himself/herself.*

BEHAVIOR OR SIGNS OBSERVED THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY A PLAYER THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of consciousness• Appears dazed or stunned• Appears confused• Forgets plays• Unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily• Answers questions slowly• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can't recall events prior to or after the injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Nausea• Balance problems or dizziness• Double or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish• Feeling foggy or groggy• Concentration or memory problems• Confusion

PROTOCOL

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/ events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

POLICY

1. During the pre-game conference of coaches and officials, the official shall remind the head coaches that a school-approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a contest for an apparent head injury, unless that injury is the result of the student-athlete losing consciousness for any period of time. In such a situation, the student-athlete shall be removed from the practice or contest and will not be allowed to return to activity that day and will be subject to the Association's Return to Play policy.
2. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the previous rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the school-approved health care provider.
3. If it is confirmed by the school's approved health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may re-enter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
4. RETURN TO PLAY POLICY
Background: With the start of the 2010-11 school term, the NFHS implemented a new national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional." In applying that rule in Illinois, it has been determined that only certified athletic trainers and physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois can clear an athlete to return to play the day of a contest in which the athlete has been removed from the contest for a possible head injury. In cases when an athlete is not cleared to return to play the same day as he/she is removed from a contest following a possible head injury (i.e., concussion), the athlete shall not return to play or
(continued on next page)

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practice until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider to return to play.

Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• “Pressure in head”• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• “Don’t feel right”• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• More emotional• Confusion• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment
Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed• Vacant facial expression• Confused about assignment• Forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily or displays in coordination• Answers questions slowly• Slurred speech• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can’t recall events prior to hit• Can’t recall events after hit• Seizures or convulsions• Any change in typical behavior or personality• Loses consciousness	

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport
Document created 7/1/2011, Reviewed 4/24/2013, 7/2015, 7/2017, 6/2018

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For the purposes of this policy, licensed health care providers consist of physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

5. Following the contest, a Concussion Special Report must be filed by the contest official(s) with the IESA Office through the Officials Center.
6. In cases where an assigned IESA state finals event medical professional is present, his/her decision to not allow an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

MANDATORY CONCUSSION COURSE FOR COACHES

Senate Bill 7 (Public Act 99-245) amends the School Code and will go in to effect for the 2016-2017 school year. The legislation requires ALL interscholastic athletic coaches to take a training course from an authorized provider at least once every 2 years. The IESA makes the IHSA online concussion awareness and education program available to IESA member schools through the IESA Member Center. The program includes information on concussion awareness training, concussion recognition, best practices for avoiding concussions, return to play guidelines, and sub-concussive trauma. The presentation and other supplementary materials included in the presentation should be reviewed by ALL interscholastic athletic coaches prior to taking a required exam over the curriculum.

St. Thomas the Apostle Athletic Handbook

C. IESA Concussion Information Sheet

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The Return-to-Play Policy of the IESA and IHSA requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all schools are required to follow this policy.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>