

# St. Mark Lions



# Athletic Handbook

St. Mark Lutheran School

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## Section I - Philosophy and Goals

### **St. Mark's Athletic Program Philosophy**

St. Mark's primary purpose is to provide families with a Christ-centered education. This Christ-centered philosophy carries over into our athletic program. I Corinthians 10:31 tells us, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Co-curricular sports give student athletes the opportunity to use their God-given abilities to bring glory to God's name and reflect His love. Through athletics we strive to increase a student's self-esteem, work ethic, leadership abilities, and understanding of teamwork. In addition, we strive to provide an enjoyable, vigorous, and safe experience in a Christian environment. We believe athletics is an extension of the total educational process at St. Mark's Lutheran School.

### **Goals of our Athletic Program**

- 1) Glorify God.
- 2) To develop character traits such as: self-discipline, self-esteem, responsibility, leadership, and teamwork. At the same time demonstrating self-control under pressure, defeat, and failure, as well as proper acceptance of success and victory.
- 3) To develop a greater degree of the fundamental skills and a knowledge of the rules appropriate to each grade level.
- 4) To help and prepare our students for participation in advanced levels of athletics.
- 5) To provide a Christian witness to all our members and to our community and to demonstrate by example the fruit of faith in athletic competition.

## Section II – "Lion Code"

It is exciting to be part of St. Mark's athletic program. As we strive to do things in an orderly manner, the following guidelines have been established to help maintain a high-quality, Christ-centered program. Parents, Coaches, and Students will sign this code prior to the start of the school year.

### **Coaches**

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of Christian behavior, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both on and off the playing field. Coaching duties include keeping the "fun" in sports, developing God-given athletic abilities, teaching sport-specific skills, and instilling in the players an appreciation for the game. In detail, coaches are expected to...

- Uphold proper Christian conduct in the light of I Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."
- Treat every player, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.

**Coaches continued:**

- Learn the fundamental skills, rules, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of his/her sport.
- Communicate to his/her players and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on the team.

**Players**

Children play sports to have fun, develop God-given abilities, and learn sport-specific skills. Players have a responsibility to their team, coach, and our school. In detail, players are expected to...

1. Learn and be willing to cooperate with coaches and fellow teammates.
2. Display Christian conduct. In the event an individual fails to demonstrate Christian behavior as determined by the coach, he/she will receive a warning and the parents will be contacted. After the second occurrence the parents will be contacted and the player will be suspended from the next game. On the third infraction the child will no longer be part of the team.
3. Attend all practices and games unless excused by a parent prior to the event, either verbally or by note. Players missing a practice prior to a game will not be allowed in the starting lineup. An unexcused absence will result in a suspension the following game.
4. Be reliable. Players must be present at practices and games 75% of the time to receive recognition as being part of the team. We encourage families to put their St. Mark's school team first.
5. Put academics before athletics. In accordance with our student handbook, children who faithfully work to their potential in their schoolwork and who regularly demonstrate proper conduct will be encouraged and welcome to participate in extracurricular activities. Students not meeting academic requirements set by parents and teachers will be ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports until requirements are met.

**Parents**

Just as coaches and players strive to reflect the love of our Savior in their words and actions, parents are encouraged to do the same. Parents participate in games by watching, cheering, and supporting the efforts of all participants of the game. The following guidelines are expected to be followed by all St. Mark's parents. Parents are expected to...

- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the contest.
- Reflect the love of their Savior at all times that their words and actions may influence the behavior of children and other spectators.
- Recognize and appreciate skilled performance regardless of affiliation.
- Acknowledge officials as authoritative figures understanding that mistakes will be made.
- Never criticize a coach in a public manner or coach from the sideline.

## Section III – Interscholastic Athletic Activities

### **Chippewa Valley Lutheran Conference**

St. Mark is a member of the Chippewa Valley Lutheran Conference (CVLC). The CVLC is an athletic conference made up of all Lutheran (WELS and CLS) schools in the Eau Claire and surrounding areas. There are four schools in the CVLC: Messiah Lutheran, Eau Claire, St. Paul's, Menomonie, and St. John's, Neillsville. The CVLC serves as our governing body when it comes to rules and guidelines for each individual sport.

### **Athletic Seasons**

#### **Girls' Volleyball**

1. Volleyball is offered to girls in grades 4-8
2. The season is from the beginning of the year to approximately the middle of October.
3. A schedule for practices and tournaments will be given at the start of the season.
4. Uniforms: Tops are provided. Shorts and knee pads are the responsibility of the girl.
5. Fee: \$15

#### **Co-ed Soccer**

1. Soccer is offered to boys and girls in grades 5-8.
2. Depending on numbers, 4th graders may be allowed to play.
3. The season is from the beginning of the school year to approximately the middle of September.
4. A schedule for practices and tournaments will be made available at the beginning of the season.
5. Uniforms: Jersey is provided. Shin guards and shorts are player's responsibility.
6. Fee: \$15

#### **Flag-Football**

1. Flag-football is offered to boys in grades 4-8.
2. The season is from the beginning of the school year to approximately the middle of October.
3. A schedule for practices and tournaments will be made available at the beginning of the season.
4. Uniforms: Jersey is provided. Mouth guard and shorts are player's responsibility. (Cleats are highly recommended.)
5. Fee: \$15

#### **Basketball**

1. Offered to boys and girls in grades 4-8
2. Girls may participate on the dance/cheer team at the same time.

### **Basketball continued**

3. The season begins roughly the first week of November and concludes by the end of February or early March. The boys schedule is heavier in November/December whereas the girls schedule is heavier in January/February
4. A practice and game schedule will be sent home prior to the season.
5. In the event that school is closed due to weather, all activities will be canceled for that day as well.
6. Uniforms: Jersey and shorts provided for A-Teams. B-Teams will for sure receive a Jersey top, but based on numbers and size players might have to provide shorts. **Only white undershirts or matching uniform color undershirts should be worn under uniforms.**
7. Fee: \$15

### **Cheer/Dance Team**

1. Offered to girls in grades 5-8
2. Girls may participate in basketball at the same time.
3. The season begins in November and concludes in February.
4. A practice schedule will be sent home prior to the season.
5. A cheer/dance schedule for games will be sent home early in the season.
6. Uniforms: Will be provided.
6. Fee: N/A

### **Track and Field**

1. Offered to boys and girls in grades K-8
2. One conference track meet in May.
3. Practices will be done in school.
4. Uniforms: Shirts and shorts are player's responsibility.
5. Fee: N/A

### **Interscholastic Teams/Participation**

In seasons such as volleyball and basketball, team levels are formed.

**A-teams** shall be comprised mainly of 7th and 8th graders. Players from grades 5 and 6 may be used as well based on enrollment and/or skill as deemed by the coach. The focus at this level is skill development, preparation for high school athletics, and competition. *Playing time in games will vary according to the player's skill, attitude, and determination.*

**B-teams** shall be comprised mainly of 5th and 6th graders. Players from grade 4 may be used as well based on enrollment. The focus at this level is fundamental skill development and game participation. *The coach's aim at this level is to afford each player an opportunity to participate in games and develop skills.*

### **Playing Time**

- B-team: Strive to give equal playing time to 5th and 6th graders, 4th graders will receive less time.
  - A-Team: Strive to give all players meaningful playing time, but might not mean equal playing time.
- Players who have been faithful in the classroom, work hard, listen well, encourage others, and demonstrate skill will receive more playing time.

### **Player Advancement**

- There are two reasons players may be moved up. First of all, players may be moved up because a team does not have enough players to field a team with adequate reserves. Secondly, players may be moved up because of their skill level.
- The ultimate goal when moving players up based on skill level is to put them in a position where they can best use their God given gifts and abilities to His glory.
- The number of players moved up is determined by the head coach with approval of the athletic director.
- Players chosen to move up will be those that can best participate in a higher level of competition. The two most common determinants are: 1) skill level and 2) physical size/development.

### **Communication**

Prior to the start of each sport, the athletic director will work with each coach to communicate a schedule, expectations, team rules, and a code of conduct for athletes participating in each sport. This communication needs to keep in mind the above statements concerning player advancement, playing time, and the purpose of A and B Team Levels.

### **Section IV - Athletic Eligibility Policy**

We at St. Mark's realize the importance of using our God-given talents through participating in co-curricular athletic activities. While we realize that this is important, we also realize that it is important to use our talents academically. Because of this, we have established a policy regarding eligibility standards at St. Mark's.

1. All core classes (Religion, Math, History, Science, and Language Arts) must be at a C- average or higher at any time during the school year. Students not obtaining this level will not be able to participate in contests or practices for a period of two weeks. At the end of this time period if the average is at a C- or higher, the student will be reinstated. If the student does not have a C- average or higher at this time, he/she will be reevaluated at the end of the quarter.
2. A student may not participate in a practice or contest if he or she did not attend school on the day of the practice or contest. The only exception would be for an excused absence approved through the school principal.

**Eligibility continued:**

3. Students who attend another public school are not allowed to participate in St. Mark extracurricular activities.
4. Students who are members of St. Mark but are homeschooled are allowed to fully participate in St. Mark extracurricular activities.
5. Students from St. Paul's Lutheran, Bloomer are allowed to play with St. Mark all other cases will be brought to the St. Mark Board of Education for case by case consideration.
6. Events such as Luther Prep tournament and games attached to this tournament will be open to all members of St. Mark since it is meant for the recruitment and exposures to our Luther Prep.

Parents have the authority to establish higher standards for their children than stated in this policy.

**Section V – Addressing Concerns**

At times, there may be a question or concerns about athletics at St. Mark's. It is important to establish and follow an orderly way to address these items.

Parents may contact a coach about the following concerns:

- Child behavior
- Physical and mental treatment of a child
- Ways to improve

The following topics are inappropriate for a parent to discuss with a coach:

- Playing time
- Team strategy and play calling
- Other student-athletes
- Officiating

Please bring your questions and concerns to the proper person so that it may be addressed promptly and properly. Please follow the outlined chain of command when bringing up concerns.

- 1) Speak with the coach.
- 2) If the question or concern is not satisfactorily addressed, the coach and parent should bring the issue to the athletic director.
- 3) If the question or concern is not satisfactorily addressed, the coach, parent and athletic director should bring the issue to the principal.
- 4) If the question or concern is not satisfactorily addressed, the coach, parent, athletic director and principal should bring the issue to the attention of the school board chairman.
- 5) If the question or concern is not satisfactorily addressed, the school board chairman will include the item on the agenda of the next available school board meeting.

## **Section VI – Absences**

The expectation is that players attend all practices and games.

**Parents are expected to excuse their child from a game or practice prior to the absence.**

**The notice should be made by written note, email, or phone call.**

If a player is absent from school, he/she may not participate in that day's practices or games.

Players must be present at practices and games 75% of the time to receive recognition as being part of the team. We encourage families to put their St. Mark's school team first.

## **Section VII – Transportation**

Parents are responsible for securing transportation for their child(ren) to and from away games.

Requesting a ride from a coach should be the last resort.

## **Section VIII – Parent Volunteering**

The livelihood of our athletic program depends on parent volunteers. It is an expectation that parents assist with concessions, scoreboard, clean-up, etc.

We are very thankful and appreciative for the volunteer hours put in by parents. It is a blessing to our school and to our athletic program.

## **Section IX After School Responsibility**

Players are not allowed to stay after school without proper supervision. St. Mark does provide after school care if that is needed. The exceptions are as followed:

- 4 or 4:30 Games-If there is a game beginning at those times there will be a supervised study hall before the game.
- 4:45 pm or Later Games or Practice-There is NO study hall for these players. You must make alternative arrangements such as after-school care, a friend's house, or someone else watching them. It does not matter what grade your son/daughter is in, they **can not** be left alone.

## **Section X-Coaches**

### **Head Coaches**

Head coaching positions should be approved by the Board of Education prior to the start of the school year. Head coaches should be called workers or members of a WELS or ELS congregation.

### **Assistant Coaches**

In addition to the head coach, an assistant coach may be named for each sport. Assistant coaches are meant to provide another perspective to the head coach, provide another adult to go to with questions, curb favoritism, help with coaching duties, fill in when the head coach is gone, and to provide a second adult in charge at all times. Assistant coaches should be approved by the Board of Education prior to the season.

### **Hiring Process for Each School Year**

The Athletic Director will be in charge of finding head coaches for each sport. All coaches need to have a background check completed before starting the coaching position, and must be done every 5 years. If the athletic director has issues finding coaches, they will work with the Board of Education to find qualified individuals. A request of interested parents could be communicated through PTP meetings (in the springtime prior), ROAR, and possibly the church bulletin.