

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary of the Woods' Football Program is designed to offer a Parish wide athletic experience designed to attract 4<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Participants are not only challenged to learn the fundamentals of the game, but also committed to promote the Christian and academic values we believe in. Parents, Coaches and students within the football program understand the game is a unique opportunity to develop teamwork, sportsmanship, goal setting, and the discipline of hard work.

### Goals

The Goals of St. Mary's Football program are:

Teaching sportsmanship as related to complete overall development of the student athlete,

To learn what it means to be part of a team,

Develop strong church and community spirit,

Development of good physical fitness not only of the body but the mind, as well,

Learning the proper attitude of fair play, cooperation, competing with dignity, whether you win or lose and respect for others,

Developing responsibility and discipline

The Football Board and the pastor have primary authority over the Football program of St. Mary of the Woods. The pastor's responsibilities are supervisory. It is the job of the Board to:

Implement the Mission Statement;

Compliance with the Leagues rules and enforcing them;

Verifying all legal and safety aspects of the program are implemented: verification of the athletes' insurance coverage, parental permission in writing; student emergency information and other information necessary for compliance with the League

Ensure that all adults in the program, especially the coaching staff are Christian models, qualified to work with the student athletes and support the mission statement of the football program.

## **Organization**

The Football Board was formed by the Pastor. The Board consists of 7 members. These representatives consist of 4 parish representative, 2 Religious Education (CCD) representative and 1 liaison from the Athletic Board.

The Football Board will consist of three officers appointed by the full Football Board. Officers are President, Secretary and Treasurer. All members shall deal with the oversight of the program, reporting, coaching assignments, fund-raising and volunteer coordination.

The term for the Board members is three years, beginning on January 1 and ending December 31. Any member is eligible for reappointment. A member may be voted out by a majority vote of the other members if he/she has not fulfilled their responsibilities as a board member. This includes non-participation in meetings, events, or not following the Mission Statement.

## **Guidelines and Procedures**

The Football Board shall hold periodic open meetings, have an agenda, keep minutes, have a complete accounting of all monies.

Responsibilities of the Board include:

To act as liaison between players, coaches, parents and community;

Monitoring of all coaches;

Communicate the mission statement and ensure that it is clearly understood by all;

Coordinate, schedule and supervise all aspects of the Football program;

To adhere to the guidelines for practice and games as set for by the league;

Annually prepare a budget and set participation fees;

To raise funds to support the football program;

Establish a procedure for conflict resolution;

Annually review and evaluate the rules and make changes where necessary for the betterment of the program;

To perform any other duties to fulfill the program objectives.

The officers may divide the responsibilities as they see fit.

All coaches will be required to submit an Internet application to the Archdiocese under the "Covenant to Protect Children". The parish will supply instruction. They must all attend a seminar covering child abuse and they must also attend a coaches seminar given by the league.

## ELIGIBILITY

All 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who attend St. Mary of the Woods school or Religious Education (CCD) students are eligible to participate in the football program. The program is, also, open to students who live in the community but attend other Religious Education (CCD) programs. This is providing that they are enrolled and participate in that program fully and have a sign off from their pastor and our pastor,

Eligibility per the C.G.S.C. League Rules are as follows:

- a. Varsity players are ineligible if they reach the age of 15 before Dec 1 of the calendar year.
- b. Jr. Varsity players are ineligible if they reach the age of 13 before Dec 1 of the calendar year.
- c. Varsity weight- no stripes 140lbs or less - one stripe 160lbs or less - two stripes 185lbs or less
- d. JV weight -no stripes 105lbs or less - one stripe 115lbs or less - two stripes 125lbs or less.
- e. Players must be enrolled in the parish school or an approved C.G.S.C. approved satellite school.
- f. If a player is not enrolled in the parish school then the player and his parent or legal guardian must be registered in the parish or satellite parish
- g. Players must be baptized Catholics and attend their parish school or Religious Education (CCD) program.

St. Mary of the Woods foot ball program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin in its athletic program.

## PLAYING TIME

St. Mary of the Woods football program has a "no-cut" participation philosophy. "Winning at all costs" or exclusion of eligible players is not tolerated. Given the nature of the sport, it is extremely difficult to give equal playing time. Every attempt will be made to give as much playing time as possible to all athletes. Great consideration must be given to the athletes' ability to perform on the field against the opponent. Their safety and the safety of their teammates is our main concern.

## COACHES: Selection, Rules and Responsibilities

The coach has the greatest amount of responsibility as well as the greatest opportunity to influence the student athletes. Coaches assume the role of teacher, mentor, and minister to the young people in their charge. A coach's attitude and behavior are critical to modeling good Christian, Catholic sportsmanship both in word and deed, including attendance at mass. The careful selection of coaches is vital if it is to reflect our Mission Statement. A Board member may not be the Head Coach of the program or of the Varsity or JV Squads.

The term "Coach" includes all persons who have any ongoing interaction with the team, including those who assist the coaches and present on the sidelines during the games. Criteria for selection of coaches includes:

Ability to model Catholic Christian values

Ability to articulate and model the goals of the program

Ability to supervise and instruct youth in his or her care

Understanding of the basics of football

Ability to develop potential, confidence and skills of each athlete

Ability to separate winning from the more important goal and values of the program.

After a careful screening process the coaches will be appointed by the board members with the approval of the pastor. Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age and be knowledgeable in the sport of football, be able to conduct practices and coach in a responsible manner.

Coaches shall attend a clinic given by the C.G.S.C. League. Coaches should receive training in first aid, CPR and blood borne pathogens; they should be familiar with Abuse and Neglected Child Reporting Act and should clearly understand their legal responsibilities.

Coaches must be familiar with, adhere to and support the football Mission Statement, all policies and guidelines of the league. Coaches shall hold a mandatory meeting with parents and student athletes prior to the start of the season. The purpose of the meeting is to outline expectations of parents and student athletes and to establish a line of communication.

Coaches must knowledgeable of the rules of the football and techniques for teaching the fundamentals of football. They should use tactics and strategies that are age and skill appropriate.

Coaches must model Christian sportsmanship knowing that St. Mary's is judged more by the coaches' sportsmanship and his/her record. The coach should teach and guide the team members with a sense of fair play and model winning and losing in a respectful, courteous and gracious Christian manner. Coaches must show proper respect to the officials and opponents. The coaches must refrain from public protest that may lead to similar behavior from students, parents and other spectators.

Coaches are responsible for the safety and welfare of the team. They are responsible for the equipment issues to them and for proper care of the facilities where practices and games are held.

Coaches must take necessary precautions to protect all clothing and valuables of the students.

Coaches must carry with them at all times pertinent information on every athlete in their care in case of emergency. The emergency card should list obvious problems such as asthma, heart problems, diabetes and allergies. A first aid kit must be at all games and practices. Coaches may NEVER administer medication.

Coaches should attend all practices and games. They are responsible for proper adult supervision in their absence. They are responsible for student conduct and behavior at all practices and games.

Coaches should teach the rules of the sport and develop each player's skills within the framework of team concept. They must help each player develop self-confidence, discipline and sportsmanship and make participation a learning experience for all.

Coaches should be fair and unprejudiced in their relationships with student athletes and their parents. They should be objective when they evaluate.

Coaches are to ensure that students wear the official uniform of St. Mary of the Wood's football team to all games and tournaments.

Coaches must discipline inappropriate player behavior or disrespect. However, a coach may NEVER resort to physical or verbal abuse or profanity. Coaches should know the difference between punitive touching (physical discipline) and corrective touching (correcting a player's stance or ball holding). Coaches must take care that touching a player will never be interpreted in a sexual manner. Coaches must use common sense and maturity in resolving problems and conflicts.

Coaches should keep objective, factual, written records of problems concerning attitude and/or behavior. These records are important when discipline matter might lead to the suspension and/or expulsion of a player from the program.

Coaches must communicate a schedule of practices, games or alterations to students and their parents in a timely manner. Coaches cannot assume that players will get the message home.

Coaches must keep a record of all accidents and injuries and parents should be notified. While it may be impossible to document every injury, an honest effort must be made to notify the parents in a timely manner and is important to the safety and security of the athlete. The Board should be made aware of all injuries and accidents.

Coaches are not allowed to deny playing time to players who are cooperative in effort and attendance.

If a coach fails to perform his/her duties according to the spirit and policies of St. Mary of the Woods football program, the coach will be removed by the officers of the football program following implementation of procedures established herein. Coaches who have been negligent or deficient in carrying out their responsibilities will not be retained. Coaches who have been removed from their position may not be involved in any other aspect of the football program.

If during the course of a season, a complaint is made to the athletic board about an active coach, the officers of the board shall conduct an informal investigation to determine if there is any validity to the complaint. If the officers determine that the complaint is valid, a more formal process shall be initiated. If necessary, the decision of the officers may include disciplinary action relating to any person or person involved. It shall be understood that the Board will not entertain any grievances regarding game strategy or playing time. Any decision of the football board regarding the dismissal or discipline of a coach or the discipline of a player may be appealed to the pastor.

#### **STUDENT ATHLETES: Expectations and Responsibilities**

The expectations and responsibilities of the athlete should be clearly stated and published before the student makes a decision to participate in the program. These expectations are part of this handbook.

Submit all documentation within the established time line.

Present proof of insurance;

Present complete permission forms;

Meet age and weight requirements of league regulations; and

Pay all required fees.

Participating in any athletic program and playing football is a privilege, not a right. Athletes are held to personal, academic and disciplinary standards.

Athletes who choose to participate in the football program are representatives of the parish and the community. They must act in a manner that reflects favorably upon the church and on themselves. This expectation is not limited to the football field but in the community, at other fields, as well as, before, during and after games. Regulations regarding proper wearing of the uniform or other attire are physical manifestations of this reflection.

Each student will be responsible to pay the required fee for his/her uniform.

The student athlete must show proper respect for coaches and cooperate with them fully. This respect must also be given to other members of the team, opponents, and officials of the sport. The student athlete must also respect the spectators and fans.

Student athletes are expected show good sportsmanship and play by the rules. They should be supportive of the members of their team.

Losing control, using inappropriate gestures or tone of voice, foul or abusive language, arguing a referee's call or coach's decision or other signs of disrespect are reasons for disciplinary action. Consequences of such behavior could be reduced playing time, or even suspension or expulsion

from the team. Student athletes are expected to be present and on time for all practices and games. Not attending practices affects the entire team and detracts from the sense of team work that the coaches are striving to achieve. "Excused" or "Un-excused" absences are to be defined by the coaches. In the event the athlete is unable to attend that practices/games he/she is to notify one of the coaches beforehand.

#### PARENT/GUARDIAN Expectations and Responsibilities

Parents play an important role in the success of the student athlete and in the success of the team. The Mission Statement should be communicated to the parents as well as all expectations of their child's participation in the program. Attendance at a MANDATORY pre-season orientation session will be required.

Parents are expected to support and encourage their child's efforts by attending games, and cheering for the team. Parents are reminded to act in a responsible manner and show good Christian sportsmanship.

Parents should make no attempt to instruct or direct play of a student athlete or of the team. They should not criticize the playing efforts of any athlete or of the team. Questioning, criticizing, or berating the coach, the referees, or any other officials is inappropriate behavior. Parents can and may be asked to leave a game or tournament if they are not able to maintain a standard of acceptable behavior. Parents can be a model for putting losses into perspective.

Parents are expected to contribute their time and service in support of the team and the football program. We view the football program as another branch of Parish Ministry serving the children of our church community. In addition we recognize participants and their families make significant sacrifices for the success of this unique athletic experience. Modeling Christian values and pooling our collective efforts do make an impact on the development of our athletes and cheerleaders. Volunteering your support, energy, and available resources are all necessary elements to create a connection for your son or daughter with the mission of St. Mary of the Woods. Our success is dependent upon everyone's help to support and maintain a high level of quality and success. Parents will be asked to assist in the concessions, crowd control, clean up or other voluntary positions. Parents will be needed to serve as team liaison, assist with phone calls or provide rides.

Parents will provide transportation for their children to and from practices and games. Coaches are not covered with liability insurance for chauffeur service, therefore may not transport athletes at any time.

Parents will communicate directly first with the coach to resolve matters of concern. Should further communication be necessary, concerns should then be brought to the Football Board. It should be understood the Board will not entertain any grievances regarding game strategy or playing time.

## **NUMBER of GAMES/ Season Length**

This is determined by the C.G.S.C. league and will be distributed to the players as soon as the Board has the schedule.

## **FINANCES**

The St. Mary of the Wood's football program is self-sustaining. Participation fees are set to allow as many student athletes as possible to participate. Provisions for the children of families who can not afford the fees is available by contact the Football Board and/ or pastor.