

INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE
ATHLETIC PROGRAM
PHILOSOPHY & GUIDELINES

Revised 9/12/11

INTRODUCTION:

The goal of the athletic program at IJP is to enable our children to develop physical/athletic skills within a Christian framework of team play, competition and cooperation. A large part of a child's growth involves learning how to be a team player and learning to work with others toward the common goal. Sports activities allow for this growth.

Athletics are a social, as well as physical, learning activity for our children. The goal of the IJP sports program will be to teach the individual basic athletic skills and rules, to enhance those skills, to teach Christian sportsmanship and conduct, as well as to encourage and foster development of interpersonal and social skills, through team activities.

The IJP Athletic Board is responsible for the organization, management and maintenance of the athletic program. The guidelines that follow will be used to help the Board direct the program. Such guidelines cannot cover every possible situation, but will assist the board in most. The Board can amend these guidelines as and when needed.

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IJP SPONSORED SPORTS

Each sport will have a coordinator for that program who is a member of the Athletic Board. The coordinator will maintain contact with the league(s) and the coaches throughout the season to assist in the coordination of a well-planned, well-run season.

The coordinator is responsible for developing a budget for the sport prior to the season and gaining approval for said budget from the Board. The coordinator will keep the Board informed throughout the season. Prior to the start of the season the coordinator will present a slate of coaches to the Board for approval. The coordinator will attempt to resolve concerns parents may have regarding aspects of the program.

At this time the Athletic Board has approved the following sports:

- Girl's Basketball
- Football
- Cheerleading
- Boy's Basketball
- Girl's Volleyball

The Board, at its discretion, may add or delete sports.

GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines apply to all sports:

- I. Dates of Registration shall be announced two times a year through the IJP Campanile, IJP School and the IJP Religious Education Program as well as electronic communications. Registration forms are available online at the IJP Parish website.
- II. An athlete may not be rostered on more than one Parish team in any one sport, unless approved by the Board.
- III. Practices:
 - A. Not to exceed three (3) hours in a calendar (Sunday-Saturday) week. (See football exception)
 - B. Wednesday practices should not conflict with Religious Education classes.
 - C. No practices the day/night of a game, unless approved by the coordinator in special circumstances, such as tournament or playoff games.
 - D. There should be no practices or games on Sunday morning, so that each family has the opportunity to attend Mass together.
- IV. Children who transfer into the Parish after the start of sport season may petition the Board to play. Factors such as grade level, roster size, uniform availability, time in season, will be considered, and the Board, in making its decision, will use league rules.
- V. IJP uniforms and equipment will be distributed by the coordinator. **No team may purchase additional equipment or uniforms without the Athletic Board's prior approval.**

ROSTER APPROVAL

- I. A copy of all registered players is to be submitted by the coordinator of that sport, to the rectory for player eligibility.
- II. The rectory must advise the coordinator in writing only if the player is not eligible to play.
- III. The coordinator should immediately notify the parents of the ineligible player, as well as the Coach.

COACH ELIGIBILITY

- I. Candidate must receive prior approval from the Board.
- II. Head coach candidate must be over the age of 21.
- III. Assistant coach must be over the age of 16.
- IV. “Helpers” must be at least high school age.
- V. Candidate must consent to an Archdiocesan Background Check, a DCFS check, and attend a Virtus Training Program. Candidate must submit an Archdiocesan Volunteer Form.
- VI. **Candidate must agree to enforce the guidelines, bylaws, and policies of the IJP Athletic Board.**

COACH'S APPROVAL PROCEDURE

- I. Names will be submitted to the Coordinator from the registration form.
- II. Coordinator will review the individuals and creates a pool of candidates based on the following:
 - A. Personal Character
 - B. Tenure with IJP Athletic program
 - C. Coaching Experience at IJP and/or other programs
- III. The sport coordinator then submits a recommendation to the Board for discussion and approval. Approved and non-approved coaches are to be notified by the coordinator within 5 days of the Board vote.
- IV. Non-approved coaches may have the opportunity to appeal within 5 days of notification. The individual will talk with coordinator to review facts used to determine the coaching decision. The coordinator will immediately submit the findings to the board President.
- V. The President will then:
 - A. Stand by the original ruling
 - B. Call a special session with the Athletic Board and coordinator to review the findings.
 - C. Re-vote, if necessary.
- VI. Teams shall consist of the following, per team:
 - A. Boy's Basketball - (1) Head Coach (1) Assistant Coach
 - B. Girl's Basketball - (1) Head Coach (1) Assistant Coach
 - C. Girl's Volleyball - (1) Head Coach (1) Assistant Coach
 - D. Girl's Cheerleading - (1) Head Coach (1) Assistant Coach
 - E. Boy's Football - (1) Head Coach and appropriate number of Assistant Coaches dependent on number of participants in program.
- VII. The above teams may have individuals who would like to help but don't want to be an official coach. Helpers must:
 - A. Have their name submitted to the coordinator by the head coach of the team they wish to help. The coordinator will then get board approval.
 - B. The helpers must meet the criteria set forth in the coach's eligibility, including VIRTUS, CBC, and DCFS
 - Helpers may fill-in as head coaches or assistant coaches in game situations only as needed. Helpers must be approved by the coordinator to coach in game situations.
 - C. Teenage helpers are not to run practices alone. An adult must be present.
- VIII. Only board approved head coaches, assistant coaches and helpers are allowed on the sidelines or bench during a game. League rules may limit the number of coaches allowed on the sidelines.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL/BOYS' BASKETBALL/GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

4th Grade/ 5th Grade

Teams at these levels will be divided relatively equally in talent. Siblings in the same grade level may be placed on the same team if desired by the parents. Players will receive relatively equal playing time over the course of the season. Teams will play in one league and one tournament (5th grade may play in up to 3 tournaments subject to Athletic Board approval).

4th Grade Evaluation (if necessary)

Open gym. The evaluation process is to be determined by the coordinator. Teams are to be divided on a relatively equal talent basis. Consideration may be given to special requests.

5th Grade Evaluation (if necessary)

Every effort will be made to keep the teams from the prior year intact, however changes in the registered participants may warrant changes. If the coordinator is not satisfied that the teams were fairly equal, an evaluation may be scheduled and teams divided evenly based on the evaluation. Consideration may be given to special requests.

6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Evaluation (if necessary)

Sixth grade is a transitional year, progressing from developmental to competitive. Tryouts at these levels will be held to determine the team(s) roster. An independent evaluator(s) approved by the Board will rank the children. Due to the variances in player count and other circumstances from season to season, the coordinator and the Athletic Board President will determine the method used in selecting the A team, and the evaluation process will be determined by the coordinator.

In the event there are siblings in the same grade level, they will be evaluated independently, meaning twins may be placed on different teams. If the players/parents elect to have the players play on the same team, the players will be placed on the lower of the two teams. In 6th grade, all players receive meaningful playing time - 25% to 50% over the course of the season. (There will be no playing time requirements during the playoffs.) Teams may play in up to 2 leagues and up to 3 tournaments during the season (with prior approval from the coordinator and Board President).

The coordinator makes a recommendation to the league as to where each team should play. It is the league's decision into which divisions they assign our teams.

7th Grade / 8th Grade

These grades are competitive levels with playing time earned based on talent, effort, practice & game attendance, and commitment to the team. Playing time is at the coach's discretion with effort given to allow each player a chance to play as much as possible.

All players should be placed according to their evaluation.

FOOTBALL

Practices begin in mid-August (Mon.-Fri); once school starts practices are determined by the coordinator and coaching staff.

All athletes participating in football are required to meet the league stated weight restrictions. No child will be encouraged to excessively diet in order to meet league weight restrictions.

WIDGET (4th 5th 6th Grade)

Players will receive representative and significant playing time over the course of the season.

VARSITY (7th and 8th Grade)

This is a competitive level with playing time earned based on talent, effort, practice, game attendance and commitment to the team. Playing time is at the coach's discretion, with effort given to allow each player a chance to play as often as possible.

CHEERLEADING

Cheerleading supports football (fall), and boys' basketball (winter). All cheerleaders must commit to participate for the fall and winter seasons from August through March. Due to squad size limitations, registrations will be accepted during regularly scheduled fall sports registration only. Any late registrations will require coordinator approval. In the case of too many registrations, the final decision on squad size rests with the coordinator.

The cheerleading squad is allowed to have a junior cheerleader as a mascot providing the team coach approves the person.

A uniform skirt and shirt will be provided. It is the responsibility of the cheerleader to provide shoes, socks and cheer briefs.

HEALTH & SECURITY

Of utmost importance to all is the health and security of the children involved in the athletic program. The following items will help guide us:

- I. Athletes will not be allowed to participate in practice or games for any sport, until the athletic board has received a signed parental consent form.
- II. Athletes are not permitted to practice without a coach or responsible adult present.
- III. All coaches must meet training and certification as required by the Athletic Board, Parish, Archdiocesan and governmental regulations.
- IV. The use of alcohol or any nonprescription drugs before or during games or practices by a coach is strictly forbidden.
- V. If an emergency requires that a coach leave a practice/game, every effort should be made to have a responsible adult present before the coach leaves.
- VI. If an athlete becomes ill or is injured during the practice or game, the following steps should be followed:
 - A. Assess extent of injury or illness,
 - B. Notify parents,
 - C. Supply first aid up to your trained ability
 - D. Call for medical assistance (if necessary).
- VII. An athlete's parents are responsible for the health and well being of their child. This includes seeking appropriate medical attention for all health conditions that may impact the child's ability to participate in an athletic activity. The Athletic Board, coordinators and coaches assume no responsibility for administering medications or for providing more than first aid for injuries sustained in the course of a game or practice.
- VIII. Coaches or their adult designee are responsible for closing all windows and doors at Infant Jesus of Prague at the end of a game or practice. No child should be left waiting at the facility. At no time should any area of parish property be accessible to the public, unless a responsible person is present. Doors or enclosed fields are to be locked at all times. *Doors are not to be propped open.*
- IX. Coaches are required to return their Parish issued gym key at the conclusion of the season to the sport coordinator. This key must not be duplicated. Coordinators are responsible for the distribution and collection of keys during their season. If a key is not turned in, the Coordinator is responsible for informing the President, who in turn is responsible for notifying the Principal of the School and/or one of the parish priests.

PLAYER PARTICIPATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a Catholic youth sports program, not the pros. Players, cheerleaders, fans, parents and coaches are expected to abide by this general code of conduct at all IJP sporting events. *Participation in the IJP Athletic Program is a privilege and not a right.*

The IJP Athletic Program is a part of a larger Catholic faith community. The IJP Athletic Board urges that players attend Saturday evening or Sunday Mass on a regular basis. As such, the goal of the Athletic Program at IJP is to enable and encourage our children to develop physical/athletic skills within a Catholic framework of team play, competition and cooperation. A large part of a child's growth involves learning how to be a team player and learning to work with others toward a common goal. Sports activities allow for this growth. The program will teach Christian sportsmanship and conduct, as well as encourage and foster the development of interpersonal and social skills through team activities.

To be eligible to play sports at IJP, the child must:

- I. Be in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8, and;
- II. Actively attend the Religious Education program or parish school at IJP, or
- III. Attend a state approved and parish approved home schooling program, while also being a parishioner of IJP.

Note:

In the event the number of registrants in any grade level (6, 7, or 8) in any particular sport becomes unmanageable in the opinion of the Athletic Board, the Board may restrict the number of teams at such level(s). If such a determination is made, tryouts will be mandated to determine the final team(s) roster.

GUIDELINES FOR PLAYERS

IJP PLAYERS WILL

- Be good people first, good students second, and good athletes third.
- Treat their teammates and coaches with RESPECT. If there are problems, talk them out face to face.
- Will act in ways that enhance the good reputation of the church and school, both on and off the field of play. They know they are identified as IJP players and they act appropriately. They encourage their teammates to do so as well.
- Treat the facilities, bathrooms and equipment with respect, both at home and on the road.
- Act appropriately in order to support and encourage their teammates' performance and morale, both in the game and from the sidelines and in the stands.
- Never lay blame on an individual player, either publicly or privately.
- Not question or argue with the officials.
- Not taunt or talk badly to opponents. When they are taunted, they walk away.
- Celebrate their successes with their teammates, but not to the detriment of opponents or opposing fans.
- Shake hands after a competition.

RULES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR PLAYERS

IF

- Any player is dismissed from the game by an official for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any player is serving any form of school suspension.
- Any player is asked to leave a game for swearing or bad behavior by a referee, coach, school official, parish priest or Athletic Board member.

THEN

The consequences below may be implemented:

First infraction: one-week suspension including all practices and games.

Second infraction: two-week suspension including all practices and games.

Third infraction: dismissal from the program.

Any player who is suspended from school could be asked to turn in their uniform for the season. If an athlete is dismissed from the program, reinstatement the next season will be on a case-by-case basis.

With the approval of a parish priest, it is the right of the Athletic Board President to remove a child from a team for the rest of the season for behavior or disciplinary reasons. Reinstatement the following year will be on a case-by-case basis.

PARENT'S ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Just as the Athletic Board, coaches, coordinators, and players have responsibilities, so do the parents. By registering their child for the IJP Athletic Program, parents (and their children) agree to abide by the guidelines of our program.

Parents should keep their player home if the player did not attend school due to illness.

Parents are required to attend one mandatory meeting each year. Parent meetings will be held in August and November. If they do not attend the meeting, their children will not be eligible to play.

IJP School Tuition Payment or Religious Education Fees must be up to date in order for the athlete to participate in the IJP Athletic Program.

It is the expectation of the Athletic Board that a parent will not send their child to participate in an athletic event if the student is serving a school suspension. The parent is responsible for notifying their Coach that the student will be unavailable to play.

The IJP Athletic Program is a volunteer program. A volunteer program is dependent upon everyone's help and support to maintain a high level of quality and success. All parents are required to donate time to the program. This may consist of duties such as working concessions and/or the gate, keeping the scorebook, handling the chains or scoreboard, securing parish property, cleaning/sweeping upon daily completion of events, etc.

Parents must accept the responsibility of registering their child within the established guidelines. Due to the disruption that late registration causes, it may result in their child not being able to participate in that season's athletic program. A \$25 late fee will be applicable per family per season after tryouts. New students are exempt. When determining if a late registration will be accepted, the Board will consider such factors as roster size, time of season, reason for late registration, and any other factors it deems relevant. If a late registration is accepted, the Board will assess a late fee on a per family basis due to the additional administrative time and expense incurred in handling late registration.

Parents can encourage and support their child by:

- I. Registering the child within established deadlines.
Late Fee \$25.00.
- II. Bringing the child to practices and games in a timely manner and notify the Coach when the player is going to be absent.
- III. Providing *dignified* vocal support during games and avoiding negative comments about opponents, coaches and officials.
- IV. Being a model for putting losses in perspective and moving on. (Public questioning, criticizing, or berating coaches, the referees, or any other official is inappropriate behavior).
- V. Supporting the coach's decisions. (See Protocol for Resolution of Disagreements and Differences below).

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- IJP parents understand that their sons/daughters are people first, students second, and athletes third.
- IJP parents will refrain from criticizing the players, including their own sons/daughters, and coaches in public.
- IJP parents will refrain from taking attention away from the game by taunting, yelling, or cheering inappropriately.
- IJP parents know that wins and losses are not as important as character and effort, and they actively promote these priorities with their children.
- IJP parents will allow coaches to coach; this includes any discussion with referees or other coaches.
- IJP parents will treat their children and their coaches with RESPECT. If there are problems, talk them out face to face.
- IJP parents do not question or argue with the officials.
- IJP parents will not question or argue with the coach regarding the decision of suspensions.
- IJP parents will encourage players to attend Saturday evening or Sunday Mass on a regular basis.

RULES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR PARENTS

IF

- Any IJP parent is asked to leave a game for unsportsmanlike conduct by a referee, parish priest, school official or Athletic Board member.
- Any parent is found arguing with the opposing team.
- Any parent threatens a player, coach, parent or official.

THEN

The consequences below will be implemented:

First infraction: one-game suspension.

Second infraction: two-game suspension.

Third infraction: suspended from attending games/practices for the remainder of the season.

The decision of the Athletic Board and IJP School is final regarding suspensions. It is not negotiable. Do not engage in conversation with the coach or program coordinator regarding the suspension decision.

REGISTRATION REFUND POLICY

Football: Unless approved by the Athletic Board, football registration fee refunds will not be issued after the date of the official league weigh-in.

Basketball and Volleyball: Unless approved by the Athletic Board, registration fees for Boys and Girls Basketball and Volleyball will not be refunded once the evaluations are completed, teams selected, and rosters approved by the coordinator.

PROTOCOL FOR RESOLUTION OF DISAGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES

If a parent has concerns or questions regarding a coach's decisions etc., a protocol should be followed in resolving any disagreements or difficulties. First, disagreements should be communicated directly to the coach. If the situation cannot be solved at this level, the parent should then go to the coordinator of the sport. If the coordinator is unable to resolve the difficulty, the parent should then take the issue to the Athletic Board President. If no resolution is offered at this level, then the parent should attend an Athletic Board meeting (see page 2 for "Management of People's Concerns at Board Meetings"), and finally, if no resolution is forthcoming, the issue should be taken to one of the parish priests. Throughout this process, it should be understood and appreciated that coaches are donating a substantial amount of time "on and off the field". When there is a question about a coach's actions, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the coach. On all people's parts, the disagreements and discussions should be handled in a Christian-like manner.

MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE'S CONCERNS AT BOARD MEETINGS

- I. If a guest wishes to attend/address the Board, They must contact a Board Member to have their concern added to the Agenda.
- II. Guests are limited to a reasonable amount of time to state concerns/problems (time limit at the President's discretion).
- III. Board members are limited to approximately 10 - 15 minutes following the guest to ask questions and clarify the issue.
- IV. Coordinator of the sport in question responds in writing within 48 hours to let the person know that we are following up on their concern/problem and then will communicate results when issue is resolved.
- IV. Board meeting agenda remains the same.

TEAM UNIFORM POLICY

All players will wear Parish-issued uniforms when representing the school at athletic functions. Only players who are wearing a complete uniform may participate in the game. No exceptions. (No additions to officially sanctioned uniforms are allowed.)

There will be a sign-out and a sign-in for uniforms. Players are responsible for inspecting their uniform for damages before signing out their uniform. They are responsible for returning the uniform in the same condition for which they received it. Any damages at the time of sign-out will be noted on the Uniform Sign-out Sheet. Players will be assessed the replacement cost for any lost or damaged uniform. The replacement cost is as follows:

	<u>Shirt</u>	<u>Shorts/Skirt</u>	<u>Total</u>
Girl's Basketball	\$40	\$35	\$75
Girl's Volleyball	\$40	\$35	\$75
Cheerleading	\$50	\$50	\$100
Football	\$75	\$50	\$125
Boy's Basketball	\$40	\$35	\$75

Other parish-issued equipment (i.e., football equipment, pads, helmet, etc.) will be charged full replacement cost applicable to the item.

The fee must be paid before the player's family is able to register any family member for an upcoming sport. Players will not receive their report card and / or diploma, until their full uniform is returned.

It is the player's responsibility to contact the sports coordinator, if a uniform is lost or damaged during the season and a replacement issued. A replacement uniform will only be made available after the player pays the Uniform Replacement Fee.

COACHES' ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A coach has the greatest responsibility - as well as the greatest opportunity to guide and influence IJP athletes. Coaches assume the role of teacher and mentor, as they minister to the young people in their charge. A coach's attitude and behavior are critical to modeling Christian Catholic sportsmanship in word and deed. It is a privilege, not a right, to be chosen to coach for IJP.

IJP coaches must consent to an Archdiocesan background check, DCFS check and attend a Virtus Training Program. Failure to do so will result in removal as coach.

IJP coaches have the following responsibilities:

- I. Attend mandatory coaches meetings per sport. Coaches must also attend the mandatory parents meeting.

- II. Communication:
Keep open communication with their players to help the players understand why certain decisions are made regarding the player and the team. Coaches should also include parents in your communications. An individual team parent meeting, separate from the mandatory seasonal parent meetings should be held prior to the start of the season to discuss coaching philosophy, practices and game schedules. Keep parents notified of any changes to game or practice schedules.

Parental questions should be welcomed as a sign of interest - not interference - and the Christian resolution of problems should be a priority of our coaches. Coaches should also maintain communication with their respective sport coordinator throughout the season. Coaches are required to follow instructions as provided by the sport coordinator and/or Board, inclusive of issues such as team selection. No coach is permitted to alter the team roster once team selections have been finalized; this includes adding players with out consent of the coordinator or Board approval.

III. Good Sportsmanship:

Coaches should show respect for the game officials and opponents. Publicly shaking hands with the officials and the opposing coach before and after a game gives clear witness to this respect. Criticism of opposing teams/players or game officials will not be tolerated. If an official is questioned regarding a rule, etc., please do so courteously. Any decision to protest a game must be done with the approval of the sport coordinator. IJP coaches should not "run up the score" against an opponent, but instead, use this opportunity to allow less experienced players on your team to gain valuable playing experience. Profanity will not be tolerated. Please remember we are always striving to set a good example for our children. As a coach you are also responsible for your players' behavior and the behavior of the IJP fans. No coach should intentionally seek a technical or walk off the court, unless the very safety of the players is at question.

IV. Instruction:

IJP coaches should strive to make each game and practice a learning situation for our children. In order to provide the best instruction to our children the coaches should:

- A. Accept responsibility for studying the game.
- B. Use tactics and strategies that are appropriate for the age and skill levels of their athletes.
- C. Teach and guide the children with a sense of fair play by modeling winning and losing in a respectful, courteous and Christian manner.
- D. Help each player develop discipline, self-confidence, teamwork and sportsmanship.
- E. Plan for proper physical conditioning of our children. Practices should begin with stretching and warm-up exercises and end with cool-downs.
- F. Be fair and unprejudiced in their relationships with players and their parents, by always striving to be objective.

V. Player Discipline:

If any IJP player is not able to meet the expectations of the IJP program, the consequences may be reduced playing time or even suspension from the team. Such decisions should be made only after the coach and parents have fully discussed the problem behavior. The Coordinator of the sport and President shall be involved in all decisions involving suspension. Should a player be removed from a game because of his/her conduct, please refer to the Code of Conduct for the penalty. All such incidents shall be reviewed with the coordinator of that sport immediately following the incident. Repetitious physical exercise used as discipline shall not be carried to an extreme. Water breaks are not to be withheld as punishment. Under no circumstances should a coach physically discipline a child by shaking or hitting a child in any way. At no time may a coach interfere with a parental decision to discipline or remove their child from the team. The parental decision shall be respected. The parent should communicate with the coach regarding such decisions, due to the consequences to the team.

VI. Uniforms & Equipment:

Coaches are responsible for the uniforms and equipment issued to them, and for the proper use of the facilities where practices and games are held. Uniforms and equipment must be returned in reasonable condition (based on reasonable use) at a time and place designated by the program coordinator (see uniform policy section above).

VII. Evaluations:

IJP coaches will be re-evaluated on a yearly basis, using parental input and observation of coaching methods/strategies by the sport coordinator and/ or board members. If problems occur during the season, this will be reviewed with the coach. The Athletic Board has the right to remove any coach from the program if he/she has acted contrary to the philosophy and/or guidelines of this program. The coach has the right to request a hearing before the Board, via the Conflict Resolution Committee (as provided in the IJP Athletic Board By-Laws), on any board decision to suspend or remove she/he as a coach.