

A GUIDE TO THE SAINTS PETER & PAUL **ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

I. INTRODUCTION

In this document, the Ss. Peter & Paul Athletic Association presents an overview of the Ss. Peter & Paul (SSPP) athletic program. We set forth the purpose and philosophy behind the program, and standards of conduct governing coaches, players and parents. This is our latest and best effort at compiling information relevant to SSPP athletics. This guide is intended to promote a better understanding of what players, coaches and parents can expect from, and contribute to, our athletic program.

While this is a lengthy and wide-ranging document, it is not a detailed treatment of the rules applicable to each sport or each athlete. Nor is this guide intended to track changes to league rules, or the diocesan policies on which they are based. Any questions you have with respect to league rules for any sport should be answered by reference to the rules of that league. This document will, however, be amended from time to time. If you have any constructive comments about this document or the program, feel free to discuss them with an association member or Mike Chiarito, the SSPP Athletic Director.

II. THE SSPP ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

The Ss. Peter & Paul Athletic Association is an association, not a board, of approximately 20 parents of Ss. Peter & Paul school students who coordinate, administer and raise funds for, the athletic program. Each association member serves a three-year term beginning on June 1 of each year, and is limited to two consecutive terms. There typically is a need for new members each year. The association encourages all parents interested in athletics, and willing to devote substantial time to the program, to apply for membership.

The association meets the first Monday of each month, with occasional variations. The meetings are attended by the Athletic Director, a school board liaison, a teacher representative, the association members and interested parents. The minutes of each meeting are provided to the school principal and the school board. The decisions of the athletic association are subject to review and approval by the school administration.

III. OUR PHILOSOPHY

In the Ss. Peter & Paul athletic program, sportsmanship, teamwork and fundamentals are to be emphasized over winning at all costs. We endorse the ideals set forth in The Suburban Parochial Football League Bylaws, which state that all schools are to “adhere to the highest standards of ethics and shall refute the ‘Win at all Cost’ philosophy in order to maintain and uphold the Interscholastic Program as educationally and morally sound.” We adopt this principle for our entire program and aspire to:

- A. Provide a forum to allow SSPP students to participate in interscholastic sports with their classmates run in a manner consistent with the philosophy and Catholic values of the school community;
- B. Establish programs that reinforce the positive values gained from interscholastic competition including teamwork, respect, responsibility, hard work and sacrifice, good sportsmanship, taking pride in yourself and your school, and in doing your best;
- C. Establish programs in which the players, coaches and parents treat one another, our opponents and the officials with mutual respect; and
- D. Develop to the fullest extent possible the physical, mental, social and spiritual qualities of each team member.

These goals are consistent with the competitive nature of interscholastic sports. Adherence to this philosophy will not make a team less competitive, and will make participation more fulfilling for players, parents and coaches.

IV. COACHING

- A. **Eligibility** – Individuals are eligible to serve as head or assistant coaches if they:
 - 1. Have completed “Protecting God’s Children” and/or all other required courses of this nature;
 - 2. Are committed to following the Coaches Code of Conduct discussed below;
 - 3. Are willing to meet the significant time requirements necessary to plan for and attend practice sessions, meetings and games; and
 - 4. Possess knowledge of the game sufficient to instruct and develop players consistent with the philosophy of the SSPP program.
- B. **NOTE** – You do not have to be a parent, athletic association member, expert, or the next John Wooden or Pat Summit to coach. The coordinators, and others with experience, will assist you along the way. If you are interested in coaching, please get involved.
- C. **Code of Conduct** – Our coaches are the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the philosophy of our athletic programs, and are the individuals who will have the most impact on our student-athletes. With that in mind, we set forth the following code of conduct that our coaches are expected to follow:

1. Coaches shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the SSPP program so as to further the goals of the program including the development of the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of each team member;
2. Coaches shall use positive reinforcement and constructive encouragement as much as possible and shall refrain from personal attacks and ridicule of players, parents, coaches, officials and opponents;
3. Coaches shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interests of the children and the team as a whole;
4. Coaches shall refrain from the use of profanity and vulgar language;
5. Coaches shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner reflecting good sportsmanship, and should never embarrass a player, coach, official, parent or opponent. Games should be competitive but never an effort to embarrass an opponent by intentionally running up the score or otherwise acting in a manner inconsistent with the ideals of good sportsmanship. Coaches should instill the virtues of good sportsmanship in the members of the team and should ensure that the members of the team conduct themselves in a manner consistent with these ideals at all times;
6. Coaches shall at all times show respect for the parents of the players, and shall have a process in place where communication can be had between parents and coaches when needed. Constructive communications can usually be had away from the heat of the playing field. It is recommended that coaches have a process in place wherein parents are requested to wait 24 hours after an event before having substantive discussions with a coach so as to allow rational, reasonable and respectful dialog to take place between the parties;
7. Coaches shall never physically or mentally abuse a player;
8. Coaches shall keep abreast of the rules of the game and playing and coaching techniques and shall prepare sufficiently in advance of practices and games so as to make the practice or game as beneficial as possible to the advancement of the goals of the SSPP athletic program; and
9. Coaches shall be familiar with and abide by all playing time rules, and make efforts to exceed those minimums when appropriate.

We also ask that our coaches:

10. Make the sport fun and a vehicle for the total development of the child;

11. Create an environment that is conducive to learning, supportive, proactive, risk free, and characterized by positive reinforcement;
12. Let the players know what to expect from you and what you expect from them;
13. Develop team discipline that is internally generated rather than externally imposed;
14. Focus your efforts on the continuous improvement of all players regardless of ability level;
15. Do not coach your child to the exclusion of others;
16. Get to know your players, and help them to get to know you and their teammates;
17. Listen to your players, so they listen to you;
18. Make parents a part of the team by giving parental involvement a high priority; and
19. Coach as a role model for players and parents.

D. Head Coach Selection

The athletic association invites all interested individuals to apply for head coaching positions. We will publish a general notice to the school community alerting interested individuals to submit a simple application to the Athletic Director or other designee on or before a stated deadline. A general notice will typically be placed in the electronic school envelope. You can also note your interest in coaching on your child's athletic registration form that is submitted at the end of year school year.

After the applications have been received, interviews will be held with all interested candidates. Participants in the interviews may include current members of the athletic association, the Athletic Director and the coordinator for that sport. If an association member has a child who will be on the team the candidate is interviewing for, that member shall not be present in the room during the interview, shall not take part in any substantive discussions concerning the candidate and shall not have any vote as to the coach selection for that team.

The relevant association oversight committee will coordinate the times, locations and dates of the interviews. All efforts will be made to allow all interested applicants the opportunity to interview, and to allow a sufficient number of athletic association members to attend and participate.

After the interviews, the Athletic Director and the association members present during the interviews shall meet to discuss the selection of the head coaches for the following season. The participants in the discussions are encouraged to have open and constructive dialog concerning the applicants. The over-riding goal of the coach selection process is to identify the person who is best suited to serve as the head coach for each of our teams taking into account the philosophy and goals of our program, and the expectations we have set forth in the Coaches Code of Conduct. The highest criterion for the decision is the best interests of the children on the team as a group. The discussions should include other criteria including coaching experience, service as an assistant coach for SSPP teams, written parent evaluations, the applicant's reasons for coaching, his or her commitment level, attendance at relevant school or athletic association workshops, and any other relevant, reliable information.

After the discussions, the association members involved in the process shall recommend a person to serve as the head coach of the relevant team for the following season. It is anticipated that each year a number of qualified persons will submit applications for the head coaching positions and it is anticipated that the decision as to who will serve will often be difficult. The members are encouraged to reach a consensus choice, but if a consensus cannot be reached, the recommended head coach will be chosen by a majority vote. The Athletic Director shall be present during the selection process but is not entitled to a vote.

The members involved in the interview process shall then make their recommendation to the entire athletic association for discussion and vote. The selection process undertaken by the association as a whole shall be run in accordance with the existing rules and procedures of the athletic association.

As noted above, head coach selection is often a very difficult decision. The fact that someone was not selected as a head coach is never a decision that that person is not a good coach or otherwise capable of significant contributions to the team or program. We hope that those selected as head coaches use the talents of those who were not selected in the furtherance of the team.

Lastly, we want to remind everyone that coach selection is made before each season. One selected as a head coach the previous season has to apply again for the position. Head coaching positions are not permanent.

E. Assistant Coach Selection

The head coach is generally given the responsibility of selecting the assistant coaches for the team. All assistant coaches must meet the eligibility requirements set forth above and must agree to adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct. To the extent the athletic association is aware of information impacting the eligibility of a person under consideration to serve as an assistant, that information shall be

communicated to the head coach. The head coach is encouraged to be inclusive in the selection of coaches always keeping the best interests of the student-athlete in mind. From time to time, the athletic association may suggest or request that a coach appoint someone as an assistant coach.

F. Team Rules

Coaches are given discretion to set reasonable team rules concerning attendance and other team-related matters. These rules should be made clear to players and parents at the beginning of the season so all are aware of the rules and the consequences of rules violations.

G. Team Meetings

Coaches are expected to hold a team-parent meeting when practices begin to clearly set out team rules and the criteria under which a player will earn or lose playing time (e.g., ability, dedication, hard work, unexcused absences from practice, etc.).

V. PARENTS

Parental cooperation and participation is essential to the success of our teams and the program as a whole. To that end, pursuant to the following code of conduct, we expect all parents to:

- A.** Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the SSPP athletic program and its goals at all sporting events;
- B.** Players are expected to attend practices and games, and parents are primarily responsible to ensure that this occurs. We ask that parents honor the time commitments a coach makes, and advise the coach in advance when a player will be unable to attend;
- C.** Parents are expected to show respect to the coaches, players and referees;
- D.** Parents are expected to let the coach “coach” the team and during the game should not relay instructions to their child on what they should be doing. It is very difficult for a child to know whom he or she should listen to – the coach or the parent – particularly when contradictory instructions are given;
- E.** Parents are expected to help the coaches in any capacity they can when asked. The organization is comprised of volunteers and from time to time the coaches may require additional assistance in a variety of matters, e.g., scorebook keeping;
- F.** The parent may raise any issue or concern with a head or assistant coach. This should be done after a practice or game has been fully completed and preferably

away from the field or gym. We have found that reasonable, rational and constructive dialog more often takes place after a “cooling down” period of time has elapsed, and recommend a “24 hour rule” if the discussion concerns a specific game or event. By taking 24 hours to “cool down” after an event, both sides will be in a better position to have a discussion that will lead toward resolution of the issue. Confronting a coach immediately after a game and/or in front of the team is unlikely to result in a positive resolution, as the parent and coach may not have as open a mind on the issue at that time;

- G. A parent may bring any unresolved issues to the chair of the athletic association oversight committee for that sport or to the Athletic Director. We ask, however, that the coach be given the first opportunity and a reasonable amount of time to resolve the issue.

VI. COMMUNICATION

- A. **Parent/Coach Communication.** Communication between coaches, players and parents is vital to the success of our program. We anticipate that most questions and issues will be answered and resolved through direct communication between coaches, players and parents. For those issues where additional feedback is needed, parents are encouraged to contact the Athletic Director and/or the chair of the relevant association oversight committee.
- B. **Coach Evaluations.** At the end of each season, we distribute coach evaluations to the parents of each player. It is important that one or both of the parents complete the evaluation as accurately and fairly as possible. These evaluations assist the association in its coach selection process, in educating coaches and generally improving our athletic program. There is no requirement that evaluations be signed, but it is preferred as it allows follow up if necessary.
- C. **Registration Forms.** Each year the association distributes a sports registration form to all families for basketball, cheerleading, cross-country, track & field and volleyball. (Football registration is a separate process.) This typically occurs in early May with a return date in early June, and it is important that the form be returned on a timely basis. Late registration often results in SSPP incurring additional fees imposed by the leagues we participate in. This form is to be used to indicate those SSPP sports your children plan to participate in during the upcoming year. This form is also to be used to express an interest in coaching. The association relies your registration forms to plan for each season. It is important that you take these forms seriously.

VII. STUDENT-ATHLETES

- A. **Eligibility.** To be eligible to participate in athletics at SSPP, students must be in good standing both academically and behaviorally. These standards are discussed in the school handbook. School related eligibility requirements are determined, set

and enforced by the school administration and not by the athletic association. When school officials determine that a student is ineligible to participate it is the school's responsibility to inform parents in a timely basis to avoid forfeiture. It is then the parents' responsibility to inform coaches of a player's inability to participate. The coach does not need to know why a player is ineligible.

- B. **COMMITMENT.** If your child is registered for a particular sport it is assumed that he or she will be fully committed to his or her school team. The association takes the representations in the registration forms seriously and asks that you do so as well. Students who are placed on a team, but are not committed to it often diminish the experience of those who are.

- C. **Conduct.** Our student-athletes, and all spectators, are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the goals and the philosophy of our athletic program. This includes, but is not limited to, showing respect at all times to coaches, parents, officials, spectators and all others present at the sporting event. It is also expected that all those present at our games and practices will treat our facility, those of our opponents and our practice fields with respect. Mistreatment of person or property will subject a student to removal from the sporting event and perhaps other discipline.

VIII. FINANCIAL ISSUES

- A. **Participation Fees.** The athletic association currently assesses a \$75 per student fee for a child participating in the SSPP athletic program at the 5th through 8th grade level. A family rate of \$140 is charged if more than one child participates at that level. Late fees may apply. This fee has not increased over the past several years, due primarily to the fund-raising efforts of the athletic association and your support of our efforts.

NOTE: If you are concerned with efforts made by parents and/or coaches to raise money for trophies, clothing, gifts, and others items specific to your team, feel free to raise your concerns with the Athletic Director or an appropriate association member. The association does not believe that pressure should be placed on families to pay for extravagances unrelated to the goals of our program.

- B. **Tournament Stipends.** The athletic association provides each of our teams with up to \$250 for entry fees for outside tournaments. A team may use some or all of the \$250. These funds cannot be transferred to another team, so we encourage each team to take advantage of this opportunity. The athletic association treasurer should be contacted to obtain those funds. Some leagues, e.g. the DuPage Parochial League, have rules that limit the total number of tournaments and games a team can participate in during the season. The Athletic Director can provide guidelines on this issue to all coaches.

- C. **Other.** For those programs that do not have tournament opportunities, like Track & Field, the athletic association provides financial support in other ways such as underwriting work with consultants. We continue to look for creative ways to support all aspects of the SSPP athletic program.

IX. THE “FOUR GATHERING” RULE

Teams are permitted four “gatherings” per week pursuant to diocesan guidelines. A gathering is a practice or a game. Our teams typically have two practices during the week and will usually play games or participate in meets on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays. Should a team participate in a tournament the number of gatherings will be considered the minimum game guarantee of the tournament. For example, if team plays in a single elimination tournament on a weekend, but advances to the finals and plays 4 games in the tourney that entire tournament counts as 1 gathering. If a team plays in a tourney with a 3 game minimum guarantee on a weekend then that tourney will count as 3 gatherings. Failure to comply with the gathering rule may result in sanctions.

X. BASKETBALL

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

All students from 1st through 8th grade have the opportunity to participate in the basketball program. An intramural program is offered for student athletes in grades one through four. Students from grades five through eight participate in interscholastic league play. Above the fifth grade level there are typically “A” level teams and “B” level teams. All teams are formed on a grade and gender basis.

B. LEAGUE PARTICIPATION

SSPP is a member of the DuPage Parochial League (DPL) and the DPL West. “A” level teams currently participate in the DPL, while “B” level teams compete in the DPL West. The league is comprised of several Catholic schools located in the western suburbs including St. Scholastica, St. Walter, St. Joseph of Downers Grove, St. Mary of Downers Grove, Ss Peter and Paul, Our Lady of Peace, St. Joan of Arc, St. Michael, Sacred Heart, St. James, St. Matthew, Holy Trinity, St. Petronille, St. Pius, and St. Alexander. Our Athletic Director attends league meetings as the SSPP voting representative and is accompanied by the chairperson of the association’s basketball committee.

C. TEAM FORMATION

- 1. **The Evaluation Process.** The By-Laws of the DuPage Parochial League define “A” team players as “the players from the squad containing at least the six best players from a grade.” Each year the association coordinates an evaluation process to aid in the placement of students on the 5th through 8th grade teams. Students interested in playing at the “B” level are not required to attend

evaluations and, as long as he or she is registered in the program, will be placed on a “B” team. However, even if a player is not interested in participating on an “A” team, he or she should attend evaluations as that assists the coaches when selecting “B” teams. All students interested in being placed on an “A” team must attend the evaluations if he or she is able. Those seeking to coach a team should also attend evaluations. It is important for potential coaches to attend the evaluations to evaluate the relative abilities of the players they may be called upon to coach.

The basketball committee in consultation with the Athletic Director and the Basketball Coordinator select the evaluation method. The evaluation procedure is our best effort to form competitive teams in a fair and objective manner. Individuals with basketball knowledge are asked to volunteer their time to observe the players in drills and scrimmages and to rate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the participants. These evaluators may be coaches at other levels, former coaches or friends of the program, and are chosen to evaluate at a particular level where the evaluator has no child or relative participating so as to avoid even the appearance of a potential conflict of interest. As noted above, the individuals who may potentially coach at the level being evaluated are also invited to attend to assist with organization and to observe the evaluations so that they can make their own observations concerning player development. These coaches, however, are not part of the evaluation process, and offer no opinion as to player ranking.

2. **Team Selection.** Under league rules the top six (6) players of each grade must be on the top team. We meet this requirement by identifying the top five ranked players through the evaluation process described above and having the sixth player selected by the assigned coach. The remaining players selected for an “A” team are considered at-large or, “bubble”, picks and are also selected by the coach. If there are two “A” teams at a grade level, the “A” 2 team is selected in a similar manner. If there are two “B” teams at a grade level, the two “B” teams are chosen in a manner intended to make them equally competitive. There are variations in this process depending on team size. All potential coaches attend the evaluations so that appropriate player selections can be made. Any changes in player placement after team selections have been made shall only be made with approval of the basketball committee and after consultation with Athletic Director, the President of the Association and the coaches of the affected teams.
3. **Inability to Attend Evaluations.** If a student is legitimately unable to attend the evaluations, yet wants to be considered for “A” team placement, his or her parent must explain the absence in a letter directed to the Athletic Director before the evaluations. He or she is then eligible for “A” team placement – assuming the absence is determined to be reasonable by the basketball committee – but not guaranteed a spot on the “A” team. Students who miss evaluations and are selected by a coach for the “A” team are considered at-large or “bubble” picks.

Previous placement on an “A” team is no guarantee of making a future “A” team for any student, including those who miss evaluations.

4. **Team Size.** Ideally, teams should not contain less than seven players. The basketball committee in consultation with the Athletic Director will make determinations as to team size based upon the skill level of the student athletes, the number of students competing at that grade level and input from coaches. All participants must be on a roster of a team of their own grade level.

D. TEAM PLAY

1. **Playing Time.** The league by-laws require that each player who dresses for a game must play at least the equivalent of one quarter per game, including tournament games. The league by-laws state an exception to this requirement in that no team is required to play more players than the number of players on the opponent’s squad. In other words, this league exception provides that if the opponent brings six players to our game and we have eight players dressed, six of our players must play at least one quarter and our remaining two players can sit out the entire game. We do not endorse this exception. Each player at SSPP that dresses for a game is entitled to play the equivalent one (1) quarter minimum, regardless of the number of players the opponent has dressed for the game.

Playing time is essential for player development and team unity. SSPP coaches are also strongly encouraged to exceed our minimum requirement and identify opportunities to provide each student substantial playing time. This playing time policy applies to “A” and “B” teams alike. It is not, however, intended to limit a coach’s ability to appropriately discipline players.

2. **Practices.** After the athletic association slates head coaches the Athletic Director will assign practice times for each team. Coaches should consider the availability of their assistants when choosing practice times. Given the limits of gym time availability, many teams share gym practice times. Head coaches should discuss sharing practice times with coaches of teams with similar abilities to provide for the potential for competitive scrimmages and shared drills. These discussions should occur promptly after head coach assignments are made. Teams should generally expect two 1-hour practice slots per week. The Athletic Director will consider the grade level of players when assigning later practice times when possible. Generally each DPL/DPL West team will be allocated 2 hours per week for practice at SSPP’s gym.
3. **Season Schedule.** The regular season is currently 10 to 12 games long, depending on grade level. Practices often start toward the end of October. The season begins in late November and ends in March, with playoffs during mid-March. At the conclusion of the regular season, the DPL and DPL West host a single elimination playoff tournament in which all teams are seeded. Note that only players on a team’s regular season roster may play in the post-season (no substitutes). Also,

only those players participating in 50% of their regular season games are eligible for post-season tournament play.

4. **Substitutes.** It is very important that all coaches consult the league rules on this issue, as there are significant limits to the use of substitutes. If after review of the league rule you still have questions, contact the Athletic Director. In any event, should a coach need a substitute player to play in a regular season game or in a tournament, he or she must ask the coach of the team the substitute player is on to avoid conflicts.
5. **The SSPP Trojan Classic.** The athletic association has hosted the Trojan Classic Basketball tournament for over three decades. Historically, this tournament runs during the month of December. This is an important fundraiser for the athletic program and provides an additional venue for SSPP teams to compete. All SSPP teams are encouraged to participate. If we are unable to form a bracket at a particular grade level, the association will offer additional funds to the affected team(s) to participate in an outside replacement tourney.

E. BASKETBALL COORDINATOR

The athletic association has retained the services of a basketball coordinator, currently Nick Fay. The coordinator assists in the development of the evaluation process, assists coaches in the development of practice plans and game plans, and otherwise promotes the development and improvement of the basketball program and our players. We encourage all coaches – and new coaches in particular – to consult with the coordinator from time to time.

F. INTRAMURALS

1. **Fees.** A \$25 per player fee is charged to cover expenses of the program, including referee fees and equipment costs.
2. **Participating Grades.** This program is for all students from 1st through 4th grades.
3. **Team Formation.** Intramural teams are formed and compete along a grade and gender basis. Generally, up to four (4) boys and girls teams are slated at each grade level. Best efforts are made to create balanced, competitive teams. The opinions of the coaches, the Athletic Director and the committee are considered when creating teams. A minimum of five (5) players per team is needed to form teams, but six (6) or more is preferred.
4. **Coach Selection.** The Athletic Director along with the association's intramural committee will select coaches for each team from the pool of applicants, generally parents, but older siblings and other qualified applicants will be considered. The athletic association views the intramural program as a potential training ground for coaches to develop their skills leading to coaching in upper grades.

5. **Schedule.** The intramural basketball season typically extends from March to May, but variances may occur. Games are presently held on weeknights, Monday through Friday. Practices are held after school or on weekends. Consideration is given to the first and second graders when possible in scheduling to provide them with the earlier timeslots. Generally a team will have one (1) hour of practice and participate in one game each week of the season. Due to the developmental nature of the program, if a team does not have five (5) available players a rostered player from another team, preferably from the same grade, can substitute for the missing player.
6. **Philosophy.** The emphasis of the intramural program is on developing basic skills, teamwork and fostering an enjoyment for the game and competition. To signify the emphasis of skill development over winning in the intramural program the scoreboard will be reset to 0-0 each quarter.

XI. CHEERLEADING

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The Cheerleading team is open to all students in grades 5 through 8.

B. TEAM INFORMATION

1. **Football/Basketball Cheerleading.** The SSPP cheerleading program is divided into two seasons – Football and Basketball. Historically, the football cheerleaders have formed a single, noncompetitive team. The basketball cheerleaders are typically more numerous and will participate in competitions.
2. **Team Size.** The number of teams and team sizes will be determined on a year-to-year basis. If enough students are interested in participating, fair and objective evaluations will be conducted and multiple teams formed. Those teams may be divided into “A” and “B” teams or any other designation deemed appropriate by the association, the Athletic Director, and the cheerleading committee, with input from prospective coaches.
3. **Practices.** Even if two or more teams are formed, efforts will be made to have the teams practice together. It is expected the teams will practice two hours per week, with additional practice times likely to prepare for competitions.
4. **Season Schedule.** The coaches will determine the cheering schedule, with input from the cheerleading chairperson and the Athletic Director. The teams are expected to cheer during at least one weekend game.

5. **Competitions.** It is anticipated that each cheerleading team will participate in cheerleading competitions throughout the year.

XII. CROSS COUNTRY

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The Cross Country team is open to all students in grades 5 through 8.

B. LEAGUE PARTICIPATION

The Cross Country team participates in the Suburban Parochial League (SPL) consisting of Catholic schools located in the western suburbs. For league information consult the SPL website at www.s-p-l.org.

C. TEAM INFORMATION

1. **Team Size.** The SSPP team is open to all students who sign up. There is no limit to team size at any grade level.
2. **Team Participation.** All team members compete in each SPL meet and in various invitational meets.
3. **Practices.** Historically there have been two practices a week, each lasting approximately an hour and a half. These practices are usually held at a location determined by the coaches. Parental participation in practices is common and encouraged.

D. MEETS

- A. **Season Schedule.** The SPL season runs from approximately the last week of August to the first week of October. There are five SPL meets and two invitational meets during the season. Coaches may contact their team to begin workouts in early August.
- B. **Distances.** 5th and 6th graders run a distance of 1 mile at each meet; 7th graders run 1.5 miles; and 8th graders runs 2 miles. The distances run at the invitationals can vary slightly.
- C. **The Championship Meet.** For a runner to qualify for the championship meet, he or she must compete in and finish at least one meet.

- B. **Volunteers.** Each team is required to supply volunteers for various tasks at the meets; so we need your help.

XIII. FOOTBALL

A. HISTORY OF SSPP FOOTBALL

SSPP students in grades 5 through 8 who were interested in playing traveling football originally played on a team combined with students from St. Raphael Parish. SSPP then formed its own team in name only, wearing the school colors, bearing the Ss. Peter & Paul name, but remaining under the full control of St. Raphael Football, Inc. For many years the athletic association football committee was merely an informational liaison between the school and the St. Raphael Football board. The athletic association had one seat on the St. Raphael Football board and the SSPP football representatives provided game day organization for home games such as transporting field equipment and yard markers and unlocking the fields to provide access for the teams and spectators.

We became more active in 2006 by conducting interviews of prospective head coaches at the junior varsity level and soliciting evaluations of the performance of the coaches from the parents of both the junior varsity and varsity players. Our role expanded further in 2007 as we undertook the review of the post-season coach evaluations, conducted interviews of head coach candidates at both levels and participated in coach selection. Our school team is still under the St. Raphael Football, Inc. umbrella, which is very cost-effective, but we now have a role in coach evaluation and selection.

B. ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAM

1. **St. Raphael Football, Inc.** St. Raphael Football, Inc. is the legal organization responsible for our varsity and junior varsity teams. The SSPP football teams are under the St. Raphael Football, Inc. umbrella. Parents pay fees for participation to St. Raphael Football, Inc. (this is not included in our registration fee) and that entity provides our players with shoulder pads, game jerseys and game pants. St. Raphael Football also provides equipment to our teams including balls, tackling dummies, sleds, sideline chains and markers and first aid kits and provides access to game and practice fields. St. Raphael Football also pays for referees and other miscellaneous items. Players are required to obtain their own helmets, practice pants with pads, practice jerseys, shoes and mouth guards at their own expense.
2. **SSPP Athletic Association.** The athletic association provides the labor for game day set up for home games, distributes coach evaluation forms for parent feed back and conducts interviews of prospective head coaches for the varsity and junior varsity teams. Ss. Peter & Paul holds one seat on the St Raphael Football board, which will be filled by our Athletic Director, who attends board meetings

with the head of our football committee. They report back any developments to the association and coaches as needed. We also serve as a resource to players, parents and coaches with questions concerning the SSPP football teams, St. Raphael Football, Inc. and the Suburban Parochial Football League.

3. **Suburban Parochial Football League.** The Ss. Peter & Paul varsity and junior varsity teams are members of the Suburban Parochial Football League (SPFL). The SPFL Constitution, Bylaws and other items of interest can be viewed on the league website at www.spfl.org. The league is comprised of 12 Catholic schools located in the western suburbs including St. Francis, St. Cletus, St. Joseph, Immaculate Conception, St. Isaac Jogues, Visitation, Ss. Peter and Paul, Our Lady of Peace, St. Joan of Arc, Queen of the Rosary, St. Michael and Sacred Heart.

The SPFL spells out its philosophy as “based upon the belief that football is educationally sound and plays an important part in the development of the participant’s physical, mental, emotional and moral growth and ... offers experiences through competition and its lead-up activities that should enhance the educational programs of the member schools.” The SPFL’s purpose is “to offer those experiences needed to reach the educational objectives of interscholastic athletics as stated in the philosophy of the league. The league shall provide a means for member schools to enhance their instructional program. The SPFL shall provide the participants with opportunities to learn skills and emotional patterns beyond those offered in school. Major emphasis will be placed on learning through competition as well as acquiring the skills of the sport. These activities shall be modified to meet the physical, mental and emotional levels of the participants.”

The SPFL is managed through the commissioner, secretary and treasurer of the league and through the respective school athletic directors or their designees. The league commissioner is rotated every two years. The league treasurer and secretary are elected every three years. Ss Peter & Paul will hold the commissioner title in 2015 and 2016. There are three regularly scheduled meetings of the member schools each year to discuss general league business and to set the schedule for the upcoming season. The meetings are typically held in October, May and August. The SSPP Athletic Director will attend these meetings as the voting representative and will be accompanied by the chairperson of the association’s football committee.

The SPFL is divided into two divisions – the Gold Conference and the Silver Conference. SSPP had previously been a member of the Silver Conference and switched into the Gold Conference in 2006. The SSPP varsity and junior varsity teams now play in the Gold Conference. Member schools within the Gold Conference typically field teams with larger rosters than those found in the Silver Conference.

C. Ss. PETER & PAUL PLAYERS AND TEAMS

1. **Team Composition.** The Ss. Peter & Paul Varsity and Junior Varsity teams are travel teams. Typically, both the varsity and junior varsity squads will have a sufficient number of players on the roster to field both an “A” team and a “B” team. In fact, the SPFL rules require that we play both an ”A” game and a “B” game when facing a Gold Conference opponent. We have traditionally referred to our “A” and “B” teams as “Blue” and “Gold”. There are no evaluations or “cuts” in football. Coaches have the discretion to place the players on the “Blue” and “Gold” teams and this can change from week to week.

We believe the Blue and Gold squads within our varsity and junior varsity teams are of equal importance and all of our players should be treated with equal respect regardless of whether they are on the varsity Blue or junior varsity Gold during any given week. The benefits of participation in interscholastic athletics can be reaped by each student no matter what team he or she is playing on and every effort should be made by our coaches, parents and school community to reinforce this concept.

2. **Varsity.** The varsity team is made up of students in the 7th and 8th grades at SSPP. The varsity team is not made up of a separate 8th grade team and a separate 7th grade team and every effort should be made by the coaching staff to mold the two classes into one supportive team, without distinctions or levels. There will be situations where a 7th grade student is better suited to play before an 8th grade student based upon ability and performance. It is expected that the “Blue” team will often be made up of both 7th and 8th graders and likewise the “Gold” team will be made up of both 7th and 8th graders. It has also been our experience that players will move between the “Blue” and “Gold” teams as their skills develop.
3. **Junior Varsity.** The junior varsity team is made up of students in the 5th and 6th grades at SSPP. The guidelines set forth in the above paragraph concerning the varsity team apply with equal force to the junior varsity team. While one of the goals of the entire program is to enhance player development, we believe overall player development is of even greater importance at the junior varsity level. The SPFL Constitution echoes this sentiment by stressing the junior varsity level should be considered instructional and urging that the experience be made fun while the players learn the game.
4. **Playing Time.** Unlike the leagues governing our volleyball and basketball teams, there are no league minimum playing time requirements for football under the SPFL rules. The coaches are encouraged to play the players in the “A” game that will allow the team to be most competitive, while taking into account the game circumstances including the score, safety of the players and the availability of a “B” game or 5th quarter that week for those players who may not play in “A” game that week. We believe that in almost every instance, player development is

advanced through the experience of playing in a game or 5th quarter and every effort should be made to provide this experience for the player and teammates.

Coaches should find opportunities for each player to play in a safe and positive situation. This may sometimes mean that an 8th or 6th grader plays in a “B” game or 5th quarter. The coaches are required to maintain an atmosphere where the Gold team is held in respect and is coached with the same degree of commitment as shown to the Blue team. For example, coaches should require the Blue team members to (1) be present for the Gold game when it is immediately following the Blue game; (2) pay attention to the field of play during the Gold game, and (3) cheer on and encourage their teammates on the Gold team that week.

Nothing in these guidelines should be construed so as to require a coach to play a child in a situation where the child’s safety is at risk, where a child is injured, or where a child is ineligible due to a violation of team rules, a violation of school requirements or a failure to attend a sufficient number of practices to meet IHSA eligibility requirements.

5. **Practices.** The IHSA sets the date each year when football practices may begin. The first day of practice varies from year to year but is typically in the middle of August. The SPFL follows the IHSA rule in this regard and requires all players to participate in a total of 12 practices before the player becomes eligible to play in a game. The first three days of practice for each player must be conducted in helmet and shoes only. Any team that plays a player that has not actively participated in 12 practices prior to appearing in a game forfeits any games the player participates in prior to meeting the 12-practice requirement pursuant to SPFL Bylaws.

The coaches of the varsity and junior varsity should communicate the opening date of practice to all football families as far in advance as possible so that families have the option of taking the date into account when scheduling family vacations. During the period of time prior to the first day of school our teams will often have practice every day, and on some days may have two sessions of practice. One purpose of the high number of pre-season practices is to ensure a sufficient number of practices are available so that the players can meet the 12-practice minimum before to the first game.

6. **Games.** Games are typically played on Sundays with the junior varsity teams playing in the morning and the varsity teams playing in the afternoon. There are a total of eight games per season, for both varsity and junior varsity, with the season ending on October.

Gold Conference teams are required to play two full games at both the varsity and junior varsity levels each week when facing another team from the Gold Conference. There are five games against Gold Conference opponents during the

regular season and two “cross-over” regular season games against Silver Conference teams. When facing a Silver Conference team, a full “B” game will be played if the Silver team has 33 or more eligible players on its roster. If the Silver team has 26 to 32 eligible players, a “5th Quarter” will be played according to league rules. There are typically no “B” games or “5th Quarters” during the final games of the season.

In those weeks where the opponent is a Silver Conference team with too few players to participate in a “B” game or “5th Quarter”, the SSPP coaches are encouraged to arrange for games or scrimmages outside of league play to provide additional game experience and opportunities for those players seeing limited playing time in the league game scheduled for that week.

While the league refers to games as “A” or “B” games to differentiate between the two, efforts have been made to refer to our teams as “Blue” and “Gold” as opposed to “A” and “B”. We do not refer to our “B” teams as the “7th grade” or “5th grade” team and efforts will be made to continue to educate the other member schools through the SPFL board meetings to refrain from referring to the “B” game as the 5th or 7th grade game and instead refer to the “B” game as the “10 o’clock game” or “3 o’clock game” for example.

7. **Player Eligibility.** In addition to what is stated above, the SPFL requires players to be enrolled as a full time student in a member school and the player must not have reached his or her 15th birthday prior to August 15 of the current school year. As previously noted, the player must have participated in the requisite number of practices under IHSA rules prior to being eligible to play in a game.

XIV. TRACK & FIELD

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The Tack & Field team is open to all students in grades 5 through 8.

B. LEAGUE PARTICIPATION

The Tack & Field team participates in the Suburban Parochial League (SPL) consisting of Catholic schools located in the western suburbs. For league information consult the SPL website at www.s-p-l.org.

C. TEAM INFORMATION

1. **Team Size.** The SSPP team is open to all students who sign up. There is no limit to team size at any grade level.

2. **Team Participation.** All team members compete in every SPL meet and in various invitational meets.
3. **Practices.** Historically there have been two practices a week each running for approximately an hour and a half. These practices are usually held at a location determined by the coaches. We have also recently been providing our student athletes and coaches with instructions from outside consultants in the various events, and are considering the hiring of a coordinator.

D. MEETS

1. **Season Schedule.** The SPL season runs from approximately the middle of April to the middle of May. There are five SPL meets with the last two being division championship and league championship events. If an athlete participates in the qualifying meet, he or she is eligible to participate in the championship meet. Even if a student does not qualify for the championship meet, he or she should consider participating in the open division events that take place at that event, e.g., shot put, 1000-meter dash, and 800 meter run.
2. **Events.** The track events include: the 75 Hurdles; the 75, 100, 200 and 400 Dash; the 600, 800, and 1600 Run; 400, 800 and 1600 Relay; and the 100 Medley. The field events include: the Long Jump; the Triple Jump; the High Jump; the Shot Put; the Discuss; and the Long Javelin. The coaches select the athletes who will participate in the events, and will ensure that all have an opportunity to compete.
3. **Volunteers.** Each team is required to supply volunteers for various tasks at the meets, and SSPP sponsors a meet each year; so we need your help.

XV. VOLLEYBALL

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

All students in grades 3 through 8 have the opportunity to participate in the volleyball program. Intramural Volleyball is available to 3rd and 4th graders to learn basic skills and the dynamics of competitive volleyball. Grades 5 through 8 participate in interscholastic play. At each grade level there are typically “A” and “B” level teams determined through an evaluation process. Teams are formed on a grade and gender basis.

B. LEAGUE PARTICIPATION

SSPP is a member of the DuPage Parochial League (DPL). As noted above, 5th through 8th grade “A” and “B” teams participate in this league. Our Athletic Director attends league meetings as the SSPP voting representative.

C. TEAM FORMATION

1. The Evaluation Process.

Each year the association coordinates an objective evaluation process to aid in the placement of students on the 5th through 8th grade teams. Students interested in only playing at the “B” level are not required to attend evaluations and, as long as he or she is registered in the program, will be placed on a “B” team. However, even if a player is not interested in participating on an “A” team, he or she should attend evaluations as that assists the coaches when selecting “B” teams. All students interested in being placed on an “A” team must attend evaluations if he or she is able. Those seeking to coach a team should also attend evaluations. It is important for potential coaches to attend the evaluations to evaluate the relative abilities of the players they may be called upon to coach.

The volleyball committee, in consultation with the Athletic Director and the Volleyball Coordinator will determine the evaluation process. The evaluation procedure is our best effort to form competitive teams in a fair and objective manner. Knowledgeable evaluators are assembled to rate the participants at evaluations. Evaluators do not currently evaluate a group that includes their child. This is subject to change as the association continues to evolve the process.

Each year some players will move to either higher or lower level teams based on their development, performance and dedication. We believe the opportunity to move from a “B” to an “A” team and the possibility to move from an “A” to a “B” team, are good for the students and the program. “A” team placement is not permanent and must be earned each year.

2. Team Selection.

Under league rules the top six (6) players of each grade must be on the top team. We meet this requirement by identifying the top five ranked players through the evaluation process described above and having the sixth player selected by the assigned coach. The remaining players selected for an “A” team are considered at-large or, “bubble”, picks and are also selected by the coach. If there are two “A” teams at a grade level, the “A2” team is selected in a similar manner. If there are two “B” teams at a grade level, the two “B” teams are chosen in a manner intended to make them equally competitive. There are variations in this process depending on team size. All potential coaches attend the evaluations so that appropriate player selections can be made. Any changes in player placement after team selections have been made shall only be made with approval of the committee and after consultation with Athletic Director, the President of the Association and the coaches of the affected teams.

3. Inability to Attend Evaluations.

If a student is legitimately unable to attend evaluations, yet wants to be considered for “A” team placement, his or her parent must explain the absence in a letter to the Athletic Director before the evaluations. The student is then eligible for “A” team placement assuming the absence is determined to be reasonable by the volleyball committee.. Students who miss evaluations and are selected by a coach for the “A” team are considered at large or “bubble” picks. Previous placement on an “A” team does not guarantee the making of a future “A” team.

4. Team Size.

Teams should not contain less than seven players. The volleyball committee in consultation with the Athletic Director and Volleyball Coordinator will make determinations as to team size based upon the skill level of the student athletes, the number of students competing at that grade level and input from coaches. All participants must be on a roster of a team on their own grade level.

D. TEAM PLAY

- 1. Playing Time.** By league rule, each player is required to play a minimum of 15 points during a match. Playing time is essential for player development and team unity. SSPP coaches are also strongly encouraged to exceed our minimum requirement and identify opportunities to provide each student substantial playing time. This playing time policy applies to “A” and “B” teams alike. It is not, however, intended to limit a coach’s ability to appropriately discipline players.
- 2. Substitutes.** It is very important that all coaches consult the league rules on this issue, as there are significant limits to the use of substitutes. If after review of the league rule you still have questions, contact the Athletic Director. In any event, should a coach need a substitute player to play in a regular season game or in a tournament, he or she must ask the coach of the team the substitute player is on to avoid conflicts.
- 3. Practices.** After the athletic association slates head coaches the Athletic Director will assign practice times for each team. Head coaches should discuss sharing practice times with coaches of teams of similar abilities. Teams should expect two one-hour practice slots per week. The Athletic Director generally assigns the later practice times to the older grade level teams.
- 4. Season Schedule.** The regular season is currently 10 to 12 games depending on grade level. Practices often start in late August or early September. The season begins in early September and concludes in late October. There are also many tournaments available for teams; the Athletic Director and the athletic association distribute this information to the coaches. The playoffs consist of a single

elimination tournament at the conclusion of the regular season in late October or early November depending on the grade.

5. **The Trojan Classic.** The athletic association has hosted the Trojan Classic Volleyball tournament for many years. The tournament runs during the month of September or early October. The tournament is an important fundraiser for the athletic program and all SSPP teams are encouraged to participate.

E. VOLLEYBALL COORDINATOR

The athletic association retains the services of a volleyball coordinator, currently Tolis Koskinaris. The coordinator runs evaluations, assists coaches in the development of practice plans and game strategies. All coaches are encouraged to consult with the coordinator when needed.

F. INTRAMURALS

1. **Fees.** A \$25 per player fee is charged to cover the expenses of the program, referee fees and equipment costs.
2. **Participating Grades.** The program is for grades 3 and 4.
3. **Team Formation.** Intramural Volleyball is co-ed. There are typically four teams per grade depending on the number of participants. Teams are selected with the idea of creating balanced, competitive teams. Typically the boys are split equally among the teams. A minimum of six players per team is needed to form teams but seven or more is preferred.
4. **Coach Selection.** The Athletic Director along with the association's intramural committee will select coaches for each team from the pool of applicants, generally parents, but older siblings and other qualified applicants will be considered. The athletic association views the intramural program as a potential training ground for coaches to develop their skills for coaching in upper grades.
5. **Schedule.** The season starts immediately after Intramural Basketball in late April or early May and the season usually lasts three to four weeks concluding before the end of the school year.
6. **Philosophy.** The emphasis of the intramural program is on developing basic skills, teamwork and fostering an enjoyment for the game and competition.

Ss. Peter and Paul Athletic Association
Naperville, Illinois
2009

