



Nativity Athletics Handbook

Revised December 2015

Our Mission

Nativity Athletics is an organization that is committed to providing Nativity parishioners and students the ability to participate in competitive activities that promote teamwork, leadership, and fitness, in a spirit of Christian values.

The goals of Nativity Athletics include:

- Discipleship: to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- Participation: to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- Growth: to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Objectives

- Participation
- Fun
- Learning
- Teamwork
- Parish spirit with a Christian attitude
- Quality of instruction, equipment, uniforms, etc.
- Preparation for the next level of competition (for example - third/fourth graders for fifth/sixth grade, fifth/sixth graders for seventh/eighth grade, etc.

Guidelines for Scheduling

Athletic Activities include games, practices, tournaments, meetings.

Athletic Activities will **not** be scheduled:

- On Sundays and Holy Days before 1:00 pm
- In conflict with the Nativity Parish's worship schedule
- On Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday
- In conflict with religious education and sacrament preparation activities

Role of Catholic Athletics Organizations

(adapted from Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter in Catholic Youth Athletics; 6.1.1)

The athletics organizations of our parishes, and non-parish schools, are the heart and soul of Catholic Youth Athletics. It's the place where the Catholic identity of participants, coaches and teams is authentically affirmed, modeled, and lived out.

The parish athletics organization is understood to be:

- (a) An integral part of the mission, ministries, and life of the parish, or non-parish school, and committed to that mission above and beyond other considerations;
- (b) Under the direct authority of the Pastor (parish) or principal (non-parish school);
- (c) Part of the youth ministry of the Catholic Church, with leaders, coaches, adult volunteers, and parents who understand the youth ministry mission of Catholic Youth Athletics;
- (d) Guided by the mission, goals and principles of the Cincinnati Archdiocese Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics
- (e) A source of inspiration, character development, virtue and Catholic Christian behavior that ideally will be beyond reproach.
- (f) Promoters of the Catholic Faith, through prayer and attendance at Mass

The Ministry Mission of the Athletics Organizations

(adapted from Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter in Catholic Youth Athletics; 6.2.2)

The youth ministry mission of the Nativity School and Parish *is* the mission of the Nativity Athletics. Nativity Athletics is responsible for organizing, coordinating and sustaining high quality athletics experiences for young people that build up their faith, character, virtues, self-confidence, communication capabilities and leadership skills, in the context of athletics.

The Role of the Parish Liaison & Accountability

The Athletic Director and Boosters President will serve as Parish Liaisons for Nativity Athletics. The Parish Liaisons will be in regular communication with the Pastor.

Accountability: Nativity Athletics is accountable to the Pastor.
Nativity Athletics is fiscally responsible and accounts for all revenues and expenses through the Parish.
Nativity is following all Archdiocese policies for insurance and legal requirements.

Financial Responsibilities: Nativity Athletics is responsible for monitoring the completion, accuracy and timely submission of records, reports, documentation and fees as required by the parish or school, Archdiocese and government, to ensure transparency and accountability regarding the finances of the organization.

The Treasurer will be designated to:

- Prepare annual budgets; collect fees and dues; maintain accurate records of receipts and expenditures; and should provide accurate, complete and timely reports as required by Nativity School and Parish, the Archdiocese and the government
- Pay all outstanding bills promptly upon receipt.

The Role of the Spiritual Liaison

The Director of Religious Education has been appointed by the Pastor to be the Spiritual Liaison for Nativity Athletics and will report directly to him. The Spiritual Liaison will also serve as a member of the Nativity Athletics Grievance Committee.

The Spiritual Liaison duties are as follows:

- **Communication:** Responsible for communicating the spirit, mission, goals and principles of this Charter to all in the athletics organization.
- **Meetings and monitoring:** Ensure that the annual coaches' ministry meeting(s) is (are) scheduled. Attend the annual coaches' ministry meeting(s) and monitor attendance at such meetings by the coaches.
- **Promote ministry spirit:** Assist coaches in implementing a spirit of ministry, as reviewed annually at the Coaches' ministry meeting, in practices and games throughout the season.
- **Evaluations:** Participate in end-of-year evaluations of coaches and discussions regarding their return for future years.
- **Resources:** Provide resources, including prayers and other resources, to assist coaches in their youth athletics ministry.
- **Listening:** Be a listening ear outside of the athletics organization for coaches, parents or athletes.
- **Develop guidelines:** In consultation with the Pastor, and athletics organization leadership, establish any guidelines to be fulfilled by coaches or teams to integrate Catholic/Christian faith and spirituality more fully into the athletics programming.

The Role of the Grievance Committee

- The Grievance Committee is a board made up of the Pastor, the Spiritual Liaison, the School Principal, the Booster President, and the Athletic Director.
- This board will hear all complaints that have not been able to be addressed through the normal course of resolution described in detail in the "Conflict Resolution" portion of the "Team Management & Communication" section of this Handbook.
- The decisions of the Grievance Committee are final.

Guidelines for Behavior

- Respect is to be given to all human persons, including student athletes on our team and the opposing team, all coaches and all referees.
- No one is ever to yell or undermine the referees in a public, abusive way.
- All cheering and support must be positive and respectful of all people present.
- No derogatory remarks should ever be made or God's name taken in vain.
- Give the benefit of doubt to the other party in all situations.
- Never undermine the authority of referees, coaches or parents in front of the students.
- All wins should be handled with humility and not boasting.
- All losses should be accepted with dignity, without bitterness.

Guidelines for Safety

- Parents/Guardians will review and sign the head injury information sheet required by Section 3707.52 of the Ohio Revised Code available at:
www.healthyohioprogram.org/concussion
- Coaches will receive training on concussions and the requirements of Ohio law.
- Play during practices and/or games will be suspended when thunder is heard and/or lightning is seen and will not resume until 30 minutes past last thunder heard or lightning witnessed.
- Coaches will exercise good judgment when practicing in hot weather (frequent breaks, water availability, etc) to prevent heat illness.
- Nativity Parish will maintain equipment and facilities. Unsafe conditions or faulty equipment will be reported to appropriate Parish staff immediately.

Guidelines for Selection of Coaches

- Coaches will have a willingness to represent Nativity with a high-level of sportsmanship, integrity and respect towards team, parents and opponents at all sporting events and live the values of the Catholic faith.
- Coaches will have a willingness to adhere to Nativity Athletics policies
- Coaches must attend and complete VIRTUS Child Protection training before they begin practices or have any interaction with the student athletes.
- No one under the age of 21 may be a head coach or assistant coach.
- Important factors in the head coach selection include the following:
 - Knowledge of the sport fundamentals and rules
 - Ability to communicate with children and parents, especially in difficult situations
 - Time availability and dependability
 - Ability to develop players' abilities, character, and spirituality and to develop each child to the best of their ability
 - Willingness to lead prayer at practices and games
- All coaches must be willing to abide by Boosters Code of Conduct
- Coaches will ensure that every student athlete is to participate in all practices and playing time guidelines shall be followed. For the safety of the student athletes, the coach will start and finish practices in a timely manner. No child shall ever be left at a game or practice site without adult supervision.
- Non-parent head coaches and assistant coaches are preferred for competitive A teams in Grade 6-8. The Booster Board will consider exceptions on an individual basis.
- The Nativity Athletics leadership must approve all recommended coaches.

Nativity Athletics appreciates the time commitment a coach invests. There is, however, no guarantee that a coach will be selected to coach the following year based on a previous years' coaching. The criteria listed above will determine coach selection from year to year. Coordinators will do their best to find the coach who best meets all of the criteria mentioned above, when there are two or more coaches who exemplify these criteria fairly equally, the Athletic Director and Coordinator will choose the coach based on solicited feedback and interviews, if necessary.

Requirements for Coach Preparation

- Compliance with Archdiocese of Cincinnati *Decree on Child Protection*
- Attendance at Annual Coaches' Meeting to review mission, role of athletics in youth ministry, policies, best practices.
- Annual Evaluations from parents
- Recommend Red Cross Certification for First Aid/CPR

Guidelines for Coaches

- ALL coaches and assistants are required to undergo on-line Concussion Training, fingerprinting, background check and attend the VIRTUS workshop prior to ANY interaction with children in relation to athletics.
- Abide by the objectives and guidelines of Nativity Athletics at all times. You represent Nativity Parish, whether at our “home” field or gym, or at another team’s or organization’s facilities. Please behave in a manner that will make our Nativity community proud.
- Be positive in your coaching. Teach the sport and good sportsmanship.
- Behave in a Christian manner and instruct your student athletes to behave as Christians.
- Pray at the beginning and/or end of each game and practice.
- Communicate with your sport coordinator. Keep them informed of any issues that you feel are important to your team and/or the particular sport or athletic program.
- Communicate with your student athletes. Keep them informed; well in advance, of practice times and game times. Also, inform them of any changes to the “scheduled” practices or games.
- Communicate with parents. Provide written guidelines and hold a brief meeting to review the guidelines at the beginning of the sports season (this meeting can occur in conjunction with a scheduled practice).
- A minimum of 2 adults (who have completed VIRTUS training) must be present for athletic activities.
- Every effort should be made to have adults present in the same proportion to participants with regard to gender.
- Be prompt for practices, games and meetings. This sets an example for your players.
- You must attend coaches’ meetings or training sessions, as required by Nativity Athletics or your sport’s league affiliation.
- Make this a good experience for the student athletes.
- The scheduled amount of practice is listed under each individual sport policy. A student athlete is expected to attend all practices and games. Any “extra” practices are voluntary and will not affect the student athlete’s participation.
- Have fun.

Guidelines for Student Athletes

- Abide by the objectives and guidelines of Nativity Athletics at all times. As a student athlete, you represent Nativity Parish, whether at our “home” field or gym, or at another team’s or organization’s facilities. Please behave in a manner that will make our Nativity community proud.
- Registering to play any sport is a commitment a Nativity team. It should be treated as a commitment; therefore you should attend all practices and all games.
- Challenge yourself to improve in all facets of your sport. Hustle all the time. Encourage your teammates to improve with you.
- Work hard on your academics. Maintain your good grades so that you may remain a student athlete in good standing.
- Inform your coach in advance if you must miss or be late for a practice or game. Unexcused practices and tardiness may result in loss of playing time.
- You should be on the field/court and ready to begin practice or warm-up for a game at the specified time stated by the coach.
- Wear appropriate clothing when coming to or from a game or practice. Your coach’s instructions on this subject should be followed to the same degree as any other rule or policy.
- Respect your opponent and officials. No arguing with officials or verbal engagement of the opponent.
- Accept both victory and defeat in the spirit of good sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.
- Be respectful of the coaches and officials at all times.
- The athlete is responsible for the care and return of the uniform.
- Have fun.

Guidelines for Parents

- Please keep the objectives and guidelines of Nativity Athletics in mind at all times. You represent Nativity Parish, whether at our “home” field or gym, or at another team’s or organization’s facilities. Please behave in a manner that will make our Nativity community proud.
- Signing up for any sport is a commitment to play for a Nativity team. It should be treated as a commitment; therefore your child should attend all practices and all games.
- Communicate with your child. Be supportive of your child by attending games. Encourage them to do their best. Encourage them to practice at home. Practice with them at home if possible.
- Communicate with your child’s coach. Be supportive of the coach and assistant coaches of your child’s team. We attempt to select the best people available. The volunteer coaches and assistants are giving a lot to provide your child an opportunity to play on the team. Help out whenever and however you can.
- Follow the steps outlined in the “Communication” section, below when you have an issue to address with your child’s coach.
- Athletic teams are not provided as a babysitting service to you and your family. Please respect everyone’s time. Insure that your student athlete is at practices, meetings or games at the time stated by the coach. Players must be dropped off and picked up promptly for practices, meetings and games.
- Make sure your child attends all practices and games. Inform your child’s coach as far ahead of time as possible if your child must miss or be late for a practice or game.
- Demand that your child play fairly and be a good sport.
- Insist that your child follow all the team rules as well as the policies of Nativity Athletics.
- Compliment all players. Each player is an important member of the team. Do not make any negative comments to or about any player. This applies to Nativity team members and the opposing team members. Mistakes are not made on purpose. Sometimes it is hard for adults to remember this.
- Lead by good example. Remember, your child may hear your words, but they will remember your actions.
- Have fun.

Eligibility for Participation on Nativity Athletics' Sports Teams

Eligibility for participation on sports teams through Nativity Athletics shall be determined by the following:

- Parish registration: The participant's parent or legal guardian is registered with Nativity Parish AND the student must be active in Nativity Parish Religious Education. If the parents of a participant are registered at more than one parish, the child is expected to play in only one parish per school year.

OR

- Student at Nativity School: The participant currently attends Nativity School, and is in good standing with regard to tuition, fees and grades.

OR

- Student eligible to play at a Catholic Elementary School that does not offer a sport or offers a sport but does not have enough players to complete a full team AND the Nativity team needs players to have a full roster.

Ejection and Suspension

Ejection: A coach, parent, or fan who is ejected for any reason must leave the premises (including the field of play, stands, and adjacent areas such as nearby parking lots) and shall be suspended for the next scheduled game. A player who is ejected from the game is not required to leave the premises. However, if a player (or child fan unaccompanied by an adult) is ejected and required to leave the premises, that child should be supervised by at least two adults until the child is directly under the supervision of a parent or guardian, in compliance with the *Decree on Child Protection*.

Suspension: An individual who is suspended shall be prohibited from attending the next game. Suspensions for egregious violations may include multiple games, practices, and other team activities at the discretion of athletics leaders.

Student Participation

Practices

A student athlete is expected to attend all practices and games. Any extra practices are voluntary and will not affect the student athlete's playing time. The amount of practice is listed under each individual sport policy.

Playing Time

- Grades K through 8 (Recreational):
 - EQUAL playing time for ALL players.
 - Position rotation for all players.
Note: Position rotation must take into account the safety of the student athletes. Coaches and Parents MUST communicate if questions are raised regarding position rotation.
- Grades 6, 7 & 8 (Competitive*, A Team):
 - Each player on a team should receive minimum playing time of 1/4 of total game time.
 - Factors that may be used in determining total playing time include, but are not limited to:
 - Attendance at practice and games
 - Attitude
 - Coachability
 - Athletic skills

*Grades 6, 7 & 8: If there are enough players for 2 teams: skills assessments may be used to determine team placement. A Team = "Competitive"; B Team = "Recreational"

Grades and Eligibility

- It is the parents' responsibility to remove their children from active participation on a parish team when grades are declining. Before deciding to remove your child, please consult the coach to see if together you may be able to foster a more positive learning environment while continuing to play. Sports should be seen as a continuation of the educational process.
- The Athletic Director is also provided a list of Nativity students that are declared ineligible for extra-curricular activities as provided for in the Nativity School Handbook. The Nativity School principal provides this list. The principal informs, by letter, the parent(s) of the student athlete whose participation is to be limited. Both the principal and the Athletic Director sign this letter.
- The Athletic Director will inform the sport coordinator, who will inform the coach. The student athlete in question will not be permitted to participate in any of our sports programs until the school administration re-institutes the student's eligibility. Parents of student athletes not attending Nativity School please note that it is not the responsibility of Nativity Athletics to monitor grades.
- It is our responsibility to carry out the policy of restricting participation in the Athletic program when warranted. Eligibility for participation in the case of any suspensions or expulsions from school will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Team Management & Communication

Team Management

- Coaches' children will be placed on their team
- Teams will be selected by a collaborative effort among coaches and the Sport Coordinator
- Disputes in team selection will be mediated by the Sport Coordinator and/or Athletic Director
- Teams in Grades K-6 will be remixed each year and balanced for parity of skill.
- If there is more than one team at a grade level, it is strongly recommended that the teams practice together once per week
- Each team will have 1 Head Coach and only 1 Assistant Coach
- There must be 2 Diocesan approved adults at every practice
- At the beginning of each sports season, the Head Coach will distribute and discuss team guidelines for the season.

Conflict Resolution

Student athletes:

- First discuss any issue with your coach or assistant.
- If that does not resolve the issue, discuss it with your parent(s).

Parents:

- First discuss any issue with the student athlete.
- Discuss the issue concerning the sport with the coach.
- If that does not resolve the issue, discuss it with the Sport Coordinator and/or AD.
- If that does not resolve the issue, the issue can be brought before the Grievance Committee.

Coaches:

- If the issue involves a student athlete, discuss it with the student athlete.
- If that does not resolve the issue, discuss it with the parent(s) of the student athlete.
- If the issue involves a parent, discuss it with the parent.
- If that does not resolve the issue, discuss it with the Sport Coordinator and/or AD.
- If that does not resolve the issue, the issue can be brought before the Grievance Committee.

Sport Coordinators:

- If any issue is not resolved at the primary and most important level (the student

athlete and the coach) then it should be resolved at the Sport Coordinator level.

- If the sport coordinator does not resolve the issue, it will then be presented to the Athletic Director.
- If that does not resolve the issue, the issue can be brought before the Grievance Committee.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Communication

Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:

- The mental and/or physical treatment of the student athlete.
- Ways to help the student athlete to grow athletically and personally.
- Concerns about behavior or attitude of the student athlete or the coach.
- Concerns about officiating during a game.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with a coach:

- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Player positioning in the field
- Practice Routine

Concerns about Officiating

Coaches

- Concerns during a game regarding officiating should be discussed with a member of the officiating team during a time out, between quarters, half-time or following the game.
- If the issue is unable to be resolved with the officiating team during the course of the game/match, the coach with the concern/complaint should submit his/her account of the official's behavior in writing to the Sport's Coordinator and Athletic Director within 2 days of the game/match.
- The coach, Sport Coordinator and Athletic Director will decide together what, if any, action is to be taken.
- The Athletic Director will communicate with the appropriate parties regarding the complaint and will copy the pastor on all correspondence.

Spectators

- Concerns during a game regarding officiating should be discussed with a member of the Nativity coaching team during a break in play (i.e. between quarters, half-time) ONLY if safety of the players is at risk.
- Under NO circumstances should a spectator speak directly to an official during a game.

Concerns about Behavior of Opposing Coaches, Players or Spectators

- The coach with the concern/complaint should submit his/her account of the opposing team's behavior in writing to the Sport's Coordinator and Athletic Director within 2 days of the game/match. The account should be in as much detail as possible.
- The coach, Sport Coordinator and Athletic Director will decide together what, if any, action is to be taken.
- The Athletic Director will communicate with the appropriate parties regarding the complaint and will copy the pastor on all correspondence.
- At no time should an individual coach contact an opposing school's coaches, Athletic Director or pastor regarding an issue with the opposing team's coaches, players or spectators.

Membership Policies

Athletic Booster Fee

There is a one-time \$50 fee per family per school year to participate in Nativity Athletic sponsored activities.

Participation Fee

- Individual sport participation fees vary depending on the sport.
- Fees must be paid at the beginning of the sport's season.

Late Fees

- \$15 fee for late registration
- Failure to register by the deadline does not guarantee a spot on the roster.

Registration

Dates for sports registration for each season will be communicated as follows:

- school newsletter
- church bulletin
- school e-mail blast
- Nativity Athletics website

Registrations are to be completed on-line by the stated deadline

Annual Athletics fee must be up to date at time of registration

No student athlete will be prevented from participation because of financial need.

The parent of this athlete must simply contact the AD privately about this matter.

The Nativity Athletics Treasurer is responsible for: preparation of the annual budget, collection of fees, prompt payment of bills and monthly reporting of financial information.

Compliance with Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics

As a condition to being identified with Catholic Youth Athletics, organizing competitions with other participating Catholic Youth Athletics entities, and using Facilities, leagues, athletics organizations, athletics leaders, coaches and any other representatives of the Catholic Church are responsible for conducting youth athletics in compliance with this Charter. Individuals and organizations found to be not in compliance with this Charter will no longer enjoy the privileges connected with Catholic Youth Athletics, including but not limited to:

- (a) Being permitted to be identified with Catholic Youth Athletics;
- (b) Being allowed to participate in Catholic Youth Athletics;
- (c) Being allowed to use Facilities; and
- (d) Having access to parish or school communications to convey information about youth athletics.

Transportation Guidelines

Nativity will follow transportation guidelines as specified by Section 7.2 of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Charter on Youth Athletics.

- a) Seat Belts: In an automobile, all passengers must wear seat belts, with no more than one passenger per seat belt. [7.2.1 (a) Charter]
- b) Any priest, deacon, auxiliary service personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employee or volunteer may transport children, as long these guidelines are met:
 - (i) There is expected to be two adults in every vehicle and one child is never transported alone with an adult, and with the only exception being if there is a caravan of vehicles that makes no stops in between there may be one adult is in every vehicle.
 - (ii) There is written permission form a parent or guardian [7.2.1 Bd Charter].
 - (iii) Must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children while in the vehicle. [7.2.1 Be Charter]

Volunteer Expectations

- All Athletic families will receive requests for scheduled “required volunteer time.”
- This is a condition of participation in Nativity sponsored sports.
- Records will be kept of instances of volunteerism at Athletic sponsored events.
- Some instances when your “volunteer time” will be called upon are:
 - Coaching and assistant coaching
 - Sport Coordinators and Athletic leadership.
 - Doorkeepers and scoreboard keepers during basketball and volleyball seasons (Mandatory for parents of participants in sports held in Nativity’s Gym)

Nativity Athletics fundraisers:

- Brew Ha-Ha
- Nativity Boys Basketball Tournament
- Fish Fry
- Flying Pig Water Station and Raffle
- Mulch Sale

League and Tournament Participation

- Nativity Athletics participates only in leagues approved by the Pastor.
- All Teams in non-Archdiocesan sponsored leagues must follow the principles of the Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics
- Tournament participation is limited to tournaments sponsored by leagues, or parishes or schools within the leagues.
 - Nativity Athletics will pay for 2 tournaments per team per sport season.
 - Tournament fees: There shall be no financial or other obligation placed upon parents to participate in more tournaments than those for which the athletics organization has planned and paid.
- Uniforms: Team uniforms are for parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities (e.g., games, tournaments, pep rallies, etc.). Teams are not to wear their uniforms outside parish- and/or school-sanctioned activities.

Individual Sports Seasons

Please see the Nativity Athletics website for sport specific information and policies.

Sport	Season	Sign Up
SAY Soccer (boys & girls)	Fall	May
Kindergarten Soccer (co-ed)	Fall	August
Football	Fall	May
Girls' Basketball	Fall	May
Lego Robotics	Fall	May
Golf (co-ed)	Fall	May
Boys' Basketball	Winter	September
Instructional Basketball (co-ed)	Winter	September
Girls' Volleyball	Winter	September
Boys' Volleyball	Spring	January
Knothole Baseball	Spring	January
Baseball	Spring	January
Co-ed T-Ball	Spring	January
Girls' Softball	Spring	January

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