

**DIOCESAN MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
RULES GOVERNING ATHLETICS**

RULE I: PRE-REQUISITES

- A. Age: Any student who reaches his/her fifteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for the eighth grade or below. Any student who reaches his/her fourteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for seventh grade or below. Any student who reaches his/her thirteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for sixth grade or below. No student will be allowed to play up more than one grade level. Playing down a student in the leagues sponsored by the Diocese will be considered on an individual basis by the Advisory Council and the League Coordinator(s).
- B. No pupil shall be eligible to practice or participate in an athletic contest for his/her school until there is, on file with the principal, the following forms: Parental Informed Consent, Physical Examination and Clearance Form completed no earlier than the summer before the beginning of the current school year, Medical History form, hazing policy, Authorization for Emergency Care, Athlete/Parent/Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet and Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review Form **These forms should be completed annually for all participants in DMSAA leagues.**
- C. It is recommended that all parents of students playing in DMSAA sponsored events attend an educational program presented by the DMSAA representative or principal of the school. These meetings can be held at the local schools.

RULE II: MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership is open for league play in grades 6, 7, and 8 in Catholic Middle Schools located in the Tulsa Catholic Diocese that wish to comply with the requirements of the following guidelines for any of the following sports of volleyball, basketball, and track. For specific requirements regarding player ages and eligibility, specific league rules will be followed.
- B. If students not attending a member school are put on a roster of a team sponsored by a DMSAA school, a letter must be submitted by the principal of the school that is sponsoring the team stating conditions and need of the participant(s) to the Advisory Council. These might include students in public schools who are registered members of a Tulsa Diocese parish and/or students who are being home-schooled. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis. The final decision will be left up to the Council as to whether the student may or may not participate. This letter should be submitted as well for any child that attends a DMSAA school and wishes to play for another DMSAA school.
- C. In order to fulfill the stated philosophy of the DMSAA By-Laws and work towards accomplishing its goals and objectives, all DMSAA programs listed above will be offered to the students of those member schools. The students/teams from these schools will be accommodated first in Catholic Middle School Leagues or school teams. All Catholic Leagues will have limits on the number of teams and/or participants that it can accommodate to ensure adequate supervision and coaching for proper skill development, safety and fun for the students. Non-member schools must petition the Advisory Council to play in the DMSAA League every year. If there is space available for teams or individuals from schools that are not DMSAA members, they will be allowed to compete in Catholic Middle School Leagues if the following conditions are met:
 - 1. Costs incurred by DMSAA, its sport coordinators and facilities are paid.
 - 2. Adequate gym space is provided by the school wishing to participate in a Catholic Middle School League as established by the DMSAA Advisory Council.
 - 3. Playing talent shall be divided equally by playing ability among teams entered in the Catholic leagues as required by Rule VI, A, 6. under duties and responsibilities of schools and coaches.

4. Priority space on a roster of a Catholic Middle School League will be extended to returning players or teams from non-DMSAA schools the next year if these spaces are not needed to accommodate individuals or teams from DMSAA member schools. Every effort will be made to accommodate Catholic students if they are not attending a DMSAA-member school.
 5. Each non-member school must provide at least one team per grade level.
- D. League and program maximums and membership conditions can be changed or adjusted by the DMSAA Advisory Council as conditions warrant.

RULE III: ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The student-athlete must exhibit at least ninety percent (90%) record of daily attendance.
- B. The student-athlete must attend school for at least one-half of the day of the game/event.

RULE IV: CONDUCT/RESPECT OF AUTHORITY

A. Contestants:

1. A contestant who is disqualified by a game official because of flagrant or unsportsmanlike foul, or who is guilty of any unsportsmanlike conduct in connection with an inter-school contest, shall be ineligible to resume participation until reinstatement by the principal and written report of the details of the incident and action taken has been filed with the Advisory Council. A disqualified student forfeits the right to participate in at least one (1) contest before being reinstated by the school.
 - a. Coach must notify the principal within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - b. Principal must notify the Chairman of the Advisory Council.
2. If a contestant is ejected from a contest for fighting during a contest, he/she will be automatically suspended from participating in the next two (2) games. The student may not sit on the team bench or participate in the activities or play on his/her team.
3. A student, whose conduct or character at school is under discipline or whose conduct or character outside of school is such as to reflect discredit upon the school, shall be ineligible until reinstated by the principal.

B. Coaches/Spectators:

1. **Ejection:** If a coach or spectator is ejected from a game, meet, or contest, he/she will not be allowed to be present in the facility during the next game. The school principal must make any appeal to the sport coordinator by the next school day after the event. A coach may continue services until a final decision is made.
2. **Conduct:**
 - a. Coaches and spectators are not to approach the officials during or after a contest.
 - b. A coach, whose conduct or character during a contest is under discipline or whose conduct or character outside of school is such as to reflect discredit upon the school, shall be ineligible until reinstated by the principal. A written report of the incident and action taken by the principal shall be filed with the DMSAA Advisory Council for review within one (1) week.
 - c. If a second incident occurs, the DMSAA has the right to permanently eject the coach from the league.

C. Officials:

1. **Officials to Give Explanation:** The DMSAA has inaugurated the policy that the athletic game or contest official who disqualifies a contestant/coach for a violation of the rules of the DMSAA is to make a telephone call to the DMSAA Chairperson or Director of Officials within twenty-four (24) hours, giving the reason for disqualification. A written report to the DMSAA Advisory Council should be filed within forty-eight (48) hours.
2. **Respect for Authority:** Authority vested in the contest official must be respected and upheld. The policy set forth states, "If an act of violence is committed against the person of a game official by a fan, student, coach, player or faculty member of the school, the DMSAA will expect, before further competition, that the principal of the school will make a report to the DMSAA giving complete details of the incident, the names of the parties involved, and what corrected action has been taken. The school is to be considered on probation until further ruling is given by the DMSAA." Probation is defined to mean the team is ineligible to participate in any DMSAA-sponsored activity until the DMSAA Advisory Council reviews and determines eligibility status. The Advisory Council will be called by the Council Chairperson for an emergency meeting within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the principal's written report.

If the contest official decides the conduct of a parent or fan becomes so abusive during the games or contest, he is advised by the DMSAA to notify the coach of the school involved that a possible forfeiture can take place unless the party or parties involved take corrective action or leave the premises. If forfeiture is declared by the official, the DMSAA will expect the same procedure to take place, by the official, as stated above.

RULE V: MIGRATION AND STUDENT ROSTERS

- A. Students are eligible to participate in athletic programs of the DMSAA school in which they are currently enrolled.
- B. If a child is put on a roster of a member school and does not attend that school, the principal of both schools forming the team should submit a letter of petition to the Advisory Council for approval as stated in RULE 11-B: MEMBERSHIP. Note: Any child added to the roster of a member school is bound by the same rules as currently enrolled students in a DMSAA-member school.
- C. Rosters of teams for volleyball and basketball should be submitted to the Chairperson before the deadline for that season. The names and birth dates of all participants should be listed. Once rosters are turned in, additions to the roster must be approved by the Advisory Council and made before the deadline set by the leagues. Transfer students can be added to the roster after this deadline, with notification to the Chairperson and League or Sport Coordinator.
- D. Any change in the team roster must be submitted and signed by the principal of that school before it is sent to the Chairperson.
- E. Only players on the official team roster may participate in any official contest. Participation by a student not on the submitted team roster shall result in team forfeiture.
- F. The Advisory Council must approve roster changes due to special circumstances.

RULE VI: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: SCHOOLS AND COACHES

Coaches are very important to the young athletes with whom they work. The successful coach uses the attributes of the great teacher—thorough knowledge and preparation, orderly and positive presentation, faith in young people, and an inspiring desire to do well.

The positive approach in coaching brings the fastest and most thorough improvement. Emphasizing and rewarding when something has been done correctly reinforces the learning process more than does stressing the errors. In the area of athletics, the community in the modern world expects coaches and athletic departments to carry heavy responsibilities. The following duties have been determined by the DMSAA as those that must be met by schools and each coach representing the children of the DMSAA:

A. **Local Responsibility:** The principal of each school has the responsibility to follow Diocesan policy with respect to selection and retention of coaches and to enforce the rules established by the DMSAA.

1. The school shall be responsible for the eligibility of its students and certification of all coaches. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in notification to the school principal.
2. The principal shall be responsible for the instruction of the parents and student body about the rules and ethics of activities sponsored by the DMSAA.
3. All parents, coaches and athletes must sign the hazing policy agreement prior to participation in any sports regulated by the DMSAA. The Catholic Schools and the Diocese of Tulsa will take all rumors of hazing seriously and rumors will be investigated. Although ambiguity exists on the definition of “hazing”, it is our goal of the DMSAA, Catholic Schools Office and the Diocese of Tulsa to clarify and educate our students and parents so that these activities are eliminated from classrooms, groups and sports teams. The following definition of hazing is found on the “Stop Hazing.org” website and will be adopted to help clarify all possible incidents of hazing in the Diocese of Tulsa:

“Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional harm regardless of the person’s willingness to participate.”

The DMSAA representative will provide information sheets to all coaches, parents and athletes at the pre-season meeting and discuss other activities that will help build team spirit in a healthy and fun way. Suggested material is “How to Be a Good Sport” by Izzy Kallman (June 2006) found at www.bullies2buddies.com.

4. Sport seasons for the current school year are listed in the handbook.
5. Students in the DMSAA may only compete on 1 school sponsored team per season. Any student listed on a school sponsored team in another league is not eligible to compete on a DMSAA roster.
6. Schools will not conduct tryouts for teams entered in the Catholic leagues. If more than one (1) team within a grade(s) is necessary, it is required that playing talent be allocated equally among the Catholic league teams. Playing talent and relative merits of all students should be re-evaluated annually.

Violations of Local Responsibility: If there is a violation of local responsibility to consider, this issue should be brought forth before the Chairperson in written form signed by the school principal no later than two (2) weeks prior to the monthly DMSAA Advisory Council meeting to be submitted for the agenda at the next monthly meeting. Action taken will then be discussed and voted upon by the DMSAA Advisory Council. A simple majority of the voting members in attendance at the meeting must approve the action taken. If the Chairperson believes that a special meeting should be called of the DMSAA Advisory Council to address the issue brought forth before him/her, only the items that have been set forth in the call for a special meeting may be acted upon at the special meeting. A simple majority of the voting members present at this meeting will be required for action to be taken.

- B. **Coaches Responsibility:** In accordance with the philosophy of the DMSAA, coaches should ensure that each athlete play in every DMSAA contest if the athlete: attends practice sessions, demonstrates cooperation with his/her coach and program, and demonstrates conduct and character that is in good standing with the school they are representing. The minimum playing requirements are listed in the league regulations for the sport. Ineligible players should be notified and dealt with by the coach in accordance with DMSAA and local school and team guidelines.
1. **Coach Clinics:** All coaches and assistant coaches that coach a 6th, 7th and 8th grade team that represent a Catholic school are required to attend educational programs presented by the DMSAA for the sports of volleyball and basketball. These “coach clinics” will include opportunities for coaches and assistant coaches to meet the mandatory DMSAA requirement of having current, valid CPR certification, as well as required sessions on Emergency Care, Athletic Injuries, Sport Skills and Drills, and the Goals and Philosophy of the DMSAA. Every team should have at least one coach at one of the offered meetings or the coaches’ clinic. Teams that do not have one coach in attendance will not be allowed to coach in the league.
 2. **Planning:** Planning is an important responsibility that needs to be carried out by all coaches. Each coach must have a plan for each sport or activity for which they are responsible.
 - a. Coaches must ensure that they have each an Authorization for Emergency Care and a Medical History form that is signed by the parent(s)/guardian for each participant.
 - b. Coaches must ensure that the equipment used is in good condition and fits properly.
 - c. Because children are not mini-adults, it is recommended that each coach read **Sports Success Rx! Your Child’s Prescription for the Best Experience**, by Paul Striker, M.D. This book provides guidelines of skill development that can help each child succeed in sports.
 3. **Supervision:** Supervision is one of the most important responsibilities of the coach to his/her student-athletes. The coach must exercise reasonable care in supervising all on and off field athletic activities. The coach must ensure that each practice is conducted in a safe manner. Coaches must remain with players until a parent or guardian picks up player after games or practices.
 4. **Instruction:** The coach should be qualified and have adequate training to instruct properly. The following list itemizes some areas of instruction that must be followed by the coach:
 - a. The coach must give a student make-up instruction in any area that may have been missed.
 - b. The coach must teach the basic nature of the activity, its proper techniques of playing, and the rules of activity.
 - c. The coach must explain all safety precautions appropriate to the particular activity.
 - d. The coach shall be aware of current methods of prevention and treatment of athletic injuries and hold current CPR certification. Information can be obtained by attending “coach clinics” sponsored by the DMSAA and other coaching groups, visiting with trainers from other groups, and by asking advice from physicians, hospitals, and clinics experienced in caring for (young) athletes.
 - e. The coach will not ignore or dismiss lightly any injury to a student-athlete. If an injury occurs during practice and/or games, the coach and /or qualified personnel will assess the seriousness of the injury. If emergency medical services are deemed necessary, a 911 call will be placed and all efforts will be made to contact the parents. If the injury is less severe, first aid will be given, parental contact will be attempted and further arrangements will be the parent’s responsibility.
 - f. In certain instances, a physician’s note may be required for an athlete to return to play.
 - g. The coaches must be aware that one-time verbal warnings are not sufficient to warn of risks, and that student-athletes must be instructed to understand and appreciate the severity of the type of injury that may occur in certain activities.

5. **Safe Playing Environment:** Along with school personnel, each coach must take reasonable precaution to assess the facilities for safe competition or practice.
6. **Mismatches of Participants:** The coach must use reasonable care in matching opponents. Some criteria potential mismatches include:
 - a. Size of student-athletes
 - b. Age differences
 - c. Skill and experience levels
 - d. Incapacitating conditions
 - e. Coaches must avoid even subtle coercion of their student-athletes to participate when the player has disclosed a physical or emotional problem or has in any way expressed reservation about the match-up and/or the activity in question.

RULE VII: COVID-19 EXEMPTIONS

- A. Volleyball league games will be played in an extended season format: from September 12 through November 14
 - a. Monday and Thursday night games will be played at 6 pm and 8 pm, allowing time in between games for sanitation of game balls and other equipment.
 - b. Saturday games will be played at 9 am, 11 am, 1 pm, and 3 pm, allowing for sanitation in between games.
 - c. Teams may not enter the building more than 10 minutes prior to the start time of their game.
 - d. There will be 3 game balls used per match, and the balls not being used in play will be cleaned and rotated back in play.
- B. If teams are adversely affected by COVID-19, the games that would be missed will not be counted as forfeits.
 - a. If any team is affected by COVID-19, the standings for that grade would be calculated using a winning percentage, instead of points for total games won.
- C. All players, spectators, coaches, and officials will need to follow any additional parameters set by the host gym site in regards to seating/spacing.
 - a. Temperatures of all attendees will be taken upon entering the gym.
 - b. Face coverings must be worn, except for players, coaches, and officials during play.
 - c. All attendees should practice social distancing when able.