

SKPS Athletic Association Guidelines for Athlete Evaluations

- The SKPS Athletic Association promotes the ideals of good sportsmanship and Christian values through its athletic programs.
- The SKPS Athletic Association adheres to all policies and guidelines promulgated by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Diocesan policies on student-athlete participation include the following:
 - The overall objective of Catholic elementary school sports is to provide each student with a positive Christian athletic experience through instruction, practice and game participation. Although a reasonable competitive approach is encouraged, a win-at-any-cost philosophy is not.
 - It is extremely important that each school provide some way for every interested student to be able to participate. This can be done by having an additional team to serve students unable to make the more competitive team.
 - Because children develop differently, their ability to acquire the skills necessary to perform well in any sport will vary widely. Coaches must keep them interested, committed, content and confident. Too many children have such a bad experience with sports programs that they quit early in life, never having the chance to meet their full potential.
- Because both the Diocese of Pittsburgh and SKPS endorse the concept of having a spot on teams for all interested student athletes, evaluations are used at certain grade levels to determine the best mix of athletes to comprise team rosters. Parents and students often have questions regarding how their children will be evaluated and these guidelines have been prepared to provide answers to those questions and to provide uniformity and consistency in the evaluation process across SKPS athletic programs. Coordinators and coaches volunteer significant amounts of time and effort to this process and their respective seasons with the goal of providing athletes with a positive experience which will increase their interest in their sport of choice as well as improving their skills.
- There are no evaluations for students in the 3rd and 4th grades. SKPS athletic programs at those levels are developmental in their focus and children will be divided among one or more teams needed to accommodate the number of registrants. When multiple teams are required due to the number of participants, the sport's coordinator will assign the children to specific teams for games purposes. The goal is to align the children equally from a skill perspective across the teams. We recognize that the skill level of kids in these age groups can vary greatly from kids who have never played before to kids who have played for several years. We need to develop all kids so, at times, we may split kids for purposes of entering tournaments and base who attend those tournaments on the level of competition likely to be encountered. We strive to have as equal playing time as

possible based on the number of kids on a team but playing time is also based on compliance with the Athlete's Code of Conduct.

- If the number of interested students at the J.V. (5th and 6th grades) and/or Varsity (7th and 8th grades) levels is high for a sport, the Association will field multiple teams.
- Evaluations at the J.V. and Varsity levels will be conducted in such a manner so as to encourage all SKPS students to participate in athletic programs. Evaluations will also be conducted in a manner which will hopefully lead to a positive and healthy experience for all participants.
 - In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, many schools are only able to field one team at the J.V. and/or Varsity levels and some schools, due to small enrollment numbers, cannot even field a single team. SKPS is blessed in that we have very healthy enrollment and we are often able to field multiple teams at the JV and Varsity levels. For schools that field multiple teams, the Diocese distinguishes those teams using different terms depending on the sport. IN basketball, teams are referred to as the "Section" team and the "League" team. In volleyball they use the school's primary colors, such as "green" and "white". In more common vernacular, you may hear these teams referred to as "A" and "B" teams. Typically all teams are placed into divisions within the Diocese and the teams then play other Diocesan teams within those divisions. For most sports, the Diocese of Pittsburgh places schools into divisions for athletics based on the number of students who attend the school. Given the size of the SKPS student body, Section teams at SKPS are typically placed in the North 1A division. League teams may be placed in the North 1B or Beaver Valley divisions. For soccer, the Diocese of Pittsburgh places teams into divisions based on prior performance.
 - Regardless of which team a student is assigned to, player development and competition are stressed. All students, regardless of which team they play on, must recognize and appreciate that playing time is a privilege and may be affected by attendance at practice, behavior, effort and attitude. In addition, athletes participating at the JV and Varsity levels must maintain a C average or above in order to be eligible to play. No student will be permitted to participate in a sports program on a day when he/she has been absent from school. Any student who has sustained a concussion or other documented injury preventing sport play is not permitted to participate in evaluations or to return to his/her team until a doctor's release is provided to the Association President, Coordinator or Head Coach.
 - The key difference between SKPS teams is that the second team has a primary focus on player development and coaches will strive to provide as equal playing time as possible for athletes. Coaches of any second team(s) will also strive to provide all players with the opportunity to start games. On the first team, development remains important but reasonable competition

takes precedent. As a result, playing time may be based more on the needs of and situations arising within games. Playing time may not be equal and there can be a significant difference in playing time, although every athlete should see playing time in every game. Moreover, some athletes may not have an opportunity to start games. As noted above, the Diocese of Pittsburgh and SKPS do not endorse a win-at-any-cost philosophy and coaches must always strive to provide a positive Christian athletic experience for all students and make every effort to keep all players interested, committed, content and confident.

- If parents have a preference that their child be placed on the second team and not the first team, please inform the coach, coordinator or Athletic Association President prior to evaluations.
- SKPS Athletic Association will not place only one athlete in the 6th or 8th grades onto a second team roster unless the parents of that child request such placement.
- Parents will be provided sufficient notice of when evaluations will take place. Every effort will be made to schedule two (2) evaluation sessions. Athletes are encouraged to attend both sessions. Athletes must attend at least one evaluation session in order to be considered for the Section team, unless exceptional circumstances, such as injury, exist and the coaches/coordinators are aware of the situation prior to evaluations.
- Evaluations are CLOSED in that only athletes, evaluators, coaches for the teams, the Athletic Association President, and the coordinator may be present. Parents and siblings are not permitted at evaluations as this can lead to unnecessary distractions. Parents should bring their children to evaluations at least 15 minutes early and then return to pick them up at the time designated for evaluation to be completed.
- The SKPS Athletic Association process for evaluating student athletes at the J.V. and Varsity levels is designed to gather as much information as possible prior to team rosters being finalized. Evaluations combine both objective and subjective components. In order to have objective criteria upon which to evaluate athletes, the Coordinator for the sport will endeavor to schedule 2-3 evaluators with knowledge and ability for the sport in question from outside of SKPS to be present during evaluations. Since this is not always practical or feasible, evaluators may be from SKPS so long as they are not one of the coaches for the teams being evaluated. All evaluators must be at least 18 years old unless exceptional circumstances exist. During evaluations, students will wear a number and that number will be used for identification purposes. If a student attends both evaluation sessions he/she will wear the same number for both sessions.

- Evaluations will focus on a variety of skills which will be demonstrated by the coordinator and/or coaches. Each evaluator will be in possession of an evaluation form which, as the athletes complete the various tasks, will be used to grade their performance.
- Placing athletes onto teams will not be based solely on the objective data provided by outside evaluators. It would be unfair to the students to base team placement solely on what takes place over the limited amount of time of an evaluation. A variety of factors, including but not limited to nervousness, injury and sickness may impact how a child performs at an evaluation and their performance may not be an accurate reflection of their abilities. Therefore, while the data provided by evaluators will be a significant aspect of the overall construction of team rosters, coaches may utilize their subjective knowledge of the athletes in preparing team rosters. Coaches may also adjust rosters in order to meet specific needs of the teams. By way of example, basketball coaches must make sure that each team will have at least one player capable of handling the ball as point guard, so players may be placed onto teams to fit such needs. Coaches will conduct themselves in a fair, impartial and unbiased manner in finalizing team rosters.
- On the day following the final evaluation, the coordinator and/or coaches will email the team rosters to parents. Any questions regarding the outcome of evaluations or team rosters should be directed to the coach, coordinator and Athletic Association President within 48 hours of when the rosters are released.