

FORWARD

Lessons learned on athletic fields and playing courts are most significant to everyday living. The desire to do well, excellent competition, individual sacrifice, courage, teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, and fair play are all essential ingredients of good education and a personal way of life. Moreover, respect for the rules and the self-discipline managed by the game are identical concepts for democratic living in our American society.

Spectators, both student and adult, have their special roles in the endeavor. They contribute to the spirit, the conduct and the enjoyment of the game and its accompanying activities. Their proper support is to be encouraged and most assuredly appreciated.

There are few things finer than a good athletic program nor worse than a bad one. Immanuel stands solidly behind its interscholastic program. We expect a very good program and we anticipate a very successful program. Our individual and collective contributions are all important in this commitment.

May we continue to participate to His glory in all we do.

In His Service,

Judy Schaefer, Principal

Jeff Schaefer, Athletic Director

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL-ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

General Philosophy Among Coaching Staff

The athletic program at Immanuel Lutheran School is a vital part of the total educational program since it is an extension of the goals and principles developed in the classroom. The success of any athletic program is directly dependent upon the degree of interest, enthusiasm, dedication, loyalty, and good sportsmanship that all team members and members of the coaching staff display. Success can also be measured to the extent that the fans, administration, and staff provide understanding, encouragement, and support.

The fundamental belief emphasized in our school is that Jesus Christ is Lord. The athletic program must reflect that fact. All other goals are secondary. The program must be Christ-Centered to reinforce the Gospel message. Christ-Centered means athletes, fans, parents, cheerleaders, and staff are encouraged and expected to reflect Christ in all they say and do. They are to exhibit Christian sportsmanship in practice as well as in contest. The student athlete is pushed to develop his/her God-given talents and to respect the talents of teammates and opponents.

The athletic program encourages a commitment to excellence, which helps the student deal with the competitive society in which we live. It does this through setting a goal and focusing on the sub-goals necessary to achieve the final goal. Since goal setting and reaching them is a disciplined activity, the program is NOT an intramural activity where there is limited guidance or direction. Athletes enjoy playing and are encouraged to participate, but are also challenged to excel. Winning is a by-product of reaching the goals stated above but is not an end in itself.

On the most basic level there are two philosophies of coaching and competition. One school of thought proposes that at the elementary level everyone should play the same amount of time and winning is not important. A second theory proposes that winning is the most important part of the game and this is to be accomplished at all costs. Coaching is not as simple as either of these two theories. It is the responsibility of the coach to teach the skills our athletes need to play the game, provide opportunities at practices and games to exercise these skills, and to prepare a team for competition that is the best that it can be. Often times this means that some athletes will play more than others. Athletes with a real desire to do well, to improve, and who put forth extra effort in practices are the ones who usually make the most progress. Immanuel's coaches always try their best to rotate as many players as possible into a game, but they will also do their best to present a team worthy of competition. Competition means that one team will win and one team will lose. We believe that if we don't do our best to win, team spirit and morale can suffer. Competitive sports can and should be fun.

The program has a public relations function in Christ's kingdom. It provides an avenue to witness to teammates, opponents, and spectators by word and deed. It promotes the school by calling attention to the activities of the school.

Professional ethics of the highest nature should prevail among the coaching staff. Mutual respect and support for all activities and individuals is a requisite for a wholesome program. Athletes that quit a sport while it is in progress shall not be permitted to enter another sport that is in progress. Students will not be able to join a sport after the return date stated on the Agreement to Participate form. Students who enroll at Immanuel after a season has begun will be allowed to join the team for practices as soon as possible, but game participation is dependent on completion of practice requirements.

The Administration is responsible for the development of the athletic program, which will provide the benefits of competitive experiences to as large a number of students within the school as possible.

The Administrator shall confer with the Athletic Director, members of the coaching staff, and physical education instructors, whenever necessary, in an effort to develop a constructive approach to athletics and physical education within the school system and to maintain a program which can be justified from an educational viewpoint.

In order that the expenditures for athletics may be maintained within the proper boundaries, the Athletic Director shall direct all expenditures for approval to the Director of Operations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF IMMANUEL'S ATHLETIC PROGRAM

A. Goals of the Athletic Program:

Athletics offer a great opportunity for individual growth through Christian fellowship and competition. Athletics at Immanuel places a Christian in a special position. This position gives one an opportunity to witness his/her faith through actions and deeds.

B. Objectives of the Athletic Program:

The objectives of athletics in keeping with those of physical education are:

- 1) To develop physical fitness in terms of speed, endurance, strength, agility, and body efficiency.
- 2) To develop motor skills to the individual's greatest potential.
- 3) To develop wholesome attitudes, sportsmanship, ethics, personal relationships, and a desire to excel.
- 4) To develop knowledge of sports, rules, strategies, and the development of sports traditional to our culture.
- 5) To develop and maintain training habits consistent with requirements and concerns for health, safety, and welfare of all.
- 6) To develop a strong sense of school spirit, loyalty, and unity of students and staff.

Generally speaking, athletics should contribute directly and positively toward the achievement of their purpose. Athletics are a part of the total educational program and should be coordinated with the general instructional program and articulated with the other departments of our school. It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and the individual coaches to direct the athletic program toward the maximum fulfillment of these educational ends.

The Immanuel Lutheran School athletic program consists of the following sports when qualified coaches are secured by the Athletic Director:

BOYS:

FALL

Co-Ed Soccer (3-5)
Volleyball (6-8)
Cross Country (4-8)

WINTER

Basketball (5-8)

SPRING

Track (5-8)

GIRLS

FALL

Volleyball (5-8) or
Co-Ed Soccer (3-5)

WINTER

Basketball (5-8)
Cheerleading (5-8)

SPRING

Track (5-8)

Students may participate in only one sport per season. Immanuel is a member of the Rock Valley Lutheran Athletic Conference and Fox Valley Lutheran Athletic Conference. Conference competition exists at the 5/6 and 7/8 grade levels. Separate fifth grade games are independent of the conference are not included in the conference standing.

Requirements to Participate

1. A \$50.00 fee (\$25.00 Gr. 3-5 soccer and Gr. 4-8 Cross Country) is assessed to every athlete per sport listed and must be paid before any participation occurs.
2. Every athlete is required to obtain a medical physical before participation in practices or games. The form must be signed by a licensed physician and dated not more than one year preceding any practice or participation in games.
3. A participation form must be turned in by a specified date in order to participate.

4. All forms and fees must be turned in to the school office or the student will not be allowed to participate for the season.

Expectations of Parents of the Athlete

1. Parents are expected to assist in helping to run a successful athletic program. The parents of athletes in volleyball, basketball, and cheerleading are asked to share the responsibility of helping to run the admission's gate, concession stand, supervise hallways, and assist with clean-up according to a rotating schedule set forth by the A.D. **Parents who are unable to work their scheduled shift are responsible for finding their own replacement.**
2. Parents of the 5th and 6th grade girls' volleyball teams are expected to help at Immanuel's volleyball tournament (September). Parents of the 5th and 6th grade boys' basketball teams are expected to help at Immanuel's basketball tournament (November).
3. Parents are expected to supervise their children at athletic events. Students and siblings are expected to remain in the gymnasium during volleyball and basketball games.

ATHLETIC GUIDELINES FOR IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, it is expected that all athletes observe and uphold the stated guidelines, as well as the academic and disciplinary policies. Members of teams and organizations are expected to serve as exemplars of high moral character and must demonstrate appropriate academic commitment, which is required from all students.

All interscholastic activities covered by eligibility rules are included in these guidelines. Coaches may set additional training rules relative to practice/game behavior, absences, language, etc., and are given the latitude to establish appropriate disciplinary measures with the approval of the Athletic Director.

Title IX – No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

We believe that it is a privilege to participate on an athletic team. Only those who fulfill requirements and obey the rules of the school will have the privilege of representing our school in these areas. Students who are ineligible are not allowed to attend practice or participate in games

Failure to comply with the following regulations will result in ineligibility for a specified time:

1. No pupil shall leave the school grounds without written permission from a parent or guardian. The period of time involved includes time of arrival at school and time of departure from school. Students who remain at school for late practices or games must be supervised in a designated area (Extended Care).
2. We are always concerned about the safety of our children. Students who have **late** practices or games must be supervised. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways:
 - a) Student goes to Extended Care until it is time for practice or game.
 - b) Student goes directly home after school and returns for practice or game.
 - c) Student goes home with a friend after school and returns for practice or game.
 - d) If a game or practice starts before 4:30, a coach or parent may supervise students who stay after school in a designated area.

Practice and game schedules are printed in advance. Students will not be allowed to make last minute phone arrangements for pick up or for going home with a friend, unless the practice or game

changes are made during the school day. When arrangements have not been made the student will go to Extended Care.

3. Ineligibility means that the student may not be present at practices or participate in games for that period of time.
4. Children absent any portion of the school day due to illness, unexcused absences, or who are unable to participate in P.E. class will be ineligible for after school activities for that day.
5. Purposely defacing school property is a cause for ineligibility.
6. Students who present special discipline or other problems may be declared ineligible after consultation with the parents.
7. Two cumulative grades lower than 70% (D's) or one grade lower than 60% (F) will cause a student to be ineligible for a one-week period. The period of ineligibility begins on Thursday and continues through the following Wednesday. Parent and student will be notified on Wednesday of the student's ineligibility. Any incomplete work will result in immediate ineligibility for no less than the present day. In order for the athlete to participate the following day, all late homework must be turned in before the start of the school day. The student will resume participation upon completion of the work. The third week-long ineligibility or an accumulation of seven daily ineligibilities (VB and Soccer) or ten daily ineligibilities (BB and Cheerleading) due to late work will result in the loss of participation for the remainder of that season. Any prolonged, incomplete work will also make the student ineligible for the one-week period.
8. In conjunction with the Homework Policy, students will be allowed to attend practice or play in a game following their first late assignment in the quarter, provided that the assignment is completed satisfactorily by game or practice time. This first late assignment must be turned in by the beginning of the next day to resume participation. This late will still be counted toward their accumulative number of late assignments but will not result in an additional penalty. Students will not be allowed to practice or play in a game with late work of any kind.
9. Students may become ineligible when achievement and maintenance of academic standing is not equal to his/her ability. Parents will be consulted, and students will be reminded of their responsibility to their studies.
10. The teacher may waive ineligibility if he/she feels the student is working to his/her capability. A teacher may request a student miss a practice, or a portion of practice, to work on assignments that are incomplete or inadequate.
11. A coach may remove a student from an activity for a set amount of time, provided that the student and parents are aware of the individual coach's disciplinary actions.
12. A student will lose playing time for not participating in practice or lack of effort while at practice.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS, FANS, AND COACHES

Sportsmanship

Member schools of the Rock and Fox Valley Athletic Conferences are committed to the highest level of athletic competition within their schools' resources. Member schools are dedicated to behavior of players, coaches, cheerleaders and spectators, which honors God and others. Member schools believe that a spirit of respect for all involved in athletics – players as cooperative competitors, coaches as professional Christian educators, referees as professional arbiters and fans as encouragers – is crucial.

Behavior Expectations

We expect spectators to focus on encouraging their own team and refrain from any degree of critical, sarcastic or negative spirit.

1. Demonstrate an appreciation of the skillful play of opponents.
2. Support their own cheerleaders' efforts and respect the efforts of opponent's cheerleaders.
3. Refrain from booing any player, coach or referee.
4. Refrain from distracting noises during play.
5. Cooperate with instructions given by home team management.
6. Set positive examples for students and adults as role models of mature Christian behavior.

MATTHEW 18:15-17 or DEALING WITH DISAGREEMENTS

Immanuel is a family made up of hundreds of individuals. As with any family, disagreements or differences of opinion will occur during our school year. Matthew 18 provides guidance for Christians in dealing with many forms of differences of opinion. If unsuccessful in the case of an athletic matter the proper procedure is to speak to the coach, complete a Question or Concern Form, meet with the Athletic Director, and meet with the Principal. The goal is to obtain a God-pleasing solution.

Many questions and concerns of Immanuel are a direct result of poor or miscommunication. Talking to a brother\sister will most often resolve the problem and strengthen the ministry of ILS. PARENTS SHOULD ALSO FEEL FREE TO CONTACT A COACH AND/OR THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR AND SCHEDULE A CONFERENCE AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME.

COACHING POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY

It is the responsibility of each coach to follow the eligibility rules and guidelines set forth in the Parent Handbook and Athletic Handbook. The athletic director will supply a list of ineligible students to the coaches as soon as eligibility becomes an issue.

Any absence from school on the day of an interscholastic event for illness or unexcused reasons will make that person ineligible for participation in that day's event. Any student who fails to have all assignments completed satisfactorily and turned in by the designated time will also be ineligible for that day's extracurricular activities. The Athletic Director will determine eligibility on days of contest for partial absenteeism for doctor appointments, funerals, etc.

Athletes that quit a sport while it is in progress shall not be permitted to enter another sport that is in progress. Students will not be able to join a sport after the return date stated on the Agreement to Participate form. Students who enroll at Immanuel after a season has begun will be allowed to join the team for practices as soon as possible, but game participation is dependent on completion of practice requirements.

EQUIPMENT

It is the duty of the Athletic Director to complete records of all equipment including to whom it was issued, and to hold each recipient of such equipment responsible for each item issued. Loss of equipment must be accounted for by the person to whom it was issued.

At the end of each season, head coaches must account for their equipment. They should also submit the names of students whom, by their negligence, have lost or damaged athletic gear. The Athletic Director is responsible for obtaining reimbursement for lost or damaged articles that are the property of Immanuel Lutheran School.

At the end of the season volleyball, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, and track uniforms must be cleaned according to the tag instructions and returned to school in a bag labeled with the student's name. If the uniform requires dry cleaning, please return it to school in the dry cleaning bag labeled with the student's name.

Any athletic uniform issued by the athletic department of Immanuel shall not be worn by students other than for games or special approved situations. After all athletic contests students should change out of their sports uniform and into their street clothes.

LOCKER ROOM SUPERVISION

At the beginning and conclusion of all practices and game activity, the head coach and his staff are responsible for his/her team personnel in the locker room and adjacent areas. The last coach to leave is responsible to see that the locker room is vacant, lights shut off, and all doors shut. When practice is conducted, or games are played in the evening, on Saturday or during vacations, it is the responsibility of the coach in charge to secure all equipment and lights that have been used.

FACILITIES

Coaches should report to the Athletic Director any existing unsanitary or unsafe conditions. When any school facility is to be used for any activity (practice or game), other than those on the sports schedule or normal practice schedule, a request should be made to the Athletic Director and Director of Operations.

COMPETITION AT OTHER SCHOOLS

Supervision is the shared responsibility of the coaching staff as well as the parents or guardian. In the locker room and during competition the coach is responsible for the supervision of players. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for the behavior of the players at all other times. The coaching staff may intervene if improper behavior is observed at any time. It is the duty of all those who represent Immanuel to display the highest level of citizenship at all times.

ATTIRE ON GAME DAYS

Respect and team unity are expected of Immanuel's athletes on and off of the playing field. The attire that has been adopted through our dress code policy will serve as the attire for athletes on competition days. The attire on the days of a tournament may be changed to a higher standard as requested by the head coach. For volleyball, basketball, and cheerleading, the athletes will change into their competition uniforms at the location where the competition is held. After the competition, the athlete will change back into the attire worn to the game. This will reduce wear and prolong the life of the competition uniform.

ATTENDANCE AT TOURNAMENTS

Students will be released from classroom attendance for tournament participation at times appropriate to the tournament schedule. Releasing students from teaching time will be granted only to those who will be actually involved in team preparation. Students not participating in the event are strongly discouraged from early dismissal. Non-athletes who miss school to attend a tournament will be considered absent from school.

USE OF VITAMINS, ASPIRIN, ETC. – DIAGNOSING AND PRESCRIBING:

Immanuel is not in the business of practicing medicine and staff members should refrain from diagnosing physical and/or mental problems, prescriptions, and/or recommendations for specific treatment or course of action, and for providing such items as vitamin pills, salt tablets, etc. Aspirin and/or painkillers of any kind are not to be administered at any time by any coach or member of the staff. Basic first aid is the only treatment allowed.

POLICY FOR ATHLETIC TEAM TOURNAMENT OUT OF TOWN OVERNIGHT ACTIVITY

The coach of each individual team assumes final responsibility for supervision of their student athletes in any school activity related to that sport. In the case of overnight activities, this responsibility is to include adult chaperons in the room of each participant. The coach is also expected to announce and enforce the following guidelines:

- 1) A specific curfew time may be established and checked for enforcement.
- 2) Clear indications must be made concerning what areas of the hotel, playing site, etc. are accessible by the students. All other areas are to be declared off-limits
- 3) The entire team is responsible for any property damage which occurs at the hotel, playing site, vehicle, etc. If a guilty party is not identified, the team will accept joint responsibility.
- 4) School policies concerning behavior, attire, treatment of property, etc. remain in force, and are expected to be carried out by the coach.
- 5) The coach is responsible for taking a complete list of emergency phone numbers and medical information for each participant on the trip.
- 6) Coaches may have special instruction concerning attire at tournaments.
- 7) Alcohol use or other inappropriate behaviors in the presence of the athletes is **strongly discouraged**. This applies to coaches, parents, fans, and athletes.
- 8) To promote team unity and respect for our Lord, coaches, athletes, and parents are expected to participate in worship opportunities at overnight tournaments where worship is offered. Any athlete that does not attend the worship service may forfeit the next game following the service, unless the athlete has a valid excuse (illness). Excuses such as traffic and slow restaurant service, etc. will not be accepted.

ATHLETIC HONORS

The following criteria have been established by the school in the recognition of athletes for team awards. The head coach has the prerogative to issue or withhold an award for extenuating circumstances. Coaches must provide documentation of these circumstances to the Athletic Director. In all cases, students must complete the season as a member of the team, in order to receive an award or be recognized in the Athletic Season Summary Book unless a season ending injury would prevent completion of the season.

GENERAL PROCEDURE – ATHLETIC AWARDS

The following criteria have been established for receiving awards:

1. Seventh grade participants or first-time participants at the varsity level will receive one award letter.
2. Athletes will receive a pin for each sport in which they participate and complete.

STAFF

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Athletic Director has the responsibility to organize and implement an interscholastic sports program, which will be of the greatest educational benefit to the students of Immanuel Lutheran School. In the performance of his duties, the Athletic Director is responsible to the Administrator and the Director of Operations.

Coaching positions are offered first to the staff of Immanuel. If Immanuel staff members are not interested in coaching, the Athletic Director will secure the services of a qualified individual of at least 21 years of age. Immanuel's first consideration is to secure the services of a coach without a relative on the team. In the event that the above conditions cannot be met, the Athletic Director will meet with the any parent interested in coaching to determine their knowledge of the sport in comparison to the skills required to coach the sport. He will evaluate coaching performance and provide leadership and guidance to the coaching staff by conducting appropriate coaches' meetings. These meetings allow the Athletic Director the opportunity to become involved in the

planning of the total program and provide the opportunity to establish and maintain communication between the different coaches and the various sports. Good rapport and frequent communication among coaches is of the utmost importance if such a program is to be successful.

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director to assign teams for both practice and regular season contest at all levels to available facilities, to prepare schedules with the assistance of coaches, to assign officials for all home contests, to arrange housing where necessary. He must also coordinate the home contest with the administrator and conduct home tournaments. In addition the Athletic Director is responsible for the concession area, gate, and clean-up at home events.

In addition, the Athletic Director is responsible to develop a system to determine the eligibility of interscholastic participants.

The Athletic Director should be available to all personnel of Immanuel Lutheran School (principal, coaches, Director of Operations) responsible for sports activities for consultation in matters pertaining to athletics.

HEAD COACH

Because of the nature of our institution and in accordance with our philosophy of education, it is important that coaches are involved with the development of a well-rounded student/athlete - student first, athlete second, Christian foremost. The total training program for any sport should include means for developing the student spiritually, academically, as well as physically.

- 1) Will set an example of moral and Christian behavior and ethics during all practice sessions and during all sports events.
- 2) Will teach every player the fundamental skills needed to play the sport and help the participants to learn the value and importance of teamwork.
- 3) Reports to and works with the Athletic Director in planning and implementing a coordinated program for the assigned area of responsibility.
- 4) Directs and attends all practice sessions and events.
- 5) Remains in the building after practices and games to supervise athletes until transportation arrives
- 6) Is responsible for assigning athletes to specific duties which must be completed before being dismissed from an event or practice in terms of helping secure equipment and preparing the facility for the next event, and insures that each assigned task is satisfactorily completed before students leave the session.
- 7) Is responsible for enforcement of appropriate participant behavior, ethics, game conduct, and attendance requirements for all practices and competitions.
- 8) Performs other related duties as may be necessary from time to time as assigned by the Athletic Director. (Ex. Enforce church attendance at overnight tournaments.)
- 9) Informs the Athletic Director of any problems concerning players, coaches, parents, schedule, etc.
- 10) Provides communication to players and parents concerning schedule changes and event information through notes, emails, and/or school newsletters.
- 11) The A.D. must approve the purchase of anything that is to be used by or for the team.
- 12) Refers all questions of policy and procedure to the Athletic Director.

Playing Time:

- 1) The coach will avoid practice situations where players are sitting idle for an extended period of time.
- 2) The coach will make every effort to play every player during the course of a game or match. There should never be a period of three consecutive games where any player has not

participated except in cases of disciplinary action, absenteeism from practice or games, or during tournament play.

- 3) The coach will never discriminate against nor favor any athlete's playing time for any reason besides those set for in the eligibility guidelines, discipline code, or athletic handbook of Immanuel Lutheran School.
- 4) The coach will alter playing time due to absenteeism from practices or games, displaying a lack of effort, or any rule set forth by the coach at the beginning of the season and approved by the Athletic Director. Forgetting a game uniform automatically disqualifies an athlete from participating in that event.
- 5) The coach will teach, through example, to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.

ASSISTANT COACH

Because of the nature of our institution and in accordance with our philosophy of education, it is important that coaches are involved with the development of a well-rounded student/athlete - student first, athlete second, Christian foremost. The total training program for any sport should include means for developing the student spiritually, academically, as well as physically.

- 1) Will set an example of moral and Christian behavior and ethics during all practice sessions and during all sports events.
- 2) Reports to the head coach for respective athletic activity assigned.
- 3) Assists the head coach with matters related to facility maintenance and preparation for any and all competitions in their sport.
- 4) Attends all practice sessions and events in the time frame specified by the head coach.
- 5) Assists the head coach in assigning students to specific duties which must be completed before being dismissed from an event or practice in terms of helping secure equipment and prepare the facility for the next event, and insures that each assigned task is satisfactorily completed.
- 6) Assists the head coach with enforcement of appropriate behavior, ethics, game conduct, and attendance requirements for all practices and competitions, as defined by the head coach.
- 7) Shall perform other related duties as assigned by the head coach.

The mark of an effective assistant coach is one that is committed to the success of the program, and one who is willing to contribute in many capacities, being in attendance at every practice and arriving early and departing when the day's duty is completed.

PARENT COACHES

- 1) When a parent is in the position of head coach or assistant coach for the first time, a mandatory meeting with the A.D. is required. This is to clearly communicate the expectations and guidelines related to the athletic program at Immanuel.
- 2) Parent coaches are expected to treat all players fairly in regard to Immanuel's coaching philosophy.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR OVERNIGHT STAYS

- 1) When there is a contest on the first day of a tournament, the Immanuel Athletic Department will reimburse the evening stay, provided there is a contest the following day.
- 2) Immanuel Athletic Department will reimburse the head coach only up to 2 nights for volleyball and basketball tournaments. Reimbursement will cover basic room rate plus tax.
- 3) As long as the state track meet remains at Concordia Chicago (River Forest, IL), a maximum of 1 night stay for the head coach will be reimbursed.
- 4) The distance covered for reimbursement will be no less than 1 ½ hours normal driving time to the tournament site.
- 5) All other reimbursements will be at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

Introduction

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal function of the brain. It occurs when the brain is rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. What may appear to be only a mild jolt or blow to the head or body can result in a concussion.

The understanding of sports-related concussion by medical professionals continues to evolve. We now know that young athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Once considered little more than a “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in a variety of short- or long-term changes in brain function or, in rare cases, even death.

What is a concussion?

You’ve probably heard the terms “ding” and “bell-ringer.” These terms were previously used to refer to minor head injuries and thought to be a normal part of collision sports. Research has now shown us that there is no such thing as a minor brain injury. Any suspected concussion must be taken seriously. The athlete does not have to be hit directly in the head to injure the brain. Any force that is transmitted to the head in any matter may cause the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull, potentially resulting in a concussion.

It used to be believed that a player had to lose consciousness or be “knocked-out” to have a concussion. This is not true, as the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. In fact, less than 5% of players actually lose consciousness with a concussion.

What exactly happens to the brain during a concussion is not entirely understood. It appears to be a very complex process affecting both the structure and function of the brain. The sudden movement of the brain causes stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once this injury occurs, the brain is vulnerable to further injury and very sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.

Common sports injuries such as torn ligaments and broken bones are structural injuries that can be detected during an examination or seen on x-rays or MRI. A concussion, however, is primarily an injury that interferes with how the brain works. While there is damage to brain cells, the damage is at a microscopic level and cannot be seen on MRI or CT scans. Therefore, the brain looks normal on these tests, even though it has been seriously injured.

Recognition and Management

If an athlete exhibits any signs, symptoms, or behaviors that make you suspicious that he or she may have had a concussion, that athlete must be removed from all physical activity, including sports and recreation. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for further injury, and even death.

Parents and coaches are not expected to be able to “diagnose” a concussion. That is the role of an appropriate health-care professional. However, everyone involved in athletics must be aware of the signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion. If you suspect that an athlete may have a concussion, then he or she must be immediately removed from all physical activity.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headaches or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

When in doubt, sit them out!

When a player is suspected to have a concussion, Immanuel will follow the "Heads Up" 4-step Action Plan.

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them information on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health-care professional says he or she is symptom-free and gives the okay to return to activity.

The signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with a concussion are not always apparent immediately after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and may develop over a few hours or longer. An athlete should be closely watched following a suspected concussion and should never be left alone.

Athletes must know that they should never try to "tough out" a suspected concussion. Teammates, parents and coaches should never encourage an athlete to "play through" the symptoms of a concussion. In addition, there should never be an attribution of bravery to athletes who do play despite having concussion signs and/or symptoms. The risks of such behavior must be emphasized to all members of the team, as well as coaches and parents.

If an athlete returns to activity before being fully healed from an initial concussion, the athlete is at greater risk for a repeat concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has a chance to recover from the first can slow recovery or increase the chance for long-term problems. In rare cases, a repeat concussion can result in severe swelling and bleeding in the brain that can be fatal.

What to do in an Emergency

Although rare, there are some situations where you will need to call 911 and activate the Emergency Medical System (EMS). The following circumstances are medical emergencies:

1. Any time an athlete has a loss of consciousness of any duration. While loss of consciousness is not required for a concussion to occur, it may indicate more serious brain injury.
2. If an athlete exhibits any of the following:
 - decreasing level of consciousness,
 - looks very drowsy or cannot be awakened,
 - if there is difficulty getting his or her attention,
 - irregularity in breathing,
 - severe or worsening headaches,
 - persistent vomiting, or
 - any seizures.

Cognitive Rest

A concussion can interfere with school, work, sleep and social interactions. Many athletes who have a concussion will have difficulty in school with short- and long-term memory, concentration and organization. These problems typically last no longer than 2 -3 weeks, but for some these difficulties may last for months. It is best to lessen the student's class load early on after the injury. Most students with concussion recover fully. However, returning to sports and other regular activities too quickly can prolong the recovery.

The first step in recovering from a concussion is rest. Rest is essential to help the brain heal. Students with a concussion need rest from physical and mental activities that require concentration and attention as these activities may worsen symptoms and delay recovery. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television and phones (including texting) all may worsen the symptoms of concussion. As the symptoms lessen, increased use of computers, phone, video games, etc., may be allowed, as well as a gradual progression back to full academic work.

Return to Learn

Following a concussion, many athletes will have difficulty in school. These problems may last from days to months and often involve difficulties with short- and long-term memory, concentration, and organization. In many cases, it is best to lessen the student's class load early on after the injury. This may include staying home from school for a few days, followed by a lightened schedule for a few days, or longer, if necessary. Decreasing the stress on the brain early on after a concussion may lessen symptoms and shorten the recovery time.

Return to Play

After suffering a concussion, no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day. In the past, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown us that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to return to activity in such a short time.

An athlete should never be allowed to resume physical activity following a concussion until he or she is symptom free and given the approval to resume physical activity by an appropriate health-care professional.

Once an athlete no longer has signs, symptoms, or behaviors of a concussion and is cleared to return to activity by an appropriate health-care professional, he or she should proceed in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exercise. In most cases, the athlete will progress one step each day. The return to activity program schedule may proceed as below, following medical clearance:

Progressive Physical Activity Program (ideally under supervision)

Step 1: Light aerobic exercise- 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike or light jog; no weight lifting, resistance training, or any other exercises.

Step 2: Moderate aerobic exercise- 15 to 20 minutes of running at moderate intensity in the gym or on the field without a helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Non-contact training drills in full uniform. May begin weight lifting, resistance training and other exercises.

Step 4: Full contact practice or training.

Step 5: Full game play.

If symptoms of a concussion reoccur, or if concussion signs and/or behaviors are observed at any time during the return-to-activity program, the athlete must discontinue all activity and be re-evaluated by his or her health-care provider.

Suggested Concussion Management

1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day.
3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms.

(SAMPLE)

Agreement to Participate- Immanuel Lutheran School

Student: _____ **Grade:** _____

Please Circle: Cheerleading Girls' Basketball Boys' Basketball

Return Date to Participate: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT PARTICIPANT and PARENT:

In consideration of Immanuel Lutheran School permitting me to participate in the above sport or activity, I agree as follows:

1. I will abide by all conduct rules and will behave in a sportsmanlike manner.
2. I will follow the coach's instructions, playing techniques, practice schedule, and safety rules for the above sport or activity.
3. I understand and will abide by the Athletic Guidelines for Immanuel Lutheran School.
4. I acknowledge that I am aware that participation in the above sport or activity may involve risks of injury. A serious injury may result in physical impairment or even death. I hereby assume all risks associated with participation and agree to hold Immanuel Lutheran School, its employees, agents, coaches, School Board members, and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims, or demands of any kind and nature whatsoever which may arise by or in connection with my participation in the above activity or sport. The terms hereof shall serve as a release and assumption of risk for my heirs, estate, executor, administrator, assignees, and for all members of my family.
5. We have read the Athletic Handbook and understand our mutual obligations.
6. We pledge our concern and commitment joyfully, voluntarily, and sincerely.

Requirements to Participate

1. A \$25.00 or \$50.00 fee is assessed to every athlete per sport listed below.
2. Every athlete is required to obtain a medical physical before participation.
3. A participation form must be turned in by a specified date in order to participate.

A \$25.00 fee is assessed to every athlete for each sport for the following activities: Soccer and Cross Country. A \$50.00 fee is assessed to every athlete for each sport for the following activities: Girls Volleyball, Cheerleading, Basketball, and Track. The fee must be paid before the athlete may begin participation. In addition, each student who participates (including practice) in interscholastic athletics at Immanuel must have on file a certificate of physical fitness issued by a licensed physician not more than one year preceding practice or participation in an interscholastic athletic contest or activity. Furthermore, a participation form containing parental consent, as well as, medical and emergency information must be turned in to the athletic director **by the specified date** on the form in order to participate for that season. If the form is not turned in by the date, the student may not participate in the sport for that season. A student may not participate in more than one sport per season.

Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____



IMMANUEL'S SCHOOL SONG

We're from Immanuel and we ought a know
We fight, fight, fight wherever we go
Though the odds be great or small
Immanuel will win over all
Rah, rah, rah!
I-M-M-A-N-U-E-L
Yeaaaaah, Immanuel!