

St. Thomas More Catholic High School

Athletic Handbook

2024-25



Athletic Director

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“A good coach improves your game. A great coach improves your life”.

STM ATHLETE'S PRAYER

God, help me to play fair and to the best of my ability.

Let competition make me strong, but never hostile.

Always let me help my opponent up.

Never catch me rejoicing in the adversity of others.

Let me be happy and humble in victory.

If I am denied, keep me from envy.

Teach me the passion, conviction, selflessness,

and teamwork it takes to win as you did,

and after having learned these lessons,

let victory follow. When, through athletics,

I set an example, let it be a good one,

like that of our patron St. Thomas More.

STM Head Coaching Staff 2024-25

F – Faculty

NF – Non-Faculty

SPORT	HEAD COACH	EMAIL
Baseball	Justin Robichaux (F)	Justin.robichaux@stmcougars.net
Basketball (Boys)	Danny Broussard (F)	danny.broussard@stmcougars.net
Basketball (Girls)	Jeanne Kenney (F)	jeanne.kenney@stmcougars.net
Bowling	John Dupuis (F)	john.dupuis@stmcougars.net
Cross Country	Chris Odinet (NF)	codinet@yahoo.com
Football	Jim Hightower (F)	jim.hightower@stmcougars.net
Golf	Chad Massie (NF)	massiegolf1@cox.net
Lacrosse	Byrnes Tatford (NF)	stmlaxcoach@gmail.com
Soccer (Boys)	John Plumbar (NF)	jplumbar@cajunrush.com
Soccer (Girls)	Daniel Underwood (NF)	katie.breaux@stmcougars.net
Softball	Andria Waguespack (F)	andria.waguespack@stmcougars.net
Swimming (B & G)	Chris Landreneau (F)	chris.landreneau@stmcougars.net
Tennis (B & G)	Jennifer Sibille (F)	Jennifer.sibille@gmail.com
Track (B & G)	Ryan Frederick (F)	Ryan.frederick@stmcougars.net
Volleyball	Jessica Burke (F)	jessica.burke@stmcougars.net
Wrestling	Kerry Boumans (F)	Kerry.boumans@stmcougars.net

Vision Statement

The STM Athletic Department views interscholastic athletics as an opportunity for student participation in an organized and competitive environment. While the goal of athletic competition is to know victory, the achievement of objectives such as fair play, sportsmanship, skill acquisition, and work ethic cannot be overlooked. Winning traditions are founded upon the concepts of pride, respect, dedication, character, and loyalty. Coaches, athletes, and parents alike must strive to ensure that the athletic teams at STM represent themselves in a Christian manner that is conducive to both competitive spirit and good sportsmanship.

Mission Statement

- To immerse each athlete in Catholic values and live the mission of STM.
- To encourage student athletes to achieve academic success and to keep athletics in proper perspective.
- To develop good citizenship and respect for rules and authority.
- To provide opportunities to exemplify and observe good sportsmanship.
- To increase knowledge of various sports.
- To teach and emphasize the fundamental skills of various sports as a necessary ingredient in achieving individual and team success.
- To stress the importance of physical fitness, conditioning, health habits, and safety in athletics.
- To provide opportunities to develop lasting friendships with teammates and opponents.

STM is a member of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) and is governed by its rules and regulations. Student athletes and parents should be familiar with the LHSAA rules and regulations, which are found on the LHSAA website (www.lhsaa.org)

St. Thomas More Catholic High School Athletic Department



Athletic Chain of Command

Player

Coach

Athletic Director

Principal

If there are any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the player–coach relationship, the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution at this level, he/she should then move to the next level in the Chain of Command until resolution is achieved. *(The Chain of Command is a step-by-step process bringing together the primary individuals for discussion purposes. Each level is in place to facilitate in the process of conflict resolution).* Parents are also asked to respect this Chain of Command model regarding problem resolution.

This handbook outlines basic policy for students and parents. A coach may have additional guidelines which have been reviewed and approved by the Athletic Director.

INTRODUCTION

Athletic Handbook for Athletes and Parents

Interscholastic athletics can be a fun, rewarding, and memorable part of the high school experience. While academics offer the primary source for formal education, athletics can contribute to the total value of that education in many ways. Building upon the concepts of teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, and self-esteem, athletics can help to provide for a well-rounded educational experience.

Athletic participation is a privilege and not a right. To those who strive to succeed in the classroom comes the privilege to compete outside of it.

Being an athlete, or the parent of an athlete, is often a very challenging task. Sometimes this relationship can become complicated by the nature and structure of athletics in general. It is the intent of this Athletic Handbook to provide some insights into the role and responsibilities athletes and parents face and share, separately and together, in the realm of high school athletic participation.

The high school sport experience is much different than the recreational sport experience. Whereas recreational sport philosophy stresses equal participation by all, at the interscholastic level playing time is earned and not guaranteed.

Student-athletes earn playing time through good work ethics in practice, skill development, sportsmanship, and overall team attitude. Likewise, not all who try out for a given team will endure through the final selection process to make the team roster. Coaches are responsible for the selection of team rosters and for the determination of playing time for those on the team.

Relationships

Player-Coach Relationship:

All too often during athletic events, situations arise where many adults become too involved in the game, professing to know more than the coaches or even the officials. While this expertise may heighten a person's appreciation for a particular sport, it in no way changes the status of the individual as a parent-spectator. One should be there only to observe and enjoy the athletic performance.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical of all relationships in athletics. Parents have great influence on the relationship and can have a very profound effect upon this important and delicate balance. A parent may not agree with all decisions a coach may make. How and when a parent expresses their feelings can have a decided effect upon their child. If a parent's negative opinion is expressed in front of a child, it can be carried to the next practice or game. This in turn can lead to a player-coach confrontation. Please allow coaches to do the job for which they were hired. Coaches are expected to be leaders and role models

for their players. They are expected to teach and guide the players. They are not there to be friends or buddies. Coaches must demand respect from their players and give respect to their players in return. Concepts such as integrity, character, and Sportsmanship provides the foundation upon which STM coaching philosophy is based.

Parent-Coach Relationship:

Parents obviously want what is best for their child. Allowing the coach to guide and instruct a team are crucial. Again, please allow the coach to do his/her job. Should you have any questions or concerns, please wait at least 24 hrs. before contacting the coach. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities, and it may be a very emotional moment. Call to make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm and logical manner.

For many coaches, one of the post-game responsibilities is to meet with his/her players. Athletes should not be expected to stop and talk to parents and friends immediately after a game is over. These team meetings are essential to the learning process and are important in efforts to build team unity and understanding.

Parent-Player Relationship:

Being positive and supportive is very important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations may be extremely harmful. Allow your child to enjoy and to grow and to take responsibility for his/her athletic experiences. Encourage your child to give 100 percent effort and to become a team player, not an individual statistic seeker. In the end, it is the child's perception of the game that really matters, not that of the parents.

Relationship With Game Officials:

A sport commissioner assigns all officials and neither team has a say in which officials are assigned to a given game. The home school does not select the officials. Game officials agree to and follow a code of conduct and ethics, with no vested interest in which team emerges victorious. Officials are an integral part of the game. While one may not agree with all calls, please do not harass and/or taunt game officials. Parents are to be good role models for their children. Officials are in charge of the game and have complete authority to remove unruly spectators. Many times, a given team may see the same officials on several occasions throughout the course of a season. Coaches, Athletic Directors, and school administrators work to establish good working relationships with game officials which can be easily damaged or destroyed by spectator interference. *So please let the players play, let the coaches coach, let the officials officiate, and let the spectators be positive.*

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Athlete:

Athletes are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The team's goals and success should always come before individual interests.
2. Athletes need to attend all scheduled practices, games, and assigned events including weekends and holiday breaks.
3. Athletes must be receptive to coaching styles.
4. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
5. Athletes are responsible for the security of all personal items. Use assigned lockers and lock belongings.
6. As a team member, an athlete must abide by established team rules.
7. All injuries must be reported to the coach and to the Athletic Trainer immediately.
8. Strive for academic success to assure athletic eligibility.
9. Take pride in being a student-athlete at STM.

Responsibilities of the Coach:

Coaches are responsible for the following:

1. Running fair tryouts and using an effective evaluation process.
2. Determining the style of play, including offensive and defensive philosophies.
3. Teaching, instructing, and overseeing all practice sessions.
4. Determining starting lineups and making decisions regarding playing time.
5. Selecting the position of players.
6. Establishing and enforcing team and school rules.
7. Coordinate communication with players and parents regarding games & practices.
8. Provide appropriate supervision at all times in dressing room (before, during, and after all games and practices).
9. Presenting themselves as appropriate role models.
10. Be willing and available to discuss player-coach or parent-coach issues.
11. Be consistent, fair, and respectful of individual differences.
12. Develop team and individual objectives and goals.
13. Foster a healthy atmosphere for athletic competition.
15. Lead by example.

It is important to remember that participation on an athletic team is a privilege and not a right. Being part of and maintaining one's membership on a given team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. Unlike recreational or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time is not assured. Coaches will make the necessary decisions and utilize those players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest on any given day.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship Procedures - The School's Role:

It is the expectation of STM and more specifically the Athletic Department that everyone will demonstrate good sportsmanship and fair play during all athletic contests. This concept is presented to the staff and to the athletes throughout the school year.

The STM Athletic Department considers the need for good sportsmanship as very important. Efforts will continue to assure that every student-athlete understands that need as well.

THE ATHLETE'S PLEDGE

At STM, sportsmanship is an expectation. So please let the players play. The coaches coach. Let the officials officiate. And let the spectators be positive.

As an athlete at STM I promise to:

- *Thank Jesus Christ for granting me good health and athleticism.*
- *Represent my school, my coaches, my teammates, and myself in a manner which is appropriate and just.*
- *Maintain a healthy and competitive approach to athletics.*
- *Accept responsibility for my actions both on the playing field and in the classroom.*
- *Lead by example in the areas of self-respect and respect for others.*
- *Compete to the best of my abilities.*
- *Refrain from the use of prohibited substances such as steroids, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products.*
- *Demonstrate good sportsmanship and fair play at all times*
- *Understand that academics take priority over athletics.*

A good coach improves your game.

A great coach improves your life.

Important Participation Information

Risks Associated with Athletic Participation:

The very nature of athletic competition provides the potential risk of injury. Even with protective equipment, proper supervision, and sound instruction, injuries can occur. All athletes and parents need to be aware of the potential hazards that exist within each respective sport. Each coach/athletic trainer will always do whatever we can to ensure that our athletes have a safe and healthy athletic experience.

Mandated Forms: The following forms must be filled out and returned to the designated coach prior to any participation in the respective sport. Forms are kept on file in the Athletic Director's office for the entire year.

- Copy of birth certificate
- LHSAA Substance Abuse/Misuse Contract and Consent Form
- LHSAA Medical History Evaluation form (Physical)
- LHSAA Athletic Participation/Parental Permission

Forms required by the LHSAA and STM are available on our website at www.stmcougars.net, go to "Athletics.", "Athletic Director's Message". Links for LHSAA Requirements and Forms available under Athletic Director's Message.

Sport Tryouts:

1. All Pre-tryout Checklist Eligibility items must be completed.
2. All athletes should be given a fair and equitable tryout evaluation.
3. Coaches should utilize an evaluation tool in order to keep track of strengths and weaknesses of those trying out for their sport.
4. Efforts evaluated over the tryout period are the most important factors used to determine team selection. Out of season workouts, camps, or other sport participation are not considered as criteria for selecting team rosters.
5. Not everyone who tries out for a team will make it through to the final selection process. Coaches are responsible for selecting final team rosters and determining playing time during the season.

Expectations of Rostered Players:

All athletes selected as final rostered players must agree to the following:

1. As a rostered student athlete, you agree to comply with all school and team rules and policies.
2. As a rostered student-athlete, you agree to maintain academic and disciplinary eligibility throughout the season.

Practice Sessions and Games:

Practice sessions may be closed to spectators at the discretion of the coaches. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom where instruction takes place. In practice, interference and interruption to an athlete's concentration and focus on practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic classroom. Coaching should not be compromised.

Practice Sessions:

1. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of coaches and or the availability of facilities.
2. Will not be held when school is dismissed early or closed due to inclement weather.
3. May be held in the evening, on weekends, and over holiday break periods.
4. Attendance is mandatory. Tardiness will not be tolerated.
5. Practices are held on Sundays only through approval of the principal.
6. Athletes may not be penalized for missed practice time in order to gain academic help or to make up missed tests or quizzes.

Eligibility: Academic or Disciplinary

STM student athletes know education first and foremost. Athletic participation is a privilege and granted only to those who are deserving of this opportunity. Problems with grades and or behavior are justifiable reasons for Academic or Disciplinary Ineligibility.

Scholastic Requirements:

To be eligible in Fall 2023 – must have passed 6 subjects for the 2022-23 school year AND have “C” average (1.5 or higher).

To be eligible for Spring 2024 – pass 6 subjects from the first semester of 2023.

Please refer to the STM Student Handbook for specific interpretations of all Academic and Disciplinary Eligibility procedures and regulations.

Athletic Eligibility

*A student is eligible to participate on the VARSITY level as an incoming **freshman** providing he/she 1) currently lives in the Comeaux zone or 2) attended an eight grade CATHOLIC school in the Diocese of Lafayette, *regardless of where he/she lives.*

*An **incoming freshman** who does not live in the Comeaux zone or did not attend an eighth-grade CATHOLIC school in the Diocese of Lafayette is ineligible for Varsity competition his/her freshman year BUT is eligible for Sub-Varsity (Fr. & J.V)

*There are certain criteria established by the LHSAA for an athlete who transfers from another school. Contact the Athletic Director with questions regarding eligibility.

An INELIGIBLE student/athlete is allowed to practice and be part of the team. He/She just cannot dress out and participate in an athletic contest for one calendar year.

Uniforms and Equipment:

At the beginning of each season, all necessary uniforms and equipment are distributed. Each student-athlete is responsible for the care and return of all issued goods at the end of the season. The head coach and/or designee will determine the collection times. Failure to return uniforms or equipment will result in mid-term and/or final exams being withheld and/or a financial obligation for replacement of the outstanding items!

Changing Teams:

In fairness to coaches and team members, an athlete can leave one team and join another but only after the following conditions has been satisfied:

- 1 Any player cut from a team during tryouts may immediately tryout for another team if that team has already completed its scheduled tryouts.
2. Any player quitting a team is not allowed to join another team until the team in which he/she quit season is over.
3. Any player dismissed from a team must have the original coach's and the Athletic Director's approval before joining another team.

LHSAA athletes participating on an in-season team cannot participate with another out of season team in the same sport!

Transportation:

Athletes must travel to athletic contests as a team on the bus provided. Parents may be asked at time to transport athletes due to conflicts with STM buses and/or driver availability. Once a game is over, athletes are expected to return to school as a team on the bus provided. Proper behavior is expected of all athletes when on bus trips.

The only exception to this rule, with approval of the head coach, is if a parent wishes to take his/her own child home, the parent is required to approach the coach after the contest requesting to take his/her child. Athletes may drive to a game within the city of Lafayette with the coach's permission.

Off Site Practices and Games:

In some sports such as swimming, golf, tennis, and bowling, off campus facilities are used. Transportation is an issue that must be organized and planned. STM does not provide daily transportation for these activities. Parental assistance, coaches as drivers, or individual driving may be necessary. Parental permission is essential in response to any transportation issue outside of normal team transport – i.e., buses.

Early Dismissal:

For many athletic events, students must be dismissed from school before normal dismissal time. Early dismissal from classes for athletic reasons does not release student athletes from class work responsibilities. Each athlete must make arrangements in advance with the teacher to take missed quizzes or tests, or to hand in assignments.

Dress for Away Athletic Events:

Because our student athletes are ambassadors of our school, each time they leave campus, it is expected that their appearance be appropriate.

Injuries:

Certified Athletic Trainers are provided and on site for all home Varsity athletic events. Any time an athlete becomes injured during practice or in a game setting, the head coach should be made aware. The athletic trainer should be advised of the injury by the coach. The trainer will recommend a prescribed course of action to be taken. A visit to a doctor will yield a determined return-to-play date. No athlete will be allowed to participate until that date is reached and a note of clearance is issued by the attending physician and received by the athletic trainer.

Athletic Awards:

Each sport is responsible for scheduling, planning, and organizing a banquet to honor its athletes and supporters. Varsity letters, sub-varsity certificates, and awards will be given at the banquet after completion of each sport season.

Patches:

The Athletic Department will purchase a team patch for each athlete for the highest level of achievement accomplished. Individual patches for honors received are to be ordered and purchased by the individual and can be purchased from Jostens in Lafayette. Contact debbie.green@jostens.com

Lettering Policy:

Each sport establishes its own guidelines for lettering. Once an athlete letters, he/she may then purchase their lettermen's jacket/sweater at their expense.

Contact the Athletic Director's office for vendors.

Associated Items of Information

Steroids:

The STM Athletic Department does not condone the use of prohibited substances such as steroids, nor support the use of other-over-the counter supplements which contain artificial or naturally occurring substances that increase heart rate, blood pressure, or promote unhealthy muscle tissue growth. Use of any of these products, which may be detrimental to one's health, is a violation of the Athlete's Pledge.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco:

School rules are very specific as to the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products. The use, possession, or distribution of any of these substances is forbidden. Any athlete who violates this policy is subject to possible dismissal from the team.

Theft:

Stealing from teammates, opponents, or others will not be tolerated. Any athlete involved in a theft will be dealt with in accordance to school policy. Personal items should not be left unattended or unsecure in locker rooms or hallways. If necessary, take personal items to practice with you.

Fundraising:

Only school sanctioned fundraisers are permitted and must be approved by the Development Office, the Athletic Director and the Principal. All other inquiries regarding fundraising must be directed to the Development Office.

Athletic Team Trips:

Just as the classroom is designed to provide an educational experience, the realm of sports can also be very educational. At times, athletic opportunities provide for teams to take overnight and extended team trips. The experience of travel and the opportunity to compete makes these events valuable additions to the overall high school experience. Student athletes are representatives of STM and as such carry a great deal of responsibility when teams travel. Best behavior is mandatory. All school rules apply when teams travel and violation of school and team rules carry disciplinary consequences. Athletes should be sure to familiarize themselves with the STM Student Handbook regarding rules and consequences.

Service Projects:

It is my belief as Catholics and part of our mission that every athlete engages and experiences the gift of giving back to the community. It is required that every team perform at least one service project each year sacrificing themselves and their time as good stewards and “God’s Servant First”.

State Guidelines and Information

Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA)

All applicable league rules, policies and regulations can be accessed by visiting the following website www.lhsaa.org

LHSAA Items Pertaining to Tuition Assistance & Eligibility

2.4.2 School administered financial assistance provided by a school must be administered by the school; meaning that the school, through an established process that conforms to this policy, makes the final determination of the student who is to receive the assistance and the amount of assistance to be given. No student-athlete may accept financial assistance from any other person, business or organization unless it is received from one upon whom the student-athlete is naturally or legally dependent.

2.4.3 Criteria for Providing School-based Financial Assistance: Financial assistance is based entirely on financial need. The amount of financial assistance student is determined to qualify must meet the same guidelines of financial assistance which is provided to each and every student who qualifies for financial assistance. Financial assistance must be totally unrelated to a student’s athletic interest, potential or performance. Financial assistance based even partially on a student’s athletic interest, potential or performance shall be prohibited.

2.4.4 Work-Study Programs: A work-study program in which students receive financial assistance from a school in exchange for labor performed by the student for the school may be operated as follows:

- A. The school must limit participation in the work-study program to those students who have been independently determined to have a need for financial assistance.
- B. The school must maintain a complete written description of the work-study program and the process for determining the students who are chosen for participation.

C. The school must maintain detailed records regarding each student who participates in the work-study program. These records must include a description of the job(s) performed by the student, a documentation of the hours worked by the student, and the amount of financial assistance given the student in exchange for his/her labor.

4. Athletic department staff members and other representatives of the school's athletic interests cannot supervise only student-athletes in work-study programs.

2.4.5 Records Relating to Financial Assistance: The school must keep detailed records of school-based financial assistance provided to each student. This includes the report of the student's financial need as determined by the school's financial aid guidelines. The school must make all records available to the Commissioner or his/her designee for inspection upon request. Failure to provide records upon request shall render the student(s) ineligible for participation in any athletic contests until the records are made available.

2.4.6 Contact Initiated by Prospective Student: When a school employee, athletic department staff member, or representative of a school's athletic interests is contacted by a student who does not attend that school and/or any other member of his/her family, about the school's interscholastic athletic program or attending the school, the school employee, athletic department staff member or representative of the school's athletic interests must immediately refer the student and/or his/her family member to the appropriate school personnel who have the responsibility of registering and admitting prospective students. No school employee, an athletic department staff member, nor representative of the school's athletic interests may suggest to or promise a prospective student or any member of his/her family that any part of the student's costs of attending the school may be reduced,

It is my hope that each athlete and parent have a wholesome experience at STM and leave with the expectation to live each day with our mission in mind – “individuals of character, seekers of truth, and God's servant first”.

Please contact me if have any questions about the athletic department.

Regards,

Kim P. Broussard

STM Athletic Director

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