**SMMAA Code of Conduct for Coaches, Players and Spectators**

The objective of the Saint Mary Magdalen Athletic Association is to assist in the Christian development of children, youth, and adults of the parish and surrounding community through the sponsorship of athletic activities. In accordance with the Catholic Youth Ministry (CYM) of the Diocese of Wilmington, the SMMAA operates under the guidelines of that office.

The Office for Catholic Youth Ministry’s Athletic Program is an important component of the comprehensive approach to youth ministry in the Diocese of Wilmington. The purpose of these programs is to promote Christian attitudes while encouraging healthy physical activity. These activities should foster:

1. Cooperation
2. Respect
3. Sportsmanship
4. Responsibility
5. Leadership
6. Maturity
7. Competitiveness
8. Fairness
9. Courtesy
10. Self Control

**Code of Conduct for Coaches, Players and Spectators**

**Coach**

All persons serving in a role as a head coach or an assistant coach will have expectations to fulfill throughout the season.

**Head Coaches are expected to:**

* Build relationships with the players, teaching the sport to the best of their ability
* Foster environment conducive to learning, growing and developing positive attitudes
* Encourage positive sportsmanship from all players, coaches and spectators
* Act as a positive role model for all players, assistant coaches, and spectators
* Treat officials, players, coaches and spectators with respect
* Develop a positive sense of Church community into the program, through prayer or Mass, etc.

**Assistant Coaches are expected to:**

Assist the head coach with tasks listed above

* Cover for the head coach in times of absence
* Serve in other functions (ex. Scorekeeper/Clock Operator) during athletic contests (it is important to note that when serving in this capacity, they should not also serve as a coach unless it is half time where there is plenty of time to recover back to their primary role for that contest)

**Assistant Coaches are expected not to:**

* Speak to or argue with any official
* Circumvent the head coach during practices/games

No head coach or assistant coach should ever approach spectators, other team members or other athletes during an athletic contest unless asked to do so by the officials of that contest.

**Unsportsmanlike conduct can include (but is not limited to):**

* Arguing or berating any official
* Berating any player
* Negative banter between coaches before, during or after a game
* Causing disruption during a post-game handshake line
* Encouraging or not preventing poor sportsmanship behavior from own team

\*CYM will monitor conduct before, during and after all athletic contests, including events that occur in public places (such as parking lots, restaurants, etc.).

Coaches should be cognizant of what they post on social media and ensure it is not offensive, inappropriate or derogatory in any way towards players, parents, officials or spectators from all teams.

Any violations of these guidelines could result in sanctions implemented against the coach, team or entire parish/school athletic program. Sanctions could include warnings or suspensions. Violations could also result in a coach(es) or entire teams being ruled ineligible for post season/tournament play or even expulsion from the league.

Specifically:

* Any coach who verbally or physically mistreats an official, another coach, any player or any spectator or behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner at any time during the season (regardless of whether an ejection, technical foul or other cautionary violations are issued) may be suspended from coaching in CYM Sports.
* Any coach who is ejected from any athletic contest will serve an automatic suspension (head coaches – 1 game; assistant coaches – 2 games) and will be subject to further, more severe discipline as deemed necessary by the CYM Director of Youth Sports.
* During the suspension period the coach is permitted to attend practices unless the sanctions specifically restrict this.
* No coach on suspension is permitted to be in the gym or at the field/track during an athletic contest while serving the suspension. If they are the primary means of transportation for their child they must remain in their vehicle until they leave the facility grounds.
* Parishes/Schools may impose additional penalties (but they cannot be less severe)

*Related Policies:*

It is the responsibility of all coaches to ensure that the "For the Sake of God's Children" policies for the Diocese of Wilmington are followed at all practices, games and team activities. 2112

If the actions or attitude of a coach are found to be detrimental to the athletes or the CYM program, that coach will be subject to review and discipline. Disciplinary action can include, but is not limited to, probation, suspension or dismissal, depending upon the circumstances. 2113

Upon completion of a period of suspension lasting more than 5 athletic contests, a coach must request reinstatement in writing to the CYM Athletic Advisory Committee. The letter must indicate that the suspended coach has reviewed and will support the Statement of Purpose and Philosophy of CYM Athletics. The letter must also be reviewed and approved by the pastor of the parish or principal of the regional/consolidated/private school where the coach will be participating.

**Players**

All athletes are expected to conduct themselves with positive sportsmanship and Christian attitudes at games, during practices and in their daily activities. Athletes are expected to:

* Commit to their CYM team – this means that they are expected to attend all practices and games of the CYM team over that of any other athletic teams when conflicts arise. This agreement is also covered in the Parental Consent & Release Form on the Online Registration.
* Actively participate in all tryouts, practices and athletic contests. Sometimes this means cheering on or encouraging their teammates.
* Work hard and give their best effort at all practices and athletic contests.
* Conduct themselves with positive sportsmanship in mind at all times during an athletic contest

**Improper or unsportsmanlike conduct can include (but is not limited to):**

* Using inappropriate or offensive language
* Challenging others to a fight
* Disrupting the post-game handshake line in a negative manner
* Negatively speaking about/taunting an opponent
* Arguing with or berating any game official
* While an active player in the athletic contest (whether playing or on the bench) causing an intentional disruption to an opposing player with the goal of missed shot, failed attempt, etc.

The expected behavior for athletes applies to all athletes before, during or after any athletic event and includes incidents in parking lots, restaurants, etc.

Athletes should be careful on social media to not post, follow or like anything that could be considered offensive, inappropriate or derogatory towards any other player, teammate, coach, official or spectator regardless of the team or parish.

All unsportsmanlike fouls (technical in basketball, yellow/red card in soccer, penalty flag in football, etc) are to be reported by the head coach of the team to the CYM Director of Youth Sports within 24 hours of the incident.

Three unsportsmanlike fouls during a single program athletic season will result in a minimum one-game suspension for the athlete. Other incidents of improper conduct by athletes before, during and/or after a CYM athletic contest may result in disciplinary action taken by the CYM Office. Disciplinary action can range from probation, suspension or dismissal depending upon the circumstances.

If any athlete is ejected from ANY parish/school or CYM athletic contest, whether sponsored by CYM or not for any unsportsmanlike activity, the athlete will be suspended for a minimum of the next athletic contest played by that team (whether a regular season game, tournament game or playoff game). If the team does not play any additional games that season, the athlete would be required to miss the next athlete contest he or she participates in during the next sports season (regardless of the sport). The CYM Office reserves the right to increase the disciplinary action if deemed appropriate.

During the suspension period the athlete is not permitted to attend the athletic contest, including sitting in the spectator area. An athlete’s attendance at any athletic event while suspended will result in a forfeit by the team, or if the team lost, having its playoff win count reduced by one.

Any violation of the social media rules or the guidelines provided in the section on unsportsmanlike actions may result in disciplinary action taken by the CYM Director of Youth Sports regardless of whether an unsportsmanlike foul was issued by an official.

**Spectators**

The purpose of CYM athletic programs is to promote Christian attitudes while encouraging healthy physical activity by the youth of the Diocese.

Parents and spectators have a strong influence on the behavior and attitudes of our youth athletes and those adults are held to a high standard of conduct. Spectators must remember that their behavior influences not only their children’s behavior, but also a coach’s willingness to volunteer, a referee’s willingness to officiate and a parish’s desire to host teams.

**Spectators are expected to:**

* Positively cheer for their child and/or team
* Encourage their team members in a positive manner
* Present positive sportsmanship towards all teams, coaches, officials and other spectators

**Spectators are not expected to:**

* Argue, berate or criticize officials
* Approach any coach (or the team bench area) within 24 hours of a practice or athletic contest
* Negatively discuss any athlete, coach, or official at any athletic venue
* Engage in any negative argument, discussion or shouting matches within anyone in a parking lot, field, bathroom, restaurant or other location
* Participate in or encourage unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Unsportsmanlike conduct can include (but is not limited to):**

* Objecting to decisions of game officials
* Disrespectfully addressing a coach, official or other spectator
* Challenging others to a fight
* Negatively speaking to or about any athlete
* Using inappropriate language/gestures
* Interrupting an athletic contest by going onto the floor or field/track or approaching a game official or coach

\*CYM will monitor conduct before, during and after all athletic contests, including events that occur in public places (such as parking lots, restaurants, etc.)

Incidents of poor sportsmanship or unruly conduct will not be tolerated. Violations of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action taken by the CYM Office that could include probation/warnings, temporary or permanent suspensions or even dismissal of the team from the league.

If any spectator is ejected from any parish or CYM athletic contest, whether sponsored by CYM or not, that spectator is banned from (at a minimum) the next two (2) athletic contests played by that team, or if the team does not play in two more contests, then the next two contests played by the athlete with whom the spectator is associated, regardless of the sport. The CYM Director of Youth Sports reserves the right to increase the punishment depending upon the situation.

Athletic Associations are encouraged to share these spectator conduct policies with all families and should ask guardians to be sure they share with other family members and friends that may be in attendance at any athletic contest.

***Related Policies:***

Spectators may not file complaints with CYM concerning game officials, coaches, players, or other spectators. Only the head coach of a team may file a complaint. If a spectator has a complaint, he or she must wait 24 hours after the game, then bring the complaint to the head coach and/or the parish/school AAP/AD. The head coach and AAP/AD will review the matter and decide how to proceed, including whether to bring the complaint to CYM.

Spectators should remember that they represent their parish/school just as much as team members or coaches. Parents, guardians, other family members and friends must be models of sportsmanship for all of our athletes. Adults are expected to demonstrate positive support for all players of both teams and treat all coaches, officials, and other spectators with respect at practices or contests.

If a spectator attends an athletic contest when restricted from doing so, that spectator's team will forfeit the contest (or, if the team lost, will have its playoff win count reduced by one). A second occurrence will result in the team's exclusion from playoffs, or in the case of a non-playoff team, termination of the team's season.

Coaches and/or athletic associations are responsible for ensuring a spectator ban is enforced, and are expected to assist and cooperate with a referee, sports coordinator or Advisory Committee member who attends the game and acts to enforce a spectator ban. 2124

Repeated or continuous inappropriate spectator conduct may result in sanctions against the team or athletic association, including forfeits, exclusion from playoffs, or dismissal from the league. 2126