

## **2025-2026 CHURCH LEAGUE ATHLETIC POLICY**

### **ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE**

The Church League's primary focus is to foster the academic and religious development of the students at all times. It provides an opportunity for all interested students to learn good sportsmanship and teamwork as well as improve in the basic skills of the sport. The athletic department of each school will strive to encourage the active participation and individual efforts of each student, regardless of skill level. As a result of participating in the sport, the student/athlete should develop a respect for authority (coaches, officials, parents) and a respect for others (teammates, opposing teams).

### **ARTICLE 2: PROGRAMS**

SECTION 1: The Church League sports are cheerleading, volleyball, basketball, track, cross country and quiz bowl. The schools may participate in golf through The First Tee of Central Arkansas. Fourth grade students may participate in flag football as part of the Private School League. Fifth and Sixth grade students may participate in a combined football team that will participate in the Private School League.

SECTION 2: The sports programs are open to any child who wishes to participate as long as he/she is attending an approved member school or church (See Section 5) and meets the academic and conduct requirements.

Exemptions may be made after consultation with the administration and the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools.

SECTION 3: Schools are encouraged to have a sign posted near the entrance of the gym reminding all who enter to show good sportsmanship. Teams will pray together prior to each game/match. The home team is responsible for leading the prayer.

SECTION 4: No games are to be scheduled to start after 8:00 P.M. on school nights. School nights are defined as Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

SECTION 5: The Church League participants are: Christ the King -- Little Rock, Our Lady of the Holy Souls -- Little Rock, St. Theresa -- Little Rock, Christ Little Rock -- Little Rock, Immaculate Conception -- North Little Rock, Immaculate Heart of Mary -- North Little Rock, North Little Rock Catholic

Academy -- North Little Rock, Our Lady of Fatima -- Benton, St. John -- Hot Springs, The Anthony School -- Little Rock, Abundant Life – North Little Rock, Homeschool Flames, and Baptist Prep – Little Rock.

SECTION 6: Tryouts will not be conducted.

SECTION 7: Multiple grade level teams are to be divided equally by skill level. This should be done at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade levels and more often if needed at the discretion of the administration and athletic director.

SECTION 8: The Office of Catholic Schools must give approval before a student is allowed to “play down” for a lower grade level team.

SECTION 9: Team rosters for each sport must be turned into the Office of Catholic Schools before the beginning of that season. A waiver must be signed by the administrator stating that a physical and Athletic Parent Permission Form is on file at the school for each student. The physical must be dated within 12 – 15 months of the student’s beginning participation.

### **ARTICLE 3: ADMINISTRATION**

SECTION 1: **Athletic Program** The athletic program is under the direct supervision of the administration and overseen by the Superintendent of the Catholic Schools.

- A. Athletic fees paid to the Church League are to be sent to the Catholic Schools Office prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- B. The assessed fee to participate in the Church League will be determined at the first meeting of the year.

Payments from the Church League:

Coordinator for league scheduling, keeping the standings, director of the officials, cross Country and track coordinators/timers

Volleyball referees are paid by the school hosting the games at the rate of  
\$30.00 per match

Basketball referees are paid by the school hosting the game(s) at the rate of  
\$35.00 per game 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>; \$40 per game 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and Jr. High girls.

SECTION 2: **Athletic Board** The Church League Athletic Board will consist of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and the administrator and athletic director from each school. When a vote needs to be taken, each participating administrator will be granted one vote. The director of the officials is an ex-officio member.

SECTION 3: **Athletic Director** The administration will choose an athletic director for his/her school. The athletic director is responsible for submitting all schedules to the administration. The administration and the athletic director are to attend the Church League Athletic Board meetings.

SECTION 4: **Coaches** should be familiar and follow the Church League Athletic Policy. As a coach they should be mindful of the physical and emotional safety of the students and not place any student in a position where serious injury may occur. Coaches should be aware that a student's performance may be limited by their present physical and emotional developmental stage. Each student who is a member of the team should receive ample opportunity for playing in games on a regular basis. Persons who abuse these guidelines will lose the privilege of coaching in the Church League.

A. All coaches and assistant coaches in Catholic schools must have completed the Safe Environment Training mandated by the Diocese of Little Rock and have a background check completed by the Diocese of Little Rock before they will be allowed to coach.

B. Coaches must be at least 18 years old. Coaches under 21 years of age must have an adult 21 years or older to supervise. This supervising coach must be listed on the roster of coaches. There shall always be at least 2 adults at all games and practices.

SECTION 5: **Officials** The director of officials is hired by the league board. It is the responsibility of the director of officials to conduct a mandatory meeting with the officials and coaches to go over rules and regulations of the Church League. As officials are part of the team that administers games, we rely on them to keep control of each contest. They should be treated with respect by coaches, players, and fans. Any concerns regarding the officials should be directed first to the athletic director of the school, and the athletic director must share the concern with the administration and director of officials. The officials have the authority to eject coaches, players, and fans for violations of conduct.

A. Each school is to have trained and qualified scorekeepers. No elementary students may be scorekeepers.

- B. The scorebook is the official record of all athletic events. The coach is to sign the book prior to the game to check the players' numbers. The referees and the scorekeeper are to sign the book after the game is over. The official score books are to be kept at the schools.

SECTION 6: **Parents** It is very important that parents function as role models for their children. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend games in which their children are participating, as an expression of parental concern for their child's effort. Parents' behavior at games shall exemplify the behavior expected of the child and must reflect positively on the Church League. Belligerent or demeaning comments or actions toward game officials, coaches, players, or other fans will result in ejection from the site. If a parent is ejected from a game, the parent is required to leave the facility. If the parent refuses to leave, the referees will stop the game until the parent exits the facilities. If the parent should refuse to leave, the police may be called. (C4)

SECTION 7: **Students** are expected to show the same degree of respect and obedience to coaches as is expected of them in their relationship to classroom teachers. During any sanctioned athletic activity, the students (players and fans), coaches, and parents are representatives of the Church League. Students shall not engage in any activity or exhibit any behavior that detracts from the goals or image of the Church League. Such behavior could result in ejection from the site.

- A. Rules for player participation will apply for both regular season and tournament play.  
No player who has reached age 12 by September 1<sup>st</sup> may play on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade team.  
No player who has reached age 13 by September 1<sup>st</sup> may play on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team.  
No player who has reached age 14 by September 1<sup>st</sup> may play on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team.  
No player who has reached age 15 by September 1<sup>st</sup> may play on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team.
- B. If a student is academically ineligible, he/she may practice at the discretion of the administration.
- C. If a student is absent from school due to illness or leaves early because of illness or unexcused absence he/she may not play in the game scheduled for that evening. Students must arrive at school by 10:00 a.m. to participate in the game for that day unless there is an excused absence.
- D. If a student is ineligible to play on the date of the game (academic or conduct), he/she may NOT dress out or play in that game. (C1)
- E. No player can move over to another team of the same age group within the school. (C1)

F. No player may begin practice or continue to participate without a physical on file at the school that is less than 15 months old. All students must have on file a signed copy of The Diocesan Parental Permission form that includes proof of health insurance.

G. **Team Apparel**

1. Headbands and sweat bands must be white or similar in color to the jersey. Only one item is permitted on the head and the wrist. Sweatbands must be worn below the elbow and may be a maximum of 4 inches wide. Rubber or elastic bands may be used to control hair. All other head decorations are prohibited.
2. If a player wears a t-shirt under his/her jersey it must be the same color as the dominate color of the team jersey. If a team has two different colors of jerseys (light and dark) or reversible jerseys when playing at home, they will wear white (light) and dark when playing away.
3. Jewelry is prohibited. A medical alert medal and/or an insulin pump may be worn but must be taped to the athlete. If a player is wearing either of these the coach is to let the officials know before the game begins.

H. **Player Injury**

1. If a player is bleeding, has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on his/her uniform he/she shall be directed to leave the game until the situation is corrected.
2. If a player has an injury requiring a doctor's attention, he/she must have a doctor's permission before they may practice or play again.

I. **Academic and Conduct Eligibility** Quarter report card grades will be used to place a student on academic and conduct probation. Interim grades will be used for possible reinstatement. Interim conduct grades will be used to place a student on probation with the report card grade used for possible reinstatement.

Changes for the roster dates will follow the official Catholic school calendar. Spring (Fourth) quarter academic or conduct grades will not affect fall sports eligibility.

1. Students participating in the Church League activities must maintain an average of 70% in the following subjects, with no individual grade below 60%: Religion, Reading/Literature, Spelling, Science, Math, Language, Social Studies, Art, and any other classes the school offers. Academic marking codes are as follows:

**A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70 - 79%, D 60 - 69%, F = below 60%.**

2. Students participating in extracurricular activities must have an 80% (B) or better in conduct. Conduct marking codes are as follows **A= 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79 D = 60-69%, F = below 60%.**

3. Learning Disabilities: A diagnosed learning disability or handicapping condition is a condition that has been evaluated by a psychologist and/or psychological examiner and determined as severe enough to prevent a child from learning through traditional classroom instruction. If a student has been diagnosed with a learning disability the school administration may make an exception using the following guidelines to allow the student to participate in the church league.

- a. Copies of test results and suggestions for educational modifications and/or MAP (modified academic plan) must be filed in the school office.
- b. A modified grading scale may be used in the student's area(s) of disability. If there are areas of academics which are not affected by the particular diagnosed learning disability or handicapping condition, the academic eligibility standards for non-disabled students will apply.
- c. The administration, classroom teacher(s), parents/guardians, and the student should be aware of the guidelines established in the modifications and/or MAP prior to its enactment.

Students that do not attend the school, but are members of the church, must submit report cards and/or interim reports as needed.

## ARTICLE 4: TEAM/GAME RULES

### FAILURE TO OBSERVE ELIGIBILITY RULES WILL RESULT IN FORFEIT OF GAME(S) IN WHICH THE RULE(S) WERE VIOLATED.

- A. Games cannot be postponed for illness if a team has enough eligible players to start the game.
- B. School closures for inclement weather, sickness, etc. will automatically postpone games and practices. A decision regarding playing/postponing games on Saturday due to inclement weather, sickness, etc. will be made by the superintendent on the Friday evening prior to the Saturday games. The decision will be disseminated to administrations and athletic directors at that time.
- C. Games will only be rescheduled for church and school activities that were not scheduled prior to the season.
- D. Pep rallies are limited to a maximum of four for the school year.
- E. If a coach enters his/her team in another league the team may not wear their school uniform or play under the school's name. All Church League games must be played as scheduled. The Church League games come first. (C3-for that team)
- F. Teams are to be at the game site, dressed and ready to play 15 minutes prior to their scheduled game time.
- G. Girls cannot play on boys' teams, and boys cannot play on girls' teams.
- H. Any school whose team forfeits a game will be responsible for paying the officials' fees. They will reimburse the home school or the Church League.
- I. No Church League team shall participate in more than 6 tournaments in one school year. This includes all preseason and postseason tournaments. (C2)

## ARTICLE 5: PLAYING RULES BY SPORT

### SECTION 1: **Basketball – Boys Teams and Girls Teams**

- A. All National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules and penalties will apply provided there is not a league rule that supersedes it. (C1)
- B. The host gym will provide the game ball and two (2) warm up balls for each team. Only those balls will be used during warm-up periods. No other balls shall be brought into the gyms. (C1)
- C. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys and all girls' teams will use the 28.5-inch ball.

- D. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys/girls' divisions will play five (5) minute quarters.
- E. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys/girls' divisions will play six (6) minute quarters.
- F. All overtime periods will be 2 minutes in length.
- G. All post-season tournaments will be single elimination.
- H. All grades must play every participant a minimum of a quarter each game. In order to fulfill the quarter obligation, when entering a game for the first time, each player will start a quarter and play that entire quarter except for medical reasons, fouling out, or disciplinary actions. (C1)
- I. If a player is injured and must come out in his/her first quarter of play he/she may not re-enter that quarter unless it is on the next stoppage of the clock. If they do not re-enter immediately, they must still fulfill their quarter requirement the next time they enter.
- J. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades boys/girls' divisions may press the second half of the game. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys/girls' divisions may press at any time.
- K. If there is a 20-point advantage in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter the clock will run continuously.
- L. There can only be 2 non-players (coaches) sitting on the bench. Ineligible players can sit on the bench with the team.
- M. Playing down is not allowed unless approved by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.
- N. If needed a team may play up players from the grade below to have a total of 8 players for a single grade team. The quarter rule for playing will apply. The athlete may only play up for one team each season. The athlete playing up may not play more than any member of the team.
- O. Schools which field more than one (1) grade level team must have a minimum of 6 grade level players on the roster before being allowed to play up additional players.
- P. Schools that need 4<sup>th</sup> graders to make a 5<sup>th</sup> grade team, girls and/or boys, must offer all 4<sup>th</sup> graders of that gender the opportunity to play.
- Q. A player is allowed to play a maximum of two (2) games per night.
- R. If any team fails to show for a scheduled game, by game time, the game is a forfeit. If both teams fail to show, both teams will receive losses. Any school whose team forfeits a basketball game will be responsible for paying the referees fees (they will reimburse the home gym).
- S. First and second place trophies will be awarded for league play and a traveling trophy will be awarded for post season tournament play.
- T. If a team is ahead by 15 points, that team will not press and will allow the opposing team to get across half court.

- U. The 7/8 grade girls will have combined teams. In the event there is more than one girl's team for one school, the teams must be divided to have equal skill ability on each team.
- V. The free throw line for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls will be twelve feet. Rebounders will be moved down to the first block in this case.
- W. Teams will shoot two free throws for common fouls when in the "bonus." A bonus is reached when a team commits five fouls in each quarter. Team fouls will reset each quarter.
- X. **7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade** When a ball is in the team's control on the offensive side of the court and the defensive team commits a violation or the ball becomes dead, the throw-in by the offensive team will be at one of four designated spots determined by where the violation took place. The designated spots are either the nearest 28-foot mark along the sideline or the nearest spot three feet outside the lane line on the end line.
- Y. Each team is granted two 60 second time outs and two 30 second time outs.
- Z. Overtime will be 2 minutes.

SECTION 2: **Volleyball – Girl's Only Sport**

- A. All play and penalties will be governed by the NFHS rules provided that there is not a league rule that supersedes it.
- B. Volleyball games will be scheduled at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 during the week. Some games may begin at 5:00 if needed. Volleyball games can be played two weeknights when necessary.
- C. The service area will extend 5 feet into the court for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade division.
- D. Rally scoring will be used at all grade levels. A match will consist of winning the best 2 out of 3 games. The first 2 games will be played to 25 points. The third game to 15 points. A team must win a game by 2 points.
- E. All players must wear kneepads. Spandex shorts may not be worn as the uniform short/bottoms.
- F. Every player must play in each match. This means they must play in the first or second game of the match. (C1)
- G. A grade level team may play up players from the grade below to have no more than 8 players.
- H. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams will use the lightweight volleyball.
- I. There can only be 2 non-players (coaches) sitting on the bench. Ineligible players can sit

on the bench with the team.

- J. The host gym will provide the game ball and warm up balls for each team. Only those balls will be used during warm-up periods. No other balls shall be brought into the gyms. (C1)

#### SECTION 4: **Cheerleading**

Any elementary or secondary school with a cheerleading program must have a qualified coach to supervise.

If the cheerleading program does any type of acrobatics, pyramids, or tumbling skills the elementary school must follow the Novice rules and regulations from the National Cheerleading Association. The following guidelines are to be used for these elementary school cheering squads.

##### **General Guidelines**

- Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach. To be a qualified advisor or coach one should receive the Spirit Safety Certification from the AACCA online at <http://www.nfhslearn.com/Courses.aspx>.
- All practice sessions must be supervised by the qualified advisor or coach and held at a location suitable for the activities of cheerleading (i.e. use of appropriate mats, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.)
- Advisors/coaches should recognize a squad's particular ability level and should limit the squad's activities accordingly.
- All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
- Stretching exercises must be done prior to all stunts.
- Training in proper spotting techniques is mandatory for all squads
- All jewelry is prohibited during participation.

##### **Partner Stunts, Pyramids and Tosses**

- All pyramids and partner stunts are limited to two persons high
- No inverted position stunts
- No suspended splits are allowed
- Only shoulder height stunts on partner stunting with a spotter
- Released transition stunts must be braced on at least one side
- Cradles are from shoulder height only

- No fully extended stunts

### **Tumbling**

- No dive rolls
- No summersaulting in the air (back or front tucks)
- Standing back and front handsprings allowed
- Round off back handsprings allowed

Cheerleaders will stand between the end zone and 30-yard line.

### **SECTION 5: Quiz Bowl**

The Arkansas Quiz Bowl Rules of Competition will be followed.

### **SECTION 6: Cross Country and Track – Boys Teams and Girls Teams**

- A. All National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules and penalties will apply provided there is not a league rule that supersedes it. (C1)

**Church League Track & Field/Cross Country Rules for 2024-2025 will be emailed to each participant at the beginning of the season.**

## **ARTICLE 6: CONSEQUENCES FOR INFRACTIONS OF RULES**

SECTION 1: Consequence #1 (C1) - Forfeit of game or games that the rule violated.

SECTION 2: Consequence #2 (C2) – The team that violated the rule will continue playing games but will not be eligible for any pre/post season tournaments.

SECTION 3: Consequence #3 (C3) - The member of the team that violated the rule will be dismissed from the league and put on one year probation. That is, not play any games for one year.

SECTION 4: Consequence #4 (C4) - If a player, coach, or fan is ejected from a game for a violation he/she cannot attend that team's next church league game. This must be reported to the administration and the administration will enforce. If the ejected coach, player, or fan is from the visiting team it is the home team administration's responsibility to contact the visiting team's administration to make sure the rule is enforced. If there is a second offense, they will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the season. If anyone puts hands on an official, in a hostile manner, this person will be banned from athletic events for one calendar year.

### **ARTICLE 7: PROTEST**

A protest will be considered for any league game where there was an alleged misapplication of a playing rule. Within two (2) business days, the coach must submit in writing to his/her athletic director, the date, time, place, opponent, name of the official, the rule under which the protest is made, and the conditions and essential facts involved in the protest. The athletic director will present this to his/her administration. If the administration deems the protest to be valid, the administration will notify the administration of the school on which the protest was filed. The protest signed by the administration and the athletic director and a fee of \$25.00 must be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools within 4 business days of the game in question. A non-partisan committee appointed by the superintendent will review the protest and a decision will be communicated to both administrations within five business days of receiving the protest.

### **ARTICLE 8: INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS**

If coaches pick and choose players to play in an invitational tournament the players shall not wear the school uniforms. Even though invitational tournaments are not Church League sponsored and the Church League rules do not apply, coaches are expected to conduct themselves with the same decorum as required in the church league and are encouraged to follow playing time rules.

There shall be no videotaping of opposing teams for the purpose of “watching films” against another team.