

St. John Paul II Catholic High School

Student-Athlete & Parent/Guardian Handbook

2023-2024



Sister Tonette Sperando, President
Dr. Jeremiah Russell, Headmaster
Matt McManus, Athletic Director
Jane Dodds, Assistant Athletic Director
Becky Plott, Middle School Athletic Director
Kasey Thompson, Certified Athletic Trainer

Athletic Program Philosophy

Our Athletic Department strives to offer our student-athletes the opportunity to participate, compete and succeed in a wide range of individual and team sports competing locally and statewide at the highest level. We believe in comprehensive physical education and strength and conditioning programs that educate, improve, and elevate the performance of our student-athletes both on and off the playing field. We strive to hire and retain the most qualified and knowledgeable coaches that believe in the mission of JPII and understand the vital role athletics plays in the development of our student-athletes as young men and women of sound mind, body, and spirit. Although we strive to achieve success on the playing field and compete at the highest possible level, ensuring the next generation of young men and women are equipped with a strong moral compass to make the right choices for the common good is the true essence of interscholastic athletics.

Governance

The National Federal High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS consists of the fifty-one individual state high school athletic and/or activities associations. The purposes of the NFHS are to serve, protect and enhance the interstate activity interests of the high schools belonging to state associations; to assist in those activities of the state associations which can best be operated on a nationwide scale; to sponsor meetings, publications and activities which will permit each state association to profit by the experience of all other member associations; and to coordinate the work to minimize duplication.

The Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA)

JPII is a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association and we compete only with other member schools unless granted permission by the AHSAA. As a member school, JPII agrees to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations promulgated by this association. The primary role of the state association is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the student-athletes and a balance with other educational programs. The association solicits input and is responsive to requests for rule modification from member schools, appointed committees, and coaches' associations. The state association attempts to enforce such rules that assure the greatest good for the greatest number and to ensure that competition is conducted in an appropriate manner.

General Policies

- Participation in high school athletics is a privilege, not a right, at JPII. Athletics is one pillar of the total educational program - the athletes are students first.
- The safety of the student-athletes is first and foremost. This includes ensuring all facilities for practices, workouts, competitions are thoroughly screened and our coaches are properly trained.
- Coaches will follow and abide by all rules and policies of the AHSAA and JPII. The Varsity Coach of each program is responsible for the overall program of that sport and is responsible for the supervision of all assistant, junior varsity and middle school coaches involved. All coaches are under the supervision of the Athletic Director.
- Coaches will provide information regarding their teams and upcoming season to the Athletic Director, parents, and athletes at the beginning of the season (i.e. coaching philosophy, scheduled practices and games, team rules/policies, etc.).
- Coaches are responsible for their student-athletes at all times- before, during, and after practice, games, and/or team events.
- Student-athletes are required to be fully enrolled at JPII in order to participate in athletics.

- Student-athletes and coaches must dress appropriately for athletic and school functions. Athletes must remember even when they are off-campus they may be wearing the JPII Logo and must project a positive image at all times. Travel attire to and from games is determined by the Head Coach. The team should look uniform and professional.
- **DUAL SPORT PARTICIPATION:** A student-athlete may participate in two sports during the same season under the following conditions:
 - Dual Sport Participation Waiver is filled out and signed off on by the coaches of both sports, parent/guardian, student-athlete and returned to the Athletic Department office.
 - The two Head Coaches must meet and discuss schedule implications and have the Athletic Director approve plans for managing any conflicts, with academics being the top priority. A student-athlete that is falling behind in work or not putting forth maximum effort should not be allowed to play two simultaneous sports. The Assistant Principal is responsible for student-athlete eligibility.
 - Option not available for student-athletes to play on two team sports simultaneously. For example, a student-athlete could play soccer and run in track events, but they could not play soccer and baseball.
- Student-athletes unable to honor their commitments to their chosen sport for any reason (grades, disenchantment, peer pressure, etc.) will be ineligible to participate in any other sport during that season.
- The use of social media by a student-athlete considered inappropriate will result in discipline in accordance with the *JPII Family Handbook*. Please be familiar with the social media policy outlined in the *JPII Family Handbook*.
- Student-athletes may drive themselves to events inside Madison County only and they may only transport siblings. For events outside of the county, coaches may arrange bus transportation or use parent drivers over the age of 21 possessing a valid, non-probationary driver's license. An up-to-date Diocesan Driver Information Form (located under Links and Forms on our website) must also be on file for all volunteer drivers.
- Student-athletes must comply with all items in the *JPII Family Handbook* including the Drug Abuse Policy set forth by the Diocese of Birmingham.
- All correspondence with the media must be approved by the Athletic Director. Exception: calling in scores and stats or giving a quote after a competition.
- Equipment/Uniform – all student-athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment/uniforms issued to them. School furnished equipment/uniform is to be worn only for competition and practice (if applicable). All equipment not returned in good condition, other than normal wear, will be responsible for replacement costs.
- Overnight trips – Head Coaches are required to fill out the Diocesan FT-1 (field trip) form at least two months ahead of any planned overnight trip. Final approval is made by the Superintendent. Student-athletes not current with athletic fees will not be eligible for overnight trips.

Athletic Philosophy for Each Program Level

Middle School / Junior High:

- Focus on skill development, team success, continuous education of the sport, learning strategy and plays, and accountability. Individual development of each team member while understanding the goals of the team as a whole. All team members will participate in each competition although playing time does not necessarily have to be equal.

Junior Varsity

- Polishing skills learned at the middle school/junior high level, enhanced focus on winning through the execution of strategy and tactics learned from the coaching staff, continued individual development to prepare for varsity level competition.

Varsity

- Competing to win without sacrificing the integrity of individual or team dynamics, continued development of individual skills, advanced techniques and understanding of the sport are learned.

At each level, we want our student-athletes to have fun, develop lifelong relationships with their teammates and coaches, and continue to build the tradition and history of JPII athletics.

Requirements for Participation

All student-athletes are required to have a Dragonfly Max account in accordance with AHSAA rules. The information needed to sign up for a free Dragonfly Max account is available on the JPII Athletics webpage under the “Inside Athletics” tab. School code for DragonFly: 72XR4G

- ★ Physical Examination (AHSAA form) signed by an MD or DO (certified physician) only, good for one calendar year from the month of examination. MD or DO should also be circled at the bottom of the form.
- ★ NFHS Sportsmanship Program Completed online (once in school career)
- ★ Concussion Parent/Student Liability Waiver Form (completed yearly)
- ★ AHSAA Student Release Form (completed yearly)
- ★ Copy of Birth Certificate (must be issued by the Bureau of Vital Statistics from the state where born.)
- ★ JPII Parent Liability Waiver form (completed yearly)
- ★ *JPII Student-Athlete & Parent/Guardian Handbook* acknowledgement
- ★ Non-School sponsored driver release and Field Trip Form CH-1 (completed yearly)
- ★ Athletic fees must be paid prior to the first competition of the season:

Program	Fee	Program	Fee
Tennis	\$600	Cheer (JV/V)	\$300
Golf	\$300	Football (V)	\$600
Softball	\$600	Volleyball (JV/V)	\$600
Baseball (JV/V)	\$600	XC/Track	\$225
Football (Jr. High)	\$400	Swim & Dive	\$175
Volleyball (MS)	\$225	Girls Basketball (JV/V)	\$600
Girls Basketball (MS)	\$225	Boys Basketball (JV/V)	\$600
Boys Basketball (MS)	\$225	Wrestling	\$600
Boys Soccer (MS)	\$400	Girls Soccer (JV/V)	\$500
Baseball (MS)	\$300	Boys Soccer (JV/V)	\$600

Academic Eligibility Requirements

JPII encourages participation in high school athletics, however, student-athletes are reminded that such participation is a privilege and not a right. Their academic welfare takes precedence over their participation in any workout, practice or game. This policy is meant to encourage student-athletes to actively maintain their academic standing. The Athletic Department has eligibility requirements in accordance with the *JPII Family Handbook*.

The Assistant Principal will begin checking grades at the two week period. Any student-athlete having difficulty in a class will be strongly urged to begin tutoring in that class. Several teachers and students are willing to help, and JPII's National Honor Society offers tutoring assistance.

Risk of Participation

All student-athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury which may be a result of participation in athletics. Parents are responsible for providing health insurance for their children who are participating in athletics. JPII will use the following safeguards to make every effort to eliminate injury.

- Coaches will conduct a mandatory pre-season meeting prior to the start of each season to fully educate the athletic policies for all families. At least one parent/guardian is expected to attend.
- Coaches will continuously instruct all student-athletes about the proper techniques in their particular sport.
- SportsMed and Crestwood Medical Center provide a full-time certified athletic trainer on site at JPII to assess, monitor and rehabilitate injuries. This includes access to an orthopedic doctor and clinic availability that may be superior to that of your family doctor. In many cases, the team doctor can both see your student-athlete in a timely manner and instruct our trainer on how to quickly rehabilitate an injury to reduce missed practice and playing time. It is imperative that all injuries are reported to the Head Coach first so that they may be aware of the trainer's involvement in the recovery process.
- The AHSAA provides catastrophic insurance that JPII pays for encompassing all middle school, junior varsity and varsity sports. This coverage has a \$10,000 deductible and a \$2 million ceiling. It is for accidental injury medical expenses and can be used only for injuries that occur during AHSAA events (practices, games, meets, etc.). Student-athletes must have an updated physical in Dragonfly to be eligible.

Parent/Family/Staff Expectations

Positive involvement in sports requires commitment from students, parents, family members, coaches, and all spectators. The following expectations and policies are intended to aid in providing the best opportunities to our student-athletes while respecting coaches and staff.

- Volunteers – our success is dependent upon volunteers and supporters. Parents and/or family members of athletes are kindly asked to help with transportation, gates, concessions and facilities clean-up for JPII home events. Volunteer signups are sent prior to each season through Signup Genius.
- Positive Support and Commitment – positive support from parents and family members regardless of playing time is expected. Support for our coaching staff regardless of lineups, playing time etc. is also expected. Our student-athletes and their families need to remain committed to the team, fellow parents and coaches throughout the entirety of the season.

- Sportsmanship – every athletic event is an opportunity to represent the entire school and community of JPII. ***Berating fellow or opposing fans, coaches, players or officials will not be tolerated and could result in removal from JPII athletic events.*** Players, coaches and officials will make mistakes throughout the course of the game. Aggressively reminding them of mistakes often has a negative effect on our teams and is a poor representation of our school. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated as a representation of JPII.
- Discipline and Structure – discipline and structured environments are vital to athletic success therefore it is expected that our coaches will have disciplined and structured programs. Support of our coaching staff when disciplinary matters arise is vital. Disciplinary expectations and repercussions are to be reviewed at the beginning of each season during parent/player team meetings.
- 24 hour rule – parents and family members that have concerns or grievances will NOT contact the Head Coach, assistant coaches or Athletic Director within 24 hours of a competition. This time period allows coaches and families to separate from the emotions of intense competition. If an issue still needs to be addressed after this time period, please contact the Head Coach directly and schedule an in person meeting with the student-athlete present. Coaches will not communicate concerns or grievances through text messages, phone calls, emails or social media. Parents must contact and meet with the Head Coach prior to contacting the Athletic Director. If after the meeting you still feel the need to discuss further, please contact the Athletic Director.
- Alcohol is strictly prohibited before and during all JPII athletic events.

Student-Athlete Expectations

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department. The community, school administrators and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics.

Acts of unacceptable conduct, such as, but not limited to theft, vandalism, disrespect, immorality or violations of law, tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the athletic program and will not be tolerated.

- Attendance – A student-athlete is expected to attend all classes on their schedule on the day of a competition and the next school day following the competition. To be eligible to participate in the competition of the day, the student-athlete must be present for half of the school day. Team members are expected to be present at all practices, team meetings, competitions, and special occasions unless excused by the Head Coach. If you are going to miss for any reason, it is the **player's responsibility** to contact the Head Coach (email, phone, etc.) 24 hours in advance.
- Commitment – playing time is not guaranteed. Our coaches are making year round commitments to develop, plan and execute for their student-athletes and it's the expectation that your child respects that and buys into the program. Student-athletes are part of something that's bigger than themselves. Even in sports that compete individually, they are representing the school, their coaches, the community, and their family. As mentioned in the philosophy of our programs, the Athletic Department is not offering sports programs as simply an after school extracurricular. We are developing student-athletes with a competitive mindset to become the best version of themselves while striving towards excellence both on and off the playing field.
- Club and Travel Teams – The AHSAA prohibits a student from participating in a school sport and a club/travel team of the same sport at the same time. For example, a student cannot play JPII soccer and play club soccer at the same time. The AHSAA also does not allow students to participate in practice for an outside team while in season at school.

- **Ejections** – Coaches and players that are ejected from competition will receive the following penalties: First Ejection: Minimum \$300 fine. (The fine can be reduced one time to \$100 if the student-athlete fined completes the NFHS’s Captains Course within 10 days of the date of the ejection.). Second Ejection: Minimum one-game suspension and \$500 fine. Third Ejection: Minimum suspension for the remainder of the season and \$750 fine.
 - NOTE: JPII will not pay these fines on behalf of a coach or athlete.

Senior Days, Signing Days, End of Season Banquets

JPII appreciates the time and effort that student-athletes and their families devote to their sport(s) programs. Athletic Department letters, pins and bar are distributed at the guidance of the Head Coach of each sport and for the sole recognition of student-athletes completing one full season of varsity competition. For the most part, the process is as follows:

Letter – distributed for the first time the student-athlete competes at the varsity level in any sport. Only one letter will be distributed throughout the career of each student-athlete.

Sport-specific pin – distributed to a student-athlete who competes at the varsity level for a particular sport after they have already received a letter. Only one pin per sport will be distributed throughout the career for each student-athlete.

Bar – distributed after a student-athlete has already received a letter and sport-specific pin for that particular sport. Bars represent each remaining year of varsity level competition for the student-athlete.

Senior Days

- JPII will provide flowers for each recognized senior.
- The ceremony includes an introduction of each senior and their parents/guardians, picture with the Head Coach of the program and final recognition with all seniors and their parents/guardians.
- JPII will provide the photographer unless otherwise discussed with the Head Coach.

Signing Days

- JPII will host one signing ceremony for seniors who are planning to compete at the collegiate level.
- Family, coaches and outside supporters are welcome to attend for each senior.
- Balloons, spirit wear and other celebratory items are not provided by JPII but can be purchased at the expense of the parents/guardians.

Banquets

- For athletic programs that wish to have end of season celebrations or banquets, coordination on venue, date and time must be approved by the Athletic Director.
- Athletic Department budgets and individual team accounts cannot be used to cover expenses of the banquet.
- Team accounts can be utilized to cover team/individual awards or trophies.

High School Sports vs. Club Sports

JPII recognizes that playing club or travel sports is prominent among our student-athletes. At the same time, we believe that playing a sport for your school has benefits that last a lifetime. There is nothing more meaningful than playing a sport for your school. The values in the classroom extend to the athletic field. In the age of specialization, it is important to consider the following:

- Burnout - the reason that all of us have tried sports is because it is fun. If your child has been training for one sport per year, it is important for his physical and mental health that there be scheduled breaks for him. According to the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA), athletic burnout can best be prevented by proper rest and time away from a sport. In the age of mental health awareness, stay tuned to the signs that your child may be experiencing burnout.

- Understanding that the club or travel team is a “pay to play” business. While there are very good club coaches for our students, it is important to understand that their role on the club team may be different than a JPII team. We encourage your child to accept their role on their school team and realize that this not only meets the needs of the team, but enhances his/her versatility
- Scholar athletes who play more than one sport are often refreshed headed into their seasons. It is also an attraction for college coaches, who often find it appealing that the scholar athlete plays more than one sport.

Programs Offered

All teams are contingent on having enough students to meet the requirements to field a team.

One Team - the sport has one team regardless of grade level, but matches/meets/games are based on skill level of each student-athlete

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Summer Month Competition</u>
Cross Country	One Team	Fall	-
Cheer	JV, Varsity	Fall, Winter	-
Football	Jr. High (7 th -9 th), Varsity	Fall	July
Swim & Dive	One Team	Fall	-
Esports	One Team	Fall, Spring	
Volleyball	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Fall	July
Girls Basketball	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Winter	June
Boys Basketball	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Winter	June
Wrestling	One Team	Winter	-
Indoor Track	One Team	Winter	-
Baseball	JV, Varsity	Spring	-
Softball	One Team	Spring	-
Girls Soccer	JV, Varsity	Spring	-
Boys Soccer	Middle School, JV, Varsity	Spring	-
Golf	One Team	Spring	-
Tennis	One Team	Spring	-
Outdoor Track	One Team	Spring	-