

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE GREATER DES MOINES CATHOLIC FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**(Revised & Adopted, February 2008)**

We, the members of the Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League Board of Directors and Executive Committee, thank all families, parents, players, coaches and others who support and enhance the Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League, founded in 1964. We honor all those in the past and future who strive to make our league among the largest, oldest and most pre-eminent youth leagues in Iowa.

We, therefore, have set forth these POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE GREATER DES MOINES CATHOLIC FOOTBALL LEAGUE, and have adopted the following Mission Statement as our guide to preserve and enhance the rich tradition of our league:

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League, founded in 1964, will strive to provide young student athletes the opportunity to develop disciplined life skills through Family, Friends, and the Game of Football.

The Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League will focus on Four Key Pillars of development:

Sportsmanship  
Teamwork  
Commitment/Accountability  
Football Fundamentals/Outstanding Physical Fitness

The Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League will deliver a positive spiritual experience for each player, coach, and family, regardless of the outcome of the game.

Our goal is to develop strong young men who, through participation in our league, will naturally progress into Dowling Catholic High School, which develops leaders for life centered on Christ.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Sportsmanship is a tenet of our league. We expect all coaches, players, spectators and parents to act appropriately at all league activities.

Individuals disrupting league games or practices will be asked by coaches or league officials to stop the disruptive behavior. A failure to do so can result in the offending person being requested to leave the location of the activity. Continued failure to comply can result in a permanent ban from league facilities and activities.

Coaches of the teams are responsible for the conduct of their players, coaching staffs and spectators, and teams are subject to penalties outlined in the IHSAA rule for continued violations of these rules by any of their members or spectators.

Coaches understand that they are representing the Catholic Football League on and off the field and shall conduct themselves accordingly. Any behavior on or off the field by coaches not in line with the beliefs and values of the Catholic Football League, as determined by the board, may be reason for removal from the league.

## **GREATER DES MOINES CATHOLIC FOOTBALL LEAGUE POLICY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

It is the goal of the Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League to afford its student-athletes the best climate in which to participate in the sport of football with the league. Any use, possession, purchase or sale of controlled substance is in conflict with this goal, and is a violation of this policy. Athletes who host a party gathering where drugs or alcohol are present are also acting contrary to this policy. Students who attend a gathering or are in a vehicle where drugs or alcohol are present (other than at a party where the alcohol is being consumed only by persons of legal age), knowing that such drugs or alcohol are present, are considered to be in possession for the purposes of this policy.

The use, possession, distribution or sale of any controlled substances (prescription or non-prescription, unless prescribed by a licensed health care professional) shall be grounds for suspension or expulsion of the student-athlete from the league.

Upon receipt of information of said use, the coaches or league officials shall notify the parent(s) of the player of the allegations or evidence that they have received. They shall also notify the league of the allegations.

The coach shall request a conference with the players and his parent(s) to discuss the issues and to hear the player's response to the allegations. He shall then report that information to the Executive Committee. If the player, his parent(s) and the coach have agreed upon a course of action and discipline, this information shall also be provided to the Executive Committee. Any course of action must involve a minimum one-game suspension, unless otherwise provided hereinafter.

If the coach and the player and parent(s) are unable to agree on a course of action that would result at least in part in a one-game suspension, or if the player and parent(s) deny the allegation, the player and his parent(s) shall have a right to meet the Executive Committee. At that meeting, evidence of the commission of the offense and any denials or explanations of the commission shall be presented to the Executive Committee which shall then determine whether a violation has occurred, and what the appropriate penalty for that violation should be.

The penalty for a first-offense violation of this policy shall be a league-imposed one-game suspension. A second offense shall result in the player being ineligible for the remainder of the season in which that offense occurs, or if insufficient games remain in the season, for a total of no less than four (4) games, which may continue or carry over to the following season.

Any aggrieved student or his parent(s) shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Executive Committee.

That appeal shall consist of the Board reviewing a summary of the evidence presented at the meeting with the Executive Committee, parent(s) and coach. Appeal may be made orally at the end of the initial hearing or by presenting a written request for appeal to any member of the Executive Committee within 48 hours of being advised of the Executive Committee's decision. No new hearing will be held, nor will any new evidence be reviewed, unless the evidence was unavailable or had not been discovered at the time of the initial hearing. The Board may affirm, reverse or amend the Executive Committee's rulings, under the terms of the penalties set out herein.

There shall be one exception to the minimum one-game suspension rule. Any player or parent(s) who is/are aware of a violation by their child may report that violation to the player's coach. If that report is the first report of the violation received by the coach, the Executive Committee, with the concurrence of the player's coach and parent(s), may place the player on probation for the

remainder of the season. A violation of any league policy or rule (even of not involving alcohol or controlled substances) shall result in a revocation of that probation (after hearing with the Executive Committee as set out above), and the imposition of the one-game suspension. This rule applies only to the first violation of the Rule. Any subsequent violation would still be treated as a second violation of this policy.

Coaches and parents helping with the teams shall not have present at any practice or on Dowling Catholic High School premises on the days of practice or games any alcoholic beverages. Nor shall coaches take part in any practices or games under the influence of alcohol. A coach violating this regulation shall be suspended for at least one game. The coach shall have the same rights to appeal and hearing as set out above.

### **PLAYING TIME AND REGULATIONS**

Each player shall play a minimum of eight (8) plays per half of every game. Those plays shall be exclusive of and not include any special teams' plays. Special teams' plays shall be defined as kickoffs, punts, kicked extra points (but not extra points run as passes or running plays) and free-kick plays after safeties.

If a team has greater than 22 players at game time, that team shall play 22 different players on their first offensive and first defensive series of each half of every game. This rule shall not apply to overtime periods. A series shall be defined as the first occasion on offense or defense that the team has the ball in any given half. A series ends on the completion of an offensive series by the team in possession of the ball, by a score of any type, a turnover, or a failure to convert a first down on fourth down. A series includes all plays in that possession no matter how many until the conclusion of the series. If a series lasts longer than 8 plays, the coach can substitute on the ninth play. Players need not play offense one half and defense the next. Each "first series" shall end with a score, punt or turnover by the offensive team, regardless of the number of plays.

Any team with less than 22 players may use the minimum number of players on both offense and defense in the first series as is required by their total number of players. (Example: If a team has 20 players, 2 players may play both on offense and defense.)

Special teams, or plays at the end of the series appearing to the defense to be punts or field goal attempts shall not be considered parts of the series for the purpose of the playing restrictions. A player over the weight limit is not allowed to advance the ball on an offensive play, including punts and/or kicks.

Players who are injured, physically unable to play, have failed to attend practices or who have been a disciplinary problem for their coaches are not required to play the minimum number of plays. However, in order for a coach not to use a player for the minimum number of plays in a game, the coach must first inform the parent(s) of the player, before the game, stating which of the above reasons would result in that discipline. The coach must also, prior to the game, report the player's name and number and the reason for this action to any Board member(s) on duty at that game. A failure to advise either the Board member on duty or the player's parent(s) will require the player to play the minimum number of plays. Any player, who becomes a discipline problem (on or off the field) during a game, may be held out of the game by the coach IF reporting the reason to any Board member present. To ease administration of the game, any board members on duty may ask coaches if all players are eligible for the week, or get an update concerning this eligibility provision.

Coaches of the opposing team will be responsible, along with board members, for monitoring and enforcing the playing rules. Proof of failure to play the player the requisite number of plays in the first half, intentional or inadvertent, will result in a fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty to start the second half.

Discovery during the last three minutes of the second half will result in a like penalty and the automatic insertion of those players into the game until they have completed their minimum playing time for both halves. These penalties are in addition to the penalties that may be levied on coaches as set out below.

Failure to comply, intentionally or inadvertently, with this rule will result in penalties against the coach and or the offending team to be determined by the Board.

Violations discovered during the game can result in an officials' time out, with the offending coaches being required to insert the players who have not completed the minimum number of plays who will remain until they have played the minimum number of plays. Penalties can include, but are not limited to, a warning, a suspension of the coach or forfeiture of the game, at any time during the season, can result in any of the penalties listed herein.

The penalty shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the board of the league, which shall consider whether the violation was inadvertent or intentional, whether the offending coach has had prior violations, along with the other facts and circumstances of the violation in deciding what the penalty should be.

All minimum playing times and regulations of starting players shall be applicable to not only the tackle leagues but the flag leagues as well. The flag teams shall start eight (8) separate players for their first series on offense and their first series on defense of each half.

All of the above rules also apply to flag coaches.

#### **PRE-SEASON PARENT-COACH TEAM MEETING**

Before the start of the season, each coach shall have a short informational meeting with the parents of his players in which he should advise them of the practice and game schedule, any team rules and these league rules. Coaches shall inform their Program Coordinators and the Board of the time and place for this required meeting. Failure to do any of these items may result in action being taken against the coaching staff.

#### **SIDELINE RULES**

During games, only players, a maximum of five (5) league-approved coaches who have attended all mandatory meetings for coaches before the start of the season, trainers, coaches and officials of Dowling Catholic High School and Board personnel shall be inside of the fences or on the sidelines during the games. Again, the maximum number of coaches is five, unless otherwise authorized for legitimate purposes by the board or a board member who has been appointed to oversee games for any given day. During emergencies or injuries, parents, ambulance personnel and other medical personnel shall be allowed on the sidelines or on the field if necessary.

Any person requesting permission to be inside the fence surrounding the field, to take still photographs or video tapes of the games, shall have the permission of the Board and shall be located on the field where permitted by the Board. The Board members present shall have the right to approve or disapprove the taking of photographs, the number of persons involved and the location from which those photos are taken.

Anyone who is improperly on the sideline shall be removed immediately.

#### **TEAM PRAYERS**

The Catholic Football League fosters good sportsmanship and team play, despite the outcome of the game. Therefore, the league highly encourages coaches to hold a short team prayer between the two teams. The league encourages this short prayer to occur after handshakes at the 50-yard line between the two teams and after each game.

### **UNITY PRACTICES**

In furtherance of fostering good sportsmanship, team play and unity between all players and teams, the Catholic Football League encourages a "unity practice" to occur during the week between two teams that have played the previous weekend. The league understands that logistical challenges might occur with regard to organizing these practices, and no coach or team shall be penalized for not holding these practices. However, the league encourages "unity practices" nonetheless. Our goal is not to "partner" with other teams, but to practice with the team played the previous weekend.

### **PLAYER PARTICIPATION IN ONE TACKLE FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

The Catholic Football League encourages students, both Catholic and Non-Catholic, to participate in our league. This has been a tenet of the league since its founding in 1964. The physical nature of football limits participation to a certain number of football games during a season to help ensure player safety, and the league highly values the safety of our players. Therefore, no player shall participate in another tackle football league while also playing in a Catholic Football League tackle program. The league reserves the right to assess each known case of a player participating in two tackle programs or leagues, and will act accordingly.

### **COACHES' SPORTSMANSHIP & GOOD BEHAVIOR RULE**

Good sportsmanship is a priority of the Catholic Football League. This applies to all coaches and assistant coaches, as well as players and spectators. The examples set by the coaches for the players must reflect that priority.

Coaches are in the spotlight. Judge your actions accordingly. Keep proper bench decorum, even though it might inhibit some of your actions. Coaches are role models for the players, and their actions affect not only the players but also the spectators. How teams act and react is normally a result of coaches' actions.

Communicate with parents and team members about sportsmanship before the season and continue reinforcing that during the season. Accept the responsibility of the position of the coach. Show respect at all times for your players, opposing players and coaches, officials and league officials.

Coaches shall not have any illegitimate physical contact with any players (i.e., no grabbing of facemasks, pushing, etc.). Coaches shall not use any profane language including using the Lord's name in vain. After one warning; and if the behavior persists, coaches shall be removed from the sideline of the current game and suspended for the next game as determined by the Board.

The Board shall review any behavior during games of coaches as reasonably reported by fellow coaches and opposing coaches. Parents who witness or represent a group of parents who have concerns with respect to bad behavior by coaches should first bring their concerns to the head coach. If concerns are not properly addressed the first time, parents should notify their program coordinator. If concerns are not properly addressed for a second time, then parents should notify a board member concerning the behavior, after which time the Executive Committee shall assess the matter on its own, vote on a course of action, which shall include bringing both parties [concerned parent(s) and coach(es)] together and hear both sides. The Executive Committee will then vote on a final course of action.

It is the obligation of the coaches to practice the highest principals of sportsmanship and the ethics of competition. The Catholic Football League Board shall have full authority to penalize any coach who violates these standards. The Board may assess penalties as it sees fit, based upon

the severity of the occurrence, which penalties could include a warning, probationary period, suspension from one or more games, or complete suspension from the position as coach in the league.

Upon observation of or report of bad sportsmanship, the League Executive Committee and the Program Coordinator shall contact the coach in question and inform him of the allegations. The Executive Committee and the coach shall have the right to enter into agreement as to what, if any punishment is proper if the allegations are found by the Committee to be true. If the coach and the Executive Committee fail to reach an agreement, after the evidence is presented to them and the coach has had an opportunity to be heard, the Executive Committee shall impose such penalty as it votes is warranted (this will be determined by a majority of the Executive Committee). The coach shall have a right to appeal to the Board of the League as a whole, by delivering to any member of the Executive Committee a written request for appeal. The Board shall review the evidence presented, hear the coach, and may affirm the Executive Committee's decision or make such changes as it deems appropriate. Changes can only be made to the Executive Committee's decision if the Board (by a vote of one-half of the members present at the meeting) agrees that such changes should occur. Members of the Executive Committee who are also members of the Board shall have a right to vote on the appealed issues as any other member of the Board.

Coaches who are ejected from games by officials for misconduct will be ineligible to participate in the next two (2) games to be played by their team. A second offense carries compulsory expulsion through the present season with Executive Committee review required for the following season. Suspensions that are not completed during the year because of insufficient remaining games will carry over from year to year.

#### **PLAYER OR PARENT COMPLAINTS**

Parent(s) or players having a concern or a complaint about playing time or any of these regulations or any teams, individual rules or regulations shall first discuss that complaint with the head coach of the player's team. If the parent(s) or players are not satisfied with the explanation or decision of the head coach, they shall have the right to next discuss the issue with the Program Coordinator. The coordinator shall meet with the parent(s) and the head coach jointly to discuss the issue and shall attempt to mediate any disagreement. If the disagreement cannot be resolved at that point, the parent(s) shall have the right to request a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors to address their complaints or concerns. The head coach of the players' team shall have the right to be present and be heard at that meeting. If the matter cannot be resolved by agreement, the Executive Committee shall have a right to issue a decision on the issue. Their decision shall be final.

Parents with concerns must follow this procedure of the Board or the Executive Committee will take no action on their requests.

#### **PLAYING RULES**

The Greater Des Moines Catholic Football League follows the rules of the Iowa High School Athletic Union for the play of the games unless specific rules have overridden some of those rules. Some examples of local rules are the 30-Point Rule resulting in a running clock (like the IHSA's new 50 pt. Rule and weight restrictions for allowing players to carry the football).

In the event that a team has scored at least thirty (30) points against an opposing team, the team that is winning shall not pass the football on each offensive play during the time that the current winning team still has at least 30 points more than an opposing team. (For example, if the total points of a winning team are at least 30 points greater than the opposing team's total points, then the team that is winning shall continue not to pass. If through the course of the game, during

which the total points of a team that is winning become less than 30 points, the team that is winning may pass the football.)

If you have any questions about specific rules, contact a member of the Board.

Thank you.