**COACHES LETTER**

THANK YOU, Coaches, for your time, talent and dedication! You are appreciated and you are what makes our sports program a success. I would like to share with you a few items that could help you or inform you about our programs.

All Coaches must go through the Bishop’s Protecting God’s Children training. This consists of being Virtus trained (once), concussion trained (3 years), a signed Ministerial Behavior form and background checks. We want our student athletes to be protected as much as possible.

We have installed our VIRTUES OF GREATNESS PROGRAM, and we cannot be prouder of how this will affect our young athletes. You will receive an email on our Virtue of the week. The email will inform you on how virtue relates to sports and give you ideas to present to your team. We want you to discuss this virtue with your team at every practice and game. If you do not receive these emails the first week of practice, please reach out to your AD and they will make sure you are added to the list.

Expectations: We expect all of our coaches to be leaders, role models, teachers and an extension of GRACEAC, your school, your Church and your family. How you handle situations is noticed by our youth. Please be aware the athletes are always watching and learning. We want their experiences to be positive, supportive, learning and fun. Please treat all officials, coaches, players, and fans with respect.

Our officials are MHSAA certified. These same officials also officiate high school and some do college sports. Not all of our officials referee in high school. They might be learning or just became a registered official. Our league in all aspects is a learning and teaching league, this goes for our officials as well. We do have many officials (most) who do both high school and GRACEAC. Please treat them with respect. They are trying their best. Imagine yourself making the call and having someone berating, yelling or being sarcastic to you while you are only trying to do your job as well as you can.

We utilize the 24-hour rule, which means if you have an issue, please allow 24 hours before confronting someone. We want emotions to dissipate and cooler heads to prevail. This is the same for coaches with issues related to officials or management, as well as parents having issues with coaches or management.

Communication and chain of command: If you have any concerns, issues or questions, please reach out to your AD first. Your AD is your best resource for help. If they do not have an answer for you, they will contact the Program Director for you to get the answers.

We use TeamSnap (TS) for our registration and communication. This app makes it simple to register, contact parents or other members of the team, and allows you to add your schedule for games and practices. All communication with your team or players must be done in the TS app. Please do not send separate emails. Please download the app.

Rules: You can find rules for your sport on our website. Some sports will have “Rules at a Glance,” which are a synopsis of rules we have adopted that are different from the normal rules. We will typically send out an email informing you of any new rules for the season. NFHS is now adding or changing rules every 2 years.

Practice Times: In general, for grades 5-8, teams may practice for 4.5 hours once games begin and up to 6 hours before games start, with the exception of FB. Practices should not be longer than 2 hours. Typically, 3rd and 4th sports will practice for one day once games begin and 2 days before games start. Make sure you give water breaks and make sure you are aware of any medical needs of any athletes.

Finally, please enjoy your time coaching. It is a terrific time in your child's life, and you get to spend it with them, learn more about their friends and have the opportunity to mold all of them into little disciples. Thank you for being a Coach! It is extremely appreciated.

Blessings to all and we will see you on the field or in the gym

Brad Sturgell

Program Director Diocese of GR