

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK



URSULINE ACADEMY, DEDHAM

2010-2011



A Note from the Director of Athletics at Ursuline Academy:

Your daughter is part of the Ursuline Academy (UA) athletic family, a group always striving for excellence. Our students perform with dedication, skill, intensity and responsibility at a challenging high school level. In 2008, our athletes were recognized by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) for showing a “sincere commitment to the highest ideals and objectives of sportsmanship” during their season of play. We were recognized for winning the Sportsmanship Award six times since 2001 which makes UA one of the few schools on the MIAA honor roll for consistent sportsmanlike conduct during play. On the field and off, our student athletes shine. It is our hope that your daughter makes the most of her experience playing for the UA Bears.

This Handbook contains information regarding policies, practices and regulations that govern Ursuline Academy's Athletic program. We ask that you keep this handbook and refer to it when a question arises regarding your daughter's athletic experience. **If you feel that your questions are not answered in this handbook, please contact your daughter's coach.** If your concerns are not addressed after addressing the coach, you should then contact the Athletic Office, where I can be reached.

We look forward to your association with Ursuline Academy's Athletic Program. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

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I. PHILOSOPHY

- a.** The Athletic program is committed to the Mission of Ursuline Academy, which states:

Ursuline Academy is a Catholic school that provides a college-preparatory education for young women rooted in the traditions and values of Saint Angela Merici:

- *excellence in education*
- *respect for the uniqueness of the individual*
- *development of the whole person*
- *community and family spirit*
- *cultivation of leadership qualities*
- *willingness to serve others, as embodied by its motto, Serviam*

Athletics is an extension of the classroom. The success of the Athletic program can be directly attributed to the quality of athletes and coaches involved in the school. Any student who plays a sport is coached by a dedicated professional who cares not only about winning but also about the student as an individual. High school sports are a great place to learn about the values of competitiveness, honesty, integrity, teamwork, and most importantly, how to deal with success and failure. The sports arena is a great training ground for life after the school days are over.

- b.** Try-outs are open to all students, provided they are in good academic standing, are good school citizens and are physically fit to participate. Participation in the program is a privilege which students earn by maintaining these standards.

II. GOVERNING BODIES

- a.** The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association:

Ursuline Academy is a member in good standing of the MIAA. By this membership the Principal and the Athletic Department agree to abide by all the rules and regulations of the MIAA. Governance and administration of the MIAA is shared among members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, high school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, game officials, and physicians; all of whom serve without compensation on thirty-eight MIAA standing committees.

- b.** Sports Leagues:

Ursuline Academy participates as a District H Independent School in the sports of volleyball, soccer, field hockey, cross country, basketball, skiing, ice hockey and softball. The swimming and diving teams compete in the Southern Conference.

The golf team competes in the Mass Bay League. The tennis and track teams are members of the Catholic Conference League. The teams associated with leagues are regulated by the constitution of the league and MIAA rules. All teams follow MIAA regulations regarding tournament qualification.

III. ATHLETIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- a.** The Athletic Affairs Committee has the responsibility for advising the Board of Trustees on matters relating to athletic facilities, programs, and financial support for the sports program of the School. The Committee shall review personnel policies for those engaged in the area of athletics.

- b.** Under MIAA guidelines, the school is allowed to set additional policies, rules and/or

regulations as long as they are not less restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA.

IV. PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS

- a.** Parent/Coach Communications: Your daughter is about to engage in some of the most rewarding activities at Ursuline Academy. Parenting and coaching are difficult vocations. By understanding each other's position, we will strive to work together to benefit your daughter. As a parent, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your daughter. The coaches will strive to keep open lines of communication regarding the program. The following is an outline detailing the appropriate lines and topics of Athletics Program communications:

Communication you should expect from the coach:

- *Philosophy of the coach*
- *Expectations the coach has for your daughter as well as all the players on the squad*
- *Location and times of all practices and contests*
- *Team requirements, i.e. practices, special equipment, out-of-season*
- *Conditioning*
- *Procedures followed should your daughter be injured during participation*
- *Discipline that may result in the denial of your daughter's participation*

Communication coaches can expect from parents:

- *Concerns expressed directly to the coach*
- *Advanced notification of any schedule conflicts*
- Specific concerns with regards to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

- b.** Additional Parent/Coach Communications: The sports program will provide your daughter with some of the best moments of her life. It is important to understand there may be times when things do not go the way you or your daughter may wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. The following is an outline detailing the appropriate lines and topics of Athletics Program communications:

Appropriate concerns to discuss with your Coach

- *Treatment of your daughter*
- *Ways to help your daughter improve*
- *Concerns about your daughter's behavior*

- c.** Inappropriate Communication Subjects: The coaches take their profession seriously. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your daughter's coach, Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach are outlined as follows:

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- *Playing time at the varsity level*
- *Team strategy*
- *Play calling*
- *Any issues associated with other student-athletes*

- d.** Communication Protocol: There may be situations that will require a conference

between the coach and a parent. When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern:

- Call the Athletic Department (781-326-6161 x. 109) to set up an appointment A return call from the coach will be arranged, or a meeting set up for you
- Do not call the coach at home! A coach's time with family is severely limited during the season. The coach's family privacy should be respected.
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parents and the coach Meetings under these circumstances do not promote resolution.
- If the meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent is encouraged to call for an appointment with the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will listen carefully to your concerns and mediate a resolution between you and the coach.
- REMEMBER: Your concerns are important to us. Never hesitate to follow these procedures to make your concerns known. Together we can work to improve the UA Athletic programs.

V. ATHLETES COMMITMENT

- a.** Program Try-Outs: Interscholastic athletics demand much more commitment than a club or recreational activity. Students should be aware of the time commitment before they try-out for a team. When trying-out for a team and after being selected to be a member of a team, Ursuline Academy student-athletes shall attend all practices and games of that team. Practices will average two hours, exclusive of preparation time. Weekend practices and games should be expected and vary by sport program. Sunday practices are rare and must be approved in advance by the Principal.

VI. SCHOOL/FAMILY VACATIONS, EXTENDED ABSENCES

- a.** Every team member shall be present for all team practices and games Because of scheduling parameters, many of the teams practice and/or play during scheduled school vacations These practices and/or games will not be scheduled between December 24th and 26th and December 31st January 2nd. Student-athletes who plan to be absent for an extended period of time due to vacation, or a planned extended absence, shall discuss this situation with the coach prior to trying-out for the team.

VII. MIAA BONA FIDE TEAM MEMBER RULE

- a.** A "bona fide team member" of the school team is a student who is regularly present for, and actively participates in, all practices and competitions. Bona fide team members are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to practice or compete with an out of school team, Immediately upon confirmation of the violation, any student who violates this standard is ineligible for 25% of the season. If a second violation occurs she will be suspended for another 25% of the season and denied Tournament participation. (See MIAA Rule 45)
- b.** A coach does not have the right to excuse a team member from practice so that she

may practice or play for another team. In special circumstances only, the Principal may request a waiver of this rule.

VIII. INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM TRY-OUTS

- a.** Participation in athletics is a privilege given to those students who meet all requirements set by the MIAA and Ursuline Academy. Students' try-out voluntarily and, for some teams, risks being cut.
- b.** Any student in grades 7 to 12 may try-out for a sport. However, no seventh graders are allowed on a varsity team of the sport that has three levels: junior high, junior varsity and varsity.
- c.** Seniors are only allowed on a junior varsity team in special circumstances.
- d.** At the discretion of the coaching staff, a limited number of juniors may be considered for a junior varsity team.
- e.** Students cut from a team are encouraged to join a non-cut team, if available, or to participate in the program as a team manager.
- f.** Previous participation in a sport at any level, or attendance at any camp or clinic, does not guarantee placement on a team.
- g.** After try-outs begin, no athlete may leave one team (voluntarily or due to dismissal by the coach) and join another team without consent of both coaches involved and the Athletic Director.
- h.** Fall season try-outs start the second Thursday proceeding Labor Day. Winter season begins the first Monday after Thanksgiving. Spring season begins the third Monday in March (MIAA Rule 35 1).

IX. DAILY TEAM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- a.** Practice is where plans for upcoming contests are devised and perfected. The coaches expect the athletes to be present at all team related activities. Parents shall notify the coach if a student will miss a practice or game. Suspension or dismissal may take place as a result of such absences.
- b.** Student-athletes are excused from team activities for academic or religious reasons, family emergencies, illness or injuries that preclude her from attending classes Prior notification of the coach is required.

X. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

- a.** In order to practice or play, student-athletes must be in school by 11:00 AM. If practices are held before school, students must report to the school after practice and stay in school until at least 11:00 AM. No athlete is exempt from gym class. Any student who arrives late for school must secure a tardy slip from the main office. Students who accumulate three unexcused tardies or are absent after morning practice will be assigned a detention, Detention must be served regardless of practices or games.
- b.** Students dismissed from school for legitimate appointments, college visits, etc. are required to visit the Ursuline Academy main office to check back into school in order to practice or play.

XI. MEDICAL EXAMS / PARENT PERMISSION FORMS

- a.** All students participating in sports are required to pass a physical examination conducted by a registered physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner.

Examination documentation must be dated within 13 months of any athletic involvement. A sports physical terminates 395 days subsequent to administering and must be renewed immediately (should the athlete be "in season") to maintain eligibility.

- b.** Emergency forms are also required and shall be completed and signed by the parents. Forms can be downloaded from our web site: www.edline.net/pages/ursulineacademy or requested at the Athletic office.
- c.** Athletes will not be allowed to participate without the completion of the medical exam and emergency forms.

XII. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

- a.** Students participating in interscholastic athletics must have a passing grade in every subject during the last marking period preceding the season. Students shall also maintain their good standing throughout the entire season. If a progress report is sent home with a failing grade during the season, the athlete will be on probation. The probation will be reviewed once a week. A probation form must be picked up from the Athletic office and the teacher responsible for the grade must sign at the end of the week after entering the earned improved grade.
- b.** Students on probation will not be allowed to participate in practices and games for a week until a new passing grade is earned.
- c.** The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered official and determined only on the date when report cards for that period had been issued to the parents of all students within a particular class. Students may not try-out, nor practice with, any team while academically ineligible. A student who becomes ineligible when report cards are issued during a sport season can no longer participate in practices or games.
- d.** Please be advised that Ursuline Academy has a more restrictive academic eligibility policy than the MIAA ,

XIII. TIME ALLOWED FOR PARTICIPATION/AGE

- a.** A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive athletic seasons after first entering 9th grade.
- b.** A student shall be under 19 years of ages but may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that her birthday occurs on or after September 1st of that year.

XIV. TEAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

- a.** The coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director, may issue a set of team rules at the start of the season. It is suggested that these rules be in written form and given to the athletes. Both parents and athletes should read and sign the team rules.

XV. CARE OF EQUIPMENT

- a.** Each student is responsible for the proper care and retention of the equipment issued to them or their team for the entire length of the season.
- b.** Student-athletes shall be responsible for returning equipment to designated storage areas when not in use. Students will be charged the replacement costs

for any missing or vandalized equipment. Payment is required at the time of the loss, prior to the next season or graduation, whichever comes first. No student will be allowed to try-out for another sport until all equipment has been paid for or returned.

XVI. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- a.** All student athletes are required to participate in their regularly scheduled physical education classes. Students that are medically excused from class are not allowed to participate in team practices or games on that day. The Athletic Director will notify the coaches.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

- a.** Ursuline Academy provides transportation to most "away" contests. All team members shall travel to and from these games with their team in the transportation provided. Transportation to and from practices is the responsibility of the student.
- b.** Exceptions to this policy must be requested in writing to the Athletic Director by the student's parent/guardian 24 hours before the commencement of the game. Forms required to solicit exceptions to this policy are available the Ursuline Academy Website.
- c.**

XVIII. DIRECTIONS TO AWAY CONTESTS

- a.** The Athletic office has directions to away games on file. Directions will be furnished to students and parents at the pre-season meeting.
- b.** Directions are also posted on the following web sites:
 - i. www.edline.net/pages/ursulineacademy/athletics
 - ii. www.hsmaps.com
 - iii. www.miaa.net ("Member School Look-up")

XIX. BUILDING AND FACILITY ACCESS

- a.** Student shall not be allowed access to any of the athletic facilities without proper supervision by school authorized personnel.
- b.** Athletes waiting to attend practices participate in games, or waiting for their ride home from interscholastic athletic activities shall wait in the Tea Room. Students may only be excused from this policy if the 'Request for release' is submitted to the Athletic Director. This form is available on the Ursuline Academy Website.

XX. PLAYING TIME

- a.** Perhaps the most emotional part of student-athlete involvement in high school athletics centers around playing time. Practices and expectations are intense and demanding. Attendance, attitude, commitment, and athletic skill are part of the coaches' decisions regarding playing time.
- b.** It is the coaches' responsibility to decide which athletes should start a contest, which team member should play what position, and how long each athlete should play. These coaching decisions, often difficult to make, are made only by the coaching staff. The decisions are made after having observed the student-athlete in practice sessions, game-like situations, scrimmages and, at times, games.

- c.** At the junior high and junior varsity level, coaches will make every effort to play all team members in each game. At this level, students are learning the offensive and defensive philosophy of the program as well as the fundamentals of the sport. Both skills are necessary to move to the next level. Athletes who attend daily practices, maintain eligibility and fulfill all other team obligations should have the opportunity to display their skills in games.
- d.** At the varsity level, which is the highest level of interscholastic competition, teams are expected to compete at the highest possible level of execution. Ursuline Academy will attempt to win as many varsity games as possible. In order to accomplish this objective, there are many instances when the most competitive, skilled team members will play the major portion of the contest. However, teams cannot be successful without the commitment of substitutes or "role players ". These players have to be ready at all times to step forward and shoulder the burden when called upon their hard work in practice prepares the team for the competition.
- e.** Success should never be measured by wins or losses but by the performance of the athletes. Striving to be your best is one of the goals of the program.

XXI. TEAM CAPTAINS

- a.** Coaches have total discretion concerning the selection of team captains. They may be elected by the team, appointed by the coach prior to the first contest or at the end of the previous season. They may also be elected on a game-by-game basis.
- b.** Team captains are expected to be leaders of their team and should be ready to assume duties as outlined by their coach. Captains must communicate with the coach and the team and be the link in the event of any problems affecting the team or its members. They must be aware of team rules and student-athlete responsibilities.
- c.** Captains will be asked to meet with the Athletic Director during the school year to discuss the athletic program.

XXII. LOCKER ROOMS AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

- a.** Student-athletes are expected to respect the locker facilities and general areas of the athletic compound at both Ursuline Academy and while visiting other schools. We expect the students to take pride in their facilities and those of their opponents by using trash barrels and keeping the facilities in good condition.

XXIII. SCHOOL DISCIPLINE OBLIGATIONS

- a.** A student-athlete with a school disciplinary obligation is required to fulfill that obligation before reporting to an athletic practice and/or game. Disciplinary action shall not be postponed or cancelled for any athletic reason. The Athletic Department, in conjunction with the school administration, reserves the right to remove a student from a team for disciplinary reasons and may reinstate her upon sufficient evidence of improved behavior

XXIV. NCAA REGISTRATION

- a.** Ursuline Academy Guidance Department has a wealth of information and

experience on NCAA regulations. They also have copies of the NCAA Clearinghouse Registration forms, which must be completed by students planning to participate at the college level.

XXV. SPORTSMANSHIP

- a.** Ursuline Academy expects all parties at a sports contest to display the highest level of sportsmanship toward opponents, officials, coaches, and spectators.
- b.** The MIAA reserves the right to "warn, censure, place on probation or suspend for up to a calendar year any player, team, coach, game/school official, or school determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship. Ursuline Academy, in turn, reserves the right to impose the same penalties on spectators displaying poor sportsmanship at any contests, both at Ursuline Academy and at away games.

XXVI. MIAA CHEMICAL HEALTH RULE: ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS

- a.** During the season of practice or play, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product, marijuana, steroids, or any controlled substance.. This policy includes products such as "NA or near beer". It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her physician.
- b.** This MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render "guilt by association" e.g., many students--athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate the standard. (Refer to www.miaa.net for full rule)
- c.** Ursuline Academy penalties are stricter than the MIAA base standard. Students found smoking tobacco will receive MIAA penalties and a detention. Evidence of possession, use or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school property or at school-sponsored events is justifiable grounds for expulsion from school after due process.
- d.** This rules applies all year not only for in season violations.

XXVII. ATHLETIC WARM-UP POLICY

- a.** Ursuline Academy has approved a specific warm-up suit to be used by all athletes at all contests where they are representing Ursuline Academy. This warm-up is the only garment to be used over the official playing uniforms. Coaches may provide teams with non-official tee shirts; however, the graphics and text shall be reviewed and approved by the Athletic Director.
- b.** Orders for the official warm-up garment are collected three (3) times during the school year. Orders may be made on the Ursuline Academy Website.

XXVIII. NON-SCHOOL CONDUCT

- a.** Athletes shall be responsible for and held accountable for non-school conduct that does not follow Ursuline Academy's code of conduct or violates MIAA policies. Ursuline Academy School Administration will evaluate the situation on a case by case basis. Athletes found to be in violation may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or removal from the team

XXIX. OUT-OF-SEASON STUDENT ATHLETES

- a.** For out-of season athletes, Ursuline Academy will enforce the above-described

policy during the school day and at all extra-curricular and school sponsored activities. School is considered to be any location where a school sponsored activity is taking place. The penalties listed above will commence for out-of-season athletes at the start of the next athletic season.

XXX. OUT-OF-SEASON SPORTS INVOLVEMENT

- a.** Participation in out-of-season clinics, leagues, or other related sports activities is strictly left to the discretion of the student-athlete and her family. Participation in such activities will have no bearing on student participation on an Ursuline Academy athletic team. We encourage all students to take full advantage of the activities offered and become involved in more than one sport.
- b.** According to the MIAA rules, "Neither a coach nor any other representative of the school may require an athlete to participate in a sport or training program outside of the MIAA defined sport season." Voluntary conditioning sessions, open equally to all students in the school and which are entirely devoid of sport specific activity, may be conducted between seasons provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so. A "candidate" is defined as an athlete who participated in the school program at some level in that sport the previous season.

XXXI. HARASSMENT

- a.** Ursuline Academy is committed to creating a school climate that is supportive and respectful of all school community members and conducive to serious learning. Therefore, harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or ethnic and religious background is a serious violation of school policy and will not be tolerated. Any incidents should be reported immediately to a counselor and/or administrator.

XXXII. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- a.** Sexual harassment violates State and Federal law and is a serious violation of Ursuline Academy policy. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

‘submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or success as a student -submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual; or -such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or educational environment’

XXXIII. HAZING

- a.** It is a crime to participate in or organize hazing, or for a person at the scene of such a crime to fail to report the incident (Massachusetts State Law). Hazing is defined as the following:

‘Any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person’



Ursuline Academy
[2010]