

# **Rootstown Local Schools**



## **Athletic Handbook**

Board Approved - August 2025

# FORWARD

The purpose of this athletic handbook is to present the procedures, rules and regulations, and philosophy of the interscholastic athletic program and related activities of Rootstown High School. In addition, this material is compiled to inform and guide the involved personnel of accepted practices and to specify expected duties and responsibilities.

Athletics in the Rootstown Local School District are primarily governed by the Constitution and the Rules of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and high school league policy of Portage County. These documents are not included as a part of this guide, but are on file for reference in the office of the athletic director. Coaches are responsible for abiding by the rules and bylaws of the O.H.S.A.A. and Portage Trail Conference policy and also for keeping the participants in compliance with these rules and bylaws. The athletic directors and principals shall serve as resource persons and interpreters of O.H.S.A.A. rules and for the Portage Trail Conference.

"Sports, for young people especially, must be taught by strong men and women who are not beguiled by easy success formulas, who are not influenced by big time models, who are not afraid to exert moral leadership, who are unwilling to view their sporting lives as crusades. People such as those who love kids and sports and are able to view their coaching in such a balanced way should not only be supported by their schools and communities, they should also be valued as teachers in the best sense of that term and tradition."

Phi Delta Kappa June 1979, pp. 734-736

# **Message to Parents and Student-Athletes**

This handbook is made available to you because your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete. We are pleased with your interest in the athletic program. We believe that a comprehensive program of student activities is vital to the educational development of our students.

Participating in an athletic program is a privilege. As a student-athlete, you are held to higher standards in the classroom, on the field and in the community. You are representing many people, including past student-athletes, your family, the community, the school, your coaches and fellow student-athletes. Your involvement in athletics can be very rewarding.

As a student-athlete, you have to carry yourself with tremendous pride. You must wear the uniform proudly. Your actions constantly reflect on others. You must realize that you are a role model for the younger members of the community. As a student-athlete, you have an opportunity to set a good example for those who follow you.

As student-athletes elect to participate, there are many questions that both you and your son/daughter may have regarding the athletic program. The purpose of this handbook is to answer as many questions about the policies of the program as possible (i.e. keep student-athletes and parents as informed as possible in order to assist in making the athletic experience a positive one for our student-athletes). We are hopeful that this handbook will be of assistance to you as your child participates in the athletic program.

# **Rootstown Local Schools Sports Offered**

## **Rootstown Middle School: 7th & 8th Grade**

- Football
- Volleyball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Cheerleading
- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Track

## **Rootstown High School: 9th through 12th Grade**

- Football
- Volleyball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Soccer
- Cheerleading
- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Bowling
- Track
- Baseball
- Softball

# **Athletic Philosophy**

Rootstown High School extends the opportunity to all students to participate in extracurricular activities. The goals of these programs are to make school life richer and more rewarding and to assist each student in developing a positive self-concept and healthy attitudes as they mature mentally, physically, morally and socially.

A variety of extra-curricular activities are provided with the hope of meeting the above goals. In each of these activities participation is a high priority, and it is hoped that each student will be part of one or more activities.

To further assist in meeting these goals, reasonable rules are developed to promote order and safety within the activity. These rules will serve as tools to assist each participant to reach his/her maximum performance potential and to learn self-discipline and values that will carry over into daily living.

Drugs and alcohol have harmful effects on the social, intellectual, physical and emotional development of young people. Care will be taken to educate students concerning these harmful effects and to work with the drug prevention programs within the school.

By involving as many participants who are developing positive self-concepts; are maturing physically, mentally, emotionally and socially; and being drug free, we will assist our youth in maturing into men and women who will be productive citizens within our community.

## **Win/Lose Philosophy**

Rootstown High School defines winning as each individual or team excelling to the best of their potential. We acknowledge that this definition is highly subjective and that potential changes will occur over time.

The extra-curricular programs shall strive to encourage young people to participate in and excel to the greatest of their potential. It shall strive to teach participants how to defeat an opponent and to accept defeat with dignity, respect and consideration for both themselves and their opponents.

The participant shall be taught that defeating an opponent or being defeated only means that individual performance differs and that self-respect and self-worth have not been improved or lost. Administrators, coaches, parents and spectators shall respect the dignity and self-worth of participants.

The emphasis on winning and losing shall be in teaching young people how to focus on excellence, set goals, how to strive for these goals, how to continue if they fail to meet their goals, and how to create new goals as they participate on an athletic team.

# Parent/Guardian Expectations

- Parents will communicate openly and freely with coaches and administrators.
- Parents will communicate with respect and be honest.
- Parents will communicate issues and concerns in a timely manner, including those of their student-athlete's physical and emotional well-being.
- Parents will follow an appropriate chain of command:
  - Parent – Position Coach or Head Coach of the level of play
  - Parent – Head Coach of the program (Varsity Head Coach)
  - Parent – Athletic Director
  - Parent – Principal
  - Parent – Superintendent
- Parents are required to attend meetings when scheduled and read all information disseminated by coaches and the athletic department.
- Playing time is not guaranteed and may only be discussed with the coaches.
- Parents will display good sportsmanship and behavior by doing the following:
  - Understanding the game is for the student-athletes, not the adults
  - Recognizing that student participation is a privilege
  - Displaying good sportsmanship as a spectator, and conducting yourself in a manner that reflects positively on both the team and school
  - Promoting the team by being supportive and positive when helping the program
  - Respecting the officials, opponents, coaches and players
  - Refraining from coaching from the stands
  - Understanding that the student-athlete has an obligation to attend all practices and games
  - Parents will create a positive and supportive environment to promote your student-athlete's well-being by:
    - Supporting good conditioning and a healthy lifestyle
    - Placing the emotional and physical well-being of your student-athlete ahead of any personal desire to win
    - Expecting your student-athlete to play in a healthy and safe environment
    - Supporting your student-athlete to be successful in the classroom given the demands of training and practices
    - Being a role model for other parents by remaining positive at sporting events
    - Getting involved and staying involved in a positive manner as you support your student-athlete is critical to the success of the team (i.e., concessions, game support, fundraisers, banquets)
- Failure to follow the standards and expectations of the Rootstown Local School District and the athletic department may cause you to forfeit your right to attend athletic events.

# Parent/Student Meeting Process for Addressing Issues

In the event of an issue or concern related to a sport or activity, the following process will be followed to ensure open communication and resolution:

1. Initial Concern:  
The concerned student, parent, or coach should first attempt to address the issue directly with the involved parties, such as the coach or team member, in a respectful manner.
2. Request for a Meeting:  
If the concern is not resolved at the initial level, the parent or student should request a formal meeting with the coach or athletic director. This request can be made in person or via email.
3. Scheduling the Meeting:  
The athletic director or coach will coordinate a convenient time for all parties involved within a reasonable timeframe, typically within one week of the request.
4. Meeting Agenda:  
The meeting will focus on discussing the issue, listening to all perspectives, and collaboratively seeking solutions. Participants are encouraged to communicate respectfully and listen attentively.
5. Resolution and Follow-up:  
Based on the discussion, appropriate actions or resolutions will be established. The athletic director will follow-up via email to ensure that the issue has been addressed and that all parties are satisfied with the outcome.
6. Escalation:  
If the issue remains unresolved, it can be escalated to the school building principal for further review and intervention.

The goal of this process is to promote understanding, resolve conflicts amicably, and maintain a positive team or activity environment.

# Academic Eligibility

The eligibility requirements for Rootstown Local Schools shall be the same as those adopted by the Ohio High School Athletic Association. All student-athletes must maintain at least a 1.5 G.P.A. in order to be eligible for extra-curricular activities.

## **Section 4. Scholarship**

44-4-1 In order to be eligible in grades 9-12, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period. During the preceding grading period, the student-athlete must have received passing grades in a minimum of five one-credit courses or the equivalent which counts toward graduation. Physical education is the only class not considered a one-credit course. So student-athletes taking physical education must be taking at least six classes per semester to be eligible for athletics at the high school level.

4-4-2 The eligibility or ineligibility of a student-athlete continues until the start of the fifth (5th) school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective.

4-4-3 A student-athlete enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from the eighth grade must have passed a minimum of four subjects carried the immediately preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.

4-4-4 A student-athlete enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement.

4-4-5 The eligibility of a transfer student-athlete must be established by school records or verification from the sending school. The responsibility for establishing eligibility rests with the receiving school.

4-4-6 Summer school grades earned may not be used to substitute for a failing grade(s) from the last grading period of the regular school year.

4-4-7 Tutoring or examinations to complete the preceding grading period requirements is permissible provided the inability to complete the required work on time is due to illness or accident verified by a physician and the procedure applies to all student-athletes in the school.

4-4-8 The O.H.S.A.A. commissioner may waive the requirement of preceding grading period enrollment if a student-athlete has been withdrawn or removed from school because of circumstances due to personal accident, illness or family hardship. The principal or the official designee of the school shall appeal in writing to the commissioner. The appeal shall contain documents with school and medical supporting evidence. The decision of the commissioner may be appealed to the O.H.S.A.A. Board of Control.

# PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- All academic eligibility requirements must be satisfied.
- A current physical must be on file in the athletic office prior to the first practice.
- An Emergency Medical Form needs to be completed and on file in the athletic office prior to the first practice.
- Any other required documents must be on file in the athletic office prior to the first practice.
- All equipment issued to a player is to be worn only at practice sessions or at scheduled games involving a particular sport, unless specified by the head coach.
- Each player is responsible for all equipment issued and must return this equipment immediately upon completion of the season.
- All athletic equipment and supplies are the legal property of the Board of Education. Therefore school equipment may not be taken for the use of outside organizations or for personal use.
- Players should exhibit proper conduct and personal appearance that will create a positive reflection of themselves, teammates and the students of Rootstown Local Schools.
- All players must uphold the traditions of good sportsmanship and fair play.
- In order to participate, a player must attend school on the day of the contest game, meet, match, or performance. Exceptions to this would be a written doctor's note, documented court appearance, approved senior early release, school related activity or approved college visit. Athletes are never permitted to stay home and "rest up" before or after an activity. The principal may grant exceptions to this rule in advance on individual cases and any extenuating circumstances. Student-athletes shall refer to the student handbook for more details on attendance policies for athletics.
- The athletic department will arrange playing and practice schedules so that class absences due to athletic events will be kept to a minimum. However, it will be necessary at certain times for participants to be excused from class to be involved in an athletic contest.
- No member of an interscholastic team (in season) may play on an intramural or non-school sanctioned team in the same sport.
- No player may participate on two athletic teams during the same season unless approved by the athletic department. A dual participation form must be on file in the athletic office with all qualifications successfully met.
- Participation in "open gym" sessions by an athlete in season must be sanctioned by the coach of the team upon which the athlete is participating.

# Coaches Responsibilities

While the list of responsibilities may appear lengthy, it represents what we feel is a necessary guideline for our staff. Coaching young men and women in the development of physical skills and positive attitudes is a task not to be taken lightly. The total success of our program both as winners in the contests and winners in shaping young lives is dependent upon your positive contribution and cooperation.

## Preseason Responsibilities:

- Attend a state approved certification meeting for sports medicine and inform all assistants of this same responsibility.
- Provide athletic director with certificates of completion.
- Read and know the eligibility rules regarding your sport. This includes rule interpretations as well as athlete eligibility.
- Abide by O.H.S.A.A. limits on scrimmages and schedule them accordingly.
- Supply the athletic director with dates and officials' needs.
- Consult with the athletic director before ordering equipment or supplies; a purchase order must be used, and all items must have appeared on the preseason budget.
- Schedule facilities to be used for practice during vacation periods with the athletic director. A two-week notification is needed to schedule any specific facility and a building permit must be filled out and be on file. Building permits are necessary for any building or facility use aside from regularly scheduled games and practices.
- Notify the athletic director when buses are needed for team transportation.
- Check the schedule for bus departure times.
- Abide by the Rootstown Local Schools' Code of Conduct and notify the athletic director and/or principal of any infraction.

## Starting the season:

- Confirm that all student-athletes have the following before practicing:
  - Physical forms signed by parent and physician. These forms are to be collected and kept on file with the athletic director.
  - Insurance form or insurance waiver signed by parent.
  - Emergency medical form signed by parent. These forms must be present at all practices and games.
  - Team rules including the Rootstown Code of Conduct as well as athletic policies.
  - O.H.S.A.A. Athletic Eligibility Bulletin signed by student-athlete and parent.
  - Additional rules as given in writing by the coach. A copy of these must be approved by the athletic director.
  - Give to the athletic director one week before the first game the names and birthdays of all athletes trying out for the team. This list of names should be submitted alphabetically and by year in school.
  - Oversee the issuance of equipment and to be sure all equipment is properly certified fits properly.
  - Assign duties and responsibilities to assistant coaches and inform them of their postseason evaluation of the performance of these duties.
  - Supply your medical kit and first aid room with proper needs. A first aid kit with emergency medical forms must be present at all practices and games.

### Responsibilities at Practices and Games:

- Coaches are to be the first persons to enter and the last to leave any facility during their practice hours. No players are to be left in the facility unsupervised, and student-athletes are never to be given keys to a facility. Practice times will be posted and distributed to student-athletes and are expected to be out of the facility 15 minutes after any practice session.
- Check showers, lights and locks upon leaving a facility. Make sure locker rooms, benches and facilities are clean prior to leaving the facility.

### Injury Procedure:

- Notify the parents and athletic director at once.
- Call 911 for injuries requiring transport. A responsible person should ride with any transported student-athlete if parents are not available. Under no circumstances should a coach transport or allow a person other than the student-athlete's parent or guardian to transport an injured student-athlete to a medical facility in that person's car.
- Follow up on injuries that require home care and confinement. A phone call and/or home visit helps student-athletes feel they are still part of the team.
- Any student-athlete incurring an injury in a practice or game that requires medical treatment must have a medical release form signed by a certified athletic trainer or doctor before returning to a practice or game.
- Players should be supervised at all times during practice sessions.
- Coaches are expected to dress for public contests in an appropriate manner.
- During games, coaches are responsible for the conduct of their squads from the beginning to the end of their trip. This includes bus supervision, game time and postgame locker room cleanup.
- Officials' judgments are never to be questioned in a degrading manner that might incite players or fans. If an official is in question, notify the athletic director in writing the next day.
- All players and managers are expected to ride the bus to and from all contests and away practices. A coach may allow a student-athlete to ride with a parent during an emergency only after talking directly to the parent. Students who do not have specific duties related to the team are not allowed to ride the team bus. Anyone riding the bus must have an emergency medical form present during the trip. A list of all persons riding the bus is to be given to the driver prior to each trip.
- Notify the athletic director and/or high school principal in writing of any student-athlete removed from a contest by an official. Include as much information regarding the incident and those incidents leading up to the removal.

### Program Coordination:

- The high school head coach is responsible for developing carry-over of system and technique between the middle school and high school programs. This will be accomplished through close coordination between the head coach of a varsity sport, the middle school coaches and the athletic director.
- All phases of the middle school program, such as financing, booster clubs, scheduling, purchasing of equipment, eligibility, gym scheduling, etc., is the responsibility of the athletic director.
- Each coach is directly responsible to the athletic director and should consult him/her regarding policies and problems dealing with high school athletics. The athletic director is responsible to report to the high school principal.
- Squad selection policies will be determined by the head coach. Before moving a student-athlete from one squad to another, careful consideration should be given to the morale of the teams, the mental and

physical maturity of the student-athlete, and the psychological effects on the individual and the teams involved. Any such underclassman must be expected to participate significantly with the squad to which he has been elevated.

- Provide written notification to the athletic director at once when any student-athlete quits or is dropped from a team. It is suggested that a coach follow up on such a player as to the reasons leading to the student-athlete's decision to quit. Self-exclusion forms are available in the athletic office.
- Coaches are encouraged to recruit participation of athletes from the Rootstown school system into their sport. Care should be taken to avoid specialization in any single sport and coaches should encourage student-athletes to participate in other athletic teams. No coach should attempt to enhance his program at the expense of another or recruit student-athletes from another sport that's participating in the same season.
- Coaches who are absent from school due to personal illness more than half a day may not return for practice or any event on that day.
- Coaches should keep statements to the press constructive and positive. Players or personnel should not be singled out for criticism.

#### Fund Raising:

School related activities must be approved by the athletic director, principal and superintendent. Any fundraiser must exclude door-to-door solicitation throughout the community.

#### Post-Season Responsibilities:

- Coaches are responsible for the collection, care and storage of all equipment and uniforms.
- Supply the athletic director with an end-of-the-season inventory of all equipment and uniforms
- Formulate a list of budget items needed for the next season including the prices for each item. This budget must be completed by May 1.
- Coordinate offseason activities and needs. Any needs must be submitted in writing and must be approved on the budget. Booster groups will supplement budgets, and these needs must be submitted in writing to the athletic director. After a budget is written and approved, a coach may personally request special items at a booster meeting.
- Supply the athletic director with a list of all players and their earned awards. Include lettermen and those special awards accounted for in the awards allowance.
- Coaches at the high school will work with college recruiters and aid student-athletes in continuing their involvement in post-graduate opportunities.
- Coaches are encouraged to attend booster meetings when they do not conflict with coaching.
- Coaches must attend athletic meetings when scheduled by the athletic director unless excused by an appropriate supervisor.
- Coaches should coordinate and schedule offseason activities such as open gym, weight lifting, camps, etc., that are within the rules of the Ohio High School Athletic Association.
- Coaches are encouraged to enhance their professional development by attending clinics and/or postseason contests. Money needs for such must be accounted for in the submitted athletic or booster budgets.
- End of the year evaluation: Head coaches will be evaluated by the athletic director and principal at the end of the season. A written evaluation will be given to each coach at a meeting within two weeks of the conclusion of the season. Head coaches will also submit written evaluations of their assistants at this meeting. Forms for this evaluation may be obtained from the athletic director.

# ATHLETIC POLICIES

- If a player takes a vacation with parents, that player is not to be punished or dismissed from the squad. However, the coach should discuss possible consequences, which may include playing time limitations, with the player and the parents. This discussion should occur prior to the planned vacation.
- Only team members are permitted on the team bench or bus. The team includes coaches, players, managers, statisticians and the team physician.
- All practice games or scrimmages are scheduled by the head coach and approved by the athletic director.
- When games are played away from Rootstown, players must travel on transportation supplied by the school and must return on this transportation unless special permission has been given by the head coach directly from the parents.
- Any student-athlete, while a member of an athletic team representing Rootstown Local Schools at home or away, who destroys, damages, defaces, breaks or steals any property of the school's facilities used for practices, including school buses, shall make them subject to dismissal or suspension from the squad. The student-athlete must also pay for damages or repairs.
- No player may transfer from one sport to another after the first week of practice.
- If a player quits a sport, he or she may not join another sport until the season from which he withdrew has been completed. Any student-athlete who is cut from a squad may choose to compete in another sport within 72 hrs. (three days) of the cut being made. The student-athlete should consult with the coach of the new sport prior to making that decision.
- A student-athlete joining a team after the first allowable practice date must have adequate practice before being entered into a contest. A minimum of 10 practice days are recommended.
- A student-athlete who is serving an out of school suspension will not be permitted to attend or participate in any games or practices during the suspension.
- Injuries and Insurance:
  - It is mandatory that a student-athlete be covered by insurance.
  - Medical coverage for athletes shall be covered as prescribed by the OHSAA.
  - There shall be an ambulance in attendance at all home varsity football games.
  - It is the coach's responsibility to see that any injured player is accompanied by his parents or a school official to obtain medical attention. Students are not to assume this responsibility. Any student-athlete incurring injuries in a practice or game requiring medical attention are required to show a medical release before being returned to a practice or game situation. All such injuries should be documented by the head coach.
  - Forms for injuries:
    - Injury release form to doctor
    - Injury record form for season
    - Football insurance form
    - Emergency medical form (carried in medical kit)
    - Physical form
- Participation in open gym, open mats, weightlifting, etc., by student-athletes involved in season on an athletic team will be permitted or denied by the coach in season. Each coach while in season may allow or disallow this participation.
- Only those people whose names appear on the eligibility list shall be on the sideline/bench in all sports.

# **Bullying and Hazing**

(Harassment, Intimidation, and Dating Violence) Policy 5517.01

Bullying is an intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act that a student has exhibited more than once toward a student or students. The behavior causes mental or physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for others.

Hazing is defined as any act of coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation to any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

All student-athletes must follow the Student Code of Conduct and Board Policy 5517.01 regarding Bullying and Hazing. This also includes any acts of bullying and/or hazing towards a person's race, religion, gender, gender identification, disability, and national origin.

## **Training Rules and Regulations**

Any student-athlete using or possessing alcohol or tobacco, or using, possessing, buying or selling counterfeit drugs, look-alike drugs, including E-Cigarettes, juuling, illegal drugs or any substance represented to be an illegal drug, shall be prohibited from participating in interscholastic athletics. This rule shall be in effect during the season for those who made the team.

Any substance, as defined by United States Code, is a substance which any individual may not sell, offer to sell, exchange, give, possess, use, distribute or purchase under state or federal law. This definition also includes all prescription drugs obtained without authorization, and all prescribed and over the-counter drugs being used in any way other than for medical purposes, in accordance with the directions for use provided in the prescription or by the manufacturer. This definition includes nicotine and any vaping/juuling devices.

Consequences for the use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, bullying, or hazing in any form:

- First Violation:
  - The penalty for a first violation will be prohibition from athletic participation (contests) for a minimum of 2 contests of that sport. Any remaining percentage of the prohibition of participation not served may be applied toward the next sport in which the student-athlete participates.
  - Any student-athlete disciplined for the first violation may practice with his/her team. He/she may travel with the team and sit on the bench. He/she cannot be in uniform. All training rules and requirements of the sport team must be followed by the student-athlete during the period of prohibited participation.
  - The student-athlete's penalty for a first violation may be held in abeyance if the principal permits the student-athlete to complete a program of counseling as established by the principal.

- Second Violation:
  - Upon confirmation of the second violation, athletic participation (contests) will be prohibited for one full calendar year.
  - Any student-athlete disciplined for the second violation may practice with his/her team. He/she may travel with the team and sit on the bench. He/she cannot be in uniform. All training rules and requirements of the sport team must be followed by the student-athlete during the period of prohibition participation.
- Third Violation:
  - The student-athlete found in violation of the training rules a third time shall be prohibited from athletic participation for the remainder of his/her athletic career. After one calendar year from determination of his/her guilt, an appeal can be made to the superintendent for reinstatement contingent upon substantiated rehabilitation.

## **Appeals Procedure**

A student-athlete may appeal a suspension from athletics, in writing, to the superintendent within three (3) school days following the date on the notice of prohibition from athletics. The decision of the superintendent shall be final and not subject to any further appeal. During the time any appeal is pending, all penalties in this policy shall be enforced.

## **Risk of Injury**

All student-athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury which may be the result of athletic participation. The Rootstown Local School District will only use state certified coaches.

# AWARDS

Awards are an integral part of any athletic program. It is Rootstown's intention to recognize outstanding achievement yet, at the same time, not diminish the value of any award. A student-athlete must complete the season in good standing to be presented an award. A student-athlete must attend the awards ceremony or be excused in advance by the coach or he/she will forfeit his/her award.

- Freshmen will have numerals designating their year of graduation.
- Any student-athlete who does not earn a letter will receive a certificate.
- First-year letterwinners will receive a 6" block "R" letter plus a medal insert designating the sport. Each additional letter earned will be a medal insert designating the sport.
- A three-year plaque will be presented to a senior who has earned three letters in one sport.
- A four-year trophy will be presented to a senior who has earned four letters in one sport.

## Letter criteria:

- A student-athlete must participate at the varsity level in half the quarters in basketball and football (in football, a player must appear two times in a quarter for that quarter to be counted toward a letter); half the games in baseball bowling, golf, softball, volleyball, soccer and wrestling; earn an average of one point per meet in track; and earn an average of 1/2 points per meet in cross country.
- A cheerleader must cheer in all games or be excused in advance by the cheerleading advisor. If an alternate is activated to a full-time cheerleader, she must cheer in at least half of the regular season games to earn a letter.
- Any student-athlete that remains in good standing with the same sport from grades 9 through 12, and has not lettered before, will earn a letter their senior year.
- Any student-athlete who is a starter or plays regularly and was thereafter injured may be awarded a letter if, in the coach's judgment, he/she would have met the lettering requirements.

## Trophies:

The following trophies will be purchased by the athletic department and will be the only trophies distributed at the sports banquet:

- Varsity M.V.P. trophy shall be presented for each sport.
- J.V. M.V.P. trophy shall be presented if there is a J.V. team.
- Additional trophies or plaques may be presented. The coach and athletic director will decide the names of these trophies.
- An Outstanding Freshman trophy shall be presented if five freshmen finish the season in good standing.

## **Ernie Harris and Mary Ann Conley Awards:**

These awards are presented to the senior boy and girl who most exemplify athletic ability, leadership, citizenship and scholarship. The following criteria will be used to determine those chosen:

- One point for each sport participated in from 9th through 12th grade.
- One-half point for the following special awards: All-State, All-Northeast Ohio, All-Conference, Captain, Varsity M.V.P., J.V. M.V.P. and Outstanding Freshman.
- One-fourth point for membership in Student Council, National Honor Society, Yearbook or a Class Officer.
- Grade point average

# EVALUATION OF COACHES

The athletic program is an integral part of the overall instructional program of the Rootstown Local Schools. Students are given the opportunity to pursue athletic activities to a greater depth than available in the normal physical education classroom setting. The emphasis of the athletic program is to provide opportunities for students to participate and enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes in their areas of interest. The effectiveness of employee performance should be monitored to provide feedback to those performing successfully, to assist those whose performance can improve, and to ensure a positive and fair assessment of each employee's performance.

Accountability of athletic programs is a necessity if they are going to survive. Fundamental to an effective evaluation system is a commitment of both administration and staff to the value and desirability to the process of evaluation. The administration must make a commitment to provide professional assistance to coaches and believe that coaches do have a desire to grow in their profession. The coaching staff must make a commitment to use the instrument to assist in their self growth. The person who will be evaluated must have confidence in the instrument being used.

## OBJECTIVES OF EVALUATION OF COACHES:

- To assure that quality of coaching is a responsibility shared by the coaching staff, athletic director and administration.
- To improve the experiences and environment in which the student-athlete is involved by assessing aspects of the leadership, management and organizational skills of the coach.
- To encourage and promote professional growth and development, particularly as they relate to technical skill and knowledge of the activity.
- To identify those factors which interfere with the coach's contribution to the athletic program.
- To provide the administration a means of providing coaches recognition for outstanding contributions to the athletic program, as well as suggestions for improving upon previous performance.

## PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATION OF HEAD COACHES:

- The principal and athletic director will be responsible for the evaluation of each head coach.
- The principal and the athletic director will review the final evaluation. The written evaluation for head coaches will be completed within one to three weeks after the conclusion of the season. This evaluation will be filed with the athletic director.
- The evaluation form will be signed by the principal, athletic director and the coach following discussion of the evaluation. The coach is to receive a copy of the evaluation form. Also, the coach may write an addendum to the evaluation, if desired.

# ROOTSTOWN STUDENT-ATHLETE TEAM RULES

It is the belief at Rootstown that participation in athletics is a privilege and an honor. Therefore, it is the duty of each student-athlete to represent his/herself and the school at the highest level possible. The following rules give guidelines by which the Rootstown administration may direct actions of our athletes. Certain criteria must be met in order for a student-athlete or cheerleader to participate in the athletic program. All must have the following before he/she is permitted to begin practicing:

1. Physical examination
2. Emergency medical authorization form
3. Insurance coverage or waiver form
4. Equipment responsibility form
5. Signed team rules sheet (this form)
6. OHSAA eligibility form
7. Additional team rules (if applicable)

It is the responsibility of every student-athlete to abide by the rules set down by the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the Rootstown Local Schools' student-parent handbook and code of conduct, as well as rules established by the athletic department. Failure to comply with these regulations will subject the student-athlete to an appropriate punishment. These rules are in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the student-athlete's season. A season is defined from the first day of practice through the final contest.

A student-athlete or cheerleader must be in school five periods in order to practice or participate in a contest that day. Weekend events require attendance standards be met on the preceding school day (usually Friday). Exceptions to this rule include a written doctor's note, court appearance, approved release, school related activity or approved college visit. Any student-athlete serving an out of school suspension will not be allowed to participate in practice or a contest during the suspension.

The following specific rules of conduct are punishable by denial of participation during practice or contests. The principal, athletic director, coach and superintendent will determine the length and conditions of the denial period.

1. Possession, use, concealment or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages or unprescribed drugs of any kind.
2. Attendance at a gathering where alcohol or drugs are being consumed or used by juveniles.
3. Attendance at an establishment where alcohol may be consumed unless under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian.
4. Disrespect for the coach, administrator, teacher or any person acting as an official.
5. Abusing locker room facilities, gymnasium, school building/grounds or equipment.
6. An unexcused absence from practice or a contest. The coach will determine what is excusable. The coach should be contacted personally before a practice or contest is missed.
7. Stealing.
8. A curfew violation the night before a contest.
9. Unsportsmanlike conduct, before, during or after a practice or contest.
10. Other conduct not specifically mentioned that is deemed by the principal, athletic director, coach or superintendent to be inappropriate and warrant a denial of participation.

Any student-athlete caught selling or distributing illegal drugs will be suspended from all athletic participation for one calendar year. If a student-athlete voluntarily seeks help for a drug dependency, the student-athlete will not be denied participation so long as he/she participates regularly in an approved rehabilitation program. Failure to attend assigned meetings or prescribed treatment will result in immediate suspension. Any student-athlete charged with a crime outside of school is subject to placement on athletic probation.

The following rules of conduct are punishable by extra running:

1. Arriving late to practice, meetings or contests.
2. Harassing other student-athletes or students.
3. Abusive language on or off the athletic field.

A coach may add additional rules to cover his/her specific activity. Any additional rules will be submitted in writing to the athletic director with copies given to each student-athlete.

# Return to Participate Contract

The following stipulations must be met before a Rootstown High School student-athlete returns to a game/contest based upon inappropriate actions in the past.

1. The student-athlete must apologize to his/her coaches and teammates for actions unbecoming of a Rootstown High School student-athlete. This apology needs to be sincere and not just an "I'm sorry for my actions" statement.
2. Write at least a 500-word essay on "How to be a good teammate." The coaches may ask that this essay be read to the team as a reminder for all student-athletes involved in the program of how a good teammate should act on a daily basis.
3. The student-athlete must show respect for all of his/her coaches and teammates, thus not being involved in any further confrontations during the remainder of the season.
4. It's expected that the student-athlete works hard, is a positive role model for others in the program and always sets a good example moving forward.
5. When representing Rootstown High School during competition, the student-athlete will exercise self-control in all ways including, but not limited to, resisting the use of profanity, demonstrating unnecessary aggression towards others, making inappropriate physical gestures, and disrespecting coaches, teammates, officials or opponents.

If the above stipulations have been successfully carried out then the student-athlete can be considered for participation in games/contests during the remaining weeks of the season. If at any time, the student-athlete fails to uphold this contract then he/she will be eliminated from the program for the remainder of the season. A student-athlete who doesn't finish the season in good standing will not be invited to the end-of-the-season awards ceremony or receive a letter.

# Parent/Student-Athlete Meeting Form

**Date of Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Participants:**

- Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_
- Student: \_\_\_\_\_
- Coach: \_\_\_\_\_
- Athletic Director: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Reason for Meeting (Brief Summary):**

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## **Discussion Notes:**

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## **Agreed-Upon Actions or Resolutions:**

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## **Follow-Up Plan & Timeline:**

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## **Acknowledgment & Signatures**

By signing below, all participants acknowledge that the discussion above accurately reflects the meeting, and that the agreed-upon actions will be followed.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Coach Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Athletic Director Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_