

## **Athletics Philosophy**

### **Varsity Program Philosophy**

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sport's program. Normally, seniors and juniors make up the majority of the roster. Occasionally a sophomore and infrequently a freshman may be included on the team providing that evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate socio-emotional development is demonstrated. It is possible, but rare, for a middle school level student to be included on a varsity roster. Selection classification occurs more frequently in sports commonly classified as "individual" (track, golf, swimming, etc.)

Squad size at the varsity level is limited. The number of participants on any given team is a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest. It is vital that each team member has a role and is informed of its importance. The number of roster positions is relative to the students' acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team's goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed.

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on a varsity team, as is the realization that a varsity sport requires a six-day-a-week commitment. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons. While contests and practices are rarely held on holidays and Sundays, the dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity program should be taken seriously.

The varsity coach is the leader of that sport's program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. The communication among the modified, junior varsity and varsity programs is the responsibility of the varsity coach. Preparing for success, striving for victory in each contest and working to reach the group's and individual's maximum potential are worthy goals of a varsity level team.

### **Junior Varsity Program Philosophy**

The junior varsity level is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive varsity level performers. Although team membership varies according to the structure of each program, sophomores occupy the majority of the roster positions. In certain situations, juniors who are expected to make contributions at the varsity level will be considered for junior varsity participation. Also, freshmen may be included on a junior varsity roster, as well as middle school students who have satisfied all selection classification requirements. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, team and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play in addition to socio-emotional development. Junior varsity programs work toward achieving a balance between continued team and player development and striving for victory. The outcome of the contest becomes a consideration at this level.

The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful junior varsity team and player. For all team members, meaningful contest participation will exist over the course of a season; however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for a six-day-a-week commitment that is expected at the varsity level. While contests and practices are rarely held on Sundays and holidays, practice sessions are sometimes scheduled during school vacation periods. With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the junior varsity level.

### **Modified Program Philosophy**

This program is available to all students in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Sport activities offered are determined by the existence of leagues, student interest, and the relationship to the high school program. At this level, the focus is on learning athletic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, socio-emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition.

At the modified level if the number of students trying out for a team creates a situation that is difficult to manage, poses a safety problem or is problematic because of facility considerations, reducing team size may be necessary. Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the availability of 1) financial resources; 2) qualified coaches; 3) suitable indoor or outdoor facilities; and, 4) a safe environment.

In order for the desired development of the adolescent athlete and team to occur, practice sessions are vital. The New York State Public High School Athletic Association publishes regulations by which practice sessions are governed. Occasionally, practice or contests will be scheduled for Saturdays. Opportunities for meaningful contest participation for each member will exist over the course of the season. Exceptional 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may be permitted to try out for a varsity, junior varsity or freshman team under the State Education Department program called Selection Classification.