

*Shepherd Hill
Athletics*



Coaches' Handbook

Updated 8/15/2012

“Ten years after the average athlete graduates, everyone will have forgotten when and where he played, but every time he opens his mouth, everyone will know whether he was educated.”

-Father Hesburgh, Notre Dame.

Philosophy

Shepherd Hill strongly supports the commitment to the ideals of interscholastic athletics. We believe that a broad athletic program, competently directed by people committed to the goals of the school, contributes to the future successes and happiness of our students.

The athletic program is an essential school component that provides young people an opportunity to develop self-image, character, and good physical health. In addition, athletics offer students a chance to learn the values associated with discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, accountability, and sacrifice. Shepherd Hill stresses the fact that athletics should be a rewarding experience for all that are involved.

Goal

- To help the student-athlete become a more successful individual

Coaching Positions

All coaching positions are filled annually. Chapter 71, Section 47A of Massachusetts General law states there is no tenure for athletic coaches as such under Section 41 of that chapter. Each applicant seeking a coaching position must submit a letter or application annually to the principal. Our District strives to fill each coaching position with the most qualified person available. Therefore, all coaching positions will be advertised as needed. Preference will be provided to a Dudley-Charlton Regional School District employee, applying for such a position if applicants' qualifications are considered equal.

Coaches' Education

As you know the M.I.A.A. has regulations for all coaches. These vary depending on when you started coaching and especially if you first entered coaching after July 1, 2005 and 2007. You can review these regulations in their handbook. It is the responsibility of the coach to complete this coursework as required by the M.I.A.A. and provide proof to the Athletic Department for verification. Coaches should check on the MIAA website under coaches' corner to determine if his/her name is on the official MIAA list. If it is not, please contact the MIAA. The department will reimburse a coach for all required courses to become a certified coach. Please fill out a conference/course request form for prior approval. After completing all requirements, you must submit all receipts and have proof of attendance and completion of the coursework to the Athletic Director. We will need to verify that your name is on the official MIAA list before you are reimbursed.

The Southern Worcester County League

Shepherd Hill is proud member of the Southern Worcester County League, or S.W.C.L. The league is comprised of thirteen schools divided into Western, Central, and Eastern conferences.

SWCL East
Grafton
Millbury
Northbridge
Oxford
Uxbridge

SWCL Central
Auburn
Shepherd Hill
Tantasqua

SWCL West
Bartlett
David Prouty
Leicester
Quaboag
Southbridge

Schedules

Scheduling is usually completed well before the start of your season. If you have any concerns or a personal conflict, please address these issues with the Athletic Director as soon as possible. Monitor the progress of your schedule. If you have any special requests, such as a night game, let the AD know with ample time. Please give the dates and times of scrimmages to the AD one month prior to the start of the season or as soon as you know. Scrimmages should be no more than 50% away and no more than 2 away scrimmages. Prior to each week's competition, you will receive a weekly schedule (usually Thursday or Friday). Please cross-reference this with your season schedule. Some of your games will be rescheduled due to inclement weather, so it is important to read this carefully and share this information with your players and their families. It is your responsibility to read this carefully. The Athletic Department is extremely diligent ensuring your games go off smoothly. Please do your part to correct any errors as soon as they are detected.

Coaching Expectations

Few people have the opportunity to impact the life of a student as greatly as a coach does. Coaches are part teacher, part parent, and part drill sergeant. It is imperative that your first mission as a coach is to teach the values associated with discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, accountability, and sacrifice. Remember, character *then* performance. Coaches are subject to the rules of the MIAA, SWCL, and DCRSD. The M.I.A.A. Coaches' Handbook succinctly addresses the concept of the coach. Besides useful ideas, it has the general and specific rules governing Massachusetts High School Athletics. The handbook can be found at miaa.net. The most updated SWCL by-laws are on file in the athletics' office. A copy will be sent to coaches prior to the start of each season. Read these publications carefully. DCRSD and Shepherd Hill policies and procedures are found in this handbook.

Professional Behavior

Remember that athletes often mirror their coaches. The team that you coach is a reflection of yourself. Treat your players, opponents, and officials with respect, and demand the same from your players. Remember you work in a district in which you are held accountable for everything you do and say. Keep yourself above reproach.

Communication

Clear, frequent, constructive communication is expected between coach and players; coach and parents; and coach and the Athletic Director.

Players: Take time at least weekly to meet with your team. Just a five-minute "chat" immediately before or after practice is often, all it takes to maintain good communication. Sometimes you may need to speak with a player individually to address a behavior problem, or a recent decline in the player's playing time, or a recent improvement in attitude, etc. Choose an appropriate time to do so, but don't put it off.

Parents: Keep parents informed about practices, changes in schedule, problems, or whatever. Parents can often help if you are having difficulty with a student-athlete. They like to hear the positives as well.

Athletic Director: All coaches are encouraged to communicate with the Athletic Director as much as possible/necessary. The majority of communication from a specific program to the department should come from the head coach. Requests for equipment, uniforms, etc and discussions about problems should generally come from the head coach. Communication specific to sub-varsity teams and assistant coaches should come from the appropriate coach. The Athletic Director will make himself available whenever possible to speak to a coach. Coaches should communicate with the Athletic Director on a regular basis to keep him up to date on team progress/issues. Please keep the Athletic Director up to date on exceptional individual or team performances, articles that highlight your team or players, as well as student-athletes who have been accepted to a college and plan to compete at that level.

Meetings

You are expected to attend coaches' meetings at various times throughout the year. These may be staff meetings at the school, team orientation meetings, pre-season league meetings, or all-star meetings. You should plan for these meetings as you would a game/contest. Your attendance is required. The league will organize all-star meetings for the area coaches to vote, please mark your calendar and plan to attend your sport specific meeting. Your deserving athletes need your voice at the meeting to be recognized as an all-star. League rules state that a school will not be awarded all-stars if the head coach is not present.

Other Responsibilities

Supervision: Proper supervision is a major safety issue. Coaches must monitor locker rooms before and after practice and contests. You should be the last one out of the locker room and lock the door behind you if yours is the last team in the building. Stay with student-athletes until their ride arrives if the situation calls for it. Do not let your team or any team into the gym and leave them unsupervised.

Security: Be sure all exterior doors in both gyms are secured before you leave the gym area. Be sure you are the last one out of the gym and the interior gym doors are secured.

Gym Doors: Gym Doors should remain closed during all practices. Dirt, debris, and sand tracked in from the outside act like sandpaper and ruin the floor. Opening the gym doors causes the heat to kick on in the winter, and it is cooler in the gym than outside in the warm weather. **Student-athletes are not to use the exterior gym doors/cafeteria as entrances and exits. Team members should enter and exit the building via the back entrance near the tennis courts. Inform your team and enforce this rule.**

The Media

SWCL By-Laws state that each coach (win, lose, home, away) is responsible for calling in the games to the press. The local media often interviews coaches. This includes the *Worcester Telegram*, the *Southbridge Evening News*, and occasionally Channel 3. While most reporters in our local area have a grasp of what we are trying to accomplish, some will try to generate a controversy whenever possible.

Keep these points in mind when dealing with the media:

- Be Gracious.
- Never criticize an opposing coach or player.
- Never criticize the officials.
- Never criticize your own players.
- Make sure to compliment the other team's ability.
- Be humble. If you win, praise the players. If you loose, praise the opponent.
- Always stay positive.
- Teach your athletes how to be gracious

Discipline

When dealing with the population that you do, there will no doubt be some challenges regarding athletes' behavior and/or adherence to team rules. As a very wise man once told me we are in the business of behavior modification. It is important that your rules be reasonable and enforceable. Be consistent and follow through. Rules should apply to bench players, starters, and practice players alike. Keep parents involved when appropriate. Often they can be helpful. If there appears to be irreconcilable differences between you and an athlete, and removal from the team becomes necessary, let him/her, the parents, and the Athletic Department know in a timely manner.

Try-Outs

One of the most exciting times of the season is the try out. Tryouts should not be a stressful time for the players or for the coach. Some tips to make your try-outs go smoothly

1. All students must have a physical dated after July 1st to try out.
2. Have a well thought out series of drills, exercises, and/or scrimmages and post them.
3. Have specific written criteria for selecting a team and post them where prospective players will see it.
4. Talk to the players as a group and explain where they need to improve, rather than posting a "cut list". Some students take this very hard-it is important to them, so please be empathetic.
5. Be enthusiastic. It is contagious.
6. Give everyone a fair shot.

Paperwork

Unfortunately, there is a lot of paperwork involved with coaching at the high school level. The Athletic Department is always looking for ways to streamline this process, please share any ideas that you have to make this a better process.

Coaches must confirm that all students:

- have a physical dated after July 1st
- are academically eligible (pass four majors) the preceding marking period plus for the year for fall sports
- have a signed parental permission
- have a signed chemical health contract
- have attended the general and individual Team Orientation Meeting
- have an emergency form on file with the coach
- have read the Athletic Fee Statement
- have fulfilled the concussion guideline obligations

Coaches must also:

- complete their coaching certification requirements and yearly online concussion training before the start of their season.
- have emergency contact information for each athlete, Dudley-Charlton Injury Report forms, Head Injury Report forms, and related report forms with them while supervising their teams.
- have a fully stocked med-kit at all practices and games. It is the responsibility of the coach to make sure that the contents of the med-kit are adequate to meet the team needs.
- update rosters and submit a copy to the athletic department as necessary. Please see the coaches' checklist for details.
- Keep accurate records of all uniforms/equipment issued. You are responsible for your team inventory. Issue a lost uniform/equipment bill to any athlete who does not return his or her school issued uniform or equipment. The forms are in the Athletic Office and the pricing is located in the replacement cost section of this handbook.
- Fill out a game report/statistics for each contest. It is very important that it be accurate and given to the athletic department after the contest. It is the coaches' responsibility to maintain the appropriate statistics for the sport. All information is turned in on a weekly basis to the A.D. by 8:00 a.m. Monday morning.
- Varsity coaches have a variety of paperwork that is submitted to the M.I.A.A. This will be distributed to you. Please read this carefully, paying special attention to paperwork deadlines. This will be a collaborative effort by the Athletic Department and the coach.

Starting the Season

At our preseason team orientation meeting, coaches will have an opportunity to meet and speak with each of his/her player's parents or guardians collectively. At this time you should introduce (or reintroduce) yourself and hand out and explain your policies, procedures, and expectations for the season. It is also a good time to collect all paperwork and answer any questions. Be proactive and provide all information to prevent future issues, confusion, or conflict.

Lockers

Assign lockers and combinations during the preseason. Inform your athletes that sharing lockers is not permitted. Inform your athletes to clean out their lockers when your season ends. Supervise the cleaning out of lockers. Inform the Assistant A.D. when you have completed this task. The locks will be changed at that time to prepare for the next season. Please inform all athletes that they are responsible for their locks and they will be issued a bill for the replacement fee if any are lost. Any athlete who is dismissed from your team for any reason needs to return all equipment and uniforms to his/her coach and clean out his/her locker. Follow the procedure for lost uniforms/equipment if he/she does turn in uniforms, etc. The locker will be cleaned out by the coach and/or Assistant A.D./ A.D. if the athlete does not do it in a reasonable period of time. A new lock will be placed on the locker to secure it after it has been vacated.

Drying Room

Please help keep this room clean, organized, and secure. Many athletes will rely on this room for the security of their equipment. Please lock it when equipment is being stored and it cannot be supervised.

Med-Kit

Your med-kit will be prepared for you and put in the coaches' room in the boys' locker room or the storage room in the girls' locker room. Inform the Assistant A.D. if you need more or different supplies. You are responsible for the maintenance and care of your med-kit, please return it in the same condition in which it was received.

Season Objectives

There are endless objectives that you can set for your team, but it is important that you have objectives that are clearly defined, realistic, and attainable.

Sound objectives could be, for example:

- Receive a Gold Level Team Academic Excellence Award
- Hold opponents to under 40% shooting percentage
- Gain 150 yards rushing every game
- Commit fewer than two errors a game
- Hit .300 as a team
- Add six inches to our pole vault height

Practice

Practice sessions will be well planned, well structured, and scheduled at reasonable times and of reasonable duration, consistent with the overall well being of the athlete. As a general practice, athletic teams will meet a maximum of six consecutive days in a week. This includes all games, practices, and scrimmages. In general, practice sessions should not exceed two and one half hours.

Sundays: Sunday practices are reserved for varsity teams only and must not start before 12:30pm.

Daily Practice Plan: Practice should be repetitive enough so that your players learn the desired skill but varied enough that your players do not grow bored. Skills should be described and demonstrated the first time before a drill. Do not let players develop bad habits or get lazy during the drills. Drills should

last a short period of time (no more than five minutes) before moving on to the next drill. As the legendary coach John Wooden said, "Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect." Newer or difficult material should be presented early on in the practice. Physically demanding drills should be followed by less taxing drills. Try to incorporate sport specific activities within your cardiovascular workout (for example, have players run with their tennis rackets or dribble the basketball during sprints). Remember that the better planned and more detailed your practice plan the better results you will see.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather or unsafe playing conditions, game or practices may be postponed or cancelled. This information will be furnished in as timely a manner as reasonably possible. In event of school closing, games and practices will be cancelled unless the school Principal and/or Superintendent determines travel and playing conditions are safe. At such times only varsity teams will have the option to practice.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement of the student-athlete shall be the foremost priority. Student-Athletes are students first, and athletes second. This again is where clear, frequent, constructive communication is helpful. Discuss the importance of getting assignments done in a timely fashion in your rules hand out and at the Team-Orientation meeting so that parents and team members know you put a priority on academics, and expect them to manage their time accordingly.

Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is also of great importance. Shepherd Hill encourages and expects all parties' present at an event to display the highest possible level of sportsmanship. Players, coaches, and spectators should treat opponents, game officials, and visiting spectators with respect.

Playing Time (Sub-Varsity)

All players *in good standing* for a particular game will receive both significant and quality minutes. Significant time is approximately a quarter of the game. Quality time refers to minutes during the normal flow of the game, not just at the end of a blow out one way or the other.

Travel

Athletes are expected to ride to and from out-of-town games on district-owned or chartered vehicles. Students may ride with a parent if it is consistent with team rules. Extenuating circumstances regarding transportation will require a written request from parents and approval from the school Principal / Athletic Director prior to departure for the game.

Parking

There is parking behind the gym and in the first row of the student parking lot for coaches. Students are to park in the student lot at all times. This includes weekends and evenings. In the past this has become an issue. Please inform your team and enforce this rule.

Home Games

If there are any problems with the field or any of the facilities, the opposing team, fans, etc. please contact the Athletic Director. The seriousness of the problem will dictate how soon you need to contact the Athletic Director.

Away Games

Often you will be sharing a bus with another team. Please make sure everyone is on board before leaving. At the end of each away game carefully make sure that you have accounted for all of your players.

Ending the Season

At the conclusion of your season, be sure to collect all equipment from your players. All inventories should be recorded on the paper under the cover of your uniform bin. Indicate the names of students who have not returned uniforms/equipment and issue the bill for any missing items. Please be specific, don't write "soccer uniform" but rather "soccer shorts #10 - \$50 / soccer shirt #12 - \$75. See the replacement costs tab in this handbook for pricing. Uniforms should be returned clean. Please be sure that all your players have cleaned out their lockers. As the coach you need to see that each locker is empty and clean. Once organized, equipment will then be turned into the assistant Athletic Director. At this time, please inform us of any equipment needed for the following season. Return the athletic key to the Athletic Director and complete your sign out process.

Banquet

It is expected that each team have an end-of-the season banquet of some kind. Most sub-varsity teams have very informal events. (pizza party, etc.) The varsity teams should have a more formal banquet to distribute awards, recognize seniors as well as other distinguished athletes, and celebrate the season that you all spent working together. It is important to gather and recognize the achievements that you have made as a team and the goals that were accomplished. Pot-luck w/parents in the café is a very cost effective way to organize this event. You must reserve the café ahead of time by filling out an activities form in the main office.

Awards

It is the coach's responsibility to distribute awards and certificates to his or her athletes. This is usually accomplished at your end of the season banquet. Sub-Varsity teams will be provided certificates to distribute to team members. Varsity teams must inform the Athletic Department of their needs for Senior Awards as well as M.V.P. / O.T.P. / M.I.P. The Athletic Department will fund the aforementioned awards. You may purchase more awards through the Athletic Department at your own cost or purchase them on your own. Please do not ask for the department to purchase additional awards.