

# **PHILOSOPHY OF DEXTER ATHLETICS**

Interscholastic athletics in the Dexter Consolidated School District is an integral part of the district's total educational program.

Everyone involved in the delivery of athletics, possesses a unique opportunity to teach positive life skills and values. Therefore, this educational experience demands highly qualified coaches. Desire, dedication, and self-discipline need to be developed in order to ensure the commitment and personal sacrifice required by athletes. Making such a commitment helps to nurture integrity, pride, and overall character.

The nature of athletic competition is to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one criterion when determining a season's success. Guiding the team to attain maximum potential is the ultimate goal to this end. The coaching staff must teach student/athletes to prepare their minds and bodies in order to reach maximum potential, and then to be modest in victory and steadfast in defeat.

## **VARSITY PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Varsity competition is the culmination of each Athletic program. Occasionally, a sophomore and infrequently a freshman and in extreme cases an eighth grader may be included on the team providing that evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate emotional development is demonstrated.

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. Each team member must have a role and be informed of their 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-days-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 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 middle school, junior varsity, and varsity programs is the responsibility of the varsity coach. Preparing to win, 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 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 and eighth graders may be included on a junior varsity roster.

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 skill, elements and strategies of team play in addition to emotional development. Junior varsity programs work towards 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 the six-days-a-week commitment that is expected at the varsity level. While contests and practices are rarely held on holidays and Sundays, 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. Each student athlete is recommended to take a close look at the time commitment required prior to trying out for a particular sport.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

This program is available to all students in the seventh and eighth grades. Sport activities offered are determined by the existence of 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, emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition. Every effort will be made to allow for significant participation, for every student/athlete, at the middle school level.

At the middle school level, we will make a concerted effort not to make cuts. However, 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 as a last resort. 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 and certified coaches, 3) suitable indoor or outdoor facilities, and 4) a safe environment.