

**2018**



**Naperville  
Catholic  
Crusaders**

**PARENT-PLAYER  
HANDBOOK**

Dear Parents & Players:

Welcome to the Naperville Catholic Football Program. On the pages that follow you will find much information. The topics covered in this handbook represent a collection of answers to the most frequently asked questions we receive from parents and players. In addition, this handbook outlines the expectations you should have of the coaching staff and the expectations that the coaching staff has of you.

We need you to read through this document carefully and ask questions if anything is unclear. We will cover many of these topics in more detail at the Parent-Head Coach meetings prior to the start of the season. We will also be asking parents and players to sign the acknowledgement page at the end of this handbook to confirm your understanding of its contents.

We are looking forward to the season and getting to know each of you in a meaningful way. This will be a great experience for all of us and we are always available to you to answer questions and resolve issues.

Sincerely,

*Andy Sadowski - Head Coach Junior Varsity*

*Frank Ribaudó - Head Coach Varsity*

## Communication

Open communication is the foundation of a good relationship. We use several modes of communication to help keep you informed and facilitate interaction with the coaches.

**Email** – this is the primary method of communication used by the coaches and will be used to send you information, keep you apprised of events, and notify you when necessary.

The email address for both head coaches is [crusaders@ncyfootball.org](mailto:crusaders@ncyfootball.org) and it is VERY important that you designate the above email address as a “Safe Sender” in your email account so that emails do not go to a junk or spam folder. Only head coaches have access to this email account.

**Telephone** - it may be necessary for us to discuss a specific matter voice-to-voice. Phone calls are always okay. If we cannot speak right then we will arrange with you for a mutually convenient time to talk. Our cell phone numbers are listed below.

***Junior Varsity Head Coach Andy Sadowski: (630) 750-6146***

***Varsity Head Coach & Program Director Frank Ribaldo: (630) 853-5397***

You should also be aware that we use the Calling Post call-tree system for last minute scheduling changes and cancellations that occur owing to unforeseen events (e.g. weather).

**In Person Meetings** – it may be necessary for us to discuss a specific matter in-person. In-person meetings are a normal and welcome part of the interaction we will have together. We ask that if you need to meet in-person we work together to schedule the meeting in advance. If we know you want to meet we can plan ahead and be prepared for the discussion time.

Football coaches and parents are passionate about the game and passionate about the kids. This is positive as it brings a great deal of energy to our program. However, uncomfortable and regrettable moments occur if this passion is not channeled properly. We ask that everyone in our program live by the “24 Hour Rule”. Simply put, if something is bothering you that is not an emergency (e.g. an injury may be an emergency; being upset about playing time is never an emergency) give it 24 hours before approaching or calling the coach or sending an email or text. The coaches will live by this same rule and it will benefit everyone.

**Other Communication** - team news, documents, and important information will be available on our team website. In addition we will be posting regularly on Facebook and Twitter.

***Website – [www.ncyfootball.org](http://www.ncyfootball.org)***

***Facebook – [www.facebook.com/ncyfootball](http://www.facebook.com/ncyfootball)***

## Attendance

The following are the expectations around attendance once the season begins on August 1:

- Coaches will take attendance at all practices and games. Coaches will note absences and late arrivals and will consider this when making playing time decisions.
- Attendance is mandatory at all practices and all games. Conflicts must be discussed with the Head Coach as soon as possible prior to the practice or game. The following reasons are acceptable for missing or being late to a practice or game:
  - Religious Education Commitment
  - Family Commitment / Emergency
  - Illness
  - Academic Conflicts (if they are not punishments for poor academic effort)
- Participation in other sports during the season that significantly impacts attendance will impact playing time with our team.
- If a last minute and unavoidable circumstance arises where your child will be late or absent for a game or practice the head coach must be notified by phone.
- Punctuality is also very important. Our expectations about punctuality and arrival times are outlined in the Practice and Game Day sections of this handbook.

## Practice

Practice days, times and locations will be communicated as far in advance as possible. As a general rule, practice schedules will be as follows:

- We will be practicing at Knoch Park near baseball area #1 all season
- Practice time will be 6:00pm to 8:00pm unless otherwise indicated
- From August 6 to August 23 we will practice Monday through Thursday. The first week of practice will be Helmets Only. After the first week we will be in full equipment.
- Beginning August 28 through the end of the season we will practice Tuesday through Thursday

Some other important things to note regarding practice:

- Players should arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the “official” start time of practice. Coaches will be at the field and will have “Pre-Practice” activities planned for early arrivers. If a player is not “ready to go” 5 minutes before the official start time for practice they will be marked as late.
- We respectfully ask that you pick up your player at the designated end time for practice. If you are delayed please call us as soon as possible. We will not leave any player unattended at practice and, in fact require at least 2 coaches to remain behind.

## Game Day

SPFL League games are generally scheduled on Sunday. Games can also be scheduled on Saturday evening. A preliminary schedule has been posted on the website and will be updated prior to the start of practice in August.

Players are to arrive at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled start of any game unless otherwise indicated by the Head Coach.

## Inclement Weather Policy

During the course of a 12 week season we will face some challenging weather. Unless the conditions are severe we will practice and play games as scheduled. When it is obvious in advance of a practice or game that conditions will warrant cancellation we will contact you as soon as possible through the Calling Post telephone service.

If the weather looks threatening at the beginning of practice, we strongly encourage you to stay in the practice area. Should the weather become unsafe, we will cancel practice immediately.

## Important Suburban Parochial Football League (SPFL) Rules

As a member of the SPFL there are certain rules that we do not control as a program. Some of the rules you need to be aware of prior to the season include the following:

### Weight Limits / Restrictions

The SPFL League observes the following weight limits:

| Junior Varsity                         | Varsity                                |
|--|--|
| No Limits <= 105 pounds                | No Limits <= 135 pounds                |
| Must Play Line on Offense > 105 pounds | Must Play Line on Offense > 135 pounds |

***There are no weight restrictions with regards to positions on defense.***

### Mandatory Weigh-In Procedure

The SPFL has 3 weigh-ins during the season. The coaches will let you know if your player will need to attend based upon weight data gathered during the first week of practice and then periodically throughout the season. For the initial weigh-in, JV players who are recorded at >90 pounds and Varsity players who are recorded at >115 pounds will need to attend.

The weigh-in dates are Saturday August 18, Monday September 10 and Monday October 1. Your coaches will communicate with you as soon as possible about weigh-ins but feel free to reach out with any questions you might have regarding the process.

## Equipment & Equipment Care

Below is a summary of equipment needed and who is responsible for providing that equipment.

| We Provide the Following<br><i>(must be returned at season end)</i>  | You Provide the Following   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game Jersey</li> <li>• Game Pants</li> <li>• Shoulder Pads</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White Football Helmet – this must be a NOCSAE approved helmet.</li> <li>• Mouth Guard - the mouth guard <b>MUST</b> be colored and have a tether to attach to the facemask of the helmet.</li> <li>• Practice Jersey – purchased through the program for \$15 during the first week of practice in August</li> <li>• Practice Pants – we recommend black.</li> <li>• Football Pants Pad Set - we recommend a 3- or 5-piece football girdle as this can also be used with the game pants. You will need thigh boards and knee inserts.</li> <li>• Ankle Braces – while not required these are strongly recommended. We practice on a natural grass field and ankle sprains and twists are a common injury.</li> </ul> |

Players must take care of their equipment. The following maintenance program is suggested:

- Helmet
  - Inspect & tighten facemask and chinstrap screws weekly.
  - Inspect chinstrap buckles weekly.
- Shoulder Pads
  - Inspect all straps, strings, & clips weekly.
  - Tape all your straps after proper clip adjustment has been received.
- Pants, Girdle, Belt, & Jerseys
  - Wash them regularly to keep them from stinking, staining and housing bacteria.

## Roster Assignments & Playing Time

We have one over-arching guiding principle in managing our football program...

*If a player is willing to put in the effort required to play football and is willing to follow the Player Code of Conduct there will **ALWAYS** be a place in our program for them to play and learn the game. Players will not be cut from our program – period!*

Naturally players and parents are concerned about “playing time” in games, particularly in a travel program without “minimum play” guidelines. Below is an overview of the process we use to evaluate players and to determine how we will get them meaningful playing time in games.

- 1) During the summer camp and August pre-season camp players are evaluated by the coaches. Going into the camps every player has a chance to play any position (subject to league-mandated weight restrictions). Coaches communicate frequently to ensure that all necessary data is compiled for each player.
- 2) Assessment data is compiled for each player. The assessment data includes, but is not limited to, the following for each player: athletic skills, general football skills, position-specific skills, attitude, work ethic, and coachability.
- 3) Initial position assignments are finalized as we approach the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the August pre-season. These initial assignments are made using the assessment data discussed above but also include two other important criteria - team needs and player safety. These assignments are made irrespective of grade level. Initial assignments will be communicated by the Head Coach to all players and parents.
- 4) Player evaluations continue throughout the season. Players improve through practice and game experience and player positions and roster assignments can change. The same criteria used in the initial assignments are used throughout the season.

#### Roster Assignments...What Do They Mean?

If the roster size at any level is  $\geq 25$  the Head Coach may schedule non-league games and scrimmages to ensure we can provide playing time for all players on the roster. While we will have only one "official" roster at each level we may need to communicate to you that your child will be either a Purple or White player. These designations can be best understood as follows:

- Purple – These players will receive the majority of their playing time in league games.
- White – These players will receive the majority of their playing time in non-league games.

#### Playing Time...What Is The Goal?

We are committed to getting all players significant playing time in games as a reward for their hard work and effort. Our goal is to get every player on our roster a minimum of 15-20 game snaps each week. Players are always encouraged to talk to their coaches about how they can earn more playing time in games. Moreover, we welcome the normal conversations that occur between parents and Head Coaches about how their player can improve.

Coaches will not engage in debates or negotiations regarding roster assignments and playing time. We know our players and we are in the best position to make the decisions about roster assignments and playing time in games. Trust the coaches, encourage your player, and let them have fun learning the game of football.

## Coach Code of Conduct

Coaches in this program believe they have a unique opportunity to impact the lives of our players. To successfully discharge our responsibilities we follow the guidelines below.

- *We Are Teachers* – It isn't what the coaches know that wins football games; it's what the players know and can do. We will:
  - Create a disciplined environment based on respect and mutual trust rather than fear.
  - Provide a safe environment to play and learn the game of football.
  - Teach our players the rules and fundamentals of the game.
  - Work with each of our players based on their individual strengths and weaknesses.
  - Prepare for every practice and game to give our players the best chance to compete successfully.
- *We Are Motivators* – We cannot make a player do anything they do not want to do; we can however create an environment that encourages them to do what they need to do. We will:
  - Get to know all our players as individual people and let them know we care about them.
  - Communicate to our players in a positive manner and treat each player with dignity and respect.
  - Make football fun and help our players develop a passion for the game.
  - Never let a player go home upset or discouraged without talking to them.
  - Do everything possible to develop and maintain a positive team attitude.
- *We Are Role Models* – We earn the respect of our players by the examples we provide. We will:
  - Control our emotions but not our enthusiasm for what we are doing. Screaming and foul language will not be tolerated.
  - Help our players become better athletes and to value physical fitness.
  - Encourage sportsmanship at all times – in both victory and defeat.
  - Provide leadership and direct our players in competition.
  - Demonstrate the values we expect from our players and help them to embrace these values.

In summary, as a parent you should see the coaches in our program demonstrate every day that they:

- Love the kids and the game of football
- Teach with passion and enthusiasm
- Are prepared and organized
- Demonstrate the values we preach and teach
- Work hard and have fun



## **Player Code of Conduct**

Players are expected to represent our program and themselves positively on and off the field by following the Player Code of Conduct:

1. Do well in school. We support your parents 100% in this area.
2. Attend all practices, games, meetings, and events – and be on time!
3. Show respect to everyone – teammates, coaches, referees, and opponents.
4. Never cheat or engage in dangerous play.
5. Always be prepared on the practice field or during a game. This includes making sure your equipment is ready and maintained.
6. Hustle at all times - there is no walking on the football field during practice or games.
7. Understand that coaches make decisions based on what is best for the team, not individual players.
8. Take your position seriously and do your best at all times.
9. Participate in community service activities with the team or on your own.
10. Accept responsibility for your actions - “Be Accountable and Be Your Word”.

Violation of these rules will result in reduced playing time. The Head Coach reserves the right to handle each case on an individual basis.

## Parent Code of Conduct

Parents can have a significant impact on a player's youth sports experience. In order to get the most out of this program we ask that parents help by following the Parent Code of Conduct:

1. Insist on positive behavior and a high level of performance in the classroom.
2. Get players to all practices and games on time and with all their equipment.
3. Be positive with your athlete and allow them to perform and progress at a level consistent with their ability. Let them know you are proud they are part of the team.
4. Help your child to adhere to the Player Code of Conduct.
5. Support the coaching staff, all players on our team, other parents, our opponents and the referees.
6. Maintain "sideline" behavior of the highest standards.
7. Promote having fun and being a team player.
8. Encourage persistence in your child and the ability to accept their role on the team.
9. Help the coaching staff by volunteering when they need your assistance.
10. Use common sense principles and ethics to guide all decisions and behaviors.

**Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding**

It is the intent of the Naperville Catholic Football Program to make your experience with us highly rewarding. This Parent/Player handbook has been given to you in order to answer many of your questions and detail the expectations and obligations of all the members of our football family. Thank you for being part of our program.

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I have received and read the Naperville Catholic Football 2018 Parent/Player Handbook. I understand the contents and agree with the expectations and obligations for all participants including coaches, players and parents.

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Print Player Name(s)

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Player Signature(s)

Date Signed

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Print Parent Name(s)

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Parent Signature(s)

Date Signed

**When signed please mail to:**

**Frank Ribaud  
2156 Primrose Lane  
Naperville, Illinois 60565**

**Or email to  
crusaders@ncyfootball.org**