



DIOCESAN RECREATION ASSOCIATION

197 E. GAY ST.

COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

July 2020

Dear Pastors, Principals, Athletic Directors, DREs and Youth Ministers:

What a year! The DRA had a great start to our 2019-2020 seasons. Soccer, cross country, football and basketball had 5021 participants. We introduced flag football for the fourth graders and had almost 100 players. We all know how the spring sports went. Everything was shut down in March and we are slowly reopening following state guidelines.

I have been trying to keep the athletic directors in the loop with a few ZOOM meetings. These have been very well attended. We opened up soccer for practices on July 1. We are still waiting to see if or when we will be able to schedule games. Volleyball, football (tackle and flag) and cross-country are tentatively scheduled to start practices on Aug. 3. The DRA is working to make sure the rules and guidelines for those programs are in alignment with the state's mandatory and best practices guidelines as well as the CCL and OHSAA rules and guidelines. Again, these will be communicated to the athletic directors for them to share with the coaches.

I would like to thank you for your continued support of the Diocesan Recreations Association (DRA) and the use of your facilities for our programs. I realize that due to the pandemic, the gyms and athletic facilities will require more cleaning. The DRA will be raising the admission to games to \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and students. The family maximum will be \$8 for those families living under one roof. It is our hope that this will help defray the cost of cleaning supplies. The plan is to allot more time between games for cleaning. We may need to start games at 8:00am in order to be finished in time for the vigil masses on Saturdays.

For the past few years, the DRA has awarded the Joe Sestito-Kathryn Buckerfield Sportsmanship Award and a \$500 scholarship to a parish that exhibits exemplary sportsmanship during the current athletic year. Joe and Kathryn were long time coaches and directors in the Diocesan Recreation Program. This year, the winner of the Joe Sestito-Kathryn Buckerfield Sportsmanship Award is St. Brendan Parish. We will be making arrangements for a formal announcement and presentation as soon as possible after the restrictions of Covid 19 are lifted.

As most of you know, the DRA has partnered with the Play Like A Champion Today Educational Series to host training sessions for all head coaches. To date we have trained almost 2400 coaches from the parish programs. This year because of the restrictions placed on us by the coronavirus, the coach and parent trainings are being made available via ZOOM, at least temporarily. Information on how to register for both sessions is on the DRA website at www.columbuscatholic.org/recreations Click on Play Like A Champion, then on Coach trainings or Parent trainings. These are special sessions due to the current situation in which we find ourselves. I do not expect the virtual meetings to become the norm.

While it has, and will continue to be, the practice of the DRA to track the Play Like A Champion Today coaches' training and to provide the training free of charge to all head coaches of the sports under the DRA umbrella, the Parent Like a Champion Today expense will need to be covered by the parishes. Cost is \$10 per manual. Parishes will also be asked to sign off on the parent participation, so tracking will need to be done at the parish level.

If a parish wishes to have coaches trained for sports that are not under the DRA umbrella, we will continue to

train them. However, the cost of the manual, \$25, will need to be covered by the parish. Sports under the DRA umbrella include soccer, cross-country, tackle and flag football, volleyball, basketball, track, baseball and softball.

We will continue our policy of letting the pastors know when someone has been ejected. This seems to be a best practice and is a deterrent to unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, parents, fans and athletes. We will be updating the process we use to give the pastors more information about what happened to cause the ejection. We take ejections very seriously and ask the ADs and pastors to follow up with their parishioner when notified of an issue.

Last year we began the process of online submission of parent consent forms. We would like to have a complete transition to this process this year. By going to <https://www.dioceseregister.com/login>, parents are able to login and complete the parent consent forms, sign off on concussion and sudden cardiac arrest, as required by Ohio Law. We also include the codes of conduct, personal identifiable information sign offs. Once the parents have completed their portion of the online process, the ADs can go into the program to verify the children are on the teams from the parish and that at least one parent of each athlete has completed the Parent Like A Champion training. Pastors need to verify they are parishioners. The Safe Environment Directors will need to verify that coaches have PGC and BCI. The ADs, will be able to verify compliance with Play Like A Champion Coach Trainings. Hard copies of the Eligibility Rosters are still required. The Eligibility Roster may be signed by the pastors, athletic directors and principals. In some cases, this may be easier than the online process.

The DRA is a program formed by the values of the Catholic Church. The important lessons of commitment, sacrifice and making good choices are part of the experience. It is important to root our sporting efforts in the most important gathering of our Catholic community—the Mass—and to ensure that our young people are blessed in their experiences of athletics. We want to set the precedent in today's youth sports culture that it is necessary to set aside time for God and family. The DRA has been able to greatly reduce the number of DRA games on Sundays. However, it needs to be noted, that there are other sports offered in the parishes, as well as the local communities, that do not fall under the umbrella of the Diocesan Recreation Association. The DRA hopes to be able to provide the opportunity to reserve Sunday for family time, uninterrupted by scheduled sports, at least once or twice a month.

Scheduling the athletic events is always a challenge. I am expecting this year to be even more challenging due to the virus. Please provide your Athletic Directors with a complete listing of conflicts with church and school activities. The ADs are asked to check with the parish secretary, the DRE, the school principal, the Youth Ministers, Scouts, etc. to be sure they have a complete list of conflicts for the Sport Information Form that is due several weeks prior to the beginning of the sports season. It is much easier to schedule around the conflicts, than it is to change games after the schedules come out. We are asking that the ADs check with everyone in the parish for such conflicts, and to **include them on the conflict forms**. We realize these may change as we continue to deal with COVID 19. Please note the time of your Saturday Mass and the last morning Mass on Sunday. We want to be sure to schedule our activities so they do not conflict with the celebration of the Mass. Nothing is scheduled on Sundays until after 2:00pm. Please be sure to include the dates and times of PSR classes, if your young athletes attend PSR. If conflicts are received after the due date and after the schedule has been published, we will try to accommodate the parish or school conflict, but we cannot guarantee it. Once games are set, changes have a tendency to have a snowball effect on the league and affect other teams. Please have all conflicts ready to go by the due date. We do understand there are instances when something comes up at the last minute and will try our best to make things work.

The team league fee will remain at \$60 per team this year. The Athlete Participation fees will be \$15, with the exception of the Football Fees. The football fees are \$25 per athlete to help offset some of the fees we are being charged for Head's Up Football. Flag football fees are \$50 per player. This will include the flag belts and flags. There will be no increase in officials' fees for the upcoming season.

To help with planning, tentative dates were sent to the Athletic Directors. Since so much is still up in the air, I will update the DRA calendar found on the website(www.columbuscatholic.org/recreation then click on calendar), once we have definite dates.

We need to know who your athletic director will be for the upcoming year. I have included the link to the Athletic Director form which is located on the DRA website. <https://goo.gl/forms/uBmwkWK8feowmxtz2>

If you have decided to move on, we thank you for your service as AD and ask your help in getting this information to the proper person. We will continue to have ZOOM meetings until further notice.

Please check our website, <http://www.columbuscatholic.org/recreation> for other information and all forms. I have posted the COVID 19 waiver and the monitoring form for practices. I have included a calendar on the website of dates that we know at this time. .

Whether your parish is participating in the DRA or is one that has other sports affiliations, it is my hope that you will not hesitate to contact the DRA office for any assistance we can provide for you and your parish. I can be reached at mraines@columbuscatholic.org, or at 614-241-2580.

Once again, thank you for your support. If the Diocesan Recreation Association can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Marty Raines
Director Diocesan Recreation Association
Director of Girls Athletics