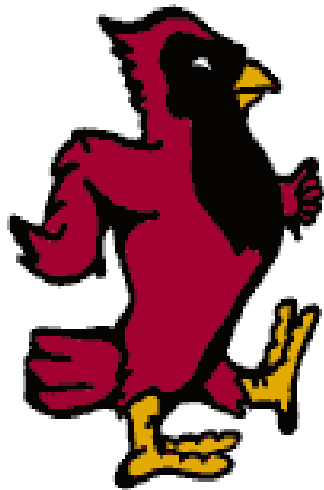


**ST ROBERT BELLARMINE**  
**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**



## I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to St. Robert Bellarmine Sports. This handbook is provided by the St. Robert Bellarmine Athletic Commission to familiarize parents, athletes, and coaches with fundamental goals, regulations, and policies for the St. Robert's football, volleyball, basketball, track, and baseball programs.

## II. ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an opportunity for the children of St. Robert's parish to participate in organized leagues, in various sports, from recreational to competitive levels.

To provide a Christian atmosphere which emphasizes sportsmanship, teamwork, commitment, and skill development.

To provide a safe environment in which to play.

## III. TEAM PRAYER

It is suggested that St. Robert Bellarmine teams say a short prayer before games. The following is a suggested prayer:

My God, we offer this game to you.  
Help us to utilize our talents in all that we do.  
Protect us from harm,  
help us play fair in this game,  
as servants of Christ,  
we ask in your name.

## IV. ATHLETIC COMMISSION

The St. Robert Bellarmine Athletic Commission (the "Commission") is a committee of volunteers. The Commission administers the football, volleyball, basketball, track, and baseball youth sports programs at St. Robert's, but does not administer the youth soccer program. The Commission consists of five Officers as well as seven Advisors to the Officers. The Officers are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past President. The Advisors are Football Commissioner, Volleyball Commissioner, Basketball Commissioner, Track Commissioner, Baseball Commissioner, Volunteer Coordinator, and Pastor Appointed Representative. The Officers may also appoint a Resolution Chairperson as an eighth Advisor in their discretion. The Commission meets monthly August through May on the first Wednesday of each month. The September and January meetings each year will have an open format for the first hour to answer parent questions about current and planned Commission policies and activities. If one has a desire to bring a specific topic before the Commission at other monthly meetings, they should contact the President so that the item can be placed on the agenda. The

Commission will meet in executive session as necessary to discuss personnel and discipline issues.

## V. FEES AND SEASONS

Fees for the five sports administered by the Commission will vary for each sport. The Commission will set fees for each sport on an annual basis. No player will be turned away due to an inability to pay. If necessary, arrangements for those with an inability to pay may be made by contacting the President of the Commission or the Pastor.

Football - Register in the spring and throughout the summer. Season runs September through October. Practices are daily and start in early to mid-August in the afternoon/evenings. When school starts, practices are every weekday. Games are generally on Saturdays.

Volleyball - Register in the spring. Season runs the end of August through October. Practices start in early August and are at the discretion of the coaches. After school starts, practices will not be held on Wednesdays, unless starting time is after 7:30 PM.

Basketball - Register in September. Season runs December through February. Practices are at the discretion of the coaches, but will generally begin in November and will not be held on Wednesdays, unless starting time is after 7:30 PM.

Track - Register in February. Season runs March through early May. Practices are weekdays, except Wednesday. Most meets are on Saturdays.

Baseball – Register in February. Season runs March through July. Practices are at the discretion of the coaches, but will not be held on Wednesdays during the school year unless starting time is after 7:30 P.M.

Refund Policy: There will be no refunds of fees after teams have been selected. Any refunds because of injuries or extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the Commission.

## VI. SUMMARY OF SPORTS

### Football:

The football program is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade male parishioners. The football team plays in the Parochial Athletic League. Coaches will determine a “Varsity” team and a “JV” team for game days. This is done in order to insure the safety of the players, so that they are competing against players with similar skills and physical size. It is also done to allow “JV” players an opportunity for more game experience. Coaches will attempt to arrange at least four “JV” games throughout the season. All games will be played against teams from other Catholic parishes in the Omaha-Council Bluffs area.

### Volleyball:

The volleyball program is open to 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade female parishioners. All volleyball teams play in the Parochial Athletic League. There will be tryouts for all grades in the spring. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams are considered recreational; therefore, all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams will be divided equally in regards to talent. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams can be either recreational or competitive. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams will be placed in one of the following divisions: AAA, AA, A, or B. All teams will participate in a post-season PAL tournament. Some teams will choose to play in other tournaments during the season. The Commission will reimburse a team for a minimum of one tournament each season.

### Basketball:

The basketball program is open to all 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade male and female parishioners. All basketball teams play in the Parochial Athletic League. There will be tryouts for all grades in the fall. The 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams are considered recreational; therefore, all teams will be divided equally in regards to talent. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams can be either recreational or competitive. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams will be placed in one of the following divisions: AAA, AA, A, or B. All teams will participate in post-season PAL tournament. Some teams will choose to play in other tournaments during the season. The Commission will reimburse a team for a minimum of one tournament each season.

### Track:

Track is open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade male and female parishioners. The team will participate in approximately 4 meets in the spring.

### Baseball:

The baseball program is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade male parishioners. The season generally runs from March to July.

Some St. Robert's volleyball and basketball teams may choose to participate in additional tournaments or leagues outside of the Parochial Athletic League. Participation in such tournaments or leagues is not mandatory for players or teams. A St. Robert's team may solicit the Commission for funds to assist in the reimbursement of such tournament and league fees paid by the teams. Any funding for such tournament and leagues fees will depend on the availability of funds in the discretion of the Commission and these funds will not come from sports registration fees. Full reimbursement of such fees is not guaranteed by the Commission. These funds, if available, will be paid from funds

generated by St. Robert's sponsored event(s). Factors the Commission will use to determine reimbursement of such fees include the extent of volunteer participation of the requesting teams coaches, players, and parents in running the St. Robert's sponsored event(s); and the availability of funds which will largely depend on the number of teams requesting such funds and the amount of such funds being requested.

## VII. FACILITIES

St. Robert Bellarmine has two gyms and an athletic field available for practices for St. Robert Bellarmine teams. All scheduling is arranged via the Parish Scheduling Manager at the Parish Office. During the busy seasons (volleyball and basketball), the Commission will designate schedulers who will coordinate scheduling from August 1 – April 1 in collaboration with the Parish Office. Requests for gym time should be made to the Volleyball Commissioner from August through October, and the Basketball Commissioner from November through March, or call the Parish Office at other times. Priorities for gym time are: (1) Parish functions scheduled through the parish office, and (2) St. Robert Bellarmine teams' games and practices during the season. Only teams sponsored by St. Robert Bellarmine parish are eligible for gym use.

## VIII. ELIGIBILITY

The St. Robert Bellarmine athletic programs are open to all families registered in St. Robert Bellarmine parish. Participation is open to students enrolled in the 5-day school, religious education program, and registered parishioners who home school. Participants will be asked to uphold standards of integrity that reflect our Christian principles. These standards involve understanding that athletics must not conflict with our family centered mission of raising followers of Christ, maintaining integrity on and off the playing field, and encouraging academic excellence above athletics. Players, coaches, and parents will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct contract before participating in the athletic programs.

The eligibility policy is as follows:

To be eligible for participation in a sports activity, players must:

- Attend school for the entire day of the sports activity, other than pre-excused doctor visits, funerals, or similar exceptions.
- Adhere to all guidelines, as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Students in the 5-day school, Religious Education program and Home School students must maintain passing grades in all academic subjects at quarterly and semester reports. Parents of students will be expected to self-police these academic guidelines.

Parents and children are asked to sign a statement indicating they have read the St. Robert Bellarmine Athletic Commission Handbook and will support the policies therein. The signed statement also gives school personnel permission to release information, relative to a child's eligibility, to the Commission, so that the eligibility policy can be administered.

## IX. CODES OF CONDUCT AT ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE

Players, parents and coaches who fail to comply with the Codes of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Commission.

### 1. Player Code of Conduct

I understand that playing for a St. Robert Bellarmine sports program is a privilege and an honor. My actions reflect upon my teammates, my parish, and myself. Therefore, I promise to conduct myself in accordance with the following:

- I will do my best to maintain appropriate academic and behavioral expectations, as outlined by the St. Robert Bellarmine Athletic Eligibility Policy.
- I understand that my playing time could be affected by my not attending practices.
- All athletes are expected to be at all practices. I will notify my coach in advance if I am unable to attend a practice or game.
- I will treat each player, coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
- I will respect the property and gym of St. Robert Bellarmine, each opposing team, and any facility used by my St. Robert Bellarmine team for practices or games.
- I will refrain from derogatory comments about my teammates, opposing players, or officials, and will act to encourage my teammates through positive comments and actions.
- I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills and rules of the sports in which I participate.
- During the St. Robert Bellarmine sports season as set forth in this handbook, I understand that my primary commitment is to my St. Robert Bellarmine team. I will not allow participation on another team to interfere with, nor take priority over, my St. Robert Bellarmine team practices and games.

- I will not use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

## 2. Coach Code of Conduct

I understand that my responsibilities as a youth coach are of great importance, and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the young athletes whom I coach. Therefore, I will conduct myself in accordance with the following guidelines:

- I will lead by example, demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players and officials.
- I will conduct my practices so that all players have the opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
- I will not, nor will I allow my players to, harass or yell at any official or opposing team member.
- I will be sensitive and supportive of my players, and understand that verbally degrading them, or denying them necessities, will not be tolerated.
- I will allow any parent access to any practice.
- I understand that any demonstration of uncontrolled anger, resulting in physical contact against a player, parent, coach, or referee, will be grounds for my immediate dismissal from any coaching role.
- I will support the St. Robert Bellarmine Athletic Commission policy for athletic eligibility, as it relates to behavioral and academic expectations.
- I will successfully complete a “Safe Environment Training” session offered by the Archdiocese of Omaha. I will submit paperwork for a background check prior to coaching.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free sports environment from my players and will refrain from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco at all St. Robert’s youth sports events.

## Supervision

Each coach is responsible for the supervision of athletes before, during, and after all practices and contests. The coach should be the last person to leave the building or practice facility. Athletes will not be allowed to use the facilities, unless under the direct supervision of a coach, or someone designated by the coach.

## FOR BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL COACHES ONLY:

The fourth, fifth and sixth grade years are considered learning and developmental years; therefore, most teams will play in recreational divisions. Certain seventh and eighth grade teams will also be considered recreational. With this in mind, I will do my best to give all players equal playing time for each game. I will follow this rule to the best of my ability, unless the player has missed practices, or has not conducted himself or herself in a manner in accordance with the Player Code of Conduct. The only exception will occur during the PAL tournament, at which time I will use my best discretion in using players who will allow the team to advance in the tournament. This, however, will not be done at the expense of any player having to sit out an entire game for basketball or a match for volleyball.

As for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams that participate in a competitive league, I realize that these are competitive teams, and equal playing time may not be possible. However, I will remember the feelings of these young athletes, and attempt to provide minimum participation for all team members. Minimum participation is considered approximately the equivalent of one (1) quarter of a game or match. The only exception will occur during the PAL tournament, at which time I will use my best discretion in using players who will allow the team to advance in the tournament. I will follow this rule to the best of my ability, unless the player has missed practices, or has not conducted himself or herself in a manner in accordance with the Player Code of Conduct.

### 3. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

I understand that it is my responsibility as a parent to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child during his/her participation in youth sports at St. Robert Bellarmine. Therefore, I will adhere to the following code of conduct:

- I will encourage true sportsmanship, by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will demonstrate my understanding that the game is for the children, not the adults, and I will place the physical and emotional well being of the children over any desire to win.
- I will support the Athletic Commission policy for athletic eligibility.
- I will provide support for the coaches and officials working with my child to provide a positive youth sports experience. I understand that there may be times when things do not go the way I wish. If I should have any concerns or suggestions, I will first express them to my child's coach, in private, away from a game or practice situation. If a discussion and/or meeting with the parent and coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution of a concern, then I will contact

the Commissioner of the sport to attempt to resolve the concern. If the concern can not be resolved by the Commissioner of the sport, then I will contact the President of the Commission.

- I am committed to helping my child enjoy the youth sports experience by being a respectful fan.
- I will expect that my child will be playing in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will expect a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free sports environment for my child, and agree to assist in establishing such by refraining from their use at any sports event.
- I will ensure my child's commitment to the team by ensuring his/her attendance and timeliness at practices and games.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free sports environment for and from my child and will refrain from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco at all St. Robert's youth sports events.

#### X. DISMISSAL FROM TEAM

All matters concerning the proposed dismissal of a player from a team shall be handled by the Commission. A coach may not unilaterally dismiss a player from any St. Robert Bellarmine sports team.

#### XI. SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

All St. Robert Bellarmine coaches, as volunteers who have regular contact with children, are required by the Archdiocese of Omaha to receive training and maintain current Safe Environment certification. A formal background check will be required prior to coaching. If you are interested in coaching and would like more information about the training, contact the Director of Religious Education at the Parish Office.

#### XII. UNIFORMS

Parents are responsible for purchasing uniforms for each child participating in a sport. The Commission will coordinate contact with a designated uniform vendor prior to each season. No player will be turned away due to an inability to pay for a uniform. If necessary, arrangements for assistance can be made by contacting the President of the Commissioner or the Pastor.

### XIII. COMMUNICATION

Communications that parents and players should expect in writing from the coach:

- Expectations of the team.
- Locations and times of all practices and games.
- Procedure to follow should a player become injured during a practice or game.

Communications that coaches should expect from parents and players:

- Notification of any schedule conflict, as far in advance as possible.
- Specific concerns regarding the coach's philosophy.

If there are general questions or concerns about the sports program, any Commission member listed in this handbook may be contacted. Commission meetings are open and parents are welcome to attend. Commission meeting times and location will be published in the church bulletin. Any person wishing to address the Commission concerning a certain topic should contact the President of the Commission prior to the meeting and have their concern added to the agenda for the meeting.

### XIV. SUNDAY MORNINGS AND WEDNESDAYS

No practices or games are to be scheduled before 1:30 P.M. on Sundays. No practices or games are to be scheduled on Wednesdays on school days prior to 7:30 P.M. This is for two reasons: it will avoid conflict with Religious Education, and it allows families one night a week when they should have no required sports participation. Coaches are encouraged not to require attendance at Sunday practices to determine playing time.

### XV. SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

If school is canceled for weather-related reasons, all home games and all practices are cancelled.