

## **A Few Words About Coaches...**

The coaching staff of GFSS is drawn upon interested teachers, parents, and community volunteers. Please remember that our volunteer coaches choose to spend many hours and devote much energy toward developing individual and team skills of each student athlete. Like many student athletes, coaches too will make mistakes. They make many decisions during the course of a season and chances are they will not be able to please everyone all of the time. Sometimes it's very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. It also can be very difficult for even the best of parents to be *totally* objective about their son or daughter. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all student-athletes involved. In the course of a season there may be many athletes wishing more playing time – even 'starters' frequently feel that they deserve more game playing experiences. The reality is that 'extra' game time has got to come from somewhere – *giving* additional minutes to one team member is in effect *taking* minutes from another team player. It's difficult for coaches to try to provide a balance between all the needs and desires of all players throughout the entire season.

## **Parent/Coach Communication...**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of others and provide greater benefit to our children. We have a common goal; to better the overall experiences of the children under our care. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on them. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team. The athletics contract, distributed to all players at the season's beginning, outlines many of the important expectations for athletic participation. Other philosophy's and team issues are frequently communicated directly to the student players themselves. The overall philosophy of the coach may vary from team to team; and is dependent on a variety of considerations including the grade level of the team involved and team dynamics including individual aspirations and team goals. We continue to encourage parents to congratulate their sons and/or daughters for their team efforts and support whether they played or not. I trust that we will all continue to encourage our children to try harder, to be proud of his/her accomplishments, and to reinforce the value of being part of a team. As your children become involved in the athletic program at GFSS, they can potentially experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. As you will see from the list below, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Some coaches are open to discussion on almost any topic; however, there are certain decision making items that should be left to the individual discretion of the coach. Some appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches are: the treatment of your child mentally and physically; ways to help your child improve; and concern about your child's behaviour. Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches are: playing time; team strategy; play calling; and other student-athletes. Please notify the coach regarding any schedule conflicts and of any medical problems that could adversely impact a child's performance and safety.

### **Athletic Participation at the Grade Eight Level...**

All players should expect some playing time but equal playing time will not be guaranteed. Circumstances that might affect playing time include, but are not limited to... injury, illness, missed practices, poor attitude, bad school attendance, low academic effort, and level of ability and commitment. Playing time is determined by the coaching staff. Playing time may not be shared equally during the course of each game or tournament; however, during the course of the season, all players will likely have the opportunity to participate in several games. We strive to maximize the number of student-athletes involved while maintaining a quality program. At this level, the focus is on skill development, fundamentals of team play, socio-emotional growth, and knowledge of game rules. Emphasized are physical fitness, individual and group effort, positive attitudes, self-discipline, and good sportsmanship. Also important is the art of winning and losing graciously, and the respect for individual differences and talents. Game play is important and practices are crucial. We recognize the importance of participation for each player in games and practices as it impacts both individual growth and development. Player development is of prime importance during this stage. Work habits and attitudes that are developed during this phase of the athlete's sports program will prepare him/her for necessary commitment, dedication, and time demands required at the next levels. While students should not expect equal playing time at this level, everyone will likely have an opportunity to compete periodically throughout the season particularly if the players are positively committed to team practices and team expectations.

### **Athletic Participation at the Grade Nine and Ten Levels (Junior Level)...**

Coaches at this level will make an effort to play individuals throughout the season with an understanding that, for some players, the amount of playing time could be limited. The outcome of the contest will become more of a consideration at this level. It is our goal for all players to have some playing time throughout the season; however, in individual games, some students may not play. The program strives to provide opportunities for skill development and quality competitive play. Preparation for future senior play is always a consideration. In evaluating a player, a coach considers levels of commitment as seen in attendance and effort in games and practices. Playing time is determined by the coaching staff of that team and there is no guaranteed playing for any student from game to game. A student-athlete's inherent ability, commitment to team and quality of work ethic will be factors used in determining playing time throughout the season with different amounts of time dependent on the skill of each player and the competitive level of each game.

### **Athletic Participation at the Grade Eleven and Twelve Levels (Senior Level)...**

Playing time is not guaranteed. Senior competition is generally the culmination of the previous sports programs. Selection is based on skill and maturity of the student-athlete. Each student-athlete's skill level is re-evaluated at the beginning of the season for team membership. Winning is likely to become more of an objective at this stage but not at all cost. The selection of starting positions and the allotment of playing time recognize the realities and rigors of interschool competition. Most coaches will strive to create the best competitive game situation. During this period athletes will continue to uphold the ideals of sportsmanship, respect, commitment, and integrity. Playing time is generally based on performance and commitment to practice time. Players will be allowed playing time as their ability and the game situations permit. Athletic ability, socio-emotional development, and playing experience are some major factors in team selection and playing time. It is not unusual to see committed grade tens playing at this level. The dedication and commitment of an athlete at this level should never be questionable and regular attendance at practice and games are required for participation. As at any level the student should be striving to make the season both fun and rewarding for all those involved.