



PLAYING TIME

(From the Longmeadow High School Coaches' Handbook)

Freshman Team

At this level, students become accustomed to interscholastic practice and play. For many, it is their first introduction to competitive sports. Gaining experience through training and play is paramount, not the win/loss record. The focus is on learning athletic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social-emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition.

As safety and positive participation during practices allow, all players will receive playing time. Playing time during competitions will be divided as equally as the coach deems appropriate.

Junior Varsity Team

This level has increased emphasis upon team play, physical conditioning, and refinement of basic skills. Although being successful at the Junior Varsity level is important, winning is not the sole objective. This is the level at which the athlete displays his/her readiness for the execution of skills at game speed. Athletic abilities, commitments, and positive attitudes will be rewarded and tested in competitive game situations.

Attempts will be made to allow as many participants as possible to play, but not all will play equally. At the Junior Varsity level, playing time will be based on the degree of effort, skill improvement, ability to compete and execute skills at game speed demonstrated by the student-athlete in practice and games. This will be determined by individual coaches.

Varsity Team

Varsity competition represents the culmination of each sport program. Normally, juniors and seniors make up the majority of the roster. Occasionally, a sophomore and, infrequently, a freshman may be included on the team, provided that evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill, and appropriate social-emotional development are demonstrated.

Squad size at the varsity level is limited. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest. It is vital that each team member have a role and be informed of the importance of that role. The number of roster positions is relative to the number of students and their acceptance of their roles in pursuit of the team goals. While participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed.

Performance should be the chief criteria in determining which athlete plays. It is the responsibility of the coaches to make clear to the student-athletes what their roles are on any team.

Sound attitudes and advanced levels of skills are prerequisites for positions on varsity teams, as is the realization that varsity sports require full commitment. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sports seasons. The dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity program should be taken seriously.