

Northern Freeze

Activities Handbook for Parents

Go Freeze!!

PURPOSE

This Activities Handbook has been prepared to foster quality communication between Tri-County and Marshall County Central Schools and their students and parents. An effort has been made to unify policy establishing guidelines, responsibilities, and suggestions for providing a positive experience in athletics for all students. Primary goals of the Northern Freeze Cooperative Athletic Handbook are to further foster community spirit, outline a standard of fair play, build an expectation of good sportsmanship, develop teamwork in our programs, and to help our students find value and balance both academics and athletics in their life.

This is meant to be a guidebook and point of reference. It is a work in progress, and will be subject to revision as needs arise.

INTRODUCTION

Freeze Athletics is a vital part of the education experience at both Tri-County School and Marshall County Central Schools.

It is essential that our schools' programs directors, coaches, athletes, and parents support and help one another to increase the personal value of the student-athlete and to assure that a healthy balance exists between academics and activities.

In pursuit of increasing personal values, the teachers and coaches should foster the development of positive self esteem, the values of good sportsmanship in winning and losing, character development, teamwork, tolerance, and school spirit.

This guide is intended to help students and parents understand our rules and policies to ensure students stay eligible to participate, remain a positive team member, and support the goals and missions of both Tri-County School and Marshall County Central Schools.

Academics is the number one priority in both Marshall County Central and Tri-County School Districts. Athletics and other co-curricular activities are known to enhance academic excellence and to teach lessons that play a significant role for success in life. Success in academics and activities requires a commitment within the school district. The commitment for both school systems begins at the school board level and funnels down through the administration, the entire school staff, coaches, students, parents, and the community as a whole. A commonality exists between each group to provide the opportunity for a balanced development of academics and activities for all students.

To The Parents of Northern Freeze Student Athletes:



#GoFreeze

There is nothing more valuable to a parent than their child. They bring laughter, joy, and excitement. While at the same time they sometimes bring tears, sorrow, and heartache. But through all the peaks and all the valleys, one thing remains constant: your love for your child.

On behalf of all of our coaches, we would like to thank you for allowing us to be a part of this experience with your child. We know there will be highs, and we know there will be lows. We know there will be days we are loved, and days when your child doesn't want anything to do with us. But please understand, there will always be another constant: we will love your child as well.

Our coaches want your child to experience something more than a team. Our coaches want your child to know and feel that they are part of a family. And just like any family, there will be hugs, there will be arguments, there will be tears of sadness, and there will be tears of joy. Mistakes will be made and goals will be achieved. Criticism will be stated at times, and praise will be bestowed at others. But through it all your child will be loved.

Our coaches intentionally choose to bring passion, excitement, and joy to Northern Freeze athletics and activities every single day. We ask that you do your part as well. We want you to be passionate and excited. We want you to celebrate in our victories and be respectful in our defeats. Most of all, we want you to remember that this is all about a child that we both love.

Thank you for letting your child be a part of the Northern Freeze!!

Brian Longerbone
Athletic Director

Gary Taylor
Athletic Director

I. PHILOSOPHY

A. Statement of Philosophy

Activities are an interscholastic program. This implies that we are involved in the development of students and athletes who will be asked to compete at a very high level against quality competition. In preparing the athletes there are three levels of play:

1. Junior High School: At the Junior High School level our goal is for those in the program to have a positive experience. This can be gained by participation. However, the transition from elementary to Junior High School includes dedicated work in the off-season. Practice efforts, attendance and coaches discretion will determine playing time. Coaches should consistently keep participation in mind, as much as possible. Game situations should be used as a guide for participation.
2. 9th/C Squad/JV: This level should follow similar guidelines to the Junior High School level regarding the extra playing time for those putting in the additional efforts during the off-season. The “Junior Varsity” Squad is the direct line to the “Varsity” Squad; therefore, it is necessary to properly prepare our athletes to make that next transition. Participation remains an important element but athletes must remember that there is a direct correlation between off-season preparation, practice effort, and attendance with playing time.
3. Varsity: The primary emphasis at the “Varsity” Squad level is on being as successful as possible. To achieve this goal, it may require playing certain athletes the majority of the time. The coaching staff should have the best idea whom has put forth the most effort during practice sessions, as well as off-season preparation. A good coaching staff should always keep the team concept in mind. When game situations permit, efforts should be made to play as many deserving players as possible. A successful program should be a combination of winning, strong team morale, and good sportsmanship from coaches and players.

II. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

A. Scholastic Eligibility

Students from Tri-County will follow the Tri-County Student Handbook and MCC students will follow the MCC student handbook in regards to eligibility. These are the minimum standards and each coach may make team rules above the minimum. These rules will be provided to parents at the start of the season in writing.

B. Minnesota State High School League and Northern Freeze Training Rules:

The Freeze Coop is a member of the Minnesota State High School League and is governed by the rules, regulations, and eligibility of the MSHSL. See Appendix L for rules and regulations. For interpretations of training rules and regulations see Appendix M.

C. Citizenship

An essential quality expected of our student athletes is that of being of good character. We expect our students to maintain acceptable norms of good behavior.

Improper behavior is unacceptable and may lead to either suspension or dismissal from the team. Examples of unacceptable behavior would be:

- Being intolerant of others
- Use of obscene gestures
- Use of abusive language
- Involved in criminal acts
- Behavior that is an embarrassment to the school and team
- Unsportsmanship conduct in a game
- Any reported incidents that can be judged as being unacceptable upon review

All matters are subject to appropriate due process procedures

D. Non-School Competition and Training

Minnesota State High School League Policies - at a minimum all coaches and athletes will follow all current MSHSL policies.

III. CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

A. Concussion Protocol - Will follow return to competition policy set by the Minnesota State High School League

The final return to competition decision is based on clinical judgment and the athlete may return only with written permission from a health care provider who is registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily authorized by the state to provide medical treatment; is trained and experienced in evaluating and managing concussions; and is practicing within the person's medical training and scope of practice. Neuropsychological testing or balance testing may help with the return to play decision and may be used after the player is symptom free, but the tests are not required for the symptom free player to return to play.

IV. PRESEASON PROCEDURES

Team Correspondence

The coach is expected to communicate with potential players via individual letters, poster, school public address announcements and verbal communication through coaches or captains. Posters should be placed in the locker rooms, cafeteria and designated bulletin boards. This communication is for the purpose of informing the athletes as to times and dates of initial meetings and practices. All subsequent announcements can be taken care of through well-organized practices.

Captains' Practice

Captains' practices are for the purpose of the athletes to prepare themselves for a level of physical conditioning prior to the start of a school sport season. All captains' practices must comply with current MSHSL policies.

Open Gym

Open gym refers to the use of school facilities for recreation activities. The characteristics of an open gym are:

1. The recreational activities are open to all students.

2. The open gym must be well publicized with enough advance notice to provide all students the opportunity to participate.
3. The school facilities are available for students to participate in a number of activities.
4. There is no requirement for students to attend open gym activities as a prerequisite for membership on a high school team.

Team Meetings

It is required that each coach hold a team meeting prior to the opening of your sport season. Information pertinent to the sport should be reviewed with the athletes, including the Student Athlete Information Guide. Other topics might include:

1. Philosophy of program
2. Team and training rules
3. Attendance rules
4. Team selection
5. Lettering policy
6. Medical and training services for the athletes
7. Organization and events of support (booster) groups
8. Other pertinent information regarding your sport
9. MSHSL Rules
10. Specific School District Rules (Tri-County or MCC)
11. Forms and signatures
12. Fees
13. Transportation Policy
14. End of season, non-school tournament

V. SELECTION OF TEAM

A. Philosophy

In accordance with our philosophy of students and our desire to see as many students as possible participate in the activities programs while at Tri-County or MCC Schools, we encourage teachers and coaches to keep as many students as they can. Obviously, time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular activity.

Senior students will only be allowed to participate at the “JV” squad levels if numbers are down and they are needed.

B. Moving Athletes Up a Level

As a means of promoting and encouraging exceptionally talented students to develop their athletic skills to the fullest degree consistent with their maturational, physiological and psychological readiness levels and compatible with their educational needs, talented athletes may be afforded opportunity to participate at levels higher than their age group.

1. The final decision to move a student athlete up rests with the head coach/Athletic Directors.
2. To aid in the decision making process the coach will hold a conference with the athlete and the parents.
3. At the JH level, all efforts will be made to keep athletes in proper age groups, an 8th grader will not come down and play with 7th graders, unless approved by the AD's.

4. Students may be moved up for a game or two based on need. Coaches will communicate with players as to why a student is moving up and why moving back down.
5. If a JH player is going to be moved up to play C/JV, that player's parent(s) and AD's will be notified.
6. If a player is moved up on an at need basis, that player may be moved back down a level when the need no longer exists. If the player is moved up a level based on ability, that player will remain at the new level for the season.

VI. IN-SEASON PROCEDURES

A. Dual Sport Participation

In some cases, it may be possible for an athlete to participate in two sports at the same time providing there is a mutual consent of the athlete, parents, coaches and activities director involved. One of the sports must be a truly individual sport such as golf or track. Permission to participate in two sports must occur prior to an athlete starting the season.

B. Deadline for Joining a Sport/Dropping a Sport

1. A student may not join any team later than the 4th Monday from the initial day of practice. Anyone with extenuating circumstances wishing to join a team after 4th Monday deadline, may make application to the Activities Directors.
2. A student may choose the sport they wish to enjoy. No student shall change sports after the third week of practice without the consent of each coach involved and the Activities Directors. If a student changes a sport or quits a sport there will be no refund for the activity fee.

C. Personal Use of School Apparel

Athletes should wear school issued athletic apparel only when they are involved in practices or games. Athletic apparel is not to be used as physical education uniform or as personal clothing. Exception will be made for game days.

1. It is the responsibility of the coach to inform the participants on the team they coach of the proper use of athletic apparel.
2. The head coaches of each sport should feel the responsibility of ensuring that this policy is conformed to by all levels of participation.

D. Student Driving

Practice and events at home sites: Students may be transported to home sites. The district may provide transportation to designated sites for practices and games for those that need transportation. Please see Student Transportation Waiver form in the forms section of this handbook.

Away events and practices: We strongly encourage students to ride the district provided transportation. Parents may sign them out returning from games, etc if they speak to the coach or advisor IN PERSON. Alternative arrangements such as riding with another adult must be made in advance. In a case of emergency, a parent may request to the Superintendent / Principal to grant permission for their child to drive. The supervisor of the activity has the authority to require all

students in the activity to ride the “team” bus for reasons of building team rapport and camaraderie.

E. Practice Policy

1. Sports cooperative extra-curricular activities on days school is cancelled.
 - a. If either Tri-County or MCC are cancelled due to weather there will be no practices.
 - b. All activities shall be cancelled at each site.

2. With the increasing number of Junior High School through varsity level athletic contests, the amount of time needed for academics, along with the multitude of extracurricular activities, it is necessary to develop a practice schedule that will meet the needs of the student athlete as well as maintain the necessity of family cohesiveness. The following for practice will apply:
 - a. No practice on Sunday.
 - b. No required practices will take place later than 6:00 PM on Wednesdays.
 - c. No organized 6-12 practice will exceed 8:00 PM on school days.
 - d. Morning practices on school days will not begin before 6:15 AM and will finish by 7:45 AM.
 - e. The coaches will develop a practice schedule before the season begins. Any changes to the schedule will go through the Activities Directors at least 72 hours prior to the proposed change.
 - f. Split afternoon practices will be permissible on an as needed basis. An example of a split practice would be practice from 3:30 – 5:00 PM and from 5:00 – 6:30 PM. There will be no split practices on Wednesdays. An as needed basis for split practices would be determined by the Activities Directors and coaching staff (i.e. overlapping seasons, weather conditions, etc.)
 - g. During school vacations, holidays, and special events, coaches must excuse players from practice for excused and pre-arranged family absences. It is important to note that even excused absences may impact playing time per coach’s discretion.
 - h. Two weeks prior to the start of the school year, practices for volleyball and football must be coordinated with the Activities Directors to attempt to eliminate overlapping transportation.

Please note that practices are for the betterment of the programs. Too many limitations can be detrimental just as excessive practices can. Excessive practices will not be tolerated.

VII. POSTSEASON PROCEDURES

A. End of Season

The end of the season for a particular sport will be when that team has completed it’s schedule and no further competition by Northern Freeze teams has been scheduled by the conference, section or state. The purpose of this statement is:

1. To eliminate a player from being scheduled to practice in a completed sport and to allow the individual to start preparation for the next sport season.
 - a. To allow coaches with consecutive coaching assignments to be available immediately for the next coaching assignment.
 - b. To eliminate the conflict of determining priority in the scheduling of facilities.

B. Overlap of Sport Seasons

Whenever sport seasons overlap, i.e. fall/winter and winter/spring, the athlete who is completing a season must be allowed to finish that season before practice with the new sport.

C. Athletic Awards Program

Activity Awards Night serve the purpose of celebrating the accomplishments of the team and the athletes. When a school activity has a banquet or award ceremony, it then becomes a school function and the school assumes the same responsibilities as it does for any other school sponsored activity. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the responsible staff member to comply with policies and guidelines established for the purpose of regulating banquets.

The following guidelines are to be observed when planning for recognition programs for athletic squads:

1. Northern Freeze Athletic Banquets:
 - a. There will be one after the Fall sports season and one after Winter sports season
 - b. The location of the banquets will rotate by season and year. i.e. if fall banquet is at MCC, the winter banquet is at TC. The following year the fall banquet will be in TC and winter banquet at MCC.
 - c. Banquets will be for players who played at either the C-squad, JV or Varsity levels.
 - d. JH teams will have a separate banquet organized by their coaches.
2. The Activities Directors will coordinate with the head coach for their sports award ceremony.
 - a. Schedule these events well in advance to avoid conflicts with other events. Check with Activities Directors for appropriate dates.
 - b. Committees for tickets, programs, menu, decorations, etc. may be organized.
 - c. If there is a charge for any planned ceremony, money should be collected in advance. (Checks for banquets should be made out to the committee designee).
 - d. All ceremonies or banquets are to be self-supporting. The Activities Directors should be accountable for the disbursement of funds. The costs should not be prohibitive for athletes and their families.
 - e. An information letter should be sent to all participating athletes and their families.
 - f. An athletic team may hold a separate banquet or it may combine with one or more other sports.
 - g. Banquets and awards programs may also be held at locations other than the school. If a banquet is held at an establishment where alcohol beverages are served, they should not be served on this occasion. Parents or guardians, coaches and guests, as well as athletes and other students who participate in activities, are to be asked to respect this policy.
 - h. In conforming to the tobacco free policy of the school district, no tobacco should be used at any banquets.

VIII. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PLAYER/PARENT CONCERNS

The coach/coaching staff for each sport is responsible for making and determining, (1) team selection, (2) length and content of practice sessions within limitations, (3) game strategy (game plans) and (4) individual playing time. These decisions will be based on the best judgment of the coach.

Procedure for Handling Activity Complaints

To allow for an expression of differences that may occur within the district's activities, the following process should be followed:

1. All Northern Freeze activities will strictly follow the 24 hour rule. **All issues and concerns will not be expressed until 24 hours has passed.** This rule is in place to allow time for all parties to process the situation and communicate with each other in an appropriate manner. This includes in person or electronic communication.
2. No conflict between a parent, student, official, or coach (director) should be addressed during or immediately following a contest or production. The contest site, practice area, lobby, or locker room is not an appropriate place to handle questions and conflict. Coaches (directors) are not to meet or deal with questions or conflicts at these times or in these places. Problems should be addressed only after the 24 hour rule has been met. Never confront a coach. Any parent who confronts a coach in such a situation may face sanctions that may include prohibiting attendance from future Freeze events, home or away.
3. If a parent/guardian or student has a concern, a meeting should be established following the procedures outlined below.
4. If a meeting becomes confrontational, it can be terminated by any party and taken to the next step of the procedure.

A. Steps for Conflict Resolution

** Freeze activities will follow the 24 hour rule. All issues and concerns **will not** be expressed until 24 hours has passed. This rule is in place to allow time for all parties to process the situation and communicate with each other in an appropriate manner.

STEP 1 – Participant Concerns

A meeting between the student and the coach (director) should be held and may be initiated by the coach (director) or the student.

OR

STEP 1 – Parent Concerns

A meeting involving the coach (director) can be requested by the parent directly by calling the coach (director), or the activities directors may be utilized as a point of contact for athletes and requested to set up the meeting. If so desired, the activities directors may also facilitate the meeting. For activities outside of athletics, the Superintendent / Principal will serve in the same capacity.

STEP 2 – Concerns

If a resolution is not achieved and a parent and/or student desires further intervention or discussion of the issue, a meeting with the activities directors and Superintendents / Principals may be held to handle an athletic-related issue. For other activities, a meeting with the Superintendents / Principals may be held.

STEP 3 – Concerns

If the conflict still has not been resolved, it may be referred directly to the Superintendents / Principals, and if he/she so chooses, the Board of Education.