The Athletics handbook has been prepared to assist parents and students in grades 4-8 in understanding essential information about the sports program offered at SHS. Athletics is an important part of the total educational process, and this handbook describes both the philosophy and practice of the program.

**Philosophy**

Development of the whole child is at the core of the values of a Sacred Heart education. Athletics at SHS are an integral part of the daily life of the school, and are designed to complement the work that takes place in the classroom. The program is designed to develop skills, encourage personal responsibility and increase confidence in physical abilities while fostering social and emotional development through teamwork, commitment and fun. It is imperative that students, parents and faculty work together to encourage positive attitudes and conduct necessary to make the athletic program a rewarding one for the student athlete.

**Policies**

Competitive after school sports begin in the fourth grade. Participation is voluntary and encouraged. The athletic department supports a no-cut policy, and additional teams will be added each season if numbers warrant. Students participate in either the Junior Varsity or Varsity division. Team selection is determined from the pool of athletes and try-outs. An A level athlete demonstrates a high level of skill and performance, whereas, a B & C level athlete may need to develop certain skills. The goal of each team is for children to enjoy themselves while developing appropriate skills and learning the rules of the game.

The Athletic program at SHS provides:

- An opportunity for each student in grades 4-8 to be a member of an organized team and to play at a level that is consistent with his/her abilities.
- An opportunity for all students to learn the game and improve their skill level.
- An opportunity for each student to fulfill the obligations of his/her team, including attendance at all practices and games.
- An opportunity for all students to enjoy athletics and the benefits of working together as a team.
- An opportunity for each player to build self-esteem, show respect for teammates, opponents, coaches and officials, and to compete in a manner consistent with Christian teachings and beliefs.
• An opportunity to use athletics as a means of furthering school and team spirit.
• Opportunities for parents to enjoy seeing their children compete in a team environment.

**Concussion Policy**
A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or a game shall be removed from competition at that time for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the education and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

**Facebook, Twitter, and Internet Policy**
Profiles are a representation of the student and their school when pictures or comments are posted about the student’s athletic activities at SHS. The student will be held responsible for anything that appears under his/her profile which includes: anything the student writes or posts and is deemed improper or unacceptable according to SHS policies governing student conduct and behavior.

**Team Sports**
Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton participates in the WBAL (West Bay Athletic League).

Current members including SHS are:

- Castilleja (Palo Alto) (Girls only)
- Crystal Springs Uplands (Hillsborough)
- Eastside Prep (East Palo Alto)
- Girls Middle School (Palo Alto)
- Harker School (San Jose)
- Highland’s Christian School (San Bruno)
- Keys School (Palo Alto)
- The Kings Academy (Sunnyvale)
- Menlo School (Atherton)
- Nueva School (Hillsborough)
- Pinewood (Los Altos)
- St. Matthew’s Episcopal (San Mateo)
- Woodside Priory (Portola Valley)
- Woodland School (Portola Valley)
- Reedermer Lutheran (Redwood City)

Team sports are open to all boys and girls grades 5-8, with the exception of basketball which begins in grade 4. In addition, fourth graders may participate in SHS’ league cross country, track and swim meets.

The seasons for boys and girls are:

**Boys’ Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>Sept. to Mid-Oct.</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Season</td>
<td>Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Football</td>
<td>Sept to Mid-Oct</td>
<td>Weekdays, Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League Swim Meet (6-8)</td>
<td>Mid-October</td>
<td>Weekday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Mid-Oct to Jan</td>
<td>Weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Varsity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Oct to Dec (JV)</td>
<td>Weekdays, Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Feb to Mid-March</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Mid-March to May</td>
<td>Weekdays,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (6-8)</td>
<td>April to Mid-May</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo (6-8)</td>
<td>April to Mid-May</td>
<td>Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Two (2) league tournaments</td>
<td></td>
<td>one (1) qualifying tournament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

League Track Meet (4-8)
Early May
2 day event (Fri & Sat)

**Girls' Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>Sept. to Mid-Oct.</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League Swim Meet (6-8)</td>
<td>Mid-October</td>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Mid-Oct. to Mid- Dec.</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Jan. to March</td>
<td>Weekdays, Sundays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (6-8)</td>
<td>April to Mid-May</td>
<td>Weekdays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo (6-8)</td>
<td>April to Mid-May</td>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(fall &amp; spring) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>one (1) qualifying tournament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Activities**

**Swim Meet**
A league swim meet is held in October for grades 6-8. This is a one-day event. There is no limit to the number of swimmers who may participate. There may be two to three additional swim meets in the fall and coaches will notify potential swimmers. A student in grades 4 or 5 with swimming experience may enter with the knowledge that they will be swimming against older competitors.
Track Meet
A league track meet is held during the first part of May. This is a two-day event held on a Friday and Saturday. Students in grades 4-8 qualify for the running events as a result of their track work in P.E. class. Team creations will try to involve as many student-athletes as possible; however, students who have the top times in these events (as determined in P.E. class) will be chosen to compete. Any student who is not participating in a running event may enter the long jump and/or softball throw, as these events are unlimited.

Qualifying for the top three spots in any of the running events requires a commitment to run in those events. Students know well in advance the dates of the track meet and may not cancel out at the last minute except for injury or family emergency. In addition to the league track meet, SHS will host or participate in one or two practice meets in which any athlete may run.

Golf Tournament
The league holds a fall and spring golf tournament. These events will be limited to a maximum of eight golfers per school. Participants will be chosen based on their experience and ability. SHS will also try to hold a qualifying tournament.

Level of Competition
Students participate in either the Junior Varsity or Varsity division. The Junior Varsity division is made up of students in grades 4-6; Varsity is made up of students in grades 7-8. In most sports the Junior Varsity and Varsity divisions are broken down into A or B levels of competition, and there is a Junior Varsity C division for 4th grade boys and girls basketball only. For example, in basketball, there are Varsity A, Varsity B, Junior Varsity A, Junior Varsity B and Junior Varsity C divisions. If there are not enough teams to have a separate B division, there will be one Junior Varsity A or one Varsity A level only.

Varsity A Division
The A level of competition is for athletes who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance. This division is extremely competitive. Separate try-outs will take place for the Varsity A. An athlete won’t be considered for the Varsity A unless the athlete participates in the try-out. Coaches will do their best to give each member playing time in each game, but there is no guarantee as to the amount of playing time each member must have.

Junior Varsity A Division
The JV-A level of competition is for athletes who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance. This division is extremely competitive. Separate try-outs will take place for the JV-A. An athlete won’t be considered for the JV-A, unless the athlete participates in the try-out. Emphasis in this division is on participation and competition, but there is no requirement as to the amount of playing time each member must have.

Varsity or Junior Varsity B Division
The B level of competition is for athletes whose skills may need further development. The
emphasis in this division is on participation. Every team member will receive some playing time, as long as he or she has made a commitment to the team. Games are still competitive at this level, but there is less emphasis on winning and more emphasis on developing the athletes’ skills and increasing their interest in the sport.

**Junior Varsity C Division**
This level is only for fourth grade girls and boys basketball. It is an all fourth grade division and has the same philosophy as the B level of competition. In the event that some Junior Varsity B teams in sports other than basketball do not have enough players to make a full squad, fourth graders may be asked to play.

SHS encourages all students to participate in athletics. The three levels of competition afford an opportunity to meet the needs of each individual athlete. Every student will be placed on a team; there will be no cuts. All efforts will be made to keep the size of the team at a manageable level.

**Team Selection**
Within each division, SHS may have one or several teams depending on the number of students who participate. Team selection is based on two factors:
2-3 practices (try-outs) before the start of the season.
Performance in physical education class in relation to that particular sport.

The Athletic Director, the physical education teachers, and the individual coaches select players jointly. This selection process is also described in the sections for each individual sport. Teams may be created either by single grade level or by mixed grade levels. While grade level teams obviously provide opportunities to strengthen relationships among peers, mixed grade level teams provide a greater degree of interaction between players of different grades as well as building strong friendships outside one’s own class. It also provides a strong cooperative learning experience. The Athletic Directors will decide which option best fits each group.

**Boys’ Flag Football ***
Varsity: In most years the league provides for an A and B division. The Varsity A team will be made up of the top 12-14 athletes in grades 7-8 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance. The remaining athletes will comprise the Varsity B team. We will have 1-3 Varsity B teams depending on the number of participants.

Junior Varsity: The Junior Varsity provides for a JV-A and JV-B Division. There is an all-5th grade team to compete in the JV-B division, and an all-6th grade team to compete in the JV-A division. If a second all-6th grade team needs to be created, this team may play in either the JV-B or JV-A division.

***Please note girls can play on the flag football teams.

**Boys’/Girls’ Basketball**
Varsity: The league provides for both a Varsity A and Varsity B divisions. The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 8-10 athletes in grades 7-8 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to form the Varsity A team. The remaining players will be divided as evenly as possible to form as many Varsity B teams as necessary. Try-outs will be held in mid-October for the boys and early December for the girls. Serious consideration is given to team chemistry, players’ positions, as well as
preparation for the following year’s teams. The Athletic Directors and the coaches involved will make these final decisions, and will communicate these decisions to the players and their parents.

Note: The boys’ Varsity A season runs from mid-October through the end of January, and there are a number of tournaments along with the league schedule. The team is entered in the St. Nicholas Tournament in January, which requires the players to house a member of one of the visiting teams for the weekend. Note: The girls’ Varsity A team will play in additional tournaments beyond league play.

Junior Varsity: The league provides for Junior Varsity A, B, and C divisions. The top 8-10 athletes from grades 5-6 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance will be chosen to form the JV-A team. The remaining fifth and sixth graders will be chosen to form the teams to represent the B division. The fourth graders will be divided as evenly as possible to form as many teams as needed to represent the C division.

Boys’/Girls’ Soccer
Varsity: The league sponsors A and B divisions in soccer. The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 12-15 student athletes in grades 7-8 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to form the Varsity A team. The remainder of the players will play on the B team. If there are enough players to sponsor two B teams, they will be divided equally.

Junior Varsity: The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 12-15 student athletes who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to play on the A team, and the remainder of the players are divided as evenly as possible to play on the B teams.

Boys’ Baseball
Varsity: The league usually sponsors only an A division, so one Varsity division is created. The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 11-13 student athletes in grades 7-8 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to play on the Varsity A-1 team. The remainder of the players will play on the Varsity A-2 team, which gives those players – who might otherwise have limited playing time - a chance to play significantly more innings and thus improve their skills.

Junior Varsity: The league sponsors A and B divisions at this level. The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 11-13 players who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to play on the A team, and the remainder of the players are divided as evenly as possible to play on the B teams.
Girls’ Volleyball
Varsity: The girls will have one Varsity A team. This team usually consists of the top 7-9 student athletes in grades 7-8. The Varsity B level will consist of as many as 5 teams (we keep the team numbers down to 7-9 on a team.) The remaining players will be divided up as evenly as possible. In some cases we may choose to have a higher level B team, or a second A level team.

Junior Varsity: The Athletic Director and the coaching staff will choose the top 7-9 student athletes in grade 6 who have demonstrated a high level of skill and performance to play on the JV-A team. A 5th grader will be considered if she is playing on a high level club team. The remainder of the sixth graders will play in the all-6th grade JV-B North division, and the fifth graders will participate in the JV-B South division. Teams in both divisions will be divided evenly to form as many teams as needed.

Co-ed Tennis
The tennis team is open to boys and girls in grades 6-8. Players participate in an initial tryout to determine level of ability. They are placed on either the Varsity A or Varsity B Teams. Each team will be limited to 20 players. The league plays four singles and five doubles per match plus some practice matches. Matches are played during the week, but not all players participate in every match. In addition to the 14 match players, the coach will try and schedule additional practice matches for the remaining players. The coaches determine the lineups before each match.

Note: During the spring sports male athletes must choose between baseball and tennis; female athletes must choose between volleyball and tennis. No athlete may play two spring sports. Students may, however, participate in the water polo league and play tennis or baseball or volleyball.

Co-ed Water Polo
For student athletes in grades 6-8, there will be a six-week program geared towards players of all levels. The practice and time commitment are designed to permit students to participate in water polo and the spring sport. The season will last six weeks with two practices a week and three Saturday tournaments. Depending on the number of boy and girls participants, there could be a Varsity B team, a Varsity A team, and an all-girls’ team.

Commitment
When a student joins a team, he/she has a responsibility to his/her teammates and to the school to play that sport for the entire season. Quitting a team for reasons other than serious academic difficulty or medical complications is unacceptable and very disruptive to the team. Players who miss an excessive number of games or practices or who have discipline or academic problems may be subject to removal from the team. Students are expected to see their coaches or the appropriate Athletic Director before missing a practice or game; telling a friend is not acceptable. A student who does not attend a game and has not given prior notice immediately will be suspended for one game (unless illness or family emergency precluded him/her from doing so). Failure to attend a second game without written notice shall result in dismissal from the team. These conditions are intended to teach students to be responsible and to communicate.
We are supportive of students who participate in off-campus sports or activities. However, a commitment to an SHS sport takes precedence over other outside activities. Parents should talk seriously with their child before the season to determine if participating in more than one activity is feasible. The Athletic Director is a good resource to students and parents.

**Games and Practices**
The athletic directors conduct sign-ups prior to the beginning of each sport. Sign-ups for fall sports will be done before school is dismissed in June, and new families will receive information in the June mailing. Signing up for a sport at SHS means that the students, as well as their parents, have made a commitment to that sport and are expected to make every effort possible to fulfill the team obligations. Game schedules will be provided for the students and parents immediately upon completion by the league. All efforts will be made to adhere to these schedules, but due to the number of teams and shared facilities changes may be necessary. Additional practice games and tournaments may be added to the schedule. Coaches will make every effort to adhere to these schedules. If a coach is sick or has an unexpected emergency, all efforts will be made to get a substitute coach for that day. If games or practices are affected by weather conditions, parents may call the school office or the athletic directors after 1:00 p.m. to find out if events are canceled.

**Player Conduct**
Sportsmanship is of utmost importance to the SHS Athletics Program, for both the P.E. classes and the After School teams. Emphasis is placed on respect for teammates, coaches, referees, and the opposing team. SHS prides itself on being the team to set the example for proper behavior with our opponents. At game time, fair and honest play will be expected and any decision made by the referee or umpire should be accepted, even if the player disagrees with the call. The students are taught that referees are human and that mistakes will be made. After a game, regardless of the outcome, opposing team members should be congratulated on a game well played. Players may be suspended for inappropriate behavior.

**Parent Conduct**
Parents must conduct themselves in a supportive manner during practices and games. A parent may not agree with a call made by an official or a decision made by a coach, but still must remember that these individuals are, in all fairness, trying to do the best job possible. An unruly or complaining parent is an embarrassment to the team and the School. Inappropriate behavior may result in the team being penalized, and/or that particular parent being ejected from the game. The league’s behavior policy is very firm, and action will be taken against unruly parents.

Sacred Heart is a strong supporter of this policy, and is proud that our parents generally have been very supportive so that their attendance at games is both encouraged and welcomed. If parents have issues with coaches, referees, etc., they must make an appointment with the coach or Athletic Director to discuss the matter. Approaching a coach after a game is not appropriate.

**Parent Expectations:**
- Parents must make sure students attend all practices and games, and should communicate with the athletic staff in a timely manner when absences need to occur. Examples of valid excuses are personal illness or injury, hospitalization or death of family or friends.
Examples of excuses that are not acceptable are too much homework, attending a party, relatives in town, etc.

- Parents must volunteer at least once a year as a “team parent.”
- Team parents should fulfill team duties such as bringing snacks, helping with the scorekeeping duties, and supporting the Booster Club when asked for help.
- Parents are responsible for maintaining a positive attitude in the stands or on the sidelines.
- Parents should cheer for the team and not coach their child from the sidelines.
- Parents should read the team rules with their student athletes and help them understand the commitment involved.
- When an issue arises, parents should contact the athletic staff through e-mail or phone. Athletic events and practices are not the time for the athletic staff to discuss issues; it is a time for the focus to be on the student athletes.
- Parents should not expect to discuss team selections, playing time, line-up, strategy or preparation with coaches.

**Booster Club**
The Booster Club provides support and service to the Athletic Department. The Booster Club coordinates “Team Parents” and “Team Photographers” for each boys’ and girls’ sport, and works with the Athletic Department to coordinate a number of fundraising activities – like the Swim Meet, Track Meet, and Faculty vs. Eighth Grade Basketball Game, as well as the year-end girls Powder Puff Games and Sports Celebration Night.

The Booster Club also designs and sells “Gator Gear,” or logo clothing, to build spirit and supplement budgets for sports teams and equipment. Many volunteers are needed to assist in Booster Club activities; parents of athletes are asked to volunteer to be “team parent” for one of their child’s teams at least once a year. More information is available on the school athletics’ website and at the Volunteer Fair.

**Transportation**
Parents must provide transportation to and from games. We recommend that parents who are unable to attend an event have their child carpool with another family. Occasionally, school vans will be used for transportation (when the situation is appropriate and the school van is available, in these cases the athletic director or coach will let the team know ahead of time). Directions to all of the sites are provided on our website.

**Uniforms**
Uniforms are distributed at the beginning of the season. Athletes are held accountable for the return of a clean uniform at the end of the season.

**Website**
The Lower & Middle Schools Athletics webpage can be found by clicking here. You can also find the webpage by going to the SHS website at www.shschools.org, and selecting the "Athletics" Tab at the top navigation bar to reveal a dropdown menu where the LMS athletics page can be found. On the Resource Board the Athletics webpage contains game and practice information for all teams currently playing. The weekly practice schedule page lists practice times and any changes that occur. This site also includes important forms and flyers relevant to Athletic programs and events.
Awards
There will be a Sports Celebration Night ceremony held in the evening at the end of the school year to recognize the hard work of all athletes and coaches. Every athlete will receive a pin for each team sport in which he/she participated. League championship teams will also be recognized. In addition, there will be several special awards presented:

**Sportsmanship Awards (Grades 5-8)**
The Sportsmanship Award recognizes one male and one female athlete per grade level who have demonstrated excellent effort, positive attitude, dedication to their teams, respect for coaches and officials, and a true desire to improve their skills. These are student athletes who embody the SHS philosophy and serve as a model for their peers. Students who have participated in at least three sports during that school year are eligible for this award.

**Track Athlete of the Year (4th-8th)**
The top male and female athlete (those receiving the most points in the league track meet) for each grade level (4-8) will receive a plaque. Also, the overall top male and female track athlete (as determined by total points) will receive the Track Athlete of the Year award.

**Four Sport Award (8th Grade Only)**
This award recognizes those students who have shown a passion for athletics by participating in four seasons of team sports during their sixth, seventh and eighth grade years.

**Coaches Awards (8th Grade Only)**
This award recognizes those students who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to our athletic teams.

**Gator Athlete of the Year (8th Grade Only)**
This award recognizes one male and one female athlete who have exhibited both exceptional skills and exceptional sportsmanship in team sports at SHS. Students who have participated in at least three sports during their sixth, seventh and eighth grade years are eligible to receive this award.

**Virginia Lochtefeld Sportsmanship Award/Kevin Eagleson**

**Sportsmanship Award (8th Grade Only)**
These awards recognize one female and one male athlete who have demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship during their time at SHS. Students who have participated in at least three sports during their sixth, seventh and eighth grade years are eligible for this award.

Coaches
The appropriate Athletic Director chooses team coaches. They are chosen from the faculty, staff, and other outside sources (e.g., high school/college students). When high school students are hired as coaches, the Athletic Directors and/or coaches will assist them during the season. (A
program that will enable high school students to mentor and coach LMS athletes is being developed.)

Coaches must make a commitment to the philosophy of Sacred Heart education and to the Athletics Program in particular. The coaches must commit themselves to their leadership role in the areas of sportsmanship, fair play, and appropriate conduct on and off the playing surface. The appropriate Athletic Director will continually evaluate a coach’s performance based on the way he/she interacts with the athletes, the parents, the opposing team, and the officials.

Parents and students have the opportunity to evaluate coaches at the end of each season using an online survey provided by the Athletic Department. The evaluations are read by the Principal and the appropriate Athletic Director. These surveys are used to help coaches improve and are taken into serious consideration by the Athletic Directors when rehiring.

**SHS Athletic Rules**

- Players are not to argue with coaches, referees or officials.
- Players are not to use improper language or demonstrative behavior as this reflects negatively on SHS, their team, and themselves.
- Players are to attend practices and games unless excused by the coach or Athletic Director.
- All absences must be communicated by the parent or guardian to the appropriate Athletic Director. Detention, babysitting, parties, etc., are not excused absences.
- Any player who misses an excessive number of practices or games is subject to removal from the team.
- All players suffering from minor illnesses while in school, such as colds, etc., must still attend practices even though they may be excluded from strenuous activity. In case of injury please alert the Athletic Director and coach.
- Participation in an athletic event held during the week requires attendance at school for at least one-half day. Absences on Friday do not affect weekend games.

**Athletic Directors and Assistants**
The Athletic Directors at SHS will coordinate all aspects of athletics in the WBAL, with which SHS is affiliated. They are to work with all personnel in maintaining a quality program within the framework of the Sacred Heart Goals & Criteria. Their duties include:

- Recruit, train, supervise and evaluate coaches.
- Represent SHS at league meetings.
- Manage all parent and student communication.
- Provide extra help when needed for the P.E. programs.
- Coordinate with the Booster Club on fundraising events and other activities.
- Enforce all Athletic rules of the school and of the leagues.

**Boys’ Sports Leadership**
Athletic Director: Jeff Reynolds
Assistants: Christian Mellberg, Prys Hughes, Temo Barrera
Girls’ Sports Leadership
Athletic Director: Sue McDonald
Assistants: Dana Van Wyk, Jamie Frank, Temo Barrera

Co-Ed Assistant Athletic Director
Dana Van Wyk