**Guidelines and Philosophy Statement for Northwest Sports**

In order to improve communication and perhaps avoid any misunderstanding in the future, we would like to express in writing the guidelines we use and have used for many years to help determine playing time for our team members. This is no easy task, nor do we take it lightly.

As coaches, we have to consider many circumstances as we come to these decisions. A player’s skill level, attitude, and effort give us a starting point. Has the player learned their responsibilities to the team in practice and game situations? What is the player’s level of understanding of the game? Is the player physically able to perform at a level required in a specific situation or on a certain team? We have to make judgments on all of these and more. We do the best we can. With all of those things in mind, we have to determine team placement and who plays when. Who is on ‘A’ Team or ‘B’ Team? Who starts? Who finishes? Does everyone get a fair chance to compete at a level to be successful? We have to try to provide appropriate experiences for players who have the skill and dedication to go on to participate at the varsity level in high school and other players who want the team and sports experience but will most likely never try out in high school. In order to help us in the process of answering all those questions and actually playing the games, we use these general guidelines.

The ‘B’ Team is for learning. We give very little emphasis to winning at this level. We try to see that each player plays nearly equal amounts of time. A common exception is when a player misses practice. In this case, playing time is often reduced accordingly to be fair to those who spend the full time preparing. Equal time is easier to do in basketball than volleyball because of the fact that basketball is timed. In volleyball, a few ace serves and the game can be over without anyone seeming to have participated much. A few ‘side outs’ and one point can involve several minutes of spirited play. We like to give the ‘B’ Teams a chance to win because everyone needs to be part of some success. However, everyone will play a reasonable amount regardless of the score.

The ‘A’ Team places more emphasis on being competitive. Everyone who is placed on the ‘A’ Team will play in every game. In close, very competitive games, the more skilled players will probably see more time. In games with less pressure, these players will see reduced time in favor of those who need more experience. In any case, all the players will play a significant, if not equal amount of time. If ‘B’ Team players are invited to be on the bench for the ‘A’ game, it is with understanding that they may not get to play, but if the opportunity presents itself, they may get a chance.

All three of the Northwest vikings sports teams end the season by participating in a tournament. It is our philosophy that the main reason for being in the tournament is to try to win. It is the one time of each season that we try to be at our competitive best and reward the players that have done the best job all year and give us the best chance to win.

This may mean that some of the players play very little or not at all. Part of the reason this happens is our effort to keep our better players on the floor a higher percentage of the time. Part of the reason is that other teams usually come to a tournament with the same philosophy of winning so they mostly play their better players. We coaches never want to put our less skilled players in a situation in which they might be embarrassed by the other team’s best players.

Within these guidelines, we try to give each young athlete at Northwest Jr. High a quality sports experience. The blending of very different skill and ability levels is no easy task. We know that not everyone is going to agree with our assessments and decisions, but we make them based on all the information we can gather from practice and game experiences so we can do the best possible job for the teams. We do the best we can and hope you will support us in our endeavors.

Head Coach Beckstead Principal Scott Mazour

Assistant Coach Fuchtman