

Guidelines for parents when planning sports banquets

A survey was sent to school parents in 2012 regarding their thought and opinions regarding the various sports banquets that have been held over the years. This document should address some of the concerns, and to act as a guide that can be passed on to parents/coaches throughout the years.

Cost, length of banquet, and overall number of banquets were the three main concerns parents expressed. Because of the sheer volume of students that participate in athletics at Saint Louise, there is no venue large enough to combine all of the sports, or even host a fall/spring season event. However, cost and length are manageable.

1. A banquet should not last more than 2.5 hours. An event much longer will make it difficult for parents who have to leave other children at home, as well as keep the attention of the youngest athletes. This can be easily managed by asking the coaches to keep their comments brief and to only speak about individual athlete's accomplishments **if they are in 8th grade**. Simply announcing the other athlete's names is sufficient when calling them up to receive their certificates.
2. Cost per individual should be kept to \$20.00 or less. This can be handled by flexibility and creativity on the planner's part.

There is no set time of day or venue when or where banquets are to be held, but many are held following Mass on Sunday. This allows for the team and parents to attend Mass together. Le Gras is preferable as a venue because it is held on Parish property and is free of charge. The planner should call and make sure it is available at the beginning of the sports season, as it tends to book quickly.

The athletic board does not offer any compensation for banquets. The athletic board provides certificates, pins, the memory mate from M&M photography, and a plaque for 8th graders only. Therefore, it is helpful to note on the invitation that the cost includes not only covers food and drink, but the overall expenses as well. Cake, table coverings, decorations, **and most importantly covering the payment for special guests, coaches and spouses to attend free of charge.**

Ideas to keep cost low include having the catering simple, perhaps an early afternoon brunch, or a pizza party. A pot luck banquet is always a possibility as well.

There are many parishioners who own catering businesses and have been willing and flexible to work well with parents when planning.

3. Any parent(s) of athletes can plan a banquet. Having 8th grade parents involved, or one acting as chair of the event is helpful. Banquets highlight the accomplishments of the outgoing 8th graders, and those parents should be able to have input on how that can be done. If the 8th grade parents choose to provide a gift for the 8th grade athlete other than that which is provided by the athletic department, all 8th grade parents must pay for the gift and agree on the amount spent. Pictures that have been taken of the players are often given as gifts to the athletes, and will be passed on from the 8th grade recognition.
4. Before purchasing decorations, check with the parent who planned the previous year's events. Some have been saved, and this keeps the cost low as well. Decorations used during 8th grade recognition are often passed on from the 7th grade parents that planned that event.
5. If using Le Gras, a floor plan should be given to maintenance a week before that notifies them the number of tables and where you want them to be placed. Other equipment such as podium, microphone, and possibly a slide projector and screen can be provided by maintenance if requested. Parents are responsible for cleaning up following event. Please place garbage bags outside of Le Gras if using that facility.
6. Those invited to the event are Coaches and their spouses, and the athletes and their parents. Siblings are asked to stay at home to keep the event manageable. It is helpful to mention this on the invitation to avoid misunderstandings at a later date. The Pastor and Parochial Vicar, the Principal, the Head of the Athletic Department, The Program Director of specific sport, the Head of the Men's Fish Fry, as well as Mrs. Testa are asked as special guests.
7. All payment for the event should be collected by a designated person. Checks should be made payable to Saint Louise de Marillac, and the collected funds should be given to the parish accountant for appropriate reimbursement. All who spend their own money should keep receipts to be reimbursed should there be money left following the event. An invoice should be collected if a caterer is involved.
8. If there should happen to be any money remaining after reimbursements have been made, please notify the Parish accountant to keep the remaining money in the athletic fund.