

St. Maximillian Kolbe opens second High-Performer Athlete program in York Region]

For the first time in school history, St. Maximillian Kolbe will open a High-Performer Athlete program at their school, the second of its kind available in all of York Region.

Set to begin in September of 2023, the HPA program is exclusive to provincial, national and international athletes seeking post-secondary and professional opportunities through sport.

Regional athletes can also be accepted.

In a seminar at the school led by coordinators Joe Gaudio and Kate Treacy last Tuesday, Gaudio explained the process to many parents of students graduating elementary school at the end of this year and to many high school students as to how this all works.

"The High Performer Athlete program is an academic program for elite student athletes who are currently involved in provincial, national or international competition. I know there are many of you in here that fall under that category and we have many students currently enrolled at St. Maximillian Kolbe who fall under that category," Gaudio said.

"I know there are also many of you in here who are regional athletes who aspire to become provincial, national and international athletes. We have many spots here for regional athletes who aspire to achieve the highest levels in sport. St. Maximillian Kolbe will support students with intense training schedules with more flexible timetables."

In the HPA program, students can earn physical education credits for their training. Gaudio explained that high performer athletes will have designated training times and schedules that will coincide with their classes.

As a school run on semesters, the HPA program will require 15-hours a week of training by the athlete. The school will work throughout the course of the athlete's year to provide seminars and information on U-Sports, OCAA and NCAA schools.

"It's extremely important to be able to combine the athletic prominence that God has blessed you with, as well as the academic brilliance. There always is another profession after sports is done. That's why we're here to support both endeavours for all of our student athletes," Gaudio said.

Students outside of St. Maximillian Kolbe's catchment area will also have the opportunity to apply for the program.

The program is not limited to strictly high-performance athletes in Aurora.

However, should a student choose to do so, the student arriving from outside of the jurisdiction of the school, will be required to follow YRAA/OFSAA rules regarding participating in their number-one sport. They can represent the school at the YRAA/OFSAA level in all other sports. Students within the jurisdiction part of the HPA program will be able to join any sports team in the school as long as it does not conflict with their training schedules.

St. Maximillian Kolbe offers training facilities at the school. There is a state-of-the-art artificial turf field, a full track, fitness room and three gymnasiums.

The admission criteria to apply is proof of an athlete's participation in an approved sport activity at the regional, provincial, national or international level. Evidence of training commitment with a minimum 15-hours weeks per week is required, along with a completed application, references from a qualified coach, organization or a recent teacher.

The application package can be found online at: smkh.ycdsb.ca/2022/11/25/high-performance-athlete-program-application/.

The application must be completed by Friday, December 16. Offers of admission will be sent between January 16-20, 2023.

For more information, visit smkh.ycdsb.ca or phone the school directly at 905-727-5652.

By Robert Belardi