

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA  
CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION  
ATHLETIC MINISTRY HANDBOOK**



School Year: 2021-2022



**Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
Catholic Youth Organization**

***The Athletic Ministry/CYO Sports Handbook is  
published by:***

**The Office of Catholic Education- CYO Office**

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## **“Beloved Young Adults”**

**The late Saint John Paul II’s words  
On Nov. 24, 1984, to Olympians who had  
participated in the Los Angeles Games.**

“Beloved young athletes, athletics offers you, among other things, also the opportunity to improve your own personal spiritual state. Called as you are frequently to engage in your competitions in the midst of nature, amid the marvels of the mountains, seas, fields and slopes, you are in the best position to perceive the value of simple and immediate things, the call to goodness, the dissatisfaction with one’s insufficiency, and to mediate on the authentic values that are the basis of human life.

These are the virtues that harmonize well with the Christian spirit because they demand a capacity for self-control, self-denial, sacrifice and humility, and therefore an attitude of gratefulness to God, who is the giver of every good and therefore also the giver of necessary physical and intellectual talents.

Sports are not merely the exercise of muscles, but the school of moral values and of training in courage, in perseverance, and in overcoming laziness and carelessness. There is no doubt that these values are of the greatest interest for the formation of a personality which considers sports not an end in itself but as a means to total and harmonious physical, moral and social development.”

Dear Friends of CYO Sports,

As we venture back into our first full year of athletics, it is important to reflect back on the opportunities lost during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our young men and women found themselves separated from their friends, activities, education, and growth during lockdown. Physical activity was limited, learning was virtual, and companionship was all but lost. It was an extremely difficult year for everyone, and our children suffered in many different ways during such a formative period. We send our prayers and best wishes to our 8th graders who did not get the chance to complete their CYO careers with us!

We were ecstatic to be able to conduct our Spring seasons in 2021 after a full year away from CYO. Baseball, Softball, and Track and Field athletes were back on the field growing their friendships, bodies, minds, and faith together. It was truly a beautiful sight to behold after such a long period away from sports.

In our new beginning this year, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia continues to grow CYO as more than just a sports program- it is a ministry. The CYO is a way for our youth to use their God given talents to play sports, while at the same time carrying out the morals and values in the light of Jesus Christ.

As the world around us continues to change, and youth sports leagues mold and fit our new sports culture, it is imperative that our CYO programs continue to provide a safe, fun, and educational experience for our youth that is rooted in the core values of our historical program. Healthy physical exercise, respect for teammates and coaches, leadership, faith-based community, and love for all those involved in our sports programs are paramount cornerstones of the success of our CYO and its players.

Our dedication to provide the best programs doesn't end with our young players, but extends to our gracious volunteers as well. We will continue our work to equip our coaches with the best tools to find success and enjoyment in leading our CYO teams. We will work to enhance our digital presence and transition our CYO infrastructure to a newer, simpler process across the board. We will also apply this mindset to our coaches trainings to make sure our volunteers are given the knowledge and education to lead their players to their full potential on and off the court.

In closing, we sincerely thank our vast amount of CYO constituents and volunteers that share their talents, abilities and endless amount of hours with the youth of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Our programs and sports seasons would certainly not exist without the tireless efforts of all of our volunteers.

We look forward to enriching our relationship with you and building upon the ministry that is the most important aspect of the Catholic Youth Organization program.

With warm regards,

Matt Hasher  
CYO Director

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## **I. Introduction to CYO Athletic Ministry**

### **A. CYO Sports Mission Statement**

#### **CYO Sports is:**

one component of a parish's comprehensive youth ministry program which

- enables the partnership of parents, coaches, priests, religious, teachers and adult leaders to manage and support a sports program that
- allows youth to grow in their relationship with God and come to better understand themselves and the Catholic faith.

#### **Such a program:**

- employs healthy and enjoyable competition to promote the sharing of gospel values among athletes, parents, and coaches
- assists parish leadership in nourishing the emotional, spiritual, social, and physical needs of young people
- encourages young people to appreciate the gifts that they possess and challenges them to share these gifts with their community
- allows youth to witness the life of Christian discipleship in their coaches and adult leaders
- encourages youth to become responsible members of their faith community.

## **B. CYO Points of Emphasis**

**MINISTRY**— CYO sports provide a unique opportunity for youth ministry with the potential for great Christian influence. All CYO sports volunteers should strive to ignite spiritual development out of the relationship between the youth and athletics. God has blessed the youth with many gifts and talents, and volunteers are called to realize the importance of animating an appreciation for those blessings. We encourage our volunteers to act as ministers by facilitating **prayer before and after practices and games**, attending **Mass as a team**, and creating a team **service project, among other things**. Most importantly, we ask that the volunteers teach values of faith and character development and reflect those values in their own actions. Participation in athletics provides many “teachable moments” and all involved need to be prepared to constructively address those opportunities.

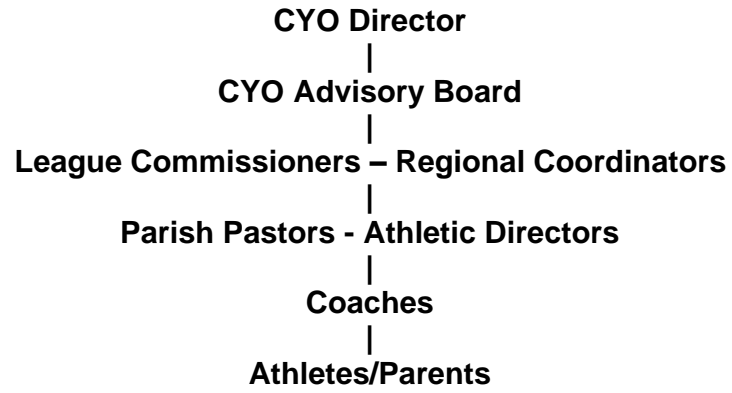
**SPORTSMANSHIP**— All CYO programs must reflect Christian attitudes and values through coaches emphasizing good sportsmanship. Coaches are expected to set sportsmanship standards with their teams and discuss proper conduct. Part of showing good sportsmanship involves both coaches and their teams shaking hands with the other team before and after each contest. Sportsmanship also includes treating game officials with respect. Officials will make mistakes, and therefore coaches and athletes must be tolerant. The CYO is not tolerant of shouting and criticism nor any negative or derogatory comments toward officials, coaches, spectators and/or athletes. **In short, let players play, coaches teach, officials officiate and parents support.**

**ENJOYMENT**— Youth play sports because it’s fun; youth leave organized sports because it’s not fun—it’s that simple. The CYO is not a spectator sport for the benefit of coaches and parents. All competitions are supposed to be enjoyable for the athletes! **Good CYO coaches “succeed” by enabling youth to develop their talents, not simply by winning. Coaches succeed** by helping each youth become the best they can be through skill development, building a team as part of the parish community, helping youth see beyond themselves to the needs of others, appreciating the social aspects of sport, seeing God as the source of our gifts and praising Him for it, and having fun along the way. Good CYO coaches constructively instruct their athletes. **It is critical that our youth understand that they get their worth from God as a free gift, NOT from “success” in athletics.** We pray that parents will support their children without placing undue pressure on them to win or be the best athlete on their team or in their Region, none of which their child can control. We also ask that spectators cheer in a positive manner. Remember that the participants are not small adults, they are children playing a game.

**ORGANIZATION**— The positioning of regional coordinators and commissioners in each sport help to bring information, processing, and decision making closer to the parish level—all under the oversight of the CYO Sports Department. A new Advisory Board will also in place to vote on changes and concerns that may not be handled at the parish level. The tremendous commitment and work by volunteers on the Boards and parish athletic directors has helped strengthen and make CYO more responsive. **The Boards also represent another voice reinforcing the importance of living the Gospel values through sports.**



**CYO Athletic Department  
Organizational Chart**



- **The Archdiocesan Administration**

- 1. **CYO Athletic Department**

- The CYO Athletic Department is responsible for carrying out the Mission of the Office of Catholic Education through the unique avenue of sports. Decisions are driven by the need to support the adult leaders to help our youth “hear and respond to the call of Jesus Christ” and are viewed through the lens of ministering to our youth’s development and building Church community.
- The CYO Athletic Department is led by the CYO Director of Athletics, and is guided by the Office of Catholic Education. The department relies heavily on the good work of the many CYO volunteers, without whom an effective CYO program would not be a reality. We continue to look for ways to work more efficiently and more effectively, given limited resources.
- The department’s role is to provide the vision and framework from which our administrators, coaches and parents carry out this vital ministry. The department also exercises oversight and governance with regard to Athletic Ministry/CYO Sports, an Archdiocesan realm of activity which, on a daily basis, is given expression in the parish setting. This Handbook is a reference tool to remind all involved of the mission of Athletic Ministry as well as the structure and rules under which this ministry is carried-out.
- The CYO Athletic Department continues to evaluate the best way to benefit from the vast gifts of its constituents while setting a clear course for the vision of CYO. We continue to seek the expertise and support needed to effectively run the CYO Regions and the Archdiocesan Tournaments.

- 2. **Office for Child and Youth Protection**

- The OCYP is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Archdiocesan Safe Environment program standards for youth serving parishes, schools, organizations, and programs. If there are questions regarding clearances, Safe Environment, or Mandated Reporting, you may contact the OCYP directly.

- 3. **The CYO Advisory Board**

- Each Region may appoint one representative to sit on the Advisory Board. Each Sport Commissioner will also be offered a seat on the Board, as well as various other CYO representatives as the CYO Director sees fit.
- This Board will serve as an unbiased group to review appeals, clarify Handbook rules, and recommend actions to the CYO Director through the course of the sports year.

#### **D. Regional Administration**

- 1. **The CYO Sports Region**

- The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is currently divided geographically into 13 CYO sports Regions for the purpose of the Athletic Ministry program. All programs with CYOs are assigned to a Region, and their teams must participate with their Region’s sports league. Failure to do so, without Archdiocesan permission, will result in elimination from Regional, Area, and/or Archdiocesan competition.

### **a. Regional By-Laws**

1. Regional Athletic Boards might identify the need to have by-laws, in addition to rules and regulations provided by the CYO, to assist in governing parish participation in Regionally-sponsored sports leagues (i.e., issue of 'cuts,' issue of minimum playing time for JV, etc.)
2. Regional by-laws may enable the Region to take steps that are not feasible on an Archdiocesan-wide basis, with the exception of eligibility requirements which are consistent across the Archdiocese. When such might be the case the/each Region needs to provide the by-laws and explanation of any deviations from rules in this Handbook to the CYO Athletic Department for review and approval prior to the beginning of each CYO Year, and immediately if mid-year changes are being sought. If a Region, parish, commissioner, coach, parent or athlete is found to be in non-compliance to any rule outlined in this Handbook, they will face a review by the CYO Athletic Department and possible sanctions or penalizations.

### **b. Parish Assignments**

1. The current assignments of parishes to particular Regions is set indefinitely. However, if a parish **feels strongly** that it should be removed from its current Region and assigned to a new Region, their Pastor and Parish Athletic Director may present a request for an "assignment review" to the Regional Coordinator or CYO Director.
  2. If a Region does not sponsor a league in a particular sport, then the CYO Athletic Department will assign that parish's team to a neighboring Region's league for that particular sport only. As long as the team is in compliance with all Archdiocesan rules outlined in this Handbook, they will be eligible to represent that Region at post-season Archdiocesan competition.
2. **The Regional Athletic Board** serves as the governing body of the Region. The Executive Committee, the Parish Athletic Directors and League Commissioners serve as its membership. Under the direction of the CYO Athletic Department, they hold the responsibility of coordinating, managing and supervising all Regionally-sponsored CYO sports programs and events. Their responsibilities include:
- Promoting the purpose and goals of the CYO Sports Mission Statement.
  - Providing a forum for communication and decision-making amongst the Region's parishes.
  - Developing a set of Regional by-laws within the domain of Archdiocesan rules and regulations which, again, would need to be submitted to the CYO Athletic Department for review and approval.
  - Responsible for facilitating fair voting procedures when necessary.
    - a. Voting privileges are granted strictly on the basis of, "One parish, one vote."
    - b. Non-parishioners may not vote for a parish.
  - -Ensuring all volunteers attend the appropriate and required training and education, for example:
    - CYO Coaches Training
    - Safe Environment Training (part I and II)
    - PA State Police Criminal Background Check
    - PA Child Abuse Clearance
    - FBI fingerprint checks, if applicable

**3. The League Commissioner** derives his or her authority from the Regional Athletic Board. Commissioners are appointed by the Board to manage a Regionally-sponsored sport on a daily basis. Decisions affecting the structure, operation, finances, and/or organization of the league must be reviewed by the Board. The Commissioner assists the Board by ensuring a particular sport is run in a manner that it is consistent with the CYO Sports Mission Statement and compliant with both the Archdiocesan CYO Rules and Regulations outlined in this Handbook and approved Regional by-laws. A Commissioner must:

1. Attend the pre-season sports meeting conducted by the Archdiocesan CYO Athletic Department.
2. Confirm completion of the following by parishes:
  - a. Distribute and collect the following forms for coaches.
  - b. Collect completed "Pastor's Coaches Eligibility Approval" from each parish.
  - c. Commissioners are responsible for ensuring coaches participating in their league have attended the appropriate level of Coaches Training.
3. Review the above items to ensure that they are completed and compliant with all CYO "Eligibility Standards" and present the original to the CYO Athletic Department. Additional requirements may be introduced by the Coordinator for Athletic Ministry/CYO Sports at the pre-season meeting.
4. Develop a set of league by-laws and/or conduct a yearly review of existing by-laws.
  - a. League by-laws must be approved by the Regional Athletic Board.
  - b. League by-laws have the flexibility outlined in Regional by-laws, as they relate to coordination with Archdiocesan rules.
  - c. League by-laws should establish policies and procedures for all regular season league administration, Regional playoffs and for determining a representative(s) for Archdiocesan-level competition.
5. Organize and schedule league games, officials, and Regional playoffs.
6. Act as an officer of approved by-laws.

## **E. Parish Administration**

**1. The Pastor, as the canonical authority with regard to the governance of the parish,** has final authority on all decisions pertaining to his parish, however the parish's participation in Regional and Archdiocesan competition is subject to those rules. The Pastor may designate a priest Moderator to work closely with a Parish Athletic Director and is strongly encouraged to develop a Parish Athletic Advisory Board. It should be the goal of parish administration to offer a sports program which promotes the purpose and goals of the CYO Sports Mission Statement and complies with both the Archdiocesan CYO Rules (outlined in this Handbook) and its Regional membership's by-laws.

The Pastor must also be knowledgeable of the "Parish Eligibility" requirements outlined on and the Grade School and High School Athletic Eligibility Requirements outlined on pages 20-25. The CYO Athletic Department stands ready to assist all parishes in their efforts to produce a sports program charged with youth ministry.

**2. The Parish Athletic Director** is appointed by the Pastor and is guided by parish by-laws as to length of term and specific responsibilities. He or she automatically is a voting member of the Regional Athletic Board which governs his or her parish's CYO sports Region. The Parish Athletic Director is responsible for the following:

**a.** Communicating the CYO Sports Mission Statement to parish sports volunteers and working to uphold its purpose and goals.

**b.** Developing a set of "Parish By-Laws," and/or conduct a yearly review of existing ones.

**c.** Ensuring the following:

1. That only qualified individuals are selected to work with children and that they're aware of their spiritual obligations and "Eligibility Requirements" as a CYO coach.

a. Must work with parish ministry office to record and house all coach clearances for Office of Child and Youth Protection audits.

2. That the parish sports program is compliant with all Archdiocesan CYO Rules and Regulations (outlined in this Handbook), Regional By-Laws and existing Parish By-Laws.

3. That the parish meets all "Parish Eligibility" requirements outlined on pages 17-18.

4. That parish team rosters and Pastor's Coaches Eligibility Approval are accurate and timely submitted.

**d.** Chairing Parish Athletic Advisory Board meetings, unless a formal structure is in place.

**e.** Representing the parish at all Regional Athletic Board meetings.

**f.** Following through with all other duties as communicated from the Pastor or Priest Moderator.

**3. The Parish Athletic Board** - It is strongly recommended that the parish form a board to assist the Parish Athletic Director and/or Priest Moderator. Length of term and specific responsibilities of the board should be outlined in the parish CYO sports program's by-laws. The Parish Youth Minister should sit on the board.

#### **4. Coaches**

Potential coaches must be screened by the Parish Athletic Director and/or the Parish Athletic Advisory Board. All coaches must meet the “Coaching Eligibility” Standards. Potential coaches must realize that becoming a CYO coach means acting as a role model to the youth of the Church. Therefore, his/her actions and words must reflect the purpose and goals of the CYO Sports Mission Statement. It is the duty of all CYO coaches to be knowledgeable of the Archdiocesan CYO Rules and Regulations outlined in this handbook.

## II. Eligibility Standards

The primary enforcer of our rules is the honesty and integrity of the CYO volunteer membership.

**Rationalizing breaking these rules is dishonest and contrary to the purpose and goals of the CYO Sports Mission Statement and certain penalization will follow no matter the intent. Ignorance to the eligibility standards below is not a defense.**

### A. Parish Eligibility

In order for a parish to participate in an Archdiocesan CYO sanctioned and Regionally-sponsored sports league, the following criteria must be met:

1. Each parish must charter annually with the CYO Office. Information and an invoice will be sent to each program during the Fall through the SI Play platform and should be returned no later than the established due date on the form.
2. Charters indicate the Pastor's acknowledgement of the following:
  - A CYO sports program exists at the parish,
  - the sports program is under his responsibility,
  - the sports program should incorporate youth ministry aspects like prayer, liturgy and service. A charter must also list the Parish Athletic Director's contact information and other ministry contacts as noted. For more information about chartering, please call the CYO at 215-587-3716.
3. Each parish team must be in compliance with the registration, rosters and fee procedures.
  - a. Rosters may be emailed as a packet through the Region to the CYO Director, or can be mailed as a complete packet to the CYO Office at 222 N. 17th Street.
4. Each parish must ensure all coaches are in compliance with the "Coaching Eligibility" requirements outlined below, as well as upload all coaches clearances and information to SI Play. (Hard copies must still be kept for OCYP Audits.)
5. All parishes must be in compliance and "good standing" with their Regional Membership's approved by-laws and their Region's Athletic Board. ("Good standing" i.e.,: meeting required attendance at Regional board meetings and other Regional criteria.)
6. Athletic eligibility requirements and other standards established by their Region.

**NOTE:** Non-compliance with any of the above criteria will jeopardize a parish's sports teams' eligibility for Regional and Archdiocesan competition, and may result in further penalization.

## **B. Coaching Eligibility**

In order to coach a parish team in an Archdiocesan CYO sanctioned and Regionally-sponsored sports league, all head coaches and assistant coaches must meet the following requirements:

**Before coaching any CYO team**, all coaches (head and assistants) **must**:

• Take the **Online Catholic Coaching Essentials course (found at [cyophilly.org](http://cyophilly.org))** before coaching at all

**ALL adults** involved in youth ministry and service to children **must provide required background checks (renewal every 5 years)** to their parish to keep on file. Parents who volunteer intermittently must also receive all of the necessary checks and certifications to do so.

For more information on checks or to register for training please visit

[www.childyouthprotection.org](http://www.childyouthprotection.org).

This is NOT handled by the CYO Athletic Department but through the parish.

### **1. Age Criteria for Head Coaches:**

**a.** Grade School: Must have reached their 21st birthday before the start of season.

**b.** High School Sports coaches: Must have reached their 25th birthday before the start of the season.

**NOTE:** An “Assistant Coach” is defined as anyone who works with and/or instructs individual athletes on a team. There is no specific age requirement for Assistant Coaches, and having HS students as Assistant Coaches, with proper supervision, can be an excellent benefit to all.

**However, ALL coaches over 18 that have any coaching role must complete Safe Environment requirements. Assistant coaches under 18 are not permitted to coach athletes alone.**

**2.** All coaches must be familiar with and comply with all Archdiocesan CYO Rules and Regulations outlined in this Handbook, or penalties may be levied.

**3.** All coaches must meet any additional requirements of their parish, their team’s league and/or the Region.

**4.** All coaches must agree to the following pledge and it is recommended that they recite it in the presence of the Parish Athletic Director and/or League Commissioner:

#### ***CYO Coach’s Pledge***

***Upon my honor as a CYO Coach, I pledge myself to the following:***

***To guide each player to be a better Christian and a better citizen.***

***To be ethical and a good sportsman in my coaching conduct towards all athletes, officials, spectators and coaches.***

***To motivate each athlete to compete according to the rules at all times.***

***To teach each athlete, especially through my own examples, to be humble***

***and generous in victory and proud and courteous in defeat.***



## C. Grade School Athletic Eligibility

### 1. Years of Eligibility for Grade School Athletes:

- a. Junior Varsity - 2 years.
- b. Varsity - 2 years.
  - i. Eligibility is served regardless of participation. "Red Shirt" years are not permitted. Special cases of students repeating (illness, family issues, etc.) may be appealed to the CYO Director and Advisory Board.
  - ii. 6th graders participating on a Varsity team because there is no Junior Varsity team - will be credited with one year of Junior Varsity eligibility, rather than a year of Varsity eligibility. They will retain their full Varsity eligibility for their 7th & 8th grade years.

### 2. Grade School Age/Grade Restrictions:

a. **Grade School Varsity** - Participants must be 7th or 8th grade students who have **not** reached their 15th birthday before **September 1**. Violators will face the penalties outlined in "Eligibility Violations."

i. **6th Graders** - Only if a parish does not offer a Junior Varsity team, may 6th graders participate on the Varsity team. See "Years of Eligibility".

ii. **8th Graders** - Students in 8th grade who have reached their 15th birthday before **September 1** may participate for their parish's "high school" sports teams.

iii. **9th Grade and Above** - Regardless of age, 9th graders and above may not participate on a Varsity team.

**Exception** - Cross Country and Track & Field, only, are approved to employ different age/grade restrictions.

#### b. **Grade School Junior Varsity**

Participants are to be 5th or 6th grade students who have not reached their 13th birthday before **September 1**. Violators will face the penalties outlined in "Eligibility Violations."

i. **4th graders** - Regardless of age, 4th graders are not eligible to participate on a Junior Varsity team.

**Exception** - Cross Country and Track & Field, only, are approved to employ different age/grade restrictions.

ii. 6th graders who are too old to participate on a Junior Varsity team are eligible to participate on a Varsity team.

iii. Below Junior Varsity \*Except for Track & Field and Cross Country, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia does not sanction any programs involving students in 4th grade or below.

Eligibility Exception: In response to the limiting and cancellation of CYO Sports during the 2020-2021 CYO Athletic Season, the four (4) year [2-year JV / 2-year Varsity] eligibility limitation will be amended as follows.

All CYO athletes who were in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades during the 2020-2021 year will have one extra year of grade school eligibility. Please note that all other eligibility requirements will remain in place. Including but not limited to, age limitations and once you graduate from 8th grade you cannot participate in grade school sports. That means if you graduate and choose to go to another school and repeat 8th grade, you are not eligible for CYO Grade School Sports.

### **3. Grade School Residence Requirements:**

#### **a. General Residence Eligibility**

- i. Athletes must be either registered members of the parish or attend the parish school, otherwise they cannot participate.
- ii. Registered members must be Catholic and must be registered before the start of the sport's season in which they are participating.

#### **b. Change of Residence**

**i. Before the Start of the Season** - If an athlete moves out of his/her parish prior to the official start date of a sport's season, the athlete is ineligible to participate with his/her former parish.

**ii. After the Start of the Season** - If an athlete moves on or after the official start date of a sport's season, he/she may choose to participate with their new or old parish.

**iii. Changing Parishes without Changing Residence –** Individuals and/or families that change parishes without changing residence will not be eligible to participate with the new parish for a period of one year from the date of transfer. The waiting year does count towards the athlete's years of eligibility. The athlete may participate with their old parish program, or can participate on a limited basis with the new program (only practice, not game eligible).

**NOTE:** After the sport's roster deadline, athletes may no longer change teams. Once an athlete chooses to participate on a team at their new parish (i.e. the change of parish must take place before **August 1**), he/she cannot participate for any teams at their former parish. The adjustment period is for that CYO Year only. Also, for CYO purposes, no family may change the parish with which they are registered, without a change of residence, during the current CYO Year.

### **5. Grade School Scholastic Regulations:**

#### **a. Parish-School Students**

- i. A student-athlete who attends a parish's school is eligible to participate on that parish's CYO team.
- ii. A student-athlete who attends a separate parish's school from his/her registered parish may, in certain circumstances, participate with either parish's CYO.

1. Upon establishing a preference, the student-athlete must participate with the designated entity for the remainder of the CYO year.
2. Exception: If the chosen entity does not offer a particular sport, then the student-athlete may participate, for that sport only, with the entity that was not originally selected.
3. At no time may a student-athlete participate for the same sport at two different CYO entities.

**iii. School Transfers –** Individuals who transfer schools (including parish, Regional, or Mission) will not be eligible to participate with the new school for a period of one year from the date of transfer. The waiting year does count towards the athlete's years of eligibility. The athlete may participate with their old parish program, or can participate on a limited basis with the new program (only practice, not game eligible).

**b. Non Parish-School Students**

i. A student-athlete who is a registered member of the parish and attends a school (public, private or Catholic which is not part of CYO) other than their parish's school or is home-schooled is eligible to participate for their registered parish's team.

**NOTE: It is recommended that non-parish-school students be required to participate in the parish's religious education program. Please contact your parish pastor.**

**c. Combined Schools/Regional Schools**

Parishes who share a "combined-school" may either offer CYO sports through their own parish or through the school. However, if the parishes involved choose to offer CYO sports through the school, the following conditions must be met:

i. Participation is limited to the students who attend the school and/or those registered members of the parishes involved in the combined-school.

ii. All involved parishes' Pastors must submit letters of their acknowledgement and approval of the "combined-school" CYO sports program to the Regional Athletic Board. The Pastor's letter must indicate: 1) the shared responsibility between the parishes for the CYO sports program, and 2) an understanding that none of the parishes involved may field a team on their own and separate from the combined-school team.

iii. The Region must then forward the Pastors' letters onto the CYO Director.

iv. This is much like a small-parish merger.

**Note:** Holy Family Regional School offers CYO sports through the Regional school.

St. Katherine Drexel Regional School offers CYO Sports through the individual feeder parishes.

**Violators will serve the penalties outlined under "Eligibility Violations"**

**d. The Small Parish/School Merger**

Parishes without schools are encouraged to make every effort to maintain their own parish athletic program. However, the CYO Athletic Department has long recognized that there is a need to address parishes with declining school enrollments and/or the closing of such schools. Parishes who want to maintain a CYO Sports Program should be offered an option to do so. The need for possible mergers can only be to keep intact a CYO program, NOT to make teams more competitive.

**1. Criteria:**

i. Two or more "small" parishes, in the same Region, may request a parish merger.

ii. Parishes without schools may request a merger.

iii. The merger must be necessary in order for "all" of the parishes involved to sustain a team.

iv. No merger will be granted that gives the parishes involved a "substantial" competitive advantage.

v. Parish-schools must have a total enrollment of 250 or less in 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades in order to qualify to "request" a merger. Exceptions to this number can be requested, but unique circumstances must be presented.

vi. A parish merger is agreed on a team by team basis. For example: If two parishes or more form a merger for soccer, they cannot simply elect to play together for basketball – they must apply again. For example: if

two parishes form a merger for JV Girls Soccer, they do not have to merge for Varsity Girls, JV, or Boys Soccer.

vii. Mergers must also be reapplied for every year.

**2. Procedures:**

i. The cut-off date for requesting a merger is two weeks prior to the start of the season for each particular sport.

ii. The Pastor and Parish Athletic Director from each parish must present written approval to the Regional Athletic Ministry Board for review.

iii. Upon approval by the Regional Athletic Ministry Board, the request must then be forwarded to the Coordinator for Athletic Ministry/CYO Sports for final review.

iv. Once approved by all levels, merged teams will retain the right to participate in all Archdiocesan events.

**3. Merged teams will require separate rosters, one from each CYO entity involved in the merger, approved and submitted to SSU Play by the respective CYOs. It is not reasonable to expect a Pastor to vouch for the eligibility**

**e. High School or Professional Athletes**

An athlete found to be “rostered on” any high school team (freshman, j.v., or varsity) or professional team and also participating for a CYO team in that same sport during the same scholastic year will be considered ineligible.

**6. Grade School Religious Regulations**

**a. Catholics** - Athletes participating for a parish team must be registered members of the parish.

**b. Non-Catholics** - Only if a non-catholic athlete attends the parish’s school, may they participate with a parish team.

**c. Religious Education (CCD/PREP)** - Affiliations with a parish CCD/PREP Program is strongly encouraged, not required. Parishes may establish CCD/PREP enrollment and attendance as eligibility criteria in order to participate for the parish team. Please speak to your parish Pastor.

**d. Academic Standards** - Coaches are strongly encouraged to request parents to expect minimum academic standards from children. Given the variety of schools attended, the CYO Athletic Department is not able to require standards.

**7. Eligibility Violations**

**a.** Athletes found to be non-compliant with any of the “Eligibility” Standards outlined in this Handbook may face the following penalties:

i. Immediate discharge of the athlete from the violating team and the athlete will serve a one year suspension for all CYO sports.

ii. Forfeiture of any competition in which the violating team participated with the athlete.

iii. If the season has already ended, then any individual or team awards shall be returned.

**\*\*NOTE: As of the 2019 Cross Country season, Cross Country and Track and Field now support small parish mergers. Please refer to the end of the handbook on Page 39 to read the new rule and find the request forms on CYOphilly.com.**

## **D. High School Athletic Eligibility**

### **1. High School Age/Grade Regulations:**

#### **a. Varsity (Class B)**

i. Athletes must be 11th or 12th grade students who have not reached their 19th birthday before September 1, 2016.

**NOTE:** Athletes in 9th or 10th grade but over seventeen (17) years of age may be eligible for Varsity (Class B).

ii. Athletes who would have completed secondary school (chronologically) had they remained enrolled are not eligible.

iii. Parishes with not enough players to form a Junior Varsity (Class C) team (See "Resident of Parish with No Team" on pgs. 17-24), may allow 9th & 10th graders to participate on the Varsity (Class B) team.

iv. Athletes in special schools or who have dropped out of school must comply with the eligibility rules outlined above.

#### **b. Junior Varsity (Class C)**

i. All athletes must be 9th or 10th grade students who have not reached their 17th birthday before September 1, 2016.

### **NOTES:**

- 8th graders too old to compete for a Varsity (Class D) team may compete in the appropriate age class for high school.
- Athletes participating for a parish with both a Varsity (Class B) team and a Junior Varsity (Class C) team, may only play for one team.
- Anyone who is found to be in non-compliance to any rule outlined in this Handbook will face a review by the CYO Athletic Department and possible sanctions or penalizations.

### **2. High School Residence Requirements**

**a. Parish Resident** - All athletes must be Catholic and registered members of the parish. For eligibility of Non-Catholics living within the parish boundaries see "Religious Regulations" outlined below.

**b. Resident of Parish with No Team**— A parish without enough athletes to form a team may request that their athletes be given permission to participate for a nearby parish within their Regional league. The Pastors of both parishes must provide letters of request to the League Commissioner to be reviewed by the Regional Athletic Board. If the Regional Board approves the request, then both Pastors' letters and a letter of approval from the Region must be attached to the team's roster.

**c. Change of Residence** - High school athletes must comply with the "Change of Residence" rules on pgs.17-25.

**d. Formation of a New Parish** - High School athletes must comply with the rules outlined under "Formation of a New Parish"

### **3. High School Scholastic Regulations**

**a. High School or Professional Athletes** - High school athletes must comply with rules outlined under "High School or Professional Athletes"

**4. High School Religious Regulations:**

**a. Non-Catholic Athletes** - who live within the parish boundaries will be permitted to participate for that parish provided the following criteria is met:

i. The athlete complies with the "High School Athlete Eligibility" rules.

ii. The Pastor provides a letter of request to the League Commissioner to be reviewed by the Regional Athletic Board. If approved, the Pastor's letter and a letter of approval from the Region must be attached to the team's roster.

iii. In order to create fairness, Regions may determine a limit on the number of non-Catholic athletes a team may have in order to be eligible for Regional playoffs.

**NOTE:** Teams rostering non-Catholics may not participate in the PA State Boy's Basketball Tournament.

**b. Non-Catholic Teams** - In the spirit of ecumenism, the League Commissioner in coordination with Regional Athletic Board may permit non-Catholic teams to engage in Regional competition with the approval of the CYO Director. The Region may restrict their level of participation within the league.

### III. General Policies

#### A. Code of Conduct

The following are examples of **Offensive Actions and Penalties**:

**No CYO athlete, coach or spectator is permitted to....**

- a. Refuse to abide by an official's decision*
- b. Display objectionable behavior by throwing equipment or any other forceful action.*
- c. Heap verbal abuse upon any athlete, coach, spectator or official*
- d. Lay hands upon, push, shove, strike, threaten to strike or physically attack an athlete, coach, spectator or official.*

**This list is not exhaustive.**

**Any athlete, coach or spectator who is found to be guilty of any of the above violations may face the following penalties:**

- a. Violation of Articles a thru c - Minimum five-game suspension for CYO league and/or playoff competitions. (A coach may not coach another CYO team while under suspension.)*
- b. Coach, spectator or athlete in violation of Article d - Minimum suspension for one full calendar year from all CYO sports.*
- c. Violation of above imposed penalties for conduct - If a violator disregards a penalty when properly notified, his or her team will be suspended from all competition for one full calendar year for that particular sport. The parish is responsible for enforcement.*

**This list is not exhaustive.**

#### NOTES:

- Penalties will carry over into the next season available in order to follow it to completion.
- If the circumstances necessitate further investigation, the individual in possible violation will be suspended until an informed decision can be made.
- If a Violator would like to protest a penalty, please see "General Protests."

#### B. Safety

**1. Equipment** - Coaches must ensure all players wear the proper and mandated athletic equipment for their sport according to the "Primary Rules" for their sport. The "Primary Rules" are designated per sport and further defined at the pre-season Commissioner's Meeting.

**2. Competition Sites** - Day of Competition Coaches must ensure that all fields and facilities are safe and free from hazards on the day of the competition. Coaches should report any suspicious or unsuitable athletic conditions to the Site Director assigned to that competition immediately. **If no Site Director has been identified, the Home Team coach takes on responsibility for the safety of all involved at that site. It is strongly encouraged that a separate Site Director be available at each competition as it is difficult for a coach to manage that additional responsibility.**

#### **3. Competition Sites** - Pre-Competition Day

It is the Commissioner's responsibility to make safety a priority in running the league that they preside over. It is recommended that the Commissioner make a site visit before the day of a scheduled competition as a safety precaution.

**4. First Aid** - Every coach is required to carry at least one first aid kit. No game may begin without at least one first aid kit available at the site of the competition.

**5. Emergency**— Access to 9-1-1 is important in the event of an emergency. A cell phone is typically sufficient.

### **C. Rosters and Fees**

**1. The Roster** - Every CYO team must complete and submit a CYO sports roster through the SI Play platform by the date determined each sports season.

**2. Required Information** - Coaches must ensure that all of the information required on the roster be provided and that it is honest, accurate and complies with the "Eligibility Rules. The Coaches need to work with the Athletic Director and the Pastor to ensure that all athletes are eligible.

**3. Required Approvals** - The team's roster is considered complete when submitted and shows through SI Play that the following individuals have approved it and found it to be in compliance with the "Eligibility Rules."

- a. Head Coach
- b. Parish Pastor or School Principal
- c. Parish Athletic Director
- d. Commissioner

**4. Required Fees** – All teams will be charged a seasonal Team Fee. The fee is \$100 per team regardless of grade or skill level. Each roster submitted will be tallied and invoiced from the Office of Catholic Education Financial Services Office. Checks can be submitted electronically online. Each program must have updated mailing and contact information for invoices.

**5. Deadline** – All roster information, Coaches clearances, and approvals from the parish leadership must be submitted through SI Play by the required deadline. If rosters are not submitted by the deadline, the team will not be eligible for the postseason and could face further sanctions.

**6. ROSTER REVIEW** – All Rosters will flow through the SI Play platform. Athletic directors, Pastors, Regional Directors, and League Commissioners will all be granted appropriate access to rosters for approval and review. All rosters are required to be reviewed by each director before submission to the league. Once rosters are locked, players cannot be added.

### **D. Post-Season Competition**

**1. Varsity Leagues and above may host Regional post-season playoffs.**

Commissioners are responsible for the following:

- a. Establishing, in writing prior to the season, clear procedures for determining the Regional champion and possible at-large teams eligible for Archdiocesan post-season competition.
- b. Reporting which team(s) will be representing the Region at the Archdiocesan competition before the deadline established at the pre-season Commissioners' Meeting at the Archdiocesan Office Center.

**2. Regional invitations to Archdiocesan competition will be determined by the CYO Athletic Department by mid-season and will be based on various factors including the Region's compliance with Archdiocesan initiatives and each league's size (# of parishes participating in the league for that sport). The number of "completed" rosters received before the roster deadline will determine the Region's size.**

### **E. Officials**

League Commissioners are responsible for contracting officials for league competition and Regional play-offs. It is recommended that, in coordination with the Regional Board, the Commissioner hire an Assignor of officials.

**1. The Assignor will schedule officials for the season. \*It is recommended that the Commissioner work out an agreement with the Assignor so that the Region may**



pay the Assignor with one check. If so, the Commissioner would add an additional fee to the rostering fee for each team in order to cover the cost of the officials and the assigning.

**2. \*\*All funds must flow through the Regional Financial Account.**

3. Officials must be proficient and certified in the primary rules of the sport.
- a. Coaches must notify the Commissioner, in writing, about any problems or concerns with officials.
  - b. Coaches may not officiate for any CYO competitions in their Region for the same sport in which they coach unless specifically granted permission by the regional board.

## F. Admission Fees

**1. Archdiocesan Competitions** - may charge an admission fee in order to cover general expenses of the event.

**2. Regional Competitions** - may charge an admission fee in order to cover general expenses of the event, only when approved by the Regional Athletic Advisory Board.

**3. Individual Parishes** - may charge an admission fee at parish-hosted competitions in order to cover general expenses of the event. However, if the Commissioner, in coordination with the Regional Board, finds these charges to be unreasonable or unnecessary, they reserve the right to refuse that parish home game on the league schedule.

## G. General Protests

Protests may be filed on the basis of “**rules interpretation**” and/or “**athlete eligibility**,” they **cannot** be filed based on “**judgment**” calls. All protests must follow the process below:

### Procedure:

1. Before a competition is completed, the Head Coach must indicate to both the Head Official and the Head Coach of the opposing team that the competition is being protested.

a. The protest shall be noted in the official scorebook when possible.

**If the protest is not indicated in the official scorebook, then the protest will be dropped.**

**b. If the Head Official has left the competition area without being notified of the protest, it will be dropped.**

2. The protesting coach has 24 hours from the completion of the contest to send an e-mail of protest to the Commissioner.

**NOTE:** “Time sensitive” protests must be made within two hours of the completion of the competition.

3. If the protesting coach does not consider the protest satisfactorily resolved by the Commissioner, he or she may appeal the Commissioner’s decision to the Regional Athletic Advisory Board.

a. This appeal must be e-mailed within 24 hours of the Commissioner’s decision to the Regional Coordinator for review by the Regional Board.

**NOTE:** A “time sensitive” appeal of a Commissioner’s decision must be communicated to the Regional Coordinator within one hour of the Commissioner’s decision. The Regional Coordinator should make an attempt to communicate with as many Regional Board Members as possible.

**The Region’s decision is final on “time sensitive” appeals.**

4. If the protesting coach does not consider the protest satisfactorily resolved by the Regional Board, he or she may appeal the Board’s decision to the Coordinator for Athletic Ministry/CYO Sports who will gather information.

a. This appeal must be e-mailed within 24 hours of the Regional Board’s decision to the Coordinator for CYO Athletic Department. (See 1st page of this Handbook for e-mail addresses).

**b. Protocol is important and must be followed** to ensure the appropriate people have reviewed a situation and as a practical matter because the CYO Athletic Department is not able to respond to all constituents in the more than 200 CYO sports programs.

**The CYO Athletic Department is able to respond only to the Regional Board or other appropriate CYO Sports personnel.**

**NOTE:** The Regional Board must resolve all protests related to a team prior to submitting them for Archdiocesan post-season competition. No team having been disqualified by a Region or by the CYO Athletic Department may participate in Archdiocesan post-season competition.

#### **H. Lateness**

Archdiocesan competitions may be held in any of the five counties within the Archdiocese, therefore coaches should plan for appropriate time when making travel arrangements. For Archdiocesan events, and when not addressed by Regional or league rules, the following policy shall govern teams who are late for a competition:

1. A fifteen (15) minute grace period will be granted beginning at the scheduled start of the competition. At the conclusion of this time, the Facility/Field Director and/or the Head Official may forfeit the game. At which time, the forfeiting team will be held responsible for their portion of the officials' fees.
2. A team with a requisite number of players is not entitled to the grace period.
3. The Field/Facility Director and/or the Head Official may extend the grace period if the team in question has contacted them, is en route and will reach the facility/field in a reasonable amount of time.

#### **I. Regional Alignment**

The CYO Athletic Department reserves the right to assign parishes to the geographic entity known as the Region. When circumstances change within the structure of the Region, it may become necessary for the assignment of a parish(es) to a new Region(s).

#### **J. Insurance & Liability**

**1. Sanctioned Sports Programs** - Archdiocesan parish CYO sports programs and/or CYO sports Regions who sponsor a sport(s) sanctioned in this Handbook and are in compliance with "all" of the rules and requirements outlined in this handbook may receive insurance and liability assistance from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

**2. Non-Sanctioned Sports Programs** - Archdiocesan parish CYO sports programs and/or CYO sports Regions who sponsor a sport(s) that are not sanctioned in this Handbook or sponsor a CYO sanctioned sport but the age requirements fall above or below the age class regulations sanctioned in this Handbook, must meet the following minimum requirements in order to receive insurance and liability assistance from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:

**a. Sponsorship** - Each team must be fully parish sponsored: 1) Teams must provide written approval by the Pastor and the Parish Athletic Director to the Regional Athletic Advisory Board and the CYO Director, 2) Teams must roster with their assigned Region (See pg. 15).

**b. Finances** - All parish team finances must flow through the parish's account, and all league finances must flow through the Regional account.

**c. Rules Compliance** - Parish teams and their league(s) must be in compliance with "all" of the rules and requirements outlined in this Handbook.

**d. League By-Laws** - Any league by-laws pertaining to the sport(s) must be approved by the Regional Athletic Advisory Board and the CYO Athletic Department before the start of season. \*It is recommended that league by-laws reference a set of national safety guidelines.

**e. Under Grade Five** - Parish teams and leagues allowing the participation of athletes under grade five may be "developmental" only.

**\*Playoffs and all-star competitions are prohibited for these levels of competition.**

**NOTE:** Disregard for the above requirements may result in individual parties who host non-sanctioned sports activities in the CYO name, being held liable for any accident which takes place at these events.

#### **K. Out-of-Season Violations**

CYO teams in any form or by any name may not participate in out-of-season competition. CYO teams competing out-of-season prior to June 15th or after August 1st will jeopardize their parish's participation in the following athletic season.

#### **L. Summer Season**

CYO teams in any form or by any name may participate together between June 15th and August 1st.

#### **M. Field/Facility Directors**

It is recommended that Commissioners assign responsible individuals to oversee and manage league competition, when they cannot be present. The duties of the Field/Facility Director include but are not limited to the following:

1. The Field/Facility Director's decisions, in coordination with the Head Official, will be final at the time of the event.
2. He or she must ensure the competing teams pray together prior to the contest and preferably after as well.
3. He or she must sign and date the official score-book, where possible, at the completion of the event.
4. He or she must call in the final results to the Commissioner, and report any problems, protests or any other pertinent information regarding the event.
  - a. Field/Facility Directors must be familiar with the "Code of Conduct" (See p. 25) and must monitor the behavior of athletes, coaches and spectators. \*Coaches are responsible for their spectators. If the Head Official has to stop a game for spectator behavior and/or a coach does not make an effort to correct his or her spectator (s) after proper notification from an official, the Field/Facility Director reserves the right to declare the competition a forfeit for the team whose spectators are in violation.
5. Other tasks may be assigned at the discretion of the Commissioner.

#### **N. Tryouts**

Coaches must give all eligible athletes a fair and equal chance to try out for a CYO sport or athletic activity. Tryouts may not be limited to participation or performance at any outside competition and/or membership to any outside team or organization.

When more athletes register for a sport than can be accommodated on one team, the parish is encouraged to create additional teams in order to enable more youth to participate in CYO sports. Regions are encouraged to create additional leagues, when appropriate. When the parish determines that it needs to "cut" players, great care must be taken as this also impacts the development of the student-athlete. At a minimum, this process should value each person and not be a public embarrassment to the youth. The parish should seek other ways to engage these youth, whether as a team manager or other support role or through other ministries throughout the parish. Seeking to help the youth identify, develop and share their gifts is still the goal, even when those gifts may not be through sports for that season.

**O. Black-Out Dates**

The following dates are considered to be “Black-Out Dates” set forth from the CYO Athletic Department. No tryouts, practices, games or competitions may take place on these days. If anyone is found to be in non-compliance to this rule, he or she will face a review by the CYO Athletic Department and possible sanctions and/or penalizations.

**Feast of All Saints**

**Immaculate Conception**

**Christmas Eve**

**Christmas Day**

**Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God**

**Holy Thursday**

**Good Friday**

**Holy Saturday**

**Easter Sunday**

**Ascension Thursday**

## **VOLLEYBALL**

### **Tryouts, Practice & Competition:**

Season- Fall

Starting Date August 1

End Date November 14

**Gender:** Girls

**Primary Competition Rules:** PIAA

**For further Rules and Regulations, please contact the CYO Director or Volleyball Commissioner.**

## **CROSS COUNTRY**

Season- Fall

Start Date August 1

End Date October 31

**Gender:** Boys and Girls, Separate Competition

### **Primary Competition Rules:**

AAU Rules will be used to establish the distances for each group. The Archdiocesan Commissioner for Cross Country, in coordination with the Coordinator for CYO Sports reserves the right to adjust these distances based on age appropriateness and course availability.

### **Age/Grade Restrictions:**

#### **Categories**

**a. Novice** - Any boy or girl who has not reached his or her eleventh (11) birthday before January 1. No athlete may be below fourth (4th) grade.

**b. Minor** - Any boy or girl who has not reached his or her thirteenth (13) birthday before January 1.

**c. Cadet** - Any boy or girl who has not reached his or her fifteenth (15) birthday before January 1. No athlete may be in ninth (9th) grade or above.

## **FOOTBALL**

Season- Fall

Start Date August 1

End Date November 21

**Gender:** Boys

### **Primary Competition Rules:**

PIAA and "Archdiocesan CYO Football League By-Laws".

### **CYO Competition Rules:**

The "Archdiocesan CYO Football League By-Laws," are amendments to PIAA rules and must be followed by all CYO Divisions.

**Player Exemption Form** - Any Varsity (Class D) athlete who turns fifteen or Class "E" athlete who turns thirteen between September 1st and November 30 of the current school year must submit an Player Exemption Form to their Commissioner prior to the start of the season. No athlete may participate in any games or scrimmages until this form has been approved by the CYO Football Coordinator.

### **Parish Affiliations:**

Parish affiliations are granted in cases where it is necessary for a Host Parish to merge with, at most, four other parishes in order to sustain a football program. Affiliated parishes must be geographically adjoining to the Host Parish, and may not already be affiliated with another Host Parish. The Host Parish and its Parish Affiliations must be listed on the team's "Registration Form" (See below) with each participating parish's Pastor's signature.

### **Team Registration:**

All participating teams must complete a CYO Football "Registration Form" by August 15. Those teams who fail to register by this date will automatically lose their eligibility for the "Parade of Champions" and may jeopardize their overall participation in the Archdiocesan CYO Football League.

### **The Parade of Champions:**

The CYO Athletic Department will sponsor four (4) - five (5) championship football games governed by PIAA and CYO Rules on or about November 20, 2016. The method for determining invitations, as well as more detailed rules, is outlined in the "Archdiocesan CYO Football League By-laws".

**As of July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the CYO does not allow co-ed participation in tackle football, tackle rugby, or wrestling.**

## **SOCCER**

Season- Fall

Start Date August 1

End Date November 21

**Gender:** Boys, Girls and Coed

**1. Girls** - If a girl's team exists at the parish, all girls must participate on the girl's team.

**2. Boys** - If a boy's team exists at the parish, all boys must participate on the boy's team.

**3. Coed** - If it is necessary to roster athletes of both sexes in order to sustain a team, then that team may only participate in a boy's league or coed league.

**Primary Competition Rules:** PIAA

### **A. Time**

**1. Halves** - Thirty (30) minutes

**2. Halftime** - Five (5) minutes

**3. Ties are final** - No Overtime

**B. Goalie** - Permitted to hold the ball for six (6) seconds before he or she must release the ball.

**C. Game Ball** - The home team is required to provide a game ball, however the final decision rests with the Head Official.

1. Varsity (Class D) #5 ball

2. Junior Varsity (Class E) #4 ball

**D. Use of Hands** Girls are permitted, within guidelines, to use their hands to protect their chest. The Head Official has final judgment on this matter.

**E. Uniforms**

1. All players must wear shin guards. Cut down shin guards are considered illegal.

2. Metal spikes are prohibited.

3. All players are to wear numbered (8") jerseys, no duplicate numbers, and matching uniforms.

**F. Red Cards**

If an athlete or coach receives a *red card* they are to be ejected from the game by the Referee (athletes - with no substitute). The League Commissioner is to be notified within 24 hours, and the coach and/or athlete will be suspended from their next game.

**The Archdiocesan Tournament:**

The CYO Athletic Department will sponsor a boy's and a girl's Championship Tournament governed by PIAA and CYO rules:

**A. The Girl's Tournament** will consist of eight (8) teams. At least one team will be invited from each Region, and at-large invitations may be granted by the CYO Athletic Department typically based on Region size.

**B. The Boy's Tournament** will consist of sixteen (16) teams. At least one team will be invited from each Region, and at-large invitations may be granted by the CYO Athletic Department.

**FIELD HOCKEY**

Season- Fall

Start Date August 1

End Date November 7

**General Policies:** Coaches must be familiar with the policies.

**Gender:** Girls

**Primary Competition Rules:**

**EQUIPMENT:** All players must wear mouth guards and shin guards (MANDATORY). No player will be permitted to play without these guards. Officials will make equipment, uniform and jewelry checks of each team prior to the start of the game. No jewelry is allowed, including post earrings, watches, and rings.

Cleated shoes or shoes with protruding plastic or rubber studs may be worn. The players stick shall weigh no more than 23 oz and must pass through a 2-inch ring. The stick shall have a curved end with a flat face on its left-hand side only. There should be no sharp edges or dangerous splinters. Adhesives or similar tape bindings are permitted on the stick provided the maximum weight is not exceeded and it shall pass through a 2-inch ring.

Goalies MUST wear chest protector under a goalie shirt of contrasting color of the uniforms of both teams with a visible number, full face mask, throat protector, goalie gloves, leg guards and kickers, pelvic protectors, and mouth guards.



## **BASKETBALL**

Season- Winter

Start Date November 2

End Date February 28

**Primary Competition Rules:** PIAA

**CYO Competition Rules:**

### **A. Time Limit**

Varsity 7 minute quarters

Junior Varsity 6 minute quarters **or** 20 minute running clock per half with the clock being stopped during the last 2 minutes of each half\*

(Note: \* Each region should poll the parishes in that region and decide on one or the other.)

### **B. Thirty Game Limit**

1. No team may play more than thirty (30) games in a regular season.

a. All tournament games count game for game against this cap.

b. Teams are allowed 4 scrimmages that do not count against the cap, and Regional and Archdiocesan playoffs do not count against the cap.

### **2. Violation Penalties**

a. Teams will be automatically suspended for the rest of the current season and/or post-season and concede all awards won after 30 games.

b. Coaches will serve, at least, a one full calendar year suspension from all CYO sports.

c. **Seat-Belt Rule**-All coaches and athletes must remain seated at all times during games.

## **BASEBALL**

Season- Spring

Start Date March 1

End Date June 10

**Gender:** Boys

**Primary Competition Rules:** Varsity—PIAA (NFHS) JV—Little League

**For further Rules and Regulations, please contact the CYO Director or Baseball Commissioner.**

## **SOFTBALL**

Season Spring

Start Date March 1

End Date June 10

**Gender:** Girls

**Primary Competition Rules:** ASA

**For Further Rules and Regulations, please contact the CYO Director or Softball Commissioner.**

## **Track & Field**

Season- Spring

Start Date March 1

End Date June 4

**Gender:** Boys and Girls, Separate Competition

**Primary Competition Rules:** USA Track & Field Rules

### **CYO Eligibility Rules:**

**Age/Grade Restrictions:** (Categories):

1. **Novice** – 8 or 9 years old
2. **Minor** – 10 or 11 years old
3. **Cadet** – 12-14 years old

\*\*No athlete may be in ninth (9th) grade or above.

## **CHEERLEADING**

### **Season:**

Cheerleading is considered both a CYO “Athletic Activity” which can act in support for other sports teams and/or a CYO Sport in which athletes perform in competition.

Therefore, CYO Cheerleading in support of other sports teams is not restricted to a particular season. CYO competitions are a sport and are subject to the “season dates” that will be established.

**Gender:** Coed

### **CYO Competition Rules:**

All CYO Cheerleading programs must comply with the following rules:

1. All teams are limited to competing in seven (7) competitions in one CYO Year.
2. All coaches must be familiar with the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisor’s (AACCA) national guidelines on competition and safety as well as CYO-specific guidelines. The AACCA website is [www.aacca.org](http://www.aacca.org).

### **Archdiocesan CYO Cheerleading Competition:**

The CYO Athletic Department will sponsor a cheerleading competition in **March of 2016**.

#### **1. Competition Eligibility:**

- a. Teams must not have competed in five or more competitions before this event.
- b. Teams must be compliant with the eligibility rules outlined in this Handbook.

#### **2. Competition Rules:**

A detailed set of official rules will be available at the CYO Website.

**High School  
BASKETBALL**

**Tryouts, Practice & Competition:**

Season- Winter

Start Date November 2

End Date February 28

**Gender:** Boys and Girls, Separate Leagues

**Primary Competition Rules:** PIAA

**CYO Competition Rules:**

High School Basketball Leagues may implement rules that are amendments to the PIAA rules. These rules must be reviewed and approved by the CYO Athletic Department prior to November 1st.

**CYO Eligibility Rules:**

1. Coaches must be in compliance with the "Coaching Eligibility" rules.
2. Athletes must be in compliance with the "HS Athlete Eligibility" rules.

**PA State CYO Boy's Basketball Tournament**

The Pennsylvania State Board of CYO Directors hosts annual state tournaments for boy's grade school and high school basketball and for girls grade school. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia may send one representative. The CYO Athletic Department will accept recommendations for teams eligible to compete before the first Saturday in February, which must include:

1. Written recommendation from the Pastor
2. Written recommendation from the League Commissioner. (Must verify the team is in "good standing" with the league, i.e. no technical fouls.)
3. Summary of service project(s) completed during the current season.

**High School  
VOLLEYBALL**

Season- Spring

Start Date March 1

End Date June 18

**Gender:** Coed

**Primary Competition Rules:** NCAA

**CYO Competition Rules:**

High School Coed Volleyball Leagues may implement rules that are amendments to PIAA rules. These rules must be reviewed and approved by the Regional Athletic Advisory Board and the CYO Athletic Department prior to March 1st.

**CYO Eligibility Rules:**

1. Coaches must be in compliance with the "Coaching Eligibility" rules.
2. Athletes must be in compliance with the "High School Athlete Eligibility" rules.
  - a. Exceptions: In order to help to foster inclusion at this level, teams may request the following:
    1. 9th thru 12th grade students on the same team.
    2. Inclusion of "non-parish" students who are friends, classmates or relatives of parishioners on the team.
  - b. Exception Procedures:
    1. The Pastor must present a written request to the League Commissioner
    2. The Commissioner, in coordination with the Regional Athletic Advisory Board, must review the request.

### **Service Projects for CYO Sports Teams**

Many projects are very effective with young adolescents. Think local. The ideas below may spark your own creativity. Have your athletes share their thoughts and ideas too!

#### **Examples**

- Cleaning the Church
- Helping with an already existing service project
- Raking leaves or shoveling snow for the elderly
- Visiting retirement or nursing homes
- Serving at a soup kitchen
- Distributing items to a food bank
- Working at a homeless shelter
- Working with a community program
- Participating or initiating environmental programs
- Collecting food, clothing, money or supplies for a specific cause or organization
- Developing pen pal relationships with other youth or soldiers stationed abroad
- Delivering Easter or Christmas cards, gifts or flowers to the homebound

#### **Most Importantly!**

Take the time to make service count for kids!

If you're going to do it, do it right by following the **Three P's** below:

#### **Preparation:**

Place the activity in the context of faith and discipleship. They need to know why the project is important

#### **Participation:**

Include adult supervision for guidance.

Focus should be on those being served and the purpose of the project.

#### **Processing:**

Share insight and feelings. Reflect on applicable scripture/faith issues. Celebrate the work done and the service provided.

\*If you need assistance, please call the CYO Athletic Department at 215-587-3716.

**Remember to Remember God**

*CYO Sports Volunteer Recommended Reading List*

**Wooden**

By Coach John Wooden (UCLA Bruins Basketball)

**The Double-Goal Coach**

By Jim Thompson (Positive Coaching Alliance)

**Just Let the Kids Play**

by Bob Bigelow, Tom Moroney and Linda Hall

**Values of the Game**

by Bill Bradley

**Character Development and Physical Activity**

by Brenda Bredemeier and David Shields

**My Losing Season**

by Pat Conroy

**Coaching for Character**

by Craig Clifford and Randolph M. Feezell

**Raising Cain**

by Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson

**Coaching Catholic: Gospel Values in Youth Sports**

by Rev. Richard J. McGrath, OSA, Ph.D.

**The Parent's Guide to Catholic Youth Sports**

by Rev. Richard J. McGrath, OSA Phd.

**Positive Coaching: Building Character  
and Self Esteem Through Sports**

by Jim Thompson

**Shooting in the Dark**

by Jim Thompson

**Reviving Ophelia**

by Mary Piper

**Spirituality of Sport: Balancing Body & Soul**

by Susan Saint Sing, Phd.

**Way To Go, Coach!**

by Ronald E. Smith and Frank L. Smoll

**Good Sports: The Concerned Parent's  
Guide to Competitive Youth Sports**

by Rick Wolff

**Dear God,  
Bless our team here today  
and all those who are about to compete.  
Help us to know our talents  
that you've blessed us with  
and to be supportive of others.  
Grant us the courage to do our best  
and not give up when we fall behind.  
Help us, Father, to have self-respect  
and give credit to those who do something right.  
Let us love and support our competitors  
just as Jesus taught us to do.  
Thank you, Lord, for all that you give us  
and for listening to our prayers.  
Amen.**

*Prayer written by Kelsey Schepise, former  
student-athlete of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish School.*

## CYO CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK & FIELD SMALL PARISH MERGER RULE

Two or more parishes will be permitted to merge and compete as one CYO Cross Country and/or Track & Field team when all of the following conditions are met:

- 1.) The combined number of *unique participants* competing in CYO sports in the previous school year for all the parishes involved must be less than 250.
  - a. *Unique Participants* is defined as all male and female athletes in 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade participating in inter-parish CYO sports programs sponsored by the parish.
  - b. *Unique Participants* must be verifiable through the parishes SI Play/Sports Sign-Up portal. If the parishes are not/ were not using SI Play/Sports Sign-Up, they must present evidential proof of the number of *unique participants*.
- 2.) In any of the previous two years, neither parish fielded a CYO Cross Country team or Track & Field team of more than 18 total athletes (boys & girls combined), respectively.
- 3.) In the year of merger, the merged team will not have more than 36 total athletes (boys & girls combined).

The following rules and procedures apply to all requests to merge parishes for CYO Track & Field:

- Private Academies are not permitted to merge with an eligible parish for CYO Track & Field.
- All requests for merger must be sent to the Archdiocesan Cross Commissioner or Track & Field Coordinator. Separate requests must be sent for each sport. Approval in one sport does not guarantee approval in the other.
- The attached form must be used and the requested information must be included with the request. Requests should be emailed to the Archdiocesan Cross Country Commissioner, Mary Ellen Malloy, [sunrisexc@aol.com](mailto:sunrisexc@aol.com) and the Track & Field Coordinator, Terry O'Connell, at [terence.m.oconnell@gmail.com](mailto:terence.m.oconnell@gmail.com).
- **Cross Country** - Requests for approval to merge for the CYO Cross Country season must be submitted before September 10<sup>th</sup>. All other Cross Country rostering rules still apply.
- **Track & Field** - Requests for approval to merge for the CYO Track & Field season must be submitted before March 20<sup>th</sup> and the complete roster for the initial merged season must be received by the Archdiocesan Track & Field Coordinator by April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If approved, merged teams will compete under the existing name of one of the parishes, however, separate rosters must be prepared for the different parishes and approved by the respective pastors.
- Once a request for merger is approved, the merged team must remain together for a period of two years. The *unique participant* rule and total number of cross country/track & field athletes rule apply only in the first year of merger. Merged teams must re-apply after two years competing together and *may* be denied in subsequent years based on the growth of their CYO or CYO Cross Country and/or Track & Field programs.
- Ineligible "large" parishes *may* be permitted to merge with an eligible smaller parish if credible hardships or other qualitative factors make such a merger the best option for the smaller parish. The decision to waive one or more condition will be at the sole discretion of the Cross Country Commissioner or Track & Field Coordinator, respectively.

