

**Catholic Youth Organization**

**Archdiocese of Mobile**

**11 North Lafayette Street**

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**CYO MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Catholic Youth Organization is to provide the highest quality athletic programs that promote the physical, social, emotional, and most importantly, the spiritual development of our young Catholic athletes. CYO Sports is a youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Mobile in Mobile and Baldwin County, which enables a partnership of priests, parents, coaches, and adult leaders to support our young athletes as they grow in their relationship with God and in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

**PURPOSE OF CYO ATHLETICS**

The CYO philosophy for all athletics is based on the following:

* Learning the value of getting along with people.
* Learning to respect the rights of other.
* Developing and exercising leadership.
* Making decisions and accepting responsibility.
* Developing self-reliance and emotional stability.
* Learning to be fair and honest.
* Learning to accept defeat honorably, and victory humbly.
* Developing a healthy body through physical activity in competitive athletics.
* Abiding by established and accepted rules, which govern all participants.
* Learning to Glorify God in all one’s endeavors.

The above basis of CYO athletics must always be strived for or the program has little purpose under the name Catholic Youth Organization. Competitive athletics in CYO provide a worthy vehicle to obtain a means of developing Christian character.

“Sports, properly directed,” wrote Pope Pius XII, “develop character, make man courageous, a generous loser, and a gracious victor. Sports refine the senses, give us intellectual penetration, steel the will to endurance…Sports, rightly understood, means the development of the whole man…helps a man achieve that end to which all others must be subservient, the service and praise of the Creator…”

"When it is like this, sport transcends the level of pure physicality and takes us into the arena of the spirit and even of mystery. And these moments are accompanied by great joy and satisfaction, which we all can share, even those not competing." -Pope Francis

**VALUES OF CYO ATHLETICS**

**As Proposed by The**

**NATIONAL CYO ATHLETIC DIRECTORS CONFERENCE**

**Detroit, Michigan**

1. First and foremost, it invites the children to the church in activities which they might do anyway; they are exposed to Christian leadership and exposed to an application of Christian principles.
2. They learn a “voluntary acceptance of rules and regulations” which is one of the basics of civilized life.
3. Cooperation is learned, particularly in team sports.
4. Youngsters have an opportunity to test out areas of interest.
5. Youngsters have an opportunity to achieve.
6. Adult leaders have an opportunity to perceive the youngsters in life-like competitive situations which provide the skilled leader with an insight into the child and a tool to use to help the child in psycho-socio areas where help may be needed.
7. The child experiences the ups and downs of life in winning and losing. He learns how to deal emotionally with these dynamics. Under proper Christian leadership, he learns the right way to win---how to be a true champion, to be sensitive to losers; he learns how to accept defeat graciously and to curb resentment toward winners.
8. The child acquires a respect for his opponents and an understanding and appreciation of the competitive aspects of life.
9. The child meets adults and children in a Christian atmosphere and forms friendships which are often life-lasting.

**APPLICATION OF THE CYO HANDBOOK**

This document contains the policies, procedures, rules and regulations governing the CYO, including the attached appendices (the “CYO Handbook”) The CYO Handbook applies to all Parishes in the CYO in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and includes matters of eligibility, sanctioning, qualifications, responsibility and the establishment and monitoring of program standards. The CYO Staff will make final decisions regarding questions and interpretations of the CYO Handbook.

The policies, procedures, rules and regulations contained in the CYO Handbook cannot be waived, modified or amended by mutual consent between or among Parishes and any of its participants. Any changes to the CYO Handbook must have official approval of the CYO Staff. Changes to the CYO Handbook made by CYO during the year will be highlighted in red. At the start of each year, such changes will be incorporated as part of the original font/color.

It is the responsibility of parish administrators to ensure that all parish participants understand and abide by the CYO Handbook. Lack of knowledge or awareness of the CYO Handbook is not an acceptable defense. Any matters not specifically addressed in the CYO Handbook are left to the sole discretion of the CYO Staff.

**ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE**

CYO manages and oversees an athletic program for parishes of Mobile and Baldwin Counties to instill Catholic values and aid in educating the whole child. As the governing body, CYO shall:

* Maintain a fair and healthy balance between family*,* athletics, and Catholic values.
* Provide an organizational structure for athletic competition among parishes.
* Establish and monitor standards for student athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.
* Provide information and programming materials to facilitate active communication between parishes and its administrators.
* Establish and monitor standards for good sportsmanship and healthy athletic competition.

**PHILOSOPHY OF THE CYO**

The mission of the CYO is to provide organized athletic opportunities to youth in a Catholic environment. With this mission in mind, the policies, procedures, rules and regulations set forth are based on the following philosophical objectives:

* Provide a wholesome outlet for an athlete’s physical energy while strengthening the student athlete’s spiritual and social values.
* To build a community that strives to image Christ and instill Christian sportsmanship in the life-styles of the participants.
* To center the athletic programs for the youth and for the youth’s development of physical skills, social skills, emotional and mental growth and spiritual strength.
* To help form well-rounded youth by fostering good health habits, teaching the positive value of athletic participation and showing the necessity of practice, hard work and time management.
* To recognize the vital role the coach plays in the development of the youth and to train the coaches as youth ministry leaders under the coaching certification program required by the CYO.
* To teach all the participants, i.e., school Administrators, coaches, student athletes and spectators, the proper attitude towards winning, losing and competing with dignity.
* To develop Catholic community, school spirit, team spirit and personal acceptance.
* To train, instruct and follow all rules.

**CYO STAFF**

The CYO staff consists of a Director, Assistant Director, and Program Coordinator. Game day staff consisting of officials, scorekeepers, and scoreboard operators are also employed by the CYO.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Advisory Committee of the CYO consists of representatives from each participating parish who attend meetings periodically to discuss and consult on CYO matters including policy, procedures, and finances.

**ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be eligible for a parish team, a player must either be enrolled in a participating parish school or a Catholic not attending a parish school but enrolled in the parish’s current Religious Education program (See requirements below).

The playing of an ineligible player, whether done intentionally or not, will result in the forfeit of that contest and the head coach being suspended.

**PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM (CCD)**

An athlete must have attended his/her parish religious education program regularly, which is a minimum of 75% during the previous calendar year for Fall eligibility and 75% from the beginning of the current school year for Winter and Spring Eligibility. If a Catholic player is attending Religious Education classes for the first time, due to transferring from a Catholic School to a public/private institution, their attendance will be checked beginning the second week of classes.

**MULTI - SPORT PARTICPATION**

A CYO player may participate on only one CYO team during a sport season. The exception to this is a player who participates in cheerleading may participate in another sport during the same season.

**SUPPLEMENTAL PLAYERS**

Supplemental players must be a member of a parish, and otherwise eligible but, his/her parish does not field a team in his/her division. Supplemental players are subject to the approval of the CYO Staff in order to preclude an unfair advantage by one team.

**BALANCED TEAMS / PROCESS FOR DIVIDING TEAMS**

* When a parish enters more than one team in the same age division, the team must be divided, ability-wise as evenly as possible. The object is to create two or more teams that if they played each other on any given day, the outcome would always be in doubt. It is the responsibility of the athletic director and the parish’s sports leadership team to ensure that teams in the same division from the same parish are divided equally to ensure a fair and balanced competitive league. It is left to each parish to decide how best to balance teams. An example of how to do so is as followed:

1. An evaluation of all players should take place before dividing teams. This evaluation should be overseen by someone other than the head coaches of the teams.
2. Numbers should be assigned to players based on ability (i.e. 1 – below average, 2 – average, 3 – above average, 4 – good player, 5 – outstanding player)
3. Players should then be assigned to teams based on assigned numbers (i.e. 1’s on different teams, 2’s on different teams, etc.)
4. Assistant coaches should be assigned after players are assigned to teams.

**TEAM NUMBERS AND ROSTERS**

Team numbers (number of teams in each division) and completed rosters are to be electronically submitted by the CYO issued deadline. A $100 team fee will be assessed for each team submitted.

**PARTICIPATION FEES**

CYO strives to keep participation fees for each sport at a reasonable rate. Fees are to be paid by the parish by the deadline issued by the CYO. Individual sport player fees are as follows:

● Football $95.00

● Cheer $50.00

● Soccer $95.00

● Volleyball $95.00

● Basketball $95.00

Additional fees will be assessed by the parish.

**AED LOCATIONS**

Corpus Christi – Gym lobby next to P.E. Office

Christ the King – Gym wall immediately to left of main entrance / Concession Stand at playing fields

CYO Hall – Main Gym on wall in corner office

Little Flower – Concession stand

McGill-Toolen – Gym wall next to concession stand

Saint Dominic – Gym next to door closest to upper field

Saint Ignatius – Outside the cafeteria doors under the covered area on west side of gym

Saint Mary – Pavilion and Gym.

Lipscomb Athletic Complex – Home locker room and Stadium office

INCIDENT REPORTS FOR INJURY

An incident report form must be completed and returned to the CYO office as soon as possible after an injury occurs to an athlete. The injury report form can be found on the CYO website (CYOMobile.org).

PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONALS

The CYO Sports program is a youth ministry of the Catholic Church. Coaches should lead prayer before and after games and practices and are required to lead a devotional one time per week. Weekly devotionals will be provided to each head coach.

COACHES’ ROLE & REQUIREMENTS

The coach in the CYO plays a vital role in the athlete’s experience in CYO sports. CYO views each coach as a youth minister in a Catholic environment. All coaches must represent themselves and the CYO in a sportsmanlike and positive manner. Each coach shall act, speak, and dress in a manner consistent with CYO values.

The following is a list of requirements and responsibilities for individuals to coach in the CYO:

* A coach must be approved by the parish athletic director.
* A coach is required to understand and abide by the rules of the CYO.
* A coach must have a basic understanding of the rules of the sport.
* A coach is responsible for the conduct and supervision of his/her athletes and the team’s spectators as well as supporting the officials.
* CYO recommends that each coach conduct a parent meeting to ensure that everyone understands the team policies and procedures.

In order for a coach to be certified official by the CYO and obtain a CYO coaching card, he/she must complete the following training:

* Archdiocese of Mobile CAPPS
* Play Safely Sports Training Course
* Coaches’ Information Form
* Rules Training

Any coach who does not have a CYO issued coaching card will be considered non-certified and will not be eligible to coach. If any person is on the sideline during a contest and is not a certified coach, it will result in that team forfeiting the contest. Coaches must be prepared to show proof of certification. In case of emergency, a photo of the coaching card will be accepted.

ATHLETE’S ROLE

An athlete’s participation in the CYO allows for better growth in their relationship with God and a better understanding of themselves and the Catholic faith. It is the responsibility of the parish, its administrators and coaches to ensure that each athlete behaves in a manner consistent with CYO values. An athlete shall always endeavor to be Christ-like in his/her actions, words or body language.

An athlete shall:

* Be respectful toward an opponent, coach, official, or spectator.
* Respect the game and play in a fair manner.
* Practice self-control in not using foul language or losing his/her temper

**ATHLETE’S DISCIPLINE POLICY**

1st Unsportsmanlike Conduct /Technical – Warning

2nd Unsportsmanlike Conduct /Technical – Suspended for First Half of Next Game

3rd Unsportsmanlike Conduct /Technical – Suspended for One Game

\*Players who receive an unsportsmanlike conduct / technical must be removed from the game. It is at the coaches discretion when the player reenters the game if at all.

\*No coach, **player** or spectator may approach the scorer’s table or officials after game – Automatic one game suspension.

PARENT AND SPECTATOR’S ROLE

The parents and spectators in the CYO play a vital role in supporting the athletes. Parents and spectators should behave in a manner consistent with CYO values.

Parents and spectators shall:

1. Support athletes, coaches, officials, supervisors or anyone else associated with a CYO event.
2. Refrain from being on the field or court during competition.
3. Refrain from shouting instructions or criticism.
4. Refrain from making any distracting noise during a Free Throw or Volleyball Serve.

Any parent or spectator not behaving in accordance with CYO values will be asked to leave the site. If the person refuses to obey, the official or supervisor has the authority to declare the contest a forfeit.

COACH AND SPECTATOR DISCIPLINE POLICY

Coaches, parents, and spectators play a vital role in supporting CYO athletes. This discipline policy is in place to ensure that all involved in the CYO behave in a sportsmanlike manner that is consistent with the Catholic values of the organization.

**Step 1 - First Offense**

**Warning**

Warning Issued by Parish Athletic Rep

Warning Issued in Writing by CYO Executive Director

Pastor notified by Parish Athletic Rep

**Step 2 - 2nd Offense**

**One Game Suspension**

Coach / Spectator is suspended for one (1) contest

Notified by parish athletic rep

Notified in writing by CYO office.

Pastor is notified in writing by CYO office.

**Step 3 - 3rd Offense**

**Suspended for Remainder of Season**

Coach / Spectator is suspended for remainder of season (minimum two (2) games)

Notified by parish athletic rep

Notified in writing by CYO office

Pastor is notified in writing by CYO Office

Situations that are not subject to an official’s discretion will be presented to a three-person committee to decide disciplinary action. The three-person committee will consist of members of the CYO Advisory Committee not directly involved with the coach or coaches in question.

Coaches who committed a disciplinary infraction during the 2023-2024 CYO sports season, will be placed on probation through the following CYO sports season 2024-2025. Any infraction that occurs during this probation period will automatically result in suspension.

No coach, player or spectator may approach the scorer’s table or an official after the game – Automatic one game suspension.

IMPORTANT PARISH / SCHOOL EVENTS

Each parish is asked to provide the CYO with a list of important parish and school events that they wish to be avoided when scheduling. This list must be submitted by the parish athletic director prior to the designated deadline in order to be given consideration for scheduling purposes.

HEAD COACHES OF MULTIPLE TEAMS

If the HEAD coach is coaching multiple teams during the same sport season, the CYO will make every effort when scheduling to avoid conflicts. Names of head coaches of multiple teams must be submitted by the CYO’s designated deadline in order to be given priority when scheduling.

TOURNAMENTS AND JAMBOREES

All tournaments and jamborees sponsored by individual parishes must be sanctioned by the CYO office. The final schedule must be approved by the CYO office.

OUTSIDE SCRIMMAGES

Scrimmage games with teams outside of the CYO are prohibited.

24 HOUR RULE

When contacting the CYO office to report an incident involving an official or any other CYO issue that is not an emergency, it is requested that a 24- hour grace period be observed before reporting the issue.

PARTICIPATION RULE

The participation rule is not a protestable offense. However, a violation of the participation rule may be reported to the CYO office.

VIDEOING

Under no circumstance may a parish administrator, coach, athlete, or spectator visually record a contest that does not involve their parish team.

NUMBER OF COACHES DURING CONTEST

The maximum number of coaches on the sideline during a contest is as follows:

Football – 6

Flag Football – 3

Volleyball – 3

Soccer – 3

Basketball – 3

Cheerleading – 3

The number of coaches per team for a CYO practice session is unlimited but all coaches must be CYO certified.

WEATHER POLICY

CYO follows a 10 mile rule for lightning for all venues of outdoor play. CYO also recommends that all coaches download a weather app in order to track storms and be alerted to the distance of their practice or game.

ALLEGED BULLYING PROTOCOL

The CYO and the Archdiocese have a process in place to report bullying. Anytime an athlete or parent reports a case of bullying to a coach, the CYO office must be notified. CYO will then send paperwork to be completed and returned to the CYO office.

**TOY BOWL**

On October 25, 2025 the CYO Toy Bowl will be celebrating its 77th year. The Toy Bowl tradition is the CYO’s Fall fundraiser which covers a large portion of operating expenses and allows for participation fees to be kept at a minimum.