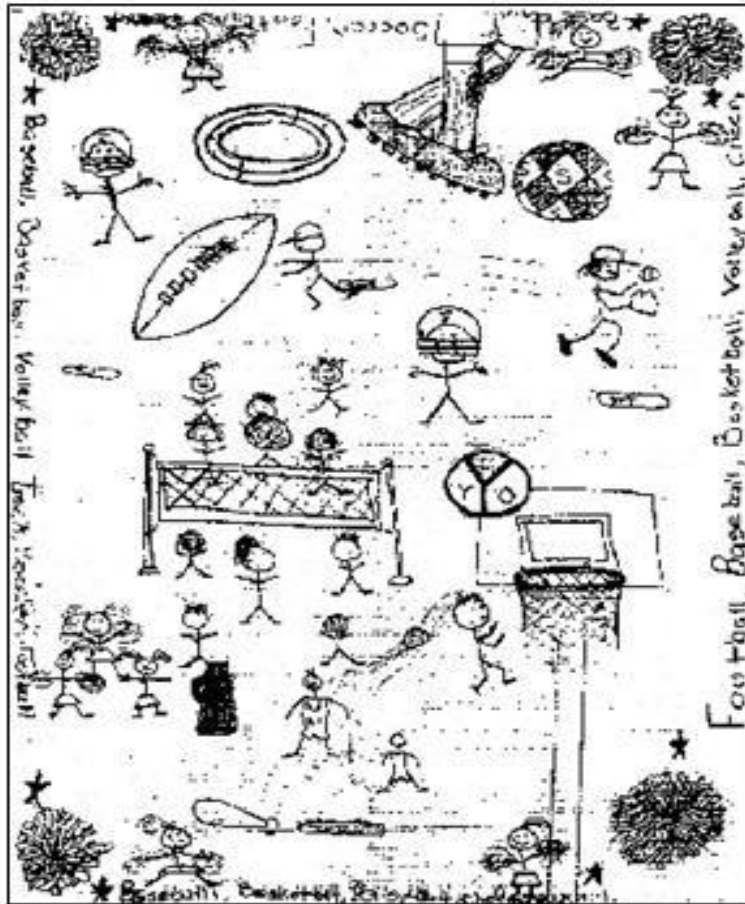


**Youth & Young Adult Ministry
and CYO Office**

**2010 FASTPITCH SOFTBALL
COACHES HANDBOOK**



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CYO Athletics

**Endeavoring to help young people be more
Christ-like in the way they live.**



Catholic Charities | Parish & Community Ministries

Catholic Charities Health and Human Services



Mission Statement

The Catholic Youth Organization endeavors to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they live. The CYO promotes participation and sportsmanship to foster the total development of participants and influence the formation of Christian values. The CYO serves the youth of the Diocese of Cleveland with the leadership necessary for the coordination and administration of athletic activities between members, which will provide equitable opportunities for participation, reduce the risks of participation and enhance the experiences of the young athlete.





Youth & Young Adult Ministry and CYO Office

Dear Coach,

As a coach, you need to be aware of the impact you will have on your players -- not just in their athletic endeavors, but in life, long after their organized sports playing days are over.

Being a Coach is a tremendous challenge and responsibility, but it's also very rewarding. As players grow and develop from the inexperienced athlete that you may first see at practice to the young person that they will become as a leader of the team, school, or community, you know that your positive support and guidance had an impact in their life. When you see a player sacrificing personal accomplishments for the good of the team and giving the best effort they can with a smile on their face, you will know that your direction had a positive effect not just in the game but also at home, at church and in school.

In CYO Athletics the role of the coach is that of youth minister, leader, teacher and parent. You need to reflect on each of these roles as you prepare for the upcoming season. Remember to take the time to develop your relationship with God and to always be an example of Christ-like behavior to your players, opponents, officials, parents and fans. As you do this the growth that will take place in you and the athletes through this shared experience will make both of you better people.

The information in this Coach's Handbook is designed to help you with all aspects of coaching from understanding the CYO Philosophy and Mission, planning for the season, and working with parents to understanding the rules of the game. Use the Coach's Handbook as the starting point for your plan to create a positive and rewarding experience for your players. If you do, they will never forget you.

Remember, Keep the Spirit Alive!

The CYO Athletic Staff

CYO Athletics – Endeavoring to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they live.

www.clevelandcyo.org

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THE CYO STORY

In the Depression Years of the 1930's a ray of light burst forth illuminating a need for the development of leisure time activities for our youth. The sounds of cheering crowds, the singing of camp songs, the music from a parish hall announcing a hi-club dance and the celebration of the Eucharist among a youth group began to touch the lives of young people through the start of the Catholic Youth Organization.

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth stressed that recreational and social activities were an important part of the overall education of young people. He called for us to rise and share our values and faith experiences with wisdom and love to the young people. After two years of study, In December, 1937 Archbishop Joseph Schrembs appointed Reverend James O'Brien as Diocesan Director of the Catholic Youth Organization. The CYO was designed as a youth serving agency to organize and coordinate all youth activities. Archbishop Schrembs stated that spiritual development is the primary objective of CYO. We are to lead youth to a better understanding and appreciation of our faith, to practice virtue and to encourage the youth to receive the Sacraments.

In the early 1940's the four-fold program of CYO, Social – Spiritual – Cultural – Physical, began to fully develop through the development of the Knights of the Alter, Cayomaw Club, Hi-Club, and CYO Camp and Athletic programs. In the 1950's, under the direction of Msg. Thomas C. Corrigan the CYO grew to include young adult programs for those that lost contact with the Church during World War II and the Korean War. During this time there were over 5,000 boys and girls involved in CYO athletics and over 1,500 CYO summer campers. Committees of lay volunteers also began to organize programs in Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, a National Catholic Youth Week, a One Act Play Festival and the Knights of the Alter Holy Hour.

In the 1960's and 1970's Reverend James P. O'Donnell fostered the development of the "Youth Happening", the AMEN Program, the Walk for Hunger in Greater Cleveland, SEARCH Program, and the Coaches Certification Program. In 1976, with Dan Ferrazza as Diocesan Director, A Vision of Youth Ministry was published. In this document the United States Catholic Conference stated that "No one aspect of youth ministry is independent of others; they are all interdependent elements of a unified total vision...the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. We are still guided by this vision today.

In the 1980's and 1990's Bishop Anthony Pilla invited us to join with him in accepting not only the challenge but also the HOPE who is Jesus. He has been a guiding hand along the journey of developing Church in the Youth and Young Adults of Cleveland. During this time there has been a re-commitment to the early dreams of CYO, to enable young people to know Jesus. In May 1997 the CYO Philosophy and rules were organized into the present Charter & By-laws that are reaffirmed by member parishes each time they resubmit their Membership Agreement. Our philosophy captures the heart of our athletic programs – Christ – Participation – Team – Teaching!

The tradition of CYO continues today. In 2002, over 15,000 young people participated in our Youth and Young Adult Ministry programs, over 29,000 participated in our Cleveland CYO Athletic programs, over 7,400 campers attended our CYO Camp Programs. Our constant challenge remains the building of community and shared philosophy among the many volunteers that give the CYO the energy to grow. Today, volunteers in CYO programs give their time and energy with the same enthusiasm as those in the 1930's. Working together we will continue to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they live and promote participation and sportsmanship among all those involved in CYO.

THE CYO PHILOSOPHY

CYO Athletics endeavors to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they live. Our programs focus on the total development of participants in order to influence the formation of Christian values. For this reason, CYO sports are an important part of the Catholic Church's comprehensive ministry to, with, by, and for youth.

CYO Athletics foster the development of physical skills, emotional growth, affirmation of gifts and spiritual strength. The young person, not the athletic activity, is our primary focus. Therefore we believe that:

- All CYO Athletic programs should be well organized and maintain standards of high quality.
- All who have the opportunity to be on a team should also have the right to participate in the game.
- Participants should have the opportunity to be involved in athletics at an appropriate age/grade level.

CYO Athletics believes that the Coach's role is critical. The coach's primary role is that of youth ministry leader, therefore striving to act at all times as a model of Christ-like values & behaviors.

CYO Athletics believes that success is not measured by the final score. Success is measured by the effort of individuals striving to achieve team goals while respecting themselves, their teammates, and their opponents and at the same time having fun.

CYO Athletic should be viewed as part of the faith building efforts of the participating members. The interrelationship of CYO Athletics with family life, parish life, and school life is essential.

CYO Athletics is committed to the acceptance of and love for people of all nationalities and races. Through our CYO Athletic programs, we work to build a community and a bond of unity that leads to caring for one another in the ways Jesus taught.

THE CYO EMBLEM



The CYO Emblem was designed and approved for the Catholic Youth Organization of the Diocese of Cleveland. To wear this emblem is to bear witness to the fundamental doctrines of one's Catholic faith in the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and in our salvation by Christ. For this reason the CYO Emblem is to be a visible part of all CYO Team uniforms.

- *The background of the Emblem is blue and the cross, circle and letters are white.*
- *The whole circle symbolizes God*
- *The three-fold division within the circle symbolizes the Holy Trinity of God - the Father, Jesus Christ - the Son and the Holy Spirit. This division represents the Unity we share in the Holy Trinity.*
- *The Greek Cross, which forms the divisions of the circle, is the sign of our salvation by Jesus Christ our Savior.*

The Catholic Youth Organization endeavors to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they live.

THE ORGANIZATION OF CYO ATHLETICS

CYO Athletics relies upon the leaders at parishes to fulfill vital roles in the Youth Athletic Program. Parish leaders must organize sign-ups and entry materials as well as eligibility rosters, preparticipation forms, supervision of coaches as well as the financial issues associated with operating an athletic program. Established leadership roles within the CYO at the member and diocesan levels can help create stability and consistency throughout the athletic program. All members of the Cleveland CYO agree to follow the CYO Charter & By-laws which may be found at www.clevelandcyo.org.

MEMBER LEADERSHIP

All members (parishes or schools) participating in the Cleveland CYO athletic program must have a Pastoral Designee. The Pastoral Designee is appointed by the Pastor/Principal of the parish and is the parish's official recipient of all diocesan CYO athletic information and is responsible for promulgating this information within their parish. The Pastoral Designee also serves as the official contact for the parish with the diocesan CYO Office for issues related to finance, inquiry, eligibility, discipline, and program administration.

The Member Administrator (Pastor/Principal) is responsible for the direction and supervision of the CYO Athletic program at the Member Level. The Pastoral Designee is the official member liaison with the CYO Athletic Administration. The Pastoral Designee is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the member's CYO Athletic program. The Pastoral Designee is ultimately accountable to the Member Administrator.

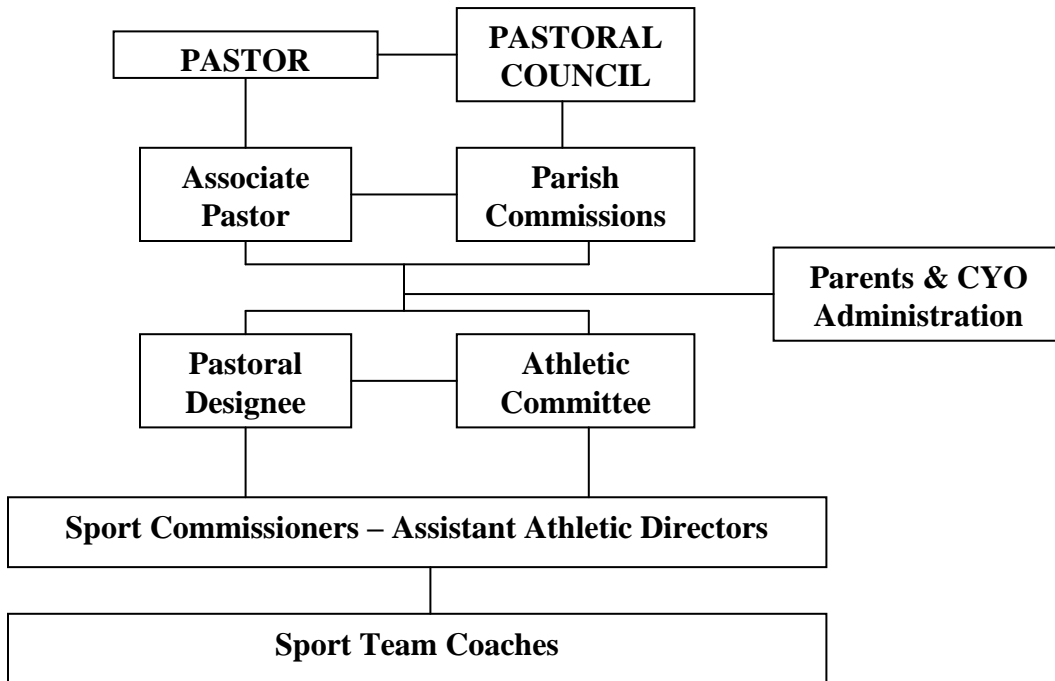
CYO OFFICE LEADERSHIP

The CYO Office is led by the CYO Athletic Administrator, CYO Area Athletic Directors, CYO Sport Commissioners and the Cleveland CYO Athletic Advisory Committee. The CYO Office staff is here to help pastoral designees and coaches plan and prepare for the upcoming sport seasons. The CYO Sport Commissioners are the first points of contact for coaches of a sport. Coaches should familiarize themselves with the names and telephone numbers of their sport commissioners. Coaches should call their CYO Athletic Director for answers to questions related to eligibility, protest or grievance, to review a decision made by a sport commissioner or to comment on the success and virtue of the CYO program.

The Cleveland CYO Athletic Advisory Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review, evaluate, plan and integrate the path of CYO Athletics in Cleveland with the overall mission of the Church. The committee is composed of 14 individuals from parishes participating in the CYO Athletic Program, who also may serve on sub-committees or ad-hoc committees that advise and give direction to the CYO Staff.

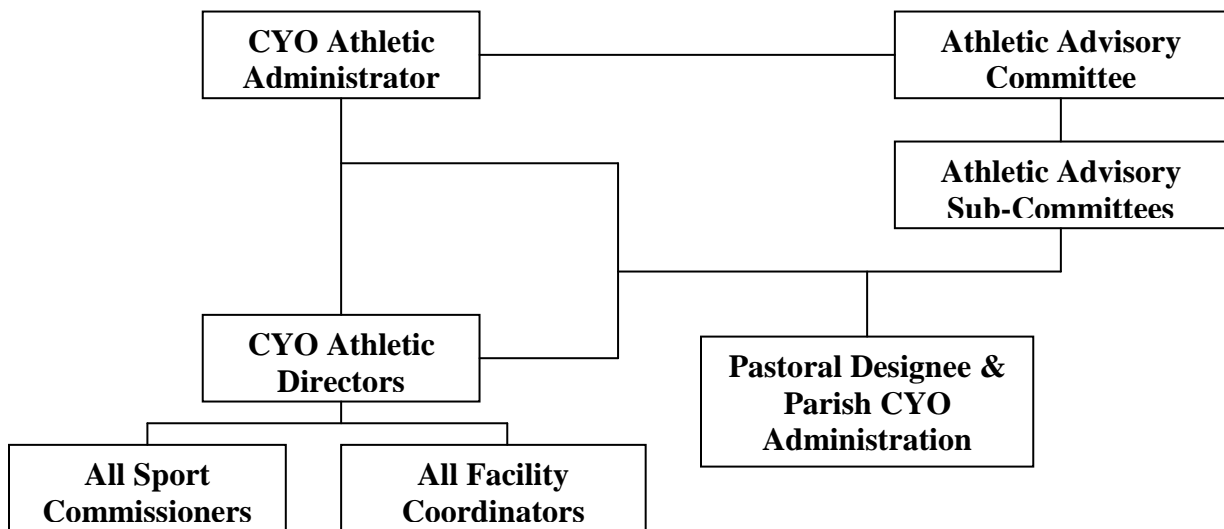
Member Organization of CYO Athletics

The CYO Charter and By-laws are the governing documents under-which the following operates.



Diocesan Organization of CYO Athletics

The CYO Charter and By-laws are the governing documents under-which the following operates.



YOU ARE NOW A CYO COACH

Congratulations on joining one of the most rewarding professions known to any man or woman. As a coach of a youth sport team you have the opportunity to shape the outlook young people have towards athletics and the development of their faith. By taking a few moments to plan and prepare for the upcoming season you can minimize issues that you may come across later on in the season. The goal of this section is to inform you of the requirements to coach in CYO Athletics and steps to take to plan for a successful season.

Your main goal as a CYO coach is not to win matches or games, but to organize the children for fun and learning. Coaching youth teams has nothing to do with winning, it's objective is developing players and helping them to play well. The young player wants to enjoy themselves and winning matches or games is not their main goal, so whatever you do don't let your self-esteem and self-confidence be governed by whether the team wins or loses.

CYO Coaches often list many specific goals they hope to achieve when coaching their athletes; usually their goals fall under these objectives:

- To help young people have fun.
- To help young people develop skills
- To help young people demonstrate Christ-like behaviors

As a coach you want an athlete to develop physically, by learning the sport skills, improving physical conditioning, developing good health habits, and avoiding injuries; psychologically, by learning to control their emotions and developing feelings of self worth; and socially by learning cooperation in a competitive context and appropriate standards of behavior.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE A CYO COACH

Each parish must assure that a person who has been engaged to coach complete the following before they begin coaching;

- Read and acknowledge the Diocese of Cleveland, "Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse"
- Read and acknowledge the Diocese of Cleveland, "Standards of Conduct for Ministry".
- complete a parish application,
- attend an approved abuse prevention program,
- attend a CYO Coaches Development Program session,
- complete the required fingerprinting process.
- Wear CYO credentials while coaching at all CYO events.
- Failure to do so will result in the coach's ineligibility until the requirements have been completed.

- For grade school teams, any man or woman 18 years of age or older may serve as a head coach, or at least 16 years of age may serve as an assistant coach if they are approved by the Pastor, Pastoral Designee and member athletic committee.
- For high school teams, any man or woman 25 years of age or older may serve as a head coach, or at least 18 years of age may serve as an assistant coach if they are approved by the Pastor, Pastoral Designee and member athletic committee.
- When a girl's team is coached by men, it is required that a women 18 years of age or must be associated with the team as an athletic aide and in attendance at all practices. When a female coaches a boy's team a male athletic aide must be associated with the team is also required.

COACHES TRAINING SESSIONS

- All coaches must attend a CYO approved coaches orientation program before they begin coaching.
- All coaches are to attend coaches meetings and other session required to maintain CYO certification.

PARENTS AT GAMES

As the coach of the team during a game you are responsible for the actions of yourself, assistant coaches, players, parents and fans. It may not be fair to put that much responsibility on you, but as a coach your actions usually set the tone for the other individuals listed. Unfortunately problems with poor sportsmanship from parents exist. In the CYO we hope that our philosophy and atmosphere at the games would minimize unsportsmanlike behavior.

As a coach you thought you were there solely for the kids, but you may have to step in if a parent is becoming too involved by verbally abusing officials, taunting players, and coaching players from the stand or stepping onto the court. Your actions may need to be a calm reminder of the purpose of youth sports to suggesting that the parent leave the facility or helping the official gain control of the crowd. Always take the time to remind your parents and assistant coaches that the little eyes of the players are always watching them and learning from their behavior.

RULES OF THE GAME

CYO SPORT OFFERINGS

The Cleveland CYO offers competition in the following sports during the noted season:

FALL

Football
Girls Soccer
Boys Cross Country
Girls Cross Country
Girls Volleyball
Cheer
Boys Soccer

WINTER

Wrestling
Boys Grade School Basketball
Girls Grade School Basketball
Boys High School Basketball
Girls High School Basketball
Cheer

SPRING

Baseball
Fast-pitch Softball
Boys Track & Field
Girls Track & Field
Boys Volleyball
Girls High School Volleyball

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Participation on CYO Teams is open to those that meet the criteria outlined in By-law 4 of the CYO Charter & By-laws. To be eligible to compete in CYO the athlete must meet either the Parish, School, Parish School of Religion or adjoining member requirement outlined on By-law 4. Some athletes may not be able to participate in practices, scrimmages or games without the approval of the CYO Office, consult the by-law for details. By-laws are available at www.clevelandcyo.org

AGE LIMITATIONS & DIVISIONS

The CYO will, whenever possible, offer leagues by age/grades divisions. However all divisions of play may not be offered in all sports or service area. A team must enter in the division of the oldest member of that team. In each case, the athlete must meet the age requirement on October 1 of the current school year. Third grade students are not eligible for CYO participation. Many parishes offer intramurals for such children. Divisions are of competition are as follows:

CYO HIGH SCHOOL	9 th - 12 th grades	
Varsity	12 th and down	ages 18 and under
Junior Varsity	9 th and 10 th grade only	ages 16 and under
CYO GRADE SCHOOL	4 th – 8 th grades	
Varsity	8 th grade & down	ages 10-14
Junior Varsity	7 th grade & down	ages 9-13
Cadet	6 th grade & down	ages 9-12
Developmental	5 th and 4 th grade only	ages 8-11
Elemental	4 th grade only	ages 8-11

NOTE: All divisions may not be offered in all sports or areas. *More restrictive limitations on age may be in place for certain sports. Consult the sports rules for details.*

ATHLETE PREPARTICIPATION FORM

Each Athlete must have a complete and valid Preparticipation Form on file with the CYO member before the athlete may participate in any practice, competition or scrimmage.

ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

It is the philosophy of the CYO to have all players participate in games and competitions. All children eligible and healthy are expected to play. For reasons of discipline, grades, etc., a child may lose eligibility as determined and established by the coach, school, principal, parish pastor, administrator or Pastoral Designee. In situations of ineligibility the coach is to inform the scorer and opposing coach of the ineligibility as well as insure it is marked on the game scoresheet or roster. The rules of each specific sport define the implementation and requirements for the participation rule.

All athletes that meet registration and medical criteria are to participate in CYO athletes. Teams are not permitted to cut players from a team. It is an underlying principle of CYO to allow all to play and participate, and for us to foster the development of physical and social skills, as well as spiritual strength in each CYO Athlete on our team. Therefore tryouts are not to be held for the purpose of limiting participation.

COACH AND ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

It is expected that all players, coaches, parents, officials, commissioners, site personnel or other persons involved with a CYO team, will conduct themselves as an example of Christian behavior. They do this through Christian leadership, good sportsmanship and providing an atmosphere for healthy athletic programs. Christian behavior is essential and expected as a witness to the philosophy and values of CYO athletics. The violations listed below will not be tolerated in CYO programs:

- Failure of the Pastoral Designee to assume direct responsibility for the individual program.
- Refusal to abide by the rules and decisions of the CYO.
- Violation of the Influence Rules (recruiting).
- Knowingly using an ineligible player.
- Taking a team off the field, floor, or out of a tournament because of dissatisfaction with the officials or other unsatisfactory reasons.
- Failure to control the spectators and/or players bench.
- Failure to adequately protect officials and/or the visiting team.
- Violation of the practice and playing season dates.
- Use of profane, vulgar or abusive language.
- Inappropriate conduct or disrespect toward officials, site personnel and others involved in CYO Athletics.
- Vandalism or the destruction of property.

- Verbal or physical abuse of players, coaches, opponents, officials or anyone affiliated with the CYO program.
- Use of alcohol or illicit drugs or tobacco before, during, or after any CYO activity.
- Representing ideals that are contrary to the philosophy of the CYO program.
- Escalating behaviors that incite others to act in ways that are in direct conflict with the values of the CYO program.

COACH AND PLAYER SUSPENSION POLICY

A coach or player ejected from a game for any reason must leave the premises and shall be suspended for the next scheduled game (two games in the high school division). An ejected player must be supervised by an adult. The person ejected may not associate with the team during the duration of the suspension, this includes practices and scrimmages.

- If a head coach is ejected from a game and does not leave quietly or there is no registered assistant coach, the team must forfeit that game.
- The penalty for any coach or player who is suspended for a second time during a season will be removal from the program for the remainder of the season.
- Any flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct is just cause for suspension. Good sportsmanship is expected at all times by all parents, coaches and players. Inappropriate behavior at any time during the CYO function is just cause for penalty.

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Sportsmanship is a primary focus of CYO sports and players and coaches are expected to respect their opponents. It is inappropriate for players and coaches to use insulting or demeaning language (“Trash Talk”) or unacceptable language to one another before, during or after games. This rule will be strictly enforced by CYO game officials.

RECRUITING

- In the Cleveland CYO, the use of influence by any person connected or not connected with a CYO Member to secure or retain a prospective athlete from another member is not permitted and shall cause the student to be ineligible upon transfer and shall jeopardize the standing of the member in future CYO athletic programs.
- High Schools that are members of the Ohio High School Athletic Association must follow their Bylaw 4, Section 9 which outlines the following limitations on recruitment by an OHSAA member high school:
 - A student is considered a prospective athlete upon enrolling in the seventh grade.
 - Prior to enrollment a prospective athlete may visit a member school within the district of residence of parents, provided the arrangements for the visit are cleared through the principal of the school to be visited.
 - High Schools cannot provide financial aid or scholarships to a student on the basis of athletic ability.
 - A prospective athlete shall not be offered or accept any inducement, such as free tuition, employment, books, complimentary tickets, sweatshirts, uniforms and

supplies, other than that which is provided to all students. High Schools can invite an 8th grade class to attend a game for free. However the invitation must be made to the whole group and not particular students.

- High School Coaches are not to initiate contact with prospective students outside of the high school's building until the student has applied to the school and acceptance letters have been distributed. No (OHSAA) member representative shall initiate any communication with a prospective athlete, parents or an athlete, guardian or family member, in person or through a third party prior to enrollment.
- The Cleveland Area Catholic High Schools have an agreed upon "No Contact" period that runs during the application review process from early-January to mid-February. During this time representatives from high schools are not to have contact with prospective students.
- High School coaches can talk to a parish group as long as they talk about the general educational values of athletics and not the attributes of a particular school.
- High Schools cannot provide financial aid or scholarships to a student on the basis of athletic ability.
- If a parent or athlete wishes to talk to coach, they need to make a request through the admissions office of the school and a meeting will be held on school grounds.

DIOCESAN RULE ON ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARM USE

Coaches, players, managers, statisticians, scorekeeper, cheerleaders, spectators, site personnel, commissioners and contest officials in the CYO athletic program are prohibited from using any form of alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco products or carry a firearm or deadly weapon at CYO athletic competitions or practice sessions. CYO contest sites are drug, alcohol, tobacco and firearm free zones.

Alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco products or firearms and deadly weapons are not permitted anywhere on the premises of a CYO athletic event. Penalty for violation by the parish representatives, officials, coaches, spectators or participants is disqualification from that contest as well as possible legal action. The CYO Member is responsible to enforce this policy.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF RULES

The penalties that are imposed by the CYO Athletic Administration or their Pastoral Designee for violation of rules include, but are not limited to:

- Warning.
- Probation.
- Forfeiture of playoff or tournament rights.
- Forfeiture of game or games.
- Temporary or permanent suspension or removal of a player, coach, parent or spectator.

- Suspension of current/future event sanctions.
- Suspension of the team.
- Suspension of athletic contests when the relationship between two or more teams has become as quarrelsome and unsportsmanlike as to jeopardize the parish and public welfare.
- Suspension of the member.

PROTESTS AND GRIEVANCES

The CYO Office will review a protest or grievance that is received with three (3) business days after an incident. The initiator of the complaint must submit a grievance or protest in writing that is signed by the Pastoral Designee and Member Administrator.

A Formal Grievance is any concern or disagreement with the administration of the Catholic Youth Organization athletic program. A formal grievance does not require a protest fee to accompany that complaint.

A Formal Protest is a written objection directly associated with the rules and/or athletic contest. A formal protest, in order to be considered by the Area CYO Athletic Director or grievance committee must be accompanied with a protest fee of \$25.00. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be returned.

Protests or grievances involving disputed calls by game officials are not considered for appeal.

An appeal of the decision of the Area CYO Athletic Director may be filed with the CYO Athletic Administrator within five (5) business days following the release of the written decision of the CYO Athletic Director. A written decision from the CYO Athletic Administration shall be issued three (3) days after the review.

GOVERNING BODIES

- The CYO Sport Specific rules are supplemented by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules. Copies of the NFHS rulebooks may be obtained through the Ohio High School Athletic Association or by visiting www.NFHS.org.
- The CYO Sport Specific rules are supplemented by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) rules. Copies of the OHSAA rules may be obtained through the Ohio High School Athletic Association, www.OHSAA.org.

CYO Coach's Code of Ethics

CYO Coaches are contributors toward the development of the young athlete. As such, they need to exercise a high level of self-discipline and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for standards of conduct by CYO Coaches.

The CYO Coach shall teach and encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support and respect for all athletes, officials, site workers, fellow coaches, and CYO administrators at all times.

The CYO Coach shall be a positive force in the formation of the youth as a total person. Through the coach's counseling and encouragement, all athletes should learn their value and responsibility to the Team, Church and Community.

The CYO Coach shall master and follow the rules of the sport, CYO modification, divisional rules as well as the general policies of the CYO Charter & By-laws.

The CYO Coach shall help their players master the skills of the sport. They shall use practices, competitions and games as opportunities to develop the fundamental skills in each athlete.

The CYO Coach shall be punctual and responsible in the fulfillment of their obligations by arriving at the competition and practice sites early, by making introductions to officials, scorers/timers/supervisors and other coaches.

The CYO Coach shall remain mindful that their conduct during each event has a tremendous impact on the conduct parents and fans exhibit. The coach should always demonstrate good sportsmanship, patience, manners and an attitude indicative of the spirit of CYO.

The CYO Coach shall remain mindful that their conduct has a tremendous impact on the love of the sport a child may have, the view parents and fans have of youth sports, the reputation of the youth coaching profession and the quality of the CYO Athletic Program.

Sportsmanship is the Name of the Game!

Name Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name Printed: _____

Parish: _____

CYO FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RULES

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules apply in this league with the exceptions contained herein. CYO game contest rules may not be altered by mutual consent of the coaches. Only the CYO office may issue authorized changes.

OFFICIAL TEAM

- Defined as an individual or group of children from a CYO Member listed on the team roster who meet the eligibility rules and are approved by the Member Pastoral Designee, Pastor and CYO office. Eligibility Rules, as defined in Bylaw 4 of the Charter & Bylaws, shall be followed to determine all questions regarding eligibility.
- In the Varsity & Junior Varsity Divisions the official number of players per side is nine (9). A game may not be played with less than eight (8) players per side. Additional players may be added during the game and will occupy the ninth (and subsequent) spot(s) in the batting order. Until the ninth player enters the game the ninth spot in the line-up will assume an out each time that spot would come to bat. (The game can't end with this assumed out. The game must continue until another out occurs).
- In the Cadet, Developmental & Elemental Divisions the official number of players per side is ten (10). The players will be placed with four (4) outfielders. A game may not be played with less than eight (8) players per side. Additional players may be added during the game and will occupy the ninth and tenth spot(s) in the batting order. Until the ninth and tenth player enters the game the ninth and tenth spot in the line-up will assume an out each time that spot would come to bat. (The game can't end with this assumed out. The game must continue until another out occurs).
- A CYO Team refusing to continue playing a scheduled contest for any reason without the consent of the referee or CYO representative may be subject to a suspension for one calendar year. This also applies to CYO Sanctioned Events.

OFFICIALS

- Officials have the power to warn or disqualify from the game or match anyone who commits acts which intend to influence their decisions.
- Officials have the authority to call or suspend a game if conditions warrant.
- Officials shall be paid before the team takes the field to play the game. Payment shall be made to the official, in cash.
- Should one team fail to show-up for a scheduled game, the team present should not pay the umpire for the forfeited game. The umpire is to call the CYO Area Athletic Director with the following information; date, time, location of game and name of team & coach present at field in order to receive payment.
- Should both teams show up for a scheduled game and one team does not have enough players to begin the game and a forfeit is called, the team that caused the forfeit shall pay the umpire the total fee for both teams.
- Should an umpire decide to postpone or cancel a game prior to its start, the umpire shall not be paid by either team.
- Should officials fail to appear five (5) minutes prior to the starting time of the game, both head coaches may arrange for persons to umpire the game and call the CYO Commissioner to report the no-show.
- Head coaches are required to attend the pre-game meeting with the plate umpire to verify that all his/her players are legally equipped, and that all players and equipment are in compliance with all rules.

EQUIPMENT

- BALL - CYO will provide official game balls to each team for use in season games.
 - *A federation approved 12” circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used for the Varsity, Junior Varsity & Cadet Divisions*
 - A federation approved 11” circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used for the Developmental and Elemental Divisions.

- **FIELD**
 - Varsity, Junior Varsity, Cadet Divisions
 - The distance between the bases will be 60 feet. The distance from the back point of home plate to the center of second base shall be 84' 10.25".
 - The pitching distance will be 40 feet, measured from the front of the pitching plate to the back point of home plate.
 - A 16 foot diameter pitchers circle will be used around the pitcher plate.
 - Developmental and Elemental
 - The distance between the bases will be 60 feet. The distance from the back point of home plate to the center of second base shall be 84' 10.25".
 - The pitching distance will be 35 feet, measured from the front of the pitching plate to the back point of home plate.
 - A 16 foot diameter pitchers circle will be used around the pitcher plate.
- **PLAYERS**
 - Catchers must wear a facemask, chest protector, throat protector, shin guards and a full catcher's helmet.
 - Helmets with facemasks are required for all batters, base runners and on-deck batters.
 - When a catcher is warming up another player the catcher must wear the appropriate catching gear: including facemasks, chest protector, throat protector, shin guards and a full catcher's helmet.
 - Metal spikes are prohibited.
- **BATS** – Must conform to ASA regulations. Bats that are broken, dented, cracked, will deface the ball or do not meet the bat specifications are illegal.

UNIFORMS

- Numbers on the jersey are **MANDATORY**. A number shall be printed on the back of each jersey. The number on the back of the jersey shall be 6 inches in height.
- All players must have the CYO Emblem on their uniform either sewn or stenciled.

- Pitchers are limited in the color of long sleeves worn under the uniform. Pitcher may not wear yellow exposed undershirts.
- Chains, earrings, other jewelry, glitter, face paint or other inappropriate items may not be worn during the game.
- An American flag and or a commemorative/memorial patch not to exceed 2 by 3 inches and with the approval of the CYO may be worn on each of the uniform apparel provided neither the flag or patch interferes with the visibility of the player's number.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

- Teams are to report to the field at the scheduled time of the game, unless they are notified through the CYO Office of the field/game cancellation.
- Coaches may not mutually decide to cancel a game. If this happens, teams will be responsible for paying umpire and field fees.
- Game umpires have the discretion to cancel or postpone a game.

PRE-CONTEST COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Coaches must be CYO Certified*
- Coaches are responsible for the supervision of their team before the contest.
- At each contest and practice, coaches are to have in their possessions; an official team roster, a copy of each players Preparticipation Form and Emergency Medical Authorization Form, and a first aid kit.
- If the schedule does not indicate home & visitors a Coin-flip will be used. The team listed first on the team schedule shall call the toss. The winner shall choose to be home team or visitor.
- For the first game on the field a grace period of ten (10) minutes will be allowed before a forfeit is declared. There will not be a grace period for other games.
- CYO Credentials are to be worn and visible at all times.

TEAM BENCHES

Bench personnel are limited to players listed on the eligibility roster, one student manager and three (3) non-players. Non-players 16 years of age or older must be CYO certified. Base coaches must be CYO certified coaches.

PARTICIPATION

- Each player must be treated with dignity regardless of their ability.
- Participants may only play and be rostered on one CYO team in the same sport in the same school year.
- Each player must play a minimum of one (1) full inning in the field unless the game is called by the umpire.
- If all players do not participate, it is an immediate forfeit called by the scorer and umpire.
- If a coach will not play a player because of missed practice, unsportsmanlike conduct, academics or injury, the coach must inform the umpire and scorekeeper before the game begins.
- A CYO player may also play on a non-CYO Softball Team in another league. CYO games take precedence and will not be rescheduled due to conflicts.

GAME, TIME & RUN LIMITATIONS

- No game will start after 8:00 PM, and all games must stop at 9:00 PM.
- Practice session must be completed by 9:00 PM.
- No CYO Games (Season or Sanctioned Events) may be held Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.
- All games shall be scored as regulation games, if after 4-1/2 innings have been played the game is called by the umpire because of darkness, rain or any other cause, which in his/her opinion makes future play hazardous.
- Varsity & Junior Varsity Divisions
 - Teams will play seven (7) innings or a 1.5-hour time limit.
 - If at the end of seven innings the score is tied, the time limit is set aside and the International Tie-Breaker Rule will be used until a winner is determined. International Tie-Breaker - Both teams will get at bats and each will start the inning with the last available player on second base.
- Cadet, Developmental & Elemental Divisions
 - Teams will play six (6) innings or 1.5-hour time limit
 - If the game is tied at the end of six innings the International Tie-Breaker Rule outlined above will be used as long as the time limit has not been reached. Once the time limit has been reached the game will end and the score shall be recorded as a tie.

- After the time limit has expired no new inning may start. A new inning shall be considered started after the third out of the previous inning has been made.
- Run Differential Rules
 - Mercy Rule
 - In the Varsity & Junior Varsity Divisions, if after the 5th inning (4-1/2 innings for the home team) a team is ahead by ten (10) runs the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met. If participation requirements are not met, those players that have not played must be substituted in the next inning. The game will end when the participation requirements have been met and there is a ten (10) run lead.
 - In the Cadet, Developmental or Elemental Divisions, if after the 4th inning (3-1/2 innings for the home team) a team is ahead by ten (10) runs the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met. If participation requirements are not met, those players that have not played must be substituted in the next inning. The game will end when the participation requirements have been met and there is a ten (10) run lead.
 - Inning Run Limit Rule
 - In the Varsity & Junior Varsity Divisions, the inning will end when a team has scored ten (10) runs. Continuous runs scored on a play will be counted. Unlimited scoring will be permitted by both teams in the last inning of the game.
 - In the Cadet, Developmental and Elemental Divisions the inning will end when a team has scored five (5) runs. Continuous runs scored on a play will be counted. Unlimited scoring will be permitted by both teams in the last inning of the game.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- Since the continuous batting order rule is in effect, unlimited substitution is permitted on defense.
- If a player is removed from the game for any reason, when her position in the line-up is up, the team must take an automatic out.
- Courtesy Runner - When there are two (2) outs, and the catcher or pitcher is on base, you must place the last available player on base for the pitcher or catcher as a “courtesy runner”. This courtesy runner must be reported to the umpire. The player is not noted in the scorebook and does not

satisfy any participation requirements. If a “courtesy runner” needs to be used in any other situation the “runner” shall be the last available player.

- Pitcher Limitations
 - One (1) inning will be charged to a pitcher that pitches one (1) pitch in an inning.
 - Violation of these rules will cause a forfeit to be charged to the team in violation. If both are in violation, both shall forfeit.
 - In the Varsity & Junior Varsity Divisions a pitcher may pitch four (4) innings in any game. Once four (4) innings are pitched in the game she will be ineligible to pitch any remaining innings scheduled for that game.
 - In the Cadet, Developmental and Elemental Divisions a pitcher may pitch three (3) innings in any game. Once three (3) innings are pitched in the game she will be ineligible to pitch any remaining innings scheduled for that game.

OFFICIAL SCORER

- Each team is required to have an official scorebook at each game. At the completion of the game it shall be the duty of each coach to have the umpire sign the scorebook.
- It is the responsibility of the winning team to submit the score and innings played to the CYO Office.

RULES OF PLAY

- Batting Order – The Continuous Batting Order will be used in all divisions.
- Stealing a Base
 - Varsity and Junior Varsity Division teams are permitted to steal when the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
 - Cadet, Developmental and Elemental Division base runners may only advance on a hit ball (no stealing). The runner may *leave the base* when the ball is released by the pitcher but must return to the base *occupied* if the ball is not hit (This eliminates advancement on passed balls, wild pitches and any play initiated by the catcher).
- Pitching
 - At least one foot must be in contact with the pitching plate when the pitcher begins motion.
 - The ball must be held in both hands from 1 to 10 seconds.

- The pitcher must start the step back before the hands come together. The step may end before or after the hands come together.
- Once hands are separated the pitch must be delivered.
- The crow hop and leap are illegal.
- Delivery must be underhand
- A pitch may not be delivered until all defensive players are positioned in fair territory (except the catcher).
- Pitcher will be allowed five (5) warm-up pitches. Substitute pitchers will be allowed eight (8) warm-up pitches.
- In the Cadet, Developmental and Elemental Divisions, the ball is considered “dead” when the ball is in control of the pitcher within an eight (8) foot radius of the pitching plate.
- A hit batter will be awarded first base, providing the batter has attempted to avoid being hit by the pitch. Pitchers must be removed from the game after they have hit four (4) batters and may not return as a pitcher.
- Bunting is allowed in all divisions.
- Sliding is allowed in all divisions (no head first sliding). At home plate, on a close play, the base runner cannot barrel into the catcher, she must slide or give-up.
- Dropped Third Strike
 - Varsity, Junior Varsity and Cadet Divisions, on a dropped third strike the batter is entitled to try to reach first-base before being tagged or thrown out, unless a runner already occupies first-base and there are less than two outs (in which case the batter shall be called out).
 - Developmental and Elemental Divisions, the batter will be called out on a third strike, even if the catcher drops the ball.
- A dead-ball strike will be called on the batter when, in the umpire’s judgment, she is hit by the pitch and prevents it from entering the strike zone.
- The infield fly rule is in effect in all divisions. A fly ball hit in fair territory that can be easily caught (in the umpire’s judgment by an infielder). With less than two (2) outs and a runner on first & second, or first, second and third, the batter is automatically out and the runners can advance at their own risk.
- The batter will be called out when her discarded bat hits the ball a second time.

(Revised February 2010)