

St. Mary CYO Athletics Handbook

2017-2018



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1 Corinthians 9:25-26

Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.

CYO PHILOSOPHY

The mission of the Northern Virginia Junior Catholic Youth Organization (NVJCYO), through its member parishes, is to organize sports programs for parish youth from various grades throughout the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. The NVJCYO is an important component of the comprehensive approach to youth ministry in the Diocese. The programs administered by NVJCYO are meant not only to encourage healthy physical activity but also to play a significant role in the development of Catholic values in the youth of the Diocese. These activities should foster cooperation, respect, sportsmanship, responsibility, leadership, competitiveness, fairness and courtesy.

Sports, under Catholic auspices do not primarily aim towards good sportsmanship, although this is an integral concern. CYO tries to fit athletics into the entire framework of total Youth Ministry and Christian spiritual formation. Producing championship teams and keeping young people occupied are not our foremost objectives.

This booklet is not intended to be a book of playing rules and/or a schedule of activities. Supplemental rulebooks for each sport are published by the NVJCYO. The purpose of this publication is to state the philosophy and spirit of the St. Mary Parish CYO. This handbook should be read by all coaches, parents, relevant parish and St. Mary School leaders, athletic directors and assistants, and moderators active in a St. Mary CYO Athletics Program.

PURPOSE OF THE ST. MARY PARISH CYO ATHLETICS

The purpose of St. Mary Parish CYO Athletics is to provide and promote recreational activity, which, by its nature and under the guidance of parish -affiliated coaches, will lead toward the development of Christian ideals in St. Mary youth. In addition to social and recreational objectives, designed for parish children, CYO does have competitive objective aspects as well.

There must be a difference in CYO sports, not only in promoting good manners and sportsmanship, but also in reaching for spiritual ideals through sports.

Pope Paul VI said - "So be good sportsmen, dear sons and daughters; but be better citizens, with that equipment of virtues and qualities that make your existence fruitful and worthy. Still more, be excellent Christians who understand the value of life as the generous response to God, the Creator and Savior."

RIGHTS OF ST. MARY CYO ATHLETES

1. Right to have fun participating in sports.
2. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability.
3. Right to have qualified adult leadership and be treated with dignity.
4. Right to play as a child and not as an adult.
5. Right of children to share in the leadership and decision making of their sport participation.
6. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments.
7. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports.
8. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success.

ST. MARY CYO CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Virtus Training

Fulfilling the Diocese of Arlington Child Protection Policy certification is mandatory for all St. Mary CYO coaches and all other volunteers who have substantial contact with children in CYO sports.

All adults age 18 and over who have substantial contact with youth (such as coordinators of youth ministry, chaperones, youth ministry advisors, core team members, youth ministry volunteers and catechists, coaches and scout leaders) **MUST** be in compliance with the Diocese of Arlington Child Protection Policy.

This includes completing appropriate background checks before volunteering or working with children and attending a three-hour, practical child protection workshop called *Protecting God's Children* (by Virtus).

During all programs and practices a Virtus-certified adult should be overseeing the activities of the youths assigned to his/her care. The adult in charge should give the same care and attention to the youths as they would receive at home.

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR ST. MARY CYO COACHES

The choosing of St. Mary CYO coaches and volunteers is a difficult process because the choices are made from volunteers having a variety of experiences and qualifications. One important guideline is that head coaches be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and assistant coaches be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

The St. Mary CYO program is to be more than a recreational program and is intended to further the lives of young children and teenagers towards mature Christian Catholic adulthood. Therefore, the selection of coaches becomes paramount to its success. The following criteria should carefully be considered in choosing coaches:

1. St. Mary CYO coaches should be people of faith. They should be actively seeking a closer relationship with Jesus and a better understanding of His teachings.
2. St. Mary CYO coaches must be willing to share their faith at appropriate times with their players through the spoken word, good example, loving actions, and prayer.
3. St. Mary CYO coaches must have a deep commitment to the Church, its leaders, and its people.
4. Though it is not mandatory that St. Mary CYO coaches be Catholic, it is strongly recommended that Sunday Mass attendance, involvement in parish activities other than athletics, and a good family life be a part of the regular life style of our coaches.
5. St. Mary CYO coaches must see themselves as a Christian role models involved in a process which challenges, enhances, enlightens, and strengthens.
6. St. Mary CYO coaches must see beyond the immediacy of victories and defeats. They must be able to see success as something more than a final score or team record.
7. St. Mary CYO coaches must have an inherent love for children which always puts the individual child and his/her welfare above victory or defeat.
8. It is desirable for St. Mary coaches to have had previous experience participating or coaching the sport which they are coaching at St. Mary's.

CHILD SAFETY AND SUPERVISION FOR ST. MARY CYO VOLUNTEERS

Supervision

During all St. Mary CYO programs and practices, a Virtus-qualified adult should be overseeing the activities of the youths assigned to his/her care. The adult in charge should give the same care and attention to the youths as they would receive at home. Further, the coach or responsible adult should remain after the event until all participants have been picked-up by an authorized individual.

Equipment/Game Venues

All equipment used in St. Mary CYO athletics should be kept in good working condition. Further, equipment should be appropriately fitted and used properly. In addition, all fields, gyms, and other facilities should be kept in acceptable condition to insure a safe environment for all participants.

Proper Instruction

St. Mary CYO coaches are expected to provide proper coaching instructions and methods which are generally regarded as acceptable and appropriate for their sport. Also, the proper methods for using equipment and adhering to Diocesan CYO rules is of primary importance to the safety of all participants.

Youth Injuries

St. Mary CYO coaches should be aware that parental permission is necessary for the care of the child in case of emergency. Doctors cannot treat an injured child without parental permission except in extreme emergencies. All St. Mary CYO Coaches should have parental permission forms for medical attention if

necessary and not allow athletes who are injured or ill to participate in sports until they are cleared by their parent and/or physician.

RESPONSIBILITY OF A ST. MARY CYO COACH

To Himself/Herself

To realize that a coach's actions speak louder than his/her words. At all times, the coach must be the master of the situation and not let the situation master him/her.

To realize that sportsmanship is contagious. Coaches behaving with dignity, courtesy, and good manners toward the opponents and officials will set the example for parents and other spectators.

To set a good example in his/her speech and actions, and uphold the spirit and intent of the values and behaviors espoused in this Handbook and CYO mission, rules and regulations.

To constantly strive to improve his/her knowledge and technique by attending clinics, making use of professional literature, and pursuing advanced study.

To be Virtus certified, and ensure that coaching assistants are certified/supervised as required by CYO policy.

To the Parish

To assure the parish that he/she will provide opportunity for participation to all who indicate the desire to play.

To inform the parish of the necessity of proper and sufficient equipment, transportation, and adequate supervision during contests.

To the Player

To be primarily responsible for the health, physical well-being, safety, and development of values, character and leadership.

To establish high standards of conduct and behavior. These high standards of the team, the parish, and the coach cannot be compromised in order to win.

To establish the tradition of good sportsmanship as a prime objective. A coach's feedback to any player regarding their technique, performance and/or ability should be communicated with encouraging language and intent. The coach should never humiliate a player individually or in the presence of the team.

To the Parent

To assure the parent that he is primarily concerned with the safety and protection of his/her child.

To assure the parent that he is vitally interested in the development of the child as an individual, a team member, a Christian, and as an athlete.

To inform the parent that he/she should refrain from coaching their child or others from the sidelines, and/or interfering during practice or contests.

To the Opponents

To always exhibit excellent sportsmanship (e.g., never embarrass an opponent by deliberately running up a score)

To the Officials

To be respectful and business-like at all times in dealing with officials. The coach must always demonstrate self-control and emotional stability.

To refrain from any criticism of the officials during or at the end of the contest. All comments regarding officials should be directed to the appropriate CYO Officials through the NVJCYO Representative/Athletic Director.

To never direct criticism of the officials to players or fans.

To the Spectators

To set the climate of behavior for the spectators.

To demonstrate, through his/her own behavior, that he/she values self-restraint, fair-play, and sportsmanlike conduct, while in no way lessening the importance of his/her team's winning the contest.

To assume responsibility for the conduct of the followers of his/her team and to exert every effort to assure their proper and sportsmanlike behavior.

PARENTAL CONSENT

Parental consent is necessary for all participants in the St. Mary CYO Athletics Program. A youngster may not participate in any St. Mary CYO Athletics Program activity without written permission from a parent or guardian. Consent forms should be provided for all activities and programs for all youth. It is also necessary to inform the parent or guardian to pick up his/her child immediately following a practice, meeting, game or any other gathering. The moderator, coach or responsible adult should remain after the event until all participants have been picked up by an appropriate adult. The importance of this matter cannot be stressed enough. It is the responsibility of the coaches and moderators to inform each parent or guardian clearly regarding all details.

GENERAL ST. MARY CYO RULES

The rules listed in this handbook are intended for use by the St. Mary Parish CYO athletic program and do not contain rules for specific CYO sports. For rules about specific CYO sports, please see the Northern Virginia Junior Catholic Youth Organization (NVJCYO) website at nvjcyo.org

The general rules for St. Mary Parish CYO athletics are listed below:

1. Registrations to participate in the St. Mary CYO Athletic Program must have defined and reasonable open and close dates.
2. "Cutting" is not allowed for any grade-level in the St. Mary CYO Athletic Program. The emphasis of the St. Mary CYO Athletic Program is participation. Every effort must be made to ensure participation for each child who comes out for the sport. All eligible participants are to be invited to participate on a team.
3. All players who have registered and paid on time are to be placed on a team. However, players who missed the registration deadlines do not have to be placed on a team.
4. Teams that do not have enough players to form a team may extend the deadline or try to sign-up eligible players on an individual basis, according to NVJCYO rules.
5. Players who become disruptive and who generally do not exhibit the applicable values and behaviors noted within this Handbook and/or CYO guidelines may be removed from a team, but such removal must be submitted in writing to the applicable Sport Coordinator for consideration of removal/disciplining. These situations will be addressed by the applicable Sport Coordinator, St. Mary Athletic Director, St. Mary CYO Parish Representative, St. Mary HSA President or Vice President, and/or St. Mary Parish Youth Ministry leadership.
6. Coaches are responsible for scheduling practices for their teams. Generally, St. Mary CYO teams will practice once or twice per week. Although occasional absences from practice are to be expected, coaches should ensure that their players understand that they are expected to attend every practice as part of their participation in the St. Mary CYO Athletic Program. Due to liability parameters, official practices for SMS teams are only to be held at the St. Mary school gym or other SMS/CYO-sanctioned locations.
7. Players are expected to demonstrate commitment to their team and therefore are expected to participate in all team practices and games/meets/matches. St. Mary players who do participate in all team practices are required to participate in a minimum of one quarter of play in each game/meet/match. Players who miss the majority of practices or games may not be allowed to participate in games at the coach's discretion, may not be included in team pictures for inclusion in the St. Mary School Yearbook, and their team participation may not be documented for high school resume purposes.
8. Sportsmanship is the keynote of the St. Mary Athletic Program. It is more important than winning. Our program depends on it, and we should never lose sight of the fact that we are organized primarily to develop Catholic leaders and to set a good example, while maintaining a competitive spirit.
9. Unsportsmanlike conduct, and/or conduct contrary to the guidelines, values and principles in this Handbook and/or NVJCYO rules, regulations, and guidance, demonstrated by any coach may be grounds for suspension or removal of the coach. A description of this conduct must be submitted in writing to the Sport Coordinator and/or the Athletic Director. These situations will be addressed by the applicable Sport Coordinator, St. Mary Athletic Director, St. Mary CYO Parish Representative, St. Mary HSA President and/or Vice President, and/or St. Mary Parish Youth Ministry leadership.

10. Spectators must be kept under control by the coach to the greatest extent possible. The criticizing or harassing of officials, opponents, and coaches must be prevented. Insulting remarks made by spectators, coaches, or players to any opponent, game official, opposing coach, opposing parent or CYO representative should be reported to the Sport Coordinator, St. Mary Parish AD, CYO Rep, and the CYO Office. Each coach should do his/her utmost to foster a sportsmanlike influence among the participants.

11. Supervision of team members by an adult is required if they come early or stay later than their scheduled game time.

12. Knowledge of rules is the responsibility of each coach. Each coach should make a special effort to master the rules for the sport he/she is coaching.

13. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer to assist their child's coach as needed. Most coaches greatly appreciate any helping hand for all types of team-related needs.

14. Should disagreements/ disputes arise between coordinators, coaches and/or parents for any reason, St Mary Parish encourages the people involved to review and reflect on the CYO mission. St. Mary Parish then encourages the people involved to discuss the matter amongst themselves to try to find a resolution. If at any point the parties involved would like additional perspective or assistance in finding resolution, the Athletic Director and/or the CYO Parish Representative can be contacted to help facilitate bringing the issue/matter to conclusion.

ATHLETE ASSESSMENTS

Depending upon the sport, player assessments may be necessary to evaluate the ability of the players to make every effort to ensure that each player will participate at a level commensurate with their maturity and ability. NVJCYO establishes different divisions of play based on player skill sets. The objective is to encourage competitive games/meets/matches, where players of similar skill sets compete versus one another.

Coaches who are coaching teams where assessments are necessary are required to participate in the assessment process from assessments through team assignment. Assessments will be held after registration and prior to the beginning of practice.

Individual Sport Coordinators, along with the support of the Athletic Director, FIS Director, and HSA leadership as necessary/appropriate, will identify coaches and assistant coaches for their respective sports for each grade level. These perspective coaches will form the Assessment Team for their sport. Assessment Teams will be by grade level. It is recommended that at least one sport knowledgeable non-coach whom the Sport Coordinator and the coaches agree upon be a part of the Assessment Team for their sport as well.

Before assessments begin, each Sport Coordinator, together with their respective coaches, will identify and define several appropriate skill sets related to the sport and methods for evaluating these skills. They will mutually agree upon a common player assessment form to be used to assess each player across all grade levels for that sport. This list of skills may include intangible qualities such as esprit de

corps, teamwork, sportsmanship, etc. Each player is to be evaluated on each of the pre-determined assessment skills.

The Assessment Team will schedule a minimum of 2 assessment dates for each sport to be evaluated. Any player not attending at least one assessment session may be ruled ineligible to play. Those parents with players missing both assessment days will need to submit a request to their Sport Coordinator for their child to be assessed in a make-up assessment session. Make Up Assessments will be conducted in the same fashion as the regular Assessment, should it occur. The entire Assessment Team does not need to be present at each assessment session, nor do they need to evaluate every player, but it is recommended that each player should be evaluated by a minimum of 3 members of the Assessment Team.

It is recommended that no member of the Assessment Team be permitted to evaluate any player related to them.

Completed assessment forms will be collected and aggregate scored by each Sport Coordinator, by grade level. Aggregate scores for each participant will be calculated and distributed to each set of grade-level Assessment Teams to be used as an input in determining the appropriate level team for each child. Aggregate individual scores for each grade-level are considered private information and thus will only be shared with grade-level Assessment Teams and will not be distributed to others.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Each Sport Coordinator together with their grade-level Assessment Teams /coaches will be responsible for the final team assignments. Generally, players should be divided according to assessment results. However, players' experience in the sport, rate of improvement, level of involvement (i.e., dedicated to improvement vs. social involvement), plus other factors as appropriate, will be considered when creating teams. Every effort will be made to place siblings of the same age on the same team.

Disputes about team assignments should first be raised with the individual Sport Coordinators. Sport Coordinators will work with the Athletic Director and CYO Parish Representative, as necessary, to resolve disputes. Sport Coordinators, the Athletic Director and CYO Parish Representative will work with all Assessment Teams to ensure each player and team selection is made in the best interest of the teams involved, the individual player and the CYO program.

Each grade-level Sport Coordinator and Assessment Team will decide which players are assigned to each team and which teams will participate at each level, i.e., A, B or C level teams.

INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Team Registration

To enter a team in the CYO League, St. Mary must submit a team registration card; listing the parish, the year, the sport, the division, the coach's name with phone numbers and e-mail address. Deadlines for registration are indicated on the NVJCYO calendar, well in advance of the particular sport's season. The team fee must accompany the registration.

Registration materials are available through the NVJCYO.

Individual Participant Registration

St. Mary CYO will provide a form that each parent/participant must fill out to participate in CYO athletics, to include an acknowledgment that they have read this SMS Athletic Handbook. The registration card must be signed by the parent, the guardian, or the custodian of the child. Participants will not be allowed to participate unless the form is completely and properly filled out before it is submitted.

Team Rosters

Team roster forms are available on the NVJCYO website. The coach and/or parish representative will turn in all rosters on the date specified for their sport and rosters must contain all the necessary information. Players should be listed on the roster alphabetically by last name. Only those participants whose forms are submitted to the NVJCYO office and who are listed on the official roster are eligible to play. Each sport will be given a roster deadline/closeout date. This will be the last day on which a player may be added to the team roster. After the deadline/closeout date, rosters will be closed and no other name can be added.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All coaches of St. Mary Parish CYO will be expected to read this Handbook and provide an acknowledgement that they have done so to their respective Sport Coordinator. This Handbook will be placed on the St. Mary Parish website.

It is anticipated that this Handbook will evolve and change over time. Any revisions for inclusion in subsequent versions of the Handbook will be approved by the St. Mary Athletic Director, St. Mary CYO Parish Representative, St. Mary HSA President or Vice President, St. Mary Parish Youth Ministry leadership, and the St. Mary Parish Pastor.