DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO

SOFTBALL
COACHES MEETING
SPRING 2020

Catholic Charities
Diocese of Cleveland
DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO
SOFTBALL COACHES MEETING

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CYO inspires young people to know God, to love God, and to serve God through athletics.
### March

3  Mandatory Coaches Meeting @ Walsh Jesuit HS, 6:00pm  
    4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. Cuyahoga Falls.

4  Mandatory Coaches Meeting @ Center for Pastoral Leadership, 6:00pm  
    28700 Euclid Ave. Wickliffe

5  Mandatory Coaches Meeting @ St. Augustine Manor, 6:00pm  
    7911 Detroit Ave. Cleveland

4  Early registration period ends

6  Regular registration ends

8  Late registration ends

9  Last date to enter teams’ blackouts

13  Schedules available on website

14  Coaches Development Program @ St. Basil the Great, 9:00am  
    8700 Brecksville Rd. Brecksville.

20  Deadline to register athletes and coaches to online rosters

21  Season competition begins

### April

3  Last day to add to rosters to meet the minimum number

10-12  No CYO Competitions can be scheduled – Easter Break

18-19  Parents’ Day at the games

26  Team Mass Sunday

### May

9-24  Diocese of Cleveland CYO Spring Championship Tournaments

31  Spring sports season ends

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*CYO inspires young people to know God, to love God, and to serve God through athletics*
Softball
Points of Emphasis

OFFICIAL NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
The official number of players on the field is nine (9). A game may not be played with less than eight (8) players per team. Additional players may be added during the game and will occupy the ninth and any 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.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
An official team will be a minimum number of 10 players; 4 which must be positioned in the outfield. A team may begin a game with 8 players. 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.

EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

All Divisions
Helmets are required for all batters, base runners and on-deck batters. All batting and catcher’s helmets must have the NOCSAE standard Label.

Ball Size

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
CYO will provide to each team the official game ball for use in regular season games. An 12” circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
CYO will provide to each team the official game ball for use in regular season games. An 11” circumference optic yellow regulation ball will be used.

Bat Regulations

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
All bats must conform to NFHS regulations. Bats that are broken, dented, cracked or do not meet the bat specifications are illegal.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
All bats must conform to ASA regulations. Bats that are broken, dented, cracked or do not meet the bat specifications are illegal.

PARTICIPATION

All Divisions
Each player must play a minimum of two (2) full innings in the field unless the game is shortened by the umpire.

Late Arriving Players: Any player arriving late to the game will be added to the end of the line-up and must still play one defensive inning.

GAME, TIME & RUN LIMITATIONS

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
- All divisions will play seven (7) innings or a two (2) hour time limit.
- If at the end of seven innings the score is tied, the game will continue with the International Tie-Breaker. The time limit is no longer in effect.
- The Tie-Breaker Rule will be used and continued until a winner is determined.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
- All divisions will play six (6) innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes time limit. No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes from the actual start of the game.
- The game officially starts with the first pitch. Games called by the time limit will be considered official and complete.
- If at the end of six innings the score is tied, the game will result in a tie.

RUN DIFFERENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
- If after the 5th inning (4-1/2 innings for the home team) and a team is ahead by ten (10) runs, the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met.
- If the 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 differential.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
- If after the 4th inning (3-1/2 innings for the home team) and a team is ahead by ten (10) runs, the game shall be called, if all participation requirements are met.
- If the 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 differential.

INNING RUN LIMIT RULE

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
- The inning will end when a team has scored eight (8) 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.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade 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.

COMPETITION RULES

Substitutions
All divisions
The continuous batting order rule will be in effect. Unlimited substitutions are permitted on defense.

If a player is removed from the game for any reason, when his position in the line-up is up, the team will not be given an automatic out. The next batter in the order will be up.

Courtesy Runner

All divisions

When there are two (2) outs, and the catcher or pitcher is on base, the courtesy runner is the last recorded out. If a courtesy runner is needed for an injury, the courtesy runner is the last recorded out. This courtesy runner must be reported to the umpire. The runner is not noted in the scorebook and does not satisfy any participation requirements.

Pitcher Limitations

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
- One (1) inning will be charged to a pitcher that pitches one (1) pitch in an inning.
- The pitcher limitation will be five (5) innings in any game.
- Once five (5) innings are pitched in the game, she will be ineligible to pitch any remaining innings scheduled for that game.
- Violation of these rules will cause a forfeit to be charged to the team in violation. If both are in violation, both shall forfeit.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
- There are no pitcher restrictions.

Base Stealing

Fastpitch - 8th and 7th Grade Divisions
- Leadoffs are NOT permitted
- Stealing is permitted once the ball is released by the pitcher.

Slowpitch - 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd Grade Divisions
- Leadoffs are NOT permitted
- Stealing is NOT permitted

Weather Information
Announcements related to the status of competitions will be posted on the main page of the schedule website, telephone announcement lines, Twitter (@CYOSportsDOC) and media as needed.

Posting Scores
The winning team is responsible for submitting the score and both lineup cards within 24hrs to Linda DeCarlo ldecarlo@ccdocle.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Fastpitch 8th &amp; 7th</th>
<th>Slowpitch 6th</th>
<th>Slowpitch 5th</th>
<th>Slowpitch 4th</th>
<th>Slowpitch 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal Spikes</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
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<td>Official # of Players</td>
<td>9, Need 8 to start</td>
<td>10, Need 8 to start</td>
<td>10, Need 8 to start</td>
<td>10, Need 8 to start</td>
<td>10, Need 8 to start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Base Length</td>
<td>60 ft.</td>
<td>60 ft.</td>
<td>60 ft.</td>
<td>60 ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitching Distance</td>
<td>40ft.</td>
<td>35ft.</td>
<td>35ft.</td>
<td>35ft.</td>
<td>35ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>2 Full Innings</td>
<td>2 Full Innings</td>
<td>2 Full Innings</td>
<td>2 Full Innings</td>
<td>2 Full Innings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inning &amp; Time Limit</td>
<td>7 innings &amp; 2 hr. time limit</td>
<td>6 innings &amp; 1.5 hr. time limit</td>
<td>6 innings &amp; 1.5 hr. time limit</td>
<td>6 innings &amp; 1.5 hr. time limit</td>
<td>6 innings &amp; 1.5 hr. time limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Innings</td>
<td>International Tie Breaker, No Time limit</td>
<td>If tied after 6 inning, the game will result in a tie</td>
<td>If tied after 6 inning, the game will result in a tie</td>
<td>If tied after 6 inning, the game will result in a tie</td>
<td>If tied after 6 inning, the game will result in a tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run Differential</td>
<td>10 runs after 5 or 4 1/2 innings if home team is winning</td>
<td>10 runs after 4 or 3 1/2 innings if home team is winning</td>
<td>10 runs after 4 or 3 1/2 innings if home team is winning</td>
<td>10 runs after 4 or 3 1/2 innings if home team is winning</td>
<td>10 runs after 4 or 3 1/2 innings if home team is winning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inning Run Limit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitching Limitations</td>
<td>5 innings</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadoffs and Stealing</td>
<td>No &amp; Yes (Once ball leaves pitchers hand)</td>
<td>No &amp; No</td>
<td>No &amp; No</td>
<td>No &amp; No</td>
<td>No &amp; No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bunting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sliding</td>
<td>Yes, No Head-First</td>
<td>Yes, No Head-First</td>
<td>Yes, No Head-First</td>
<td>Yes, No Head-First</td>
<td>Yes, No Head-First</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dropped Third Strike</td>
<td>Can Attempt First</td>
<td>Automatic Out</td>
<td>Automatic Out</td>
<td>Automatic Out</td>
<td>Automatic Out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infield Fly Rule</td>
<td>In effect</td>
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**Please download the full version of the rules from the Diocese of Cleveland CYO Website**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>SUB.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SUB.</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUB.</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUB.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charged Conference: in which inning?  
1st 2nd 3rd

SUBMIT IN DUPLICATE TO UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF

Catholic Charities  
Diocese of Cleveland
Guest Player Rule

Guest Player Rule: If a team in Grades 7th and 8th has less than 10 athletes or teams in grades 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th have less than 11 athletes at a game, a guest player may be moved from the member’s other CYO baseball teams to fill the positions at the start of a game under the following restrictions:

1. The athlete meets the age/grade restrictions of the team he/she will assist.
2. The guest player is reported by means of the button on the Coaches Information page of www.dioceseofclevelandcyo.org before the game in which he/she will be used.
3. The same individual may be moved as a guest player for no more than two (2) games during the season.
4. The athlete complies with the number of game and time limits as outlined in Section 6.
5. The guest player(s) must meet the minimum participation requirements outlined in the division specific sections.
6. Guest player movements are to be reported on the baseball scorecard before the competition begins. The guest player will be denoted on the lineup card with “GP” next to their name.
7. Coaches are encouraged that Guest players do not play more than players on the original roster.
8. Uniform Requirements
   a. Guest players must wear the uniform of the team that they are playing on, not their rostered team uniform.
   b. There are to be NO duplicated uniform numbers (teams should have at least one extra jersey to be borrowed by the guest player for that game).
9. Guest players cannot be used for sanctioned events or CYO championship competitions.

Guest Player F.A.Q’s

1. **Can a 2nd grader be a guest player on a 4th grade team?** – No, all guest players must follow the age restrictions according to bylaw 3-3-1-B.

2. **Can an 8th grader be a guest player on a 7th grade ONLY team?** – No, guests players can play up according the age limitations but cannot play down at a younger level.

3. **Can a guest player play in a game at 9:00am and then with his/her original team for a doubleheader at 2:00 & 4:00pm?** – No, a guest player cannot play in more than two games per day.

Top 10 Coaching No-No's at Softball Practice
Coaching a team on any level is far from easy. There are countless hours spent off the field thinking about and working on your craft. However, for softball coaches, here are 10 things you should avoid while coaching on the field.

Coaching is difficult and there is a big learning curve for new coaches. That is why we came up with 10 of our least favorite things to do when coaching a softball practice. We absolutely would never recommend you do the following and really hope you never see your softball player practicing these things. I’m serious, don’t do it. Don’t even think about doing these things, they will not improve your Softball or sports performance one little bit, in fact you might become worse at playing softball from practicing them.

1. Teach Softball Players to Drop their Shoulder While Hitting

Dropping your shoulder in softball leads to a damaging batting average filled pop-ups, fly outs, and strikeouts. A softball is pitched at an upward angle because it is released from the bottom of the pitchers wind up, unlike baseball. Based on the pitch a softball can drop off the table for an amazing drop, rise above your hands, curve away, screw, etc. This means a batter has to read the ball and have an extremely short swing. Short and quick swings lead to line drives, home runs, and RBI's for your team. In order to create a short and quick swing you absolutely must not drop your hands or your back shoulder. This action results in a “Scrunch.” You might have seen this in your athletes or yourself, the softball players back should dips down, the hands drop to the waist, and the batter is left scrunching down on their back side. This “Scrunch” results in a long and upward swing, which will not create a good bat plain for your swing to the ball.

2. Coach Quiet Softball Players

Have you ever watched a softball game and it was absolutely silent? If so, it’s wrong! There should always be field chatter among softball players. Not because it just sounds good to say stuff, but because you are actually instructing and passing on information to your teammates on the field. It is very common for coaches to forget to teach their softball players this important part of softball and it can often lead to multiple errors on the field. To prevent errors and encourage synergy for a winning team. Coaches need to make sure each player knows their position and responsibilities during situational play. To do this a team must run through multiple situations and build repetition with each player talking, whether they are lining up cuts from the outfield, telling a pitcher to back up home, letting another player know they have the bag on a steel, etc. These are all very important examples of why softball players must talk and be heard on the field. Coaches running a practice with situational play requires extra players for runners, and time. You must take your time and not assume your players know what they should do on every situation. This is a teaching drill that is great for young athletes, but I warn you it takes patience.

3. Catch With One Hand

We have a saying we love to ask our softball players after they miss a ball because they tried to catch it with one hand. It goes something like this:

Coach: How many hands did it take to miss that ball?
Player Response: One
Coach: Next time use two hands.

Our softball players have been drilled to use two hands over and over again, however this is something many players struggle to do. Almost every catch should be completed with two hands. This is especially critical to catch fly balls, and throws from other players. How can you encourage players to use two hands? Run through multiple small game drills, throw short fly balls to your softball players and ask them to catch the ball and pause after every catch to ensure they are using two hands. This is a very easy drill, your main goal is to build muscle memory. Another great two hand drill is by throwing lead passes to your players over their shoulder using a football. Footballs are tough to catch and cannot be caught using just one hand. This drill will require your softball players to catch with two hands and catch it cleanly. P.s. you don’t need a glove for the football drill, use your bare hands.

4. Turn Your Back to a Runner

A runner is a threat, almost like a rattle snake. You will get bit if you turn your back to it. Softball players should always keep their eye on runners. This means players must always be aware of all runners on, before the play, and have an idea of where these players will move to after a hit. Softball Pitchers are one of the worst offenders of this Softball rule. They often catch the ball from their catcher and never glance at the runner. Resulting in a delayed steal by the offensive runner. This is especially apparent in young softball players and must be addressed by coaches. Teach your pitchers to glance back at players as soon as the receive the ball. They don’t need to spas out, just look the runner back as they enter the circle. It is important to teach this to young athletes so that as they advance in level of play they don’t get delay steals on them.
5. Walking

This is my pet peeve! Softball players should never walk on the field, this shows laziness. Softball players should run to their positions as soon as they leave the dugout, they should also hustle to:

- Shag Balls
- To Rotate Hitting Stations
- Between Drills
- Get Water
- Change Positions

Coaches, if you let your players walk during practice you are training them to walk during game play, walking will not get them a scholarship. Make your players stand out by teaching them to run EVERYWHERE!

6. No Top Hand

A team has to be able to field a ball cleanly, and get an out. This means no bobbling, or errors. The less errors the more likely you will win. To get those 21 outs in a game you have to field using your top hand. We like to teach our 12U Travel team by telling them to put their hands out like an Alligators mouth. The top hand should always hover over the glove and be ready to “Love” the ball in. Using a top hand to field a ground ball will decrease errors, protect the fielder from a shot to the throat or face, and can decrease the time it takes to field and throw the ball. How? When using a strong top hand you are able to grip the ball as soon as you catch it, instead of catching the ball in your mit with tossing up the ball to your hand and trying to feel for your grip.

7. Talking Back

Okay, so this can be a touchy subject. As a coach you probably have a couple of players who like to talk, or should I say talk back? They always have to say something back to you after you tell them to do something. It is up to you to teach them to take criticism and learn to be “teachable.” Take it from me, someone who has been to college and played, and also played on many top traveling softball teams. Coaches don’t like players who talk back. They are extremely hard to coach and require a lot of time from Coaches, which most coaches will not give. They will simply move on to someone who will listen. Start teaching players this fact early and you will help them in the long run.

8. Forget to Back Up

Backing up throws and playing situations is extremely important. We define “Back Up” as someone who is there if a teammate needs them, they are also the last line of defense. If a ball is over thrown it is up to the back up to save their bacon. They must knock down the ball at all costs. This means you should teach your fielders to back up plays from a safe distance that they will be able to cover enough ground that the ball won’t fly past them. You should also teach your players to bury the ball, by dropping to a knee, and putting your body in front of the ball they will stop the ball. Do not teach your back up to run up a foot away from where the play is, they will not have the time they need to react to a wild throw.

9. Lazy Pitchers

Pitchers are a different breed, I have pitched, my sister pitches, and I have known many pitchers. They are all different. Each one has their own personality and quirks. However, they have all had one thing in common, they usually forget to back up plays once in a while. It is important to remind pitchers that after a ball is hit they have another job, they need to be aware of situations and know where they should go. A great example of this is when there is a passed ball by the catcher. A pitcher is responsible to run in to the plate and cover in case a runner from third tries to score. Another example is when there is a ball hit and the play is at third, the pitcher should be backing up the throw to third base. If they don’t back up and there is an overthrow then they could cost the team a run. Coaches need to pay attention to pitchers and make sure they know situational defense.

10. Forget Fundamentals

Many coaches and teams forget that the fundamentals of softball are extremely important. I guarantee if you went to watch any college softball team or pro softball team that they would practice the fundamentals of catching, throwing, and hitting. After coaching a 12U softball team I have realized that most players are never taught the basic fundamentals, or if
they were taught them it was briefly and the repetition that is needed to instill those fundamentals in a player were lacking. It is important when coaching young athletes that you remember their age, and capacity for memory. Working on fundamentals one practice in the whole season won’t cut it. Basic fundamentals should be repeated daily, and at every practice. The goal is to build enough repetition that muscle memory takes over. When this is accomplished errors will decrease, and athletes will increase performance.

Source: www.buildingabetterathlete.com/

## PRACTICE PLAN #5 — TEAM DEFENSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90 MIN</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Warm-up:</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique &amp; fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy &amp; throwing distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Relay Drill:</strong></td>
<td>This drill teaches players proper positioning of body for quickly relaying ball to a teammate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</strong></td>
<td>During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Infield Practice:</strong></td>
<td>During this part of the season, stress technique in fielding &amp; throwing correctly &amp; accurately. While quickness in fielding is very important, it will develop over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### CYO GRATITUDE

Go around the room and have each coach complete the following sentence:

One thing that I am grateful for receiving this evening is…
Thank you for your comments and support. We wish you nothing but the best as the season begins.

**Commitment Prayer**

**Leader:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**All:** Amen

**Leader:** Thank you God for being with us today, and for entrusting your children to our care through CYO Sports. As we prepare to return to our parishes and communities, give us the strength to share your love and caring through our actions as CYO Coaches. We give our time, talent and treasures to you that we may better serve our CYO teams and families. I ask that you respond, “I will!” to each of the following commitments you are making today.

**Leader:** Will you be a Christian role model who helps athletes discover their value and responsibility to the team, church and community? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you coach every child on your team to improve their skills through practices, competitions and games? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you teach and encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support, patience, courteousness and respect for all athletes, officials, fellow coaches, volunteers and administrators? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you read and follow the letter and spirit of the sport rules, policies, and Diocese of Cleveland CYO Charter and Bylaws? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you remain aware that your conduct has an influence on the love a child may develop toward sports, and therefore make an effort to have the children on your team have fun while also learning about athletics, themselves, their teammates and our Catholic Christian Community? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you remain mindful that your conduct has an impact on the conduct of the players and fans at a competition and make a commitment not to yell at officials, players, opposing coaches or fans and always demonstrate an attitude symbolic of the CYO Mission and Values? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Will you make an effort to grow as a Christian by going to mass and celebrating the sacraments to be strengthened to love and serve God and the young people entrusted to your care? **Response: I will!**

**Leader:** Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, hear the commitments made by your servants here today. We know you have given us spiritual capabilities, and with your light and direction we can fulfill these commitments and build the community of God. We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Response: Amen**

*CYO inspires young people to know God, to love God, and to serve God through athletics.*
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