



2009

CROSS COUNTRY

Parents' Handbook

Office of Catholic Youth & School Services

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CYO TEAM PRAYER

(This prayer will be recited prior to the start of the first set of races (junior girls') and again prior to the second set (pee wee girls')

Runners, coaches, parents and spectators are asked to stop wherever they are and kneel on one knee while the prayer is recited

Lord God, we thank you for bringing us together today and ask that you watch over and guide us:

Help the athletes use their talents to the fullest and remain injury-free.

Help the coaches to teach these young athletes not only about the game, but more importantly about being good Christians.

Help the game officials do their best to enforce the game rules and remain fair at all times.

And help the spectators to be considerate of all players, coaches, officials and each other.

Thank you for giving all of us the opportunity to put our faith into action today.



Diocese of Toledo

Catholic Youth Organization

Athletics

August 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the CYO Cross Country program! Over the past 31 years many CYO families have gathered on Saturday mornings in the fall to cheer on young runners and make new friends. We're certain that this season will be no different.

We feel that we have a top-notch program to offer your son or daughter, but if our program is to continue to grow, we need everyone's cooperation.

The purpose of this booklet is to give each parent an opportunity to learn more about the Cross Country program in which their son or daughter has expressed an interest. This book will not make you a cross country expert, but it should help you to understand the sport and the program a little bit better. If after reading this booklet you still have questions, please feel free to ask one of the coaches involved in the program.

Let's all enjoy the upcoming fall Saturdays together!

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION

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Shaping the Faith of our Youth ... Field by Field

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CYO Parents' Code of Ethics

(the following is taken from the CYO Player/Parent Contract each participant is required to submit prior to running in the CYO Cross Country program)

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
- I will demonstrate the Christian values of self-restraint, fair play, and sportsmanship in my treatment of others at every game, practice session, or other CYO event.
- I will ask my child to treat all players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, or ability.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol, tobacco and weapon-free sports environment for my child and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all CYO events.
- I will do my best to make my child's involvement with youth sports a positive experience, while always remembering that the game is for the youth, not the adults.

I have read the above "Code of Ethics" and understand that my (our) failure to uphold any of these statements may lead to disciplinary action by the CYO Office, which may include, but is not limited to, the forfeiture of my right to watch my child participate in CYO athletic events.

Parent's Signature & date signed

I. Introduction

MISSION: The Catholic Youth Organization, as a component of Catholic Youth & School Services, assists the Bishop in his teaching mission by serving, challenging, and supporting the leaders of youth formation and education who minister in parishes and in the Diocese of Toledo.

FOCUS: The Catholic Youth Organization is an athletic program designed to be a character builder for youth. The ideals of good sportsmanship and Christianity shall be the overriding influence of the program.

CYO Athletics should be viewed as part of the faith building efforts of the participating members. These programs can be effective tools that will invite, welcome and involve any person into the life of that faith community. The inter-relationship of CYO Athletics with family life, parish life, and school life, is essential.

Total participation is a main goal of the CYO program. All who have the opportunity to be on a team also have the right to participate in the game.

II. CYO Cross Country Program

The CYO Cross Country program is coordinated through the Office of Catholic Youth & School Services of the Diocese of Toledo. The program began in 1977 with one meet and just over 100 participants.

The program has grown tremendously over the years. There are now five meets held each fall with over 1200 grade school boys and girls participating each week.

The program is open to boys and girls from kindergarten through eighth grade who are members of a Catholic parish in the Diocese or who attend the parish educational system.

The participants are divided into divisions according to their present grade level. Because of the large number of younger children participating, an additional division was added in 1989. The breakdown of divisions and race distances are:

Pee Wee	K-1st grade	1/2 mile
Minor	2nd-3rd grades	3/4 mile
Cadet	4th-6th grades*	1 mile
Junior	6th-8th grades*	2 miles

* 6th graders may choose to run in either the Cadet or Junior race, but may not run in BOTH categories.

III. Preparation for the Season

As with all other CYO sponsored activities, your child **MUST** submit two very important documents to his/her coach prior to participation in practice or meets. These two forms are: a) an Emergency Medical Authorization and b) a Player/Parent contract.

The Emergency Medical form will be in the coach's possession at all practices and meets. Hopefully this form will never be needed, but if an injury does occur, the coach will have the necessary information immediately.

The CYO Player/Parent contract will be submitted to the parish athletic director by the coach. A medical examiner's signature on the contract is required for all participants in the CYO program. It is also necessary for the parent and athlete to sign this contract and at least one parent must read and sign the CYO Parents' Code of Ethics on the contract.

Parents must submit both of these forms, along with fees, to the coach prior to the deadline that your child's coach has established. Remember, no one will be permitted to participate until these forms and fees have been submitted.

IV. Meet Preparation Begins at Home

There are a few simple things you can do before leaving for the meet to help your son/daughter run a better (and more comfortable) race.

Please make sure your child gets a good night's sleep on Friday. A sleep-over party on Friday will probably hurt all of those involved.

The last intake of food should be 2-3 hours prior to the start of the race. Recognize that each individual has different nutritional needs. It is better to go into a race on the hungry side rather than on a full stomach, which could be detrimental.

Most races will provide a concession stand where snacks and liquid refreshments may be purchased. It is a good idea to bring something for your son/daughter to eat and/or drink after his/her race.

Be aware of any soreness or nagging injuries that your child may have prior to the race. This will help both you and the coaches as you evaluate the injury again following the race.

You should also make sure that participants are properly dressed for the weather conditions. In case of bad weather, the runners will want dry clothes for after the race. Shoes are vital equipment in cross country. Running spikes are not allowed. Each runner should wear shoes that offer comfort, support, a good fit, and produce no discomfort or irritation.

V. Meet Sponsors

Each week's meet is sponsored by a different parish. The sponsoring parish is responsible for the entire race on that particular day.

The responsibility of hosting a CYO cross country meet has become more difficult over the years due to the large increase in the number of runners. The parish's first responsibility is to secure a course site that will accommodate the anticipated number of runners and spectators. When securing a course, there are some very important items that must be considered: ample parking space for almost 700 cars, enough room to set up four different courses, and enough space to set up an adequate starting line and chute area.

The sponsoring parish will choose someone to serve as the Meet Director. That appointed person will be in complete control of that meet. He/she has the right to disqualify any runner for violation of rules.

VI. Arriving at the Meet

Upon arrival at the meet site, please make certain that your car is parked legally. All it takes is for one car to park in an illegal position and within moments a traffic mess is created.

You then want to find where your parish will be stationed for that day. Most parishes will hang a flag or banner to make their area more easily identifiable.

We will not walk the course in a big group. Parents should find out from their coach how they will walk the course with their team. Parents may be asked by the coach to walk the course with their son/daughter.

See the inside back cover for the scheduled times for races. These races will not begin before their scheduled times, but once they have started, the course is no longer open for inspection.

VII. Starting Gun

All cadet and junior races will be started by firing a blank from a starter pistol; pee wee and minor races will be started with an air horn sounding. In the past we have had a few youngsters startled at the sound of the gun being fired. Parents are asked to explain to their child that the gun is only a blank gun and no one can be hurt by its firing.

VIII. Carry-In/Carry-Out Trash Policy

ODNR Division of Parks & Recreation has implemented a program that will help park users to help the environment and “Green-Up” their State parks by taking their trash home with them after visits to some parks. Ohio will join 20 other states with similar programs focused on helping to keep parks clean and to help the environment.

This “Carry-In/Carry-Out Trash Policy” will be mandated at both meets held at Maumee Bay State Park, so we are encouraging all families to make this a regular practice at all five of the CYO meets.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Pack your picnic in reusable containers.

Choose reusable eating utensils, cups & plates.

Bring a trash bag with you.

Therefore, please pack a trash bag with you to take all trash created during your visit to the park home with you after the meet!

IX. How to be a Good Spectator

The main contribution asked from parents and spectators is *cooperation*. Meets run more smoothly when instructions are followed.

Cross country is not a stationary sport. It's fun to watch the start of each race, but please do so away from the starting line. Parents and coaches are asked to stay out of this area to avoid confusion and congestion at the start of each race.

When the race begins, you may find another spot on the course to see how the race is progressing. Yelling encouragement is always welcome, but do not do this while running along side your son/ daughter. Pacers are PROHIBITED. Any runner who is helped by a pacer will be disqualified.

The finish line is a great spot to watch the youngsters' determined faces as they complete the race. It is also a very difficult area in which volunteers must work if parents don't cooperate by staying behind the roped-off areas. Chute workers have a tough enough job without people standing along the side or back of the area.

When your child comes out of the chute area, make sure that he/she gives the finish card to his/her coach or appointed person from your parish. The coach may also want to gather the team to offer his/her thoughts on the race.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS TO THE MEET!

X. Team Scoring

Each parish is allowed 15 runners on the same team in a particular race. If a parish has more than 15 runners for any race, a second ("B") team may be entered. The places of the first five runners for each team are added up to figure the team score. Cross country is like golf when it comes to scoring. The lower the score, the better.

For example, if a parish has runners finish in 2nd, 5th, 10th, 20th and 31st places, their team score would be 68 points. If there is a tie with another parish that also scores 68 points, the tie will be broken by the 6th runner's placement from each team. If one of the tying teams does not have a 6th runner, the team with the 6th runner will prevail.

Many people don't understand that the other runners who finish in 7th place or lower on their team are still very important even though their placement is not figured into the team score. These runners can *block out* some of the runners from other teams by finishing ahead of them.

There is also a special scoring rule for the Junior division. Because many teams struggle to get five runners in this division, the following special rule has been adopted: *"We will add each team's top three runners to compute the team score. If a team has only two runners, they will receive the last spot plus one point for their 3rd spot. This is for Junior races ONLY."*

If only three competitors of tying teams finish, the team scoring shall be resolved totaling the scores of the first two finishers.

XI. How to get more Involved (without Coaching)

There are plenty of things that need to be done in preparation for each week's meet. Ask the coach at your parish if you may help with any of the following tasks:

- Paper work
- Finish card runners and/or collectors at the meet
- Group leaders for a division when walking the course
- Passing out participant ribbons
- Race day volunteer to serve as a marshall on the course (if needed)

Race Procedure and Order

- 8:00 am - The course is open for inspection for the Cadets & Juniors*
- 8:30 am - Coaches' meeting with meet director
- 8:55 am - CYO Team Prayer will be recited; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance
- 9:00 am - Junior girls' race
- Junior boys' race
- Cadet girls' race
- Cadet boys' race
- 10:45 am - The course is open for inspection for Pee Wees and Minors after the completion of the Cadet boys' race
- 11:15 am - CYO Team Prayer will be recited
- Pee Wee girls' race
- Pee Wee boys' race
- Minor girls' race
- Minor boys' race

NOTE: We will not walk the course as a group. All of the course maps will be posted on the CYO web site. There will be no copies of the course maps handed out to coaches unless a last minute change is necessary. When the course is open for inspection, the coach should take his/her team out to walk the course. The meet sponsor will have people available who will answer questions pertaining to the layout of the course. We will be a "rabbit" for the Pee Wee and Minor races, as well as a "turtle" for all eight races.

There will be an awards ceremony ONLY at the final meet.

2009 CYO Cross Country Meet Schedule

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th

at Carter Park in Bowling Green

Meet Sponsors: St. Joseph, Maumee & St. Aloysius, Bowling Green

Located on Campbell Hill Road in Bowling Green. Travel South on I-75, exit at BGSU.

Turn right onto Wooster Street, at first traffic light turn left onto Campbell Hill Road. Turn left into Carter Park.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th

at Maumee Bay State Park

Meet Sponsor: Regina Coeli

Located at 6505 Cedar Point Road in Oregon. Travel East on St. Rt. 2 (Navarre Avenue), turn left on N. Curtice Road, which will deadend into the Main Park Entrance.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th

at Lucas County Rec. Center Fairgrounds

Meet Sponsors: St. Joan of Arc & St. Joseph Sylvania

Located at 2901 Key Street in Maumee. Enter off Key and park between the former Mud Hens Stadium & fairgrounds.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd

at Univ. of Toledo - Com Tech Campus

Meet Sponsor: Blessed Sacrament

Located behind the Scott Park Police Office on Nebraska Ave. Enter on Nebraska to park.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th

at Maumee Bay State Park

Diocesan Championship

Meet Sponsors: Christ the King

See directions for September 19th meet above.