



Our Lady of Good Counsel  
Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)  
ATHLETIC MINISTRY HANDBOOK

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## **CYO Sports Mission Statement**

CYO Sports is one component of a parish's comprehensive youth ministry program which enables the partnership of parents, coaches, priests, religious, teachers, and adult leaders to manage and support a sports program that allows youth to grow in their relationship with God and come to better understand themselves and the Catholic faith.

Such a program:

- employs healthy and enjoyable competition to promote the sharing of gospel values among athletes, parents, and coaches
- assists parish leadership in nourishing the emotional, spiritual, social, and physical needs of young people
- encourages young people to appreciate the gifts that they possess and challenges them to share these gifts with their community
- allows youth to witness the life of Christian discipleship in their coaches and adult leaders
- encourages youth to become responsible members of their faith community.

## **Our Lady of Good Counsel – CYO – Athletic Program History**

**The CYO Athletic Program** has existed in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia since 1945. Prior to 1962, sports at OLGC were on a limited schedule and part of Region 10. In 1965, a stronger division, Region 11, was formed and OLGC became a part of this new Region.

OLGC CYO sponsors a variety of sports including: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, soccer, softball, track & field, and volleyball. Swimming is available as part of the athletic program but is not recognized as a CYO sport by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

## OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CYO ATHLETIC PROGRAM

1. Approval for the Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO Athletic Program is granted by the Pastor or his designee.
2. Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO Athletic Program is a chartered member of the Archdiocesan Youth Ministry Program. Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO is a chartered member of Region 11 CYO.
3. Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO Athletic Program shall at all times reflect the CYO Mission Statement of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The mission statement appears on the first page of this handbook.
4. The overriding motivation of the Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO Athletic Program is the involvement of as many students as possible in athletic competition within a Christian context. Through CYO sports, students are provided with opportunities to grow in their faith through the guidance, direction, and coaching of adult Christian men and women, to form friendships; and to deal graciously with both victory and defeat.

5. The following sport programs are offered through OLGC CYO:

### **Fall**

Cross Country (grades K-8; boys & girls)

Soccer (grades 3-8; boys & girls)

Volleyball (grades 5-8; girls only)

Football (grades 5-8; boys only) – Not administered by OLGC or Region 11; also known as “The Saints”

### **Winter**

Basketball (grades 3-8; boys & girls)

High School Basketball (grades 9-12; boys & girls)

### **Spring**

Softball (grades 4-8; girls only)

Baseball (grades 5-8; boys only)

Track & Field (grades K-8; boys & girls)

High School Volleyball (grades 9-12; boys & girls)

6. In some sports (usually volleyball, basketball, softball, & baseball) – depending on the number of teams in Region 11, there may be two classifications:

a. "A" Team

This level of play is designed for a higher level of competition, therefore, a student must try out for this team. Eligibility for this level is determined by general tryouts for each grade level or grouping (e.g. 7-8 grades). Tryouts are conducted by the Sports Coordinator for each sport. Student performance is evaluated and rated by the Sports Coordinator, coaches, and designees of the Sports Coordinator. From this data, the "A" team members are selected. OLGC "A" teams then compete with other Region 11 "A" teams. Attendance at a minimum of one (1) evaluation is required to be considered for the "A" team.

Due to the more competitive nature of "A" leagues, coaches are not mandated to guarantee equal playing time for each player during games. Coaches at OLGC are instructed to play all players during a game, unless agreed-upon disciplinary action/inaction necessitates otherwise.

b. "B" Team

This level is less competitive for the student but helps with instruction and practice in the basics of the sport. Each student is required to be given a certain amount of playing time during games. The amount of time varies per sport. "B" teams are considered part of a regional parish league. It is possible for parishes to sponsor more than one "B" team for each sport. This number is, however, dependent upon the availability of coaches, equipment, and/or field (or gym) time.

c. League Considerations

In the event that a given sport does not offer a "B" league option and OLGC is fielding multiple teams, the Sport Coordinator shall determine team composition.

7. Student Eligibility

a. Parish School Students

1. A boy or girl who attends his/her parish school may participate with his/her parish school team.
2. A boy or girl who attends a parish school other than his or her registered parish may participate with either the parish team or the school team. However, once an individual establishes a preference, he/she may not play for the other parish for the remainder of the scholastic year. Ex: An individual may not play soccer for the school he/she attends and then, during the same scholastic year, play basketball for the parish in which he/she is registered.

b. Public School Students

If a public school student is a Catholic, a registered member of the parish, and consistently attends PREP, the student is eligible to participate in the OLGC CYO Athletic Program.

c. Private Catholic School Students

If a private school student is a Catholic, and a registered member of the parish, he/she is eligible to participate in the CYO Athletic Program at that parish.

- d. Students must meet the grade requirements for each sport (or grade equivalent for home school students).
- e. Students must maintain passing grades in conduct and effort in his/her school in order to be eligible to play CYO sports. Failure in either of these areas (i.e. receiving a grade below the passing grade) makes the student ineligible for CYO sports until a passing grade is received on a subsequent report card.
- f. Change of Residence – After Start of Season

If a student changes residences on or after the official start date of a season (August 1, November 1, or March 1), he/she may participate with his/her old parish's team(s) for the remainder of that school year, or he/she may join the team of his/her new parish. If he/she chooses the latter, he/she may not return to a team from his/her old parish.

- g. Non-Parish Eligibility

If a student from another Parish does not have an available team to participate on as part of their home Parish CYO program during a given season, they will be eligible to participate on an OLG C CYO team upon receiving merger approval from the Region, and the home Parish CYO Athletic Director and Pastor. This will be coordinated through the Sports Coordinator and Athletic Director.

## 8. Student Suspension/Expulsion

Membership in the OLG C CYO Athletic Program is a privilege – not a right. When a boy or girl puts on an OLG C CYO uniform, he/she represents a longstanding parish and Archdiocese of Philadelphia tradition. Therefore, in order to safeguard the integrity of the CYO program, he/she is expected to act in a Christian manner, to honor the student code of conduct, and to contribute to the overall good of the OLG C CYO program.

A student who fails to comply with CYO guidelines – either Archdiocesan or OLG C – or who does not comply with team regulations as determined by the coach, will be held accountable for his/her actions and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

- a. Suspension

A serious infraction of CYO policy or the Student Code of Conduct may result in the suspension of the student from the OLG C CYO Athletic Program.

Any student who is suspended from his/her school will be dismissed from any OLG C CYO activity or competition occurring during the time period that the student is suspended from school. He/she must reapply to the OLG C CYO Athletic Board in order to regain his/her playing status. The Board reserves the right to decline this application.

There are two types of suspension as it relates to CYO activities. One type is a suspension which is levied by a coach or game official due to misconduct either during a game or practice. The other type is a suspension which is determined by the CYO Board due to multiple incidents of game misconduct, or violations which have ramifications beyond the OLG C CYO program (e.g. serious damage done to school, church property, or another school/gym). A review of any such

incidents will be conducted by the OLGC CYO Athletic Board. If the CYO Board decides to suspend the student, any or all of the following sanctions shall be imposed:

1. The student will be ineligible for a determined number of consecutive league games, tournament games, or playoff games, which may continue into the next season's sport. The student/player must be dressed in uniform for the suspended games and remain on the bench. Rescheduled games or forfeited games shall not count as a game for purposes of serving a suspension.
2. If the infraction involves monetary retribution for damages incurred, it is the responsibility of the student and his/her family to make this payment.
3. The student is ineligible for the Scholar Athlete Award or Sportsmanship Award.
4. The student remains on probation for the entire sports season. If another infraction occurs – be it minor or major – the student/player will be expelled from OLGC CYO Athletic Program for that school year.
5. A time period for sanctions to be completed will also be assessed at the time of suspension.
6. The student is ineligible for All Star play in any recognized CYO sport during that school year.

b. Expulsion

1. If a student has committed a serious infraction which is considered criminal in nature, including use or possession of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, the CYO Board reserves the right to dismiss him/her from the OLGC CYO Athletic Program for that school year.
2. Any student who is expelled from his/her day school will be dismissed from the OLGC CYO Athletic Program for that school year. He/she must reapply to the OLGC CYO Athletic Board in order to regain his/her playing status. The Board reserves the right to decline this application.

9. Coaches Responsibilities

A CYO coach is primarily a minister to youth who reaches out to young people through athletics. A Head Coach of a Grade School CYO team must be 21 years of age or older and a Head Coach of a High School CYO team must be 25 years of age or older. All head coaches must be present and responsible for the team at all times.

Responsibilities of any and all CYO coaches (whether a head coach or assistant coach) include:

- a. **Before coaching**, all head coaches and assistants must be in compliance with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's SAFE Environment Program which includes attending a SAFE Environment training session; completing both the Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance; and

complete Mandated Reporter Training. In addition, every coach must attend a Coaches Accreditation Seminar sponsored by the Archdiocesan CYO Office and be accredited by his/her second year of coaching. An current list of coaching requirements required by Region and OLG C can be found on the OLG C CYO website.

- b. Be knowledgeable of all aspects in this CYO Athletic Ministry Handbook and make sure all rules and policies are faithfully observed.
- c. Attend the pre-season coaches meeting at the time and place designated by the Athletic Director and/or Sport Coordinator.
- d. Conduct pre-season meetings of parents/assistants to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities, including proper behavior at sports functions so as to be accountable for all present for the sports function.
- e. Complete all rosters and coaches' affidavits and submit them to the Athletic Director and Priest Moderator for review of correct dates of birth, school, grade, and parish/PREP registration and approval. Once approved, final rosters must be signed by the head coach, the Athletic Director, and the Priest Moderator.
- f. Conduct themselves in a Christian manner which will reflect positively on their parish and the CYO program, and ensuring team members do the same.
- h. Attend weekend Mass and encourage, by word and example, the same for students.
- g. Teach and guide the youth on the team with a sense of fair play, sportsmanship and acceptance of winning and losing in accordance with Christian ideals.
- h. Refrain from scheduling any practices or events that will interfere with Holy Days, religious duties, and/or PREP instructional classes/events.
- i. Inform the OLG C CYO Athletic Board of any misconduct of a student who is in violation of the OLG C CYO Player Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- j. Implement and monitor the conditions of a student suspension if mandated by the OLG C CYO Athletic Board. A full report should be given to the OLG C CYO Athletic Board when the student's suspension is completed.

#### 10. Coach Suspension

The OLG C CYO Athletic Board is empowered to relieve a coach of his/her position if that coach is found to be in violation of Archdiocesan and/or OLG C CYO policy. If a coach is suspended, the OLG C CYO Athletic Board reserves the right not to renew his/her coaching eligibility. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- a. Failure to inform the OLG C CYO Athletic Board of any violations of the OLG C CYO Player Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- b. Failure to enforce any or all of the OLG C CYO Athletic Board sanctions for a player's suspension or expulsion.

- c. Use foul language or physically and/or verbally abuse a player, referee, or individual present during a practice/game. Such a violation will result in immediate suspension.
  - d. Use demeaning words and/or gestures towards a player, referee, or individual present during a practice/game.
  - e. Failure to attend the Coaches Accreditation Program (cited in 9a).
11. Awards for Individual/Team Accomplishments
- a. OLGC CYO teams, coaches, and student players are recognized for their participation and for individual and/or team achievements at an awards ceremony during the annual OLGC CYO Sports Banquet.
  - b. Sportsmanship Award – At the conclusion of each Varsity sport season, the coach will recognize one 8<sup>th</sup> grader who will receive a Sportsmanship Award for that team. The recipient of this award will have demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship, and displayed Christian values toward teammates, coaches, opponents and officials throughout the sports season. The Sportsmanship Award is usually awarded at the end of season all-star game.
  - c. Additional Awards  

If an OLGC CYO athletic team wins an Archdiocesan title or Regional title, the OLGC CYO will purchase a special team accomplishment award (shirts, jackets, etc.) The OLGC CYO Athletic Board is open to suggestions for this award from the team, however, the Board reserves the right to set a per player price limit for this award. Any item bearing the name of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Good Counsel CYO, OLGC Cougars, or OLGC must be approved by the OLGC CYO Athletic Board before purchase.
12. Tournament Games
- a. OLGC CYO follows the Archdiocesan CYO rules/mandates as to the limits on the number of games, including in tournament play.
  - b. The OLGC CYO Athletic Board reserves the right to limit the financial support given to teams for tournament play. OLGC CYO Board will provide financial support for one (1) tournament per team, per season, up to a maximum dollar value set at the Board's discretion. If a team would like to participate in more than one tournament, the coach is responsible for collecting fees from team members to cover the cost of that additional tournament.
13. The official team name for OLGC CYO Athletic Teams is Our Lady of Good Counsel (also known as OLGC) Cougars.
14. The name OLGC Cougars or Our Lady of Good Counsel Cougars is reserved for official OLGC CYO Athletic team use, or approved tournaments.
15. Criteria for Scholar Athlete Award



- a. A student must maintain a 93 or above average which is cumulative for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and for the first two (2) semesters of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The final grade point average for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and the grade point average for the first two (2) semesters of 8<sup>th</sup> grade are mathematically averaged to determine the cumulative average for this time period.
- b. A student must participate in a minimum of ONE (1) CYO sport per year during his/her 7th grade and 8th grade. One sport per year must be on an "A" or Varsity level.
- c. A student who is suspended from CYO sports or from his/her school during 7th or 8th grade is ineligible for the Scholar Athlete Award.

## **OLGC CYO – Player Code of Ethics and Conduct**

CYO Sports is one component of a parish's comprehensive youth ministry program which enables the partnership of parents, coaches, priests, religious, teachers, and adult leaders to manage and support a sports program that allows one to grow in his/her relationship with God and come to better understand his/her self and the Catholic Faith.

The team coaches should strive to encourage and value each player for his/her contribution to the game. The player should strive to master basic skills, have fun, and acquire the desire to continue to play the game at higher levels in the future.

Players should:

1. Value one's personal integrity.
2. Strive for excellence.
3. Willingly abide by the spirit of the rules and "Honor the Game" in practices and games.
4. Treat all players, officials, and coaches with respect and courtesy.
5. Graciously accept constructive criticism.
6. Exhibit dignity in manner and dress when representing OLGC CYO.
7. Recognize the value and contribution of each team member.
8. Keep the importance of winning or losing in perspective.
9. Recognize the importance of being a contributor to the team.
10. Respect fellow athletes, coaches and spectators by refraining from creating or disseminating disrespectful or inappropriate social media posts while representing OLGC CYO.

**. OLGCC CYO – Code of Ethics and Conduct**  
**for Parents and Spectators**

1. Respect and “Honor the Game.” Appreciate and enjoy the efforts of all participants.
2. Recognize the officials as persons of integrity and qualification, and respect their decisions accordingly.
3. Refrain from creating disturbances that would detract from the flow of the game and/or the safety of the participants.
4. Respect all players, coaches, and officials, regardless of team loyalty, as it is essential to raising the standards of good sportsmanship.
5. Be a positive supporter and role model by encouraging the positive aspects of play. Refrain from sideline coaching.
6. Maintain a distance from players and coaches during games and contests. Team benches should be for use of team members only.
7. Assist in the removal of trash from the fields and/or courts.
8. Refrain from name-calling, harassment of any type, or badgering. Anyone who engages in such behavior will be asked to leave the area.
9. Most of all, always encourage each player on the court or field of play.
10. Respect fellow athletes, coaches and spectators by refraining from creating or disseminating disrespectful or inappropriate social media posts while representing OLGCC CYO.