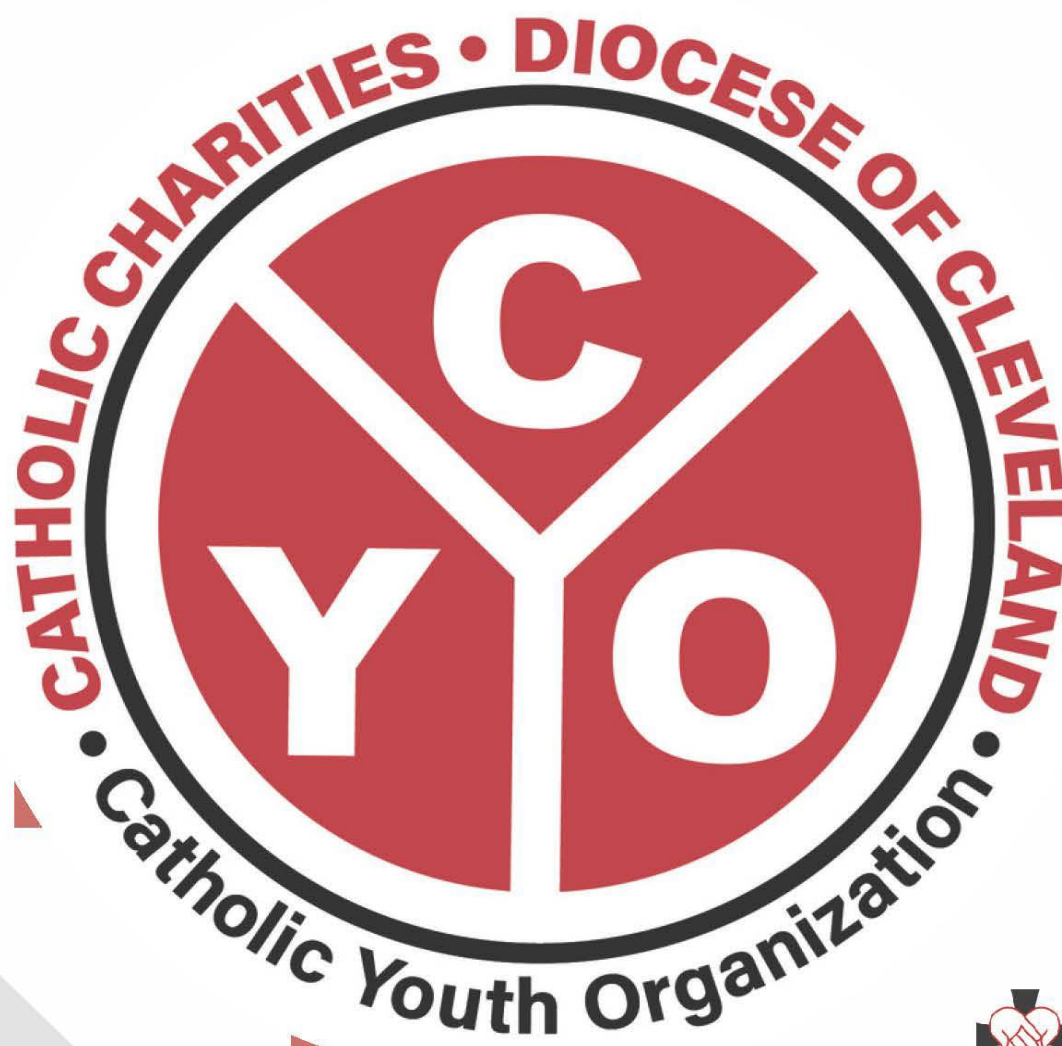
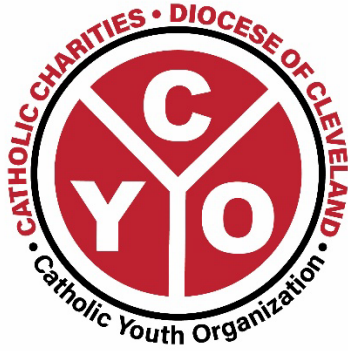


CROSS COUNTRY COACHES MEETING FALL 2026

The Way We do Things Here



ccdacle.org/cyo



DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO

CROSS COUNTRY COACH'S MEETING

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Program Planner
3. Points of Emphasis
4. NFHS Rule Review
5. Chip Timing
6. Scheduling Process
7. Coaching Articles



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

DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM PLANNER - 2026

July	20	Fall sports season opens, practices may begin, sanction event period begins
	22	In-person mandatory fall sports season coach's meetings, 6-8 pm Location: Walsh Jesuit High School, 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. Cuyahoga Falls, 44224
	27	Fall sports season early registration closes; regular registration begins, 9:00am
	28	In-person mandatory fall sports season coach's meetings, 6-8 pm. Location: Beaumont High School, 3301 N Park Blvd, Cleveland Heights, 44118
	29	In-person mandatory fall sports season coach's meetings, 6-8 pm. Location: Magnificat High School, 20770 Hilliard Blvd, Rocky River, 44116
August	3	Fall sports season regular registration ends, 9:00am
	4	Team fee payments and fee summary due
	5	Coaches Development Program - Gesu (Gym) 6:00 pm 2470 Miramar Blvd, University Heights, 44118
	8	Coaches Development Program - St. Ambrose Gym, 9:00am 929 Pearl Rd, Brunswick, 44212
	10	Deadline to add athletes and coaches to rosters, 9:00am
	14	Fall sports season schedules available on CYO website Last day to drop athletes for a refund
	18	Coaches Development Program - St. Jude 6:00 pm. 594 Poplar Street, Elyria, 44035
	22	Fall sports regular season competitions begin
September	12-13	Parents and VIP Weekend
	20	Team Mass Sunday
	26-27	Officials Appreciation Weekend
October	11	Diocese of Cleveland CYO Cross Country Championship
	25	Fall sports season ends

DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO

CROSS COUNTRY

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Uniforms – Uniforms for each member of the team shall match. See CYO Rule book for clarification

CYO Credentials – All coaches must be certified and wear their credentials at each meet. **One coach at the meet for grades 1-8 must have the Fall 2026 sticker they received from attending the Coach's Meeting.**

Course Length

- 1st - 3rd Grade - (1.0) miles.
- 4th - 5th Grade Division - One and one-half (1.5) miles.
- 6th- 8th Grade Division - Two (2.0) miles

Meet Format – All grades will run on Sundays. Grades 1-3 have the option to run on Saturday or Sunday for the entire season.

- 2-3 Meet Locations
- Proposed Schedule. (Subject to Change)
 - 1:00 Girls Grades 1-3
 - 1:20 Boys Grades 1-3
 - 1:25 – 1:50 Girls and Boys 4-5 Walk the course
 - 2:00 Girls Grades 4-5
 - 2:20 Boys Grades 4-5
 - 2:25 – 2:50 Girls and Boys 6-8 Walk the course
 - 3:00 Girls Grades 6-8
 - 3:20 Boys Grades 6-8

Official Team

- 1st-3rd Grade Division & 4th-5th Grade Divisions: Member Programs that have 10 or more athletes on their roster of *any* gender from grades 1-5 **must form their own teams**.
 - Member Programs with 9 or fewer athletes of any gender, may combine with other Member Programs to form a team.
 - Different Member Program teams may practice together at the same course and with the same coach, but teams must register and compete under their own Member Program name.
- 6th-8th Grade Division: Teams will consist of athletes of the same gender in grades 6-8. Member Programs that have 10 or more athletes on their roster from the *same* gender in grades 6-8 **must form their own team**.
 - Member Programs with 9 or fewer athletes of the same gender may only combine with other Member Programs, who also have 9 or fewer athletes of the same gender, to form a team.
 - Different Member Program teams may practice together at the same course and with the same coach, but teams must register and compete under their own Member Program name.

Participation

- A player on a CYO team MAY participate on two different teams (i.e. AAU, Rec Team) during the CYO season; however, a player MAY NOT be registered on two **CYO Cross Country rosters during the same season**
 - In Grades 7 & 8, if a player is a member of their interscholastic (OHSAA) Cross Country team, their OHSAA eligibility could be in danger.

Athletic.net - Meet results and championship registration will be handled through www.athletic.net.

Race Start/Conclusion

- A cross country race begins when the competitors are called to the starting line for final instructions and is considered official and concluded when places have been determined and the results have been recorded.
- A competitor finishes a Cross Country race when the torso of the runner breaks the plane of the finish line.

Meet Officials/Staffing

- Official - The official shall make final decisions concerning questions which are not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials.
- The head coach shall verify verbally that all their competitors are properly equipped and in compliance.
 - Starter - Once the teams have been called to the starting line by the official for final instructions. Audio/Visual Start: The starter will use whistle/flag commands along with the starting device.
 - Starting Process:
 - Give a brief instruction of the starting commands before the start.
 - The starter will hold the starting device and red flag parallel to the ground and give a long blast of the whistle. This is the signal for the runners to step up to, but not touch the starting line and become motionless.
 - The starter slowly raises both arms overhead. When all runners are set and motionless and the recall starters signal with a white flag, the starting device is fired and at the same time, the red flag is motioned downward, indicating the start of the race.



Figure 18—Starters' Signals

- Hosts – The host team/s should provide 10-12 volunteers that assist in the set up/tear down of the course, monitor races, take down, act as course and assist the meet director.

Caution and Disqualification

- It is an unfair act when a competitor receives any assistance. Assistance includes:
 - Interference with another runner.
 - Pacing by a teammate, not in the race or persons not participating in the race.
 - Runners joining or grasping hands with each other.
 - Communicating with a competitor with any device, including electronically, during a race is prohibited.
 - Runner using an aid during the race.
 - **Penalty:** Disqualification from the event.
 - ❖ **Bylaw 9 does not apply**



DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CYO CROSS COUNTRY CHIP TIMING

All Sunday Runners will be issued non-disposable chips instead of tags.

- Give each runner their assigned race bib (Information on back of bib).
- Pin assigned bib to front of each runner using 4 safety pins provided.
- Race for each runner starts with the race starter.
- Everything is done electronically.
- Runners are to keep moving and return to team area.
- Bibs and chips are not disposable – coaches collect them after each race/weekend.
- Finish times will be uploaded into Atheltic.net
- Results will also be emailed to CYO.

1st-3rd Grade Runners (Saturday) will be issued labels instead of disposable chips.

- Runners will receive labels for each athlete registered before the race
- The runner will receive a card as they exit,
- Coaches place labels on cards and return to meet director.
- Meet director will add times to the cards and return to the CYO Recorder
- CYO Recorder will load into athletic.net.

SCHEDULING PROCESS

Regular Season Meet Schedule

- Meets MAY be run at Brookside, Edgewater Park, Medina Buckeye, Lorain Community College, Silver Creek Metro Park, Walsh Jesuit, Wallace Lake, Forest Hills, Howe Meadow, Forest Hills, NDCL, Gilmour Academy, Lake Catholic, Other.
- The CYO Administration will select placement of the teams at the meet locations for the 2026 Season. This allows CYO to better handle parking and course related items at this season's venues.

Post Season Championships

- The Diocesan Championship will be for the 6th-8th Grade Division only.
- Teams will consist of athletes of the same gender in grades 6-8.
- Teams with 10 or more athletes will be placed in the Green Division for the Diocesan Championship Meet.
- Teams with 9 or fewer athletes will be placed in the White Division for the Diocesan Championship Meet.
- Teams must have a minimum of 5 athletes to compete for the Team Awards.
 - There is a maximum of 10 athletes that may be entered on the A team all others will be on the B team.



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RESOURCES

[11HeatRelatedIllness.pdf](#)

[HTTPS://WWW.VERYWELLFIT.COM/HOW-TO-START-RUNNING-THE-ABSOLUTE-BEGINNERS-GUIDE-2911191](https://www.verywellfit.com/how-to-start-running-the-absolute-beginners-guide-2911191)

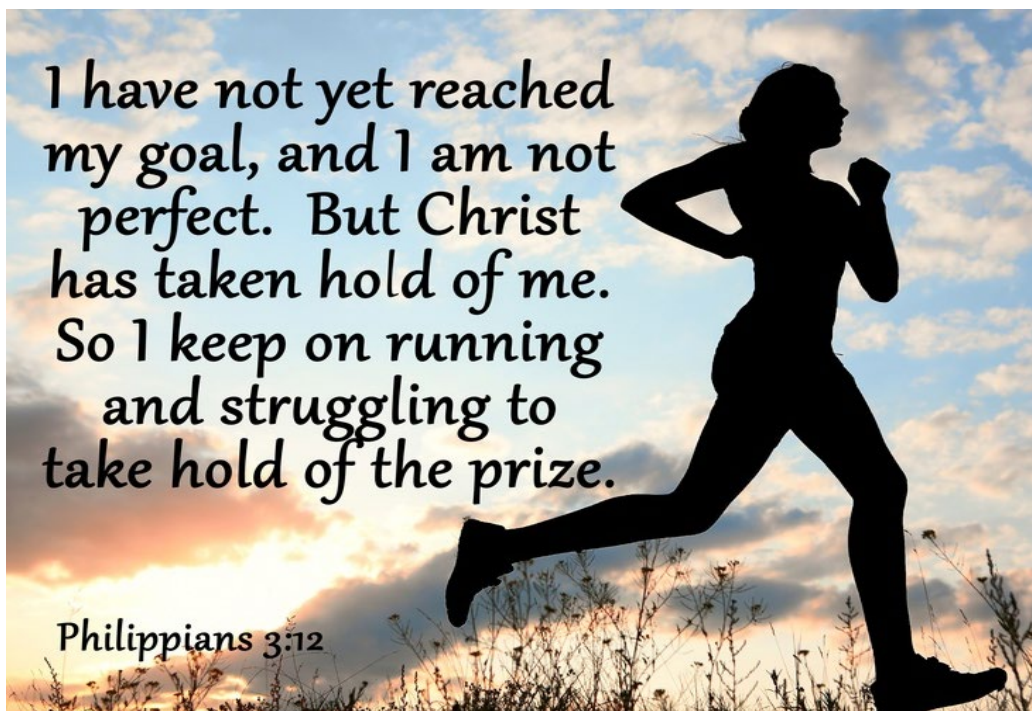
[HTTPS://TRACKANDFIELDTOOLBOX.NET/CROSS-COUNTRY/TRAINING-MIDDLE-SCHOOL-CROSS-COUNTRY-RUNNERS](https://trackandfieldtoolbox.net/cross-country/training-middle-school-cross-country-runners)

[HTTPS://WWW.USATF.ORG/RESOURCES](https://www.usatf.org/resources)

[HTTP://WWW.DRNICKSRUNNINGBLOG.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2015/08/TRAINING-1ST-AND-2ND-GRADE.PDF](http://www.drnicksrunningblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/training-1st-and-2nd-grade.pdf)

[HTTP://WWW.DRNICKSRUNNINGBLOG.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2015/08/RUNNING-GAMES.PDF](http://www.drnicksrunningblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/running-games.pdf)

[HTTPS://BLOG.NASM.ORG/RUNNING-FOR-KIDS](https://blog.nasm.org/running-for-kids)



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THE LONG-TERM APPROACH TO COACHING YOUNG DISTANCE RUNNERS

Marty Sonnenfeldt
Knoxville Youth Athletics

PATIENCE! Ah what a virtue. We all strive to be more patient in our daily lives. Patience with our coworkers, ourselves our spouses and with all those around us. However when we don the sacred mantle of coach and couple this with parental expectations patience quickly gets flushed down the commode. The temptation to focus on short-term results is great. With weekly meets and end of season championship meets coaches often get drug into the euphoria of weekly team results, runner's personal bests and rankings. There is no question as a coach that you want to find a way to motivate your kids by showing improvement, keeping parents engaged by their child's success and keeping your team focused towards helping each other. Unfortunately for most distance runner's success does not happen overnight and keeping your distance runners sights on the future is much better in the long run than having them and you be too concerned with what happens week to week. Here is what I have come to know in over 28 years of working with young distance runners.

- 45% of your team will not be able to chew gum and walk at the same time every new season you start. Moreover with current obesity rates and the concurrent lack of physical readiness of many Elementary and Middle School students' newcomers to your team will not likely be able to complete 400-600m of running without stopping.
- Of the remaining 55% most will not been consistent with their running throughout the year. Some will have participated in other sports throughout the year, which is great. Others may have just turned into couch potatoes. In other words you cannot take for granted that your kids will be ready to tackle a season or even finish the first race when pre-season practice starts.
- Most young runner's first experience with running in our society has unfortunately been punitive. Running suicides in Basketball practice. Drop a pass – make a fumble – incomplete a pass > “take a lap”. Penalty laps, extra sprints for being late or missing practice. The list goes on a on. One of the most fundamental human locomotive activities outside of walking has been turned into drudgery by sports coaches near and far. Make any sense to you?
- Solid aerobic development is not something achieved in a summer or fall but something that is built over years of consistent, measured training.
- Young North African distance stars are not overnight sensations. They have grown up in high altitude environments using their legs as the predominant mode of transportation in their daily lives. They have done so at a very early age. By the time they have reached mid to late teens they have cobbled together an aerobic training base that takes most Western runners till their mid-twenties to obtain. They are most often not burdened with the luxuries of Western life such as computers, iPad's, smartphones, TV's, comfy couches, personal trainers and the Internet.
- One cannot be personally contacted by a college coach until after July 1st of the summer prior to one's senior year in HIGH SCHOOL – they are not looking at elementary and middle school runners! An elementary or middle school champion does not guarantee high school, college or post collegiate success. There is plenty of time to reach for these lofty goals –for now enjoy the ride and hidden benefits that come with being a healthy, well rounded distance runner.
- Local road races are NOT the proper environments to teach young runners the joys of running, much less the rigors of competing against one's peers. Leave your local 5K's to those who run them most often – moms, dads and other adults seeking self-satisfaction and fitness. Most kids do not need to be running road races till their athletic careers are over. Sure one 5K in the summer to see how your summer base training is progressing is fine – but entering your child into numerous local road races will only lead to the long term demise of their ability to compete against their peers while taking away the fun they might have in later years as adults in entering these events.

- Stop worrying about the clock and the distance of the course in cross-country races. There is no athletics governing body that certifies the distance of a cross-country course – EVEN THE IAAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS! Courses distances are estimates at best. Course difficulty varies greatly from one course to the next thus making judgments about improvement based on time meaningless. Take down the clock in a cross-country race and you can still score the meet. Place of finish is of paramount importance and allows you to make judgments on improvement from race to race more effectively. The clock is only relevant when you get to the track – certified distance, reproducible surface and accurate timing.

Knowing the above to be true I have found it much better to nurture younger runners so that they first and foremost love the activity. Remember, many already are pre-conditioned to think running as both painful and devoid of fun. Running is an activity that can benefit each and every one of your athletes for decades. It may not lead to athletic success and reward, but it will set them on path of healthy living that will endure far beyond a tarnished medal or trophy. Each day of running is a small building block placed upon a foundation of your distance running “house” that will take 10-15 years to build. During this 10–15-year period your athlete will undergo profound physical and emotional changes. Just navigating through the changes encountered by most during their adolescent years is daunting at best – throw athletic expectations on top of this and for some it can be too much. Some respond to these physical and emotional changes better and quicker than others. This further underscores the need for patience and balance when dealing with young runners. Give them the proper perspective about their running early (as well as their parents) so that you can better equip them to navigate the changes that lie ahead for them in the years to come.

I have been fortunate to have both of my children “grow up” with running. With two parents who ran competitively in college and after it would have been easy to spoon-feed our kids running to the point of nausea. Yet we took a “hands off” approach to exposing them to a sport we dearly loved and continue with today 44 years after taking our first running steps. They both ran middle school cross-country with our youngest taking part in the first KYA elementary school cross-country races. They both ran summer track and field, elementary – middle school track and field. They also had separate dreams of playing in the NFL and the NBA. They gradually played their way out of those two sports to come to realize that this running thing might be something they were good at. No pushing – no shoving just an exploration of the sport by dipping their toes in the water and letting them choose. Were there times when running mom and dad could have been sent to “proud parents time out”? – YOU BET!! Yet through it all we wanted them to enjoy their running, knowing that there were benefits they could enjoy long after the crowds had disappeared and individual – team honors faded into obscurity. How has this approach worked out? Well, the verdict is not in yet and only time will tell – so far so good.

I say all this to save both coaches and parents sleepless nights worrying about things that in the end amount to little when looking at the long road that is the life of a distance runner.



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2026 CYO Coaching Education: Cross Country

Presented by:
Anjanette A. Whitman, Beaumont Track & Field/Cross Country



Welcome & Thank You!

Thank you for investing your time into becoming the best coach for your student-athletes. You hold the power to make a positive impact on the lives of our youth. Participating in CYO athletics prepares our students to be productive people now and in the future as they use the gifts God has given them.

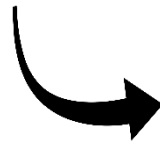
Thank you and enjoy the season!

Coach Anj 😊

Coach's Note Packet

Basic Athlete Equipment

- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Shoes
 - Training Shoes for Running
 - Spikes Shoes (optional)
 - Always untie before taking off
 - Double knot them when on
- Chrono watch/non-GPS



You Make a Difference!

To develop student-athletes who achieve personal excellence as competitors and leverage the discipline of running to lead present, motivated, healthy, and impactful lives.

CYO CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETE CLINIC & COACHING EDUCATION RE-CERTIFICATION

Co-Hosted & Presented by Beaumont Cross Country



READY TO TURN "JUST RUNNING" INTO A CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON?

JOIN BEAUMONT CROSS COUNTRY FOR A HIGH-ENERGY, LEARN-BY-DOING CLINIC DESIGNED TO SET THE PACE FOR 2026.

FOR THE ATHLETES: RUN FASTER, SMARTER
FOR THE COACHES: LEAD THE PACK

SATURDAY, AUG. 15

● 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. for athletes

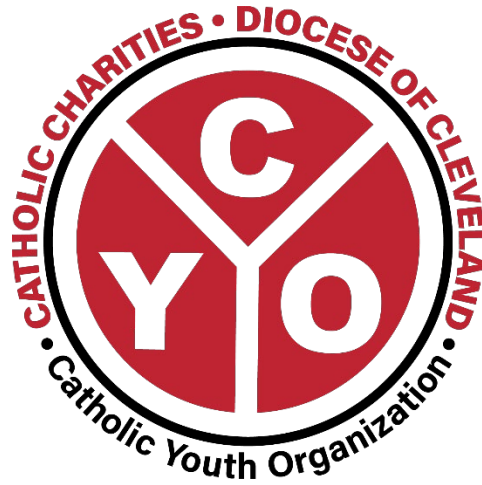
● 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. for coaches

● Beaumont School – 3301 North Park Blvd. – Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER



Thank you for all you do!



Questions?

Coach Anjanette Whitman
awhitman@beaumontschool.org



Scan the QR code to subscribe to the Beaumont XC weekly ***eNewsletter***
that runs from August through October
designed for coaches & parents
to help you inspire your young runner to be happy & healthy.



Closing Prayer



St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ Has No Body

We will read our closing prayer together out loud in our breakouts

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: AMEN

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Christ has no body now but yours!

Amen!

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NOTES