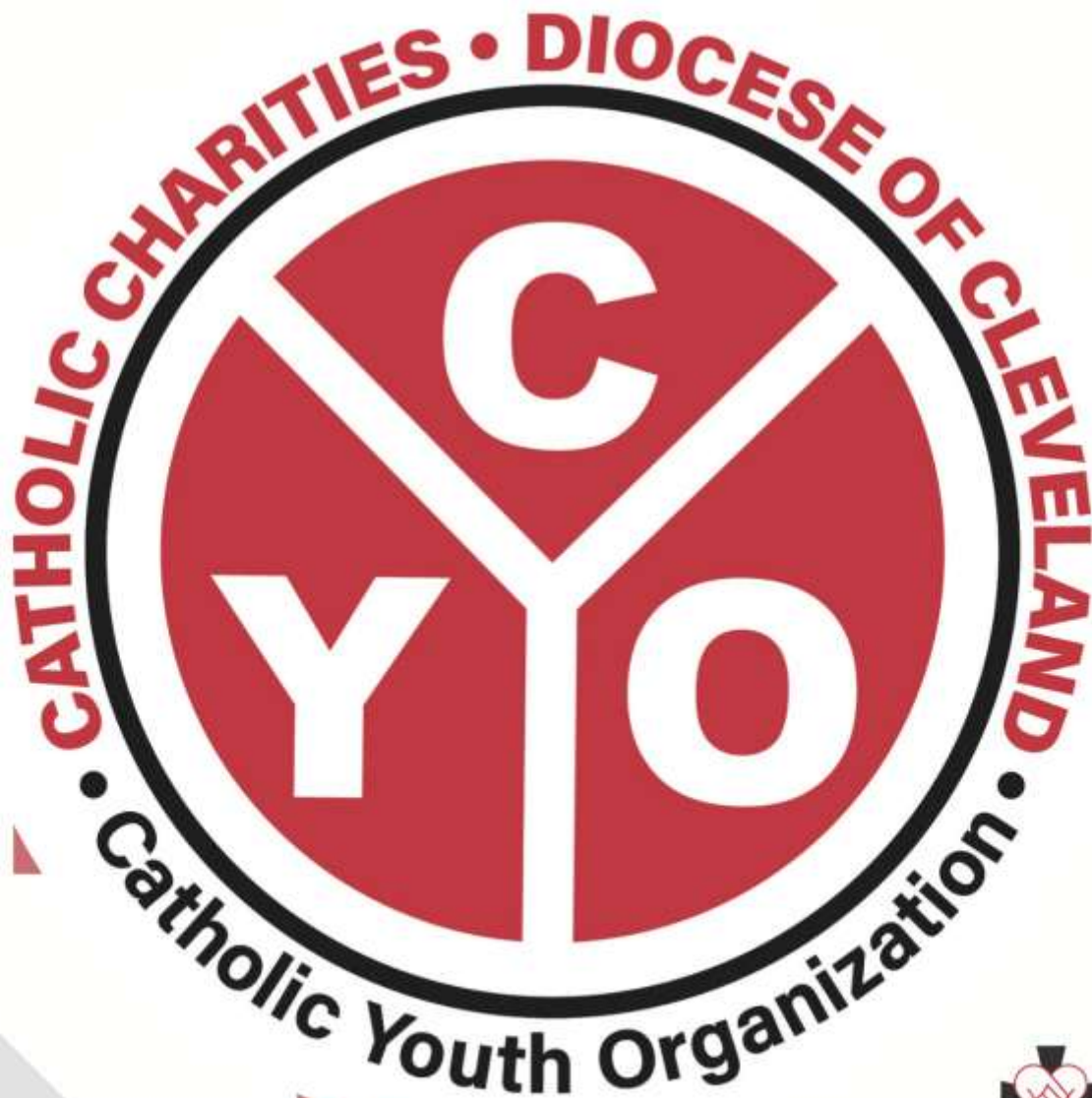


CROSS COUNTRY RULES FALL 2026

The Way We Do Things Here



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

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Cross Country Rules apply in this league with the exceptions contained within. CYO game contest rules may not be altered by mutual consent of the coaches. Only the CYO Administration may issue authorized changes.

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL TEAM

- A. Defined as an individual or group of children from one or more Members listed on the team roster who meet the eligibility rules and are approved by the member athletic director, member administrator and diocesan athletic office.
- B. There is not a minimum number of athletes required to be on a team.
- C. **1st-3rd Grade Division & 4th-5th Grade Divisions:** Teams that have 10 or more athletes on their roster of *any* gender from grades 1-5 **must form their own team.**
 - 1. Teams with 9 or fewer athletes of any gender, may combine with other teams.
 - 2. Different member 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.
- D. **6th-8th Grade Division:** Teams will consist of athletes of the same gender in grades 6-8. Teams that have 10 or more athletes on their roster from the *same* gender in grades 6-8 **must form their own team.**
 - 1. Teams with 9 or fewer athletes of the same gender, may only combine with other teams, who also have 9 or fewer athletes of the same gender.
 - 2. Different member 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.
- E. A CYO Team refusing to continue to run in a scheduled meet for any reason without the consent of the official or diocesan athletic representative may be subject to penalties as outlined in Bylaw 10. This also applies to CYO Sanctioned Events.
- F. A partial roster or combined roster cannot be entered into any sanctioned event.

SECTION 2 - OFFICIALS

- A. Officials that are certified and registered with the Diocese of Cleveland CYO may be assigned to each meet.
- B. Officials/ Meet Directors have the power to warn or disqualify from the competition anyone who commits acts which intend to influence their decisions.

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

- A. Appropriate shoes are required in all competitions. Spiked shoes may be worn during competition. The length of the spikes shall not exceed 3/8 inch.
- B. All athletes are required to wear member issued uniforms. The uniform shall be at least matching t-shirts and shorts.
- C. Bare midriffs are not permitted, and the uniform top must hang below or be tucked into the waistband of the bottom when the athlete is standing upright.
- D. Athletes must wear shorts. Team shorts are to be of the same color. Cutoff shorts are not permitted.
- E. Tights, leggings, etc., are considered undergarments and always must be covered by team-issued uniform shorts. These undergarments must be worn under the official team-issued uniform short.
- F. All athletes must have the CYO Emblem on their uniform, either sewn or stenciled.
- G. The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for cross country. However, an official may require the removal of jewelry or hair adornment if it is deemed to be inappropriate or dangerous.
- H. An American flag and or a commemorative/memorial patch not to exceed 2 by 3 inches and with the approval of the CYO Administration may be worn on each of the uniform apparel provided neither the flag nor patch interferes with the visibility of the team's name.

SECTION 4 - PRE-CONTEST COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Coaches must be CYO certified.
 - 1. **One coach must have their "Fall 2026" season sticker visible on their credential.**
- B. CYO Credentials are to be always worn and visible.

1. Credentials cannot be given to another coach at any time.
 2. Coaches who give their credentials to another coach, even for one meet, will have their coaching privileges revoked for one year.
 3. If a coach has lost or forgotten their credential, they must inform the Meet Director and show proof of certification with a photo ID and either the photo of the credential or the coach's name on the certification list.
- C. Coaches are responsible for the supervision of their team before, during and after the contest.
 - D. Coaches should be prepared to provide one competent adult to serve as a volunteer official each week.
 - E. At each contest and practice, coaches are to have in their possession: an official team roster, a copy of each athlete's Pre-participation Form and Emergency Medical Authorization Form, and a first aid kit.

SECTION 5 - PARTICIPATION

- A. Each athlete must be treated with dignity regardless of their ability.
- B. An athlete on a CYO team may participate on any other cross country team during the CYO season. In 7th and 8th grade, an athlete may not participate on his/her Junior High School team and CYO team at the same time for purposes of eligibility.
- C. Participants may only compete and be rostered on one CYO team in the same sport in the same school year.
- D. In accordance with the Bylaw 3-2-2 of the Diocese of Cleveland CYO, an athlete must meet the following grade and age requirements on August 1 before the school year starts to compete in races of the following divisions:
 1. 8th Grade Division - Individuals in grades 8, 7, 6 and ages 10-14
 2. 5th Grade Division - Individuals in grades 5, 4, and ages 7-11. No athletes in the 5th Grade Division are permitted to "move up" into the 8th Grade Division.
 3. 3rd Grade Division - Individuals in grade 3, 2, 1; ages 6-8; No Pre-K or K. Athletes in 1st or 2nd, 3rd grade cannot move up to races in grades 4 and above.
- E. Mandatory participation applies to all meets.
- F. If a coach will not run an athlete because of missed practice, unsportsmanlike conduct, unsatisfactory academics or injury, the coach must inform the Athletic Director before the meet begins.
- G. Violation of these rules will result in a warning or a forfeit with possible disciplinary action against the coach.
- H. The Guest Player Rule does not apply to the Diocese of Cleveland CYO Cross Country program as all the athletes are on the same roster.

SECTION 6 - GAME & TIME LIMITATION

- A. Events on Sunday cannot begin until 1:00 PM.
- B. No meet can start after 8:00 PM.
- C. Practice sessions must be completed by 9:00 PM.
- D. Practice session should be no longer than 90 minutes.

SECTION 7 - LIGHTNING & INCLEMENT WEATHER

- A. The OHSAA lightning & inclement weather policy is in effect.
- B. When thunder is heard or a lightning bolt is seen at a practice or competition, the teams must suspend play and take shelter immediately. Once play has been suspended, a period of at least 30 minutes after the last thunder heard or lightning flash is witnessed must be honored prior to resuming play/practice.
- C. Contest or CYO officials assume authority for competitions when they arrive on the field. When the officials recognize inclement weather, they are bound to suspend the game. Coaches and member athletic directors are responsible for application of this policy at practice.
- D. Temperature, humidity, heavy precipitation and wind chill can become dangerous to the athletes and spectators and must be monitored during all practices and competitions by coaches and competition officials.
- E. Announcements related to the status of competitions will be posted on the main page of the schedule website and media as needed.

- F. During inclement weather a commissioner or head official may choose to relax the uniform rule.
- G. Unless the head coach is contacted or notified through a phone message, website or e-mail, a team is to report to the field at the scheduled time of the meet.
- H. **Weather Statement**
 - 1. Weather conditions are continuously monitored by CYO staff and weather professionals.
 - 2. Weather delays or cancelation decisions will be made **ONLY BY CYO STAFF** and communicated promptly.
 - 3. Official contest delays or cancellations re weather is available on the scheduling page of the CYO website.
 - 4. When lightning is detected within a 10-mile radius, all outdoor activities will be suspended immediately.
 - 5. When heat index thresholds become too high, outdoor events may be delayed or canceled.
 - 6. Events may be delayed, relocated, or rescheduled due to field or facility conditions.

SECTION 8 - COURSE LENGTHS

- A. Grades 6-8 divisions will run a course of approximately two (2.0) miles.
- B. Grades 4-5 divisions will run a course of approximately one and one-half (1.5) miles.
- C. Grades 1-3 divisions will run a course of approximately one (1.0) miles.

SECTION 9 - SCORING

- A. Each athlete will have a tag **chip** as they move through the finish chute. More information will be shared at the coach's meeting. **The results will be tabulated in Athletic.net by Wednesday evening.**
- B. No team scoring until Diocesan Championship Meet.

SECTION 10 - CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

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

SECTION 11 - CAUTION AND DISQUALIFICATION

- A. Runners and teams are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that the meet officials and CYO administration feel shows respect and dignity towards its opponent.
- B. It is an unfair act when a competitor receives any assistance. Assistance includes:
 - a. Interference with another competitor.
 - b. Pacing by a teammate, not in the race or persons not participating in the event.
 - c. Competitors joining or grasping hands with each other during a race.
 - d. Communicating with a competitor through the use of any device, including electronically, during a race or trial.
 - e. Coaching a competitor from a restricted area.
 - f. Competitor using an aid during the race or trial.
- Penalty:** Disqualification from the event.
- C. Athletes, coaches, parents, and fans who have been ejected, asked to leave, or removed by Officials or CYO personnel must depart immediately. If they refuse to leave the premises immediately, one week is added to their suspension. Their suspension begins the next day, with no option to appeal. There may be additional consequences and disciplinary actions for those individuals as stated below and in Bylaw 10.
- D. Anyone besides the coach or athlete on the team that enters the court or field of play is immediately suspended for one week and may be suspended for a longer time as determined by CYO Administration.
- E. CYO is dedicated to the safety of every child, parent and adult. We will not tolerate any form of aggressive or abusive behavior in the CYO community. Examples include: yelling at officials or site personnel; physical intimidation or threatening behavior; verbal or physical harassment; and any disruptive behaviors. If any of these behaviors occur, consequences will be assessed as outlined in **Bylaw 9** of the [CYO Charter & Bylaws](#).