



## ELIGIBILITY AND SPECIAL REQUESTS

Administration of CYO Athletics at the parish, school and archdiocesan level requires rules, policies and processes to effectively and efficiently run the program. To be true to our philosophy, it is imperative that there is a balance of justice and mercy in our program implementation. In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, mercy *"does not destroy justice, but is a certain kind of fulfillment of justice...Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; (and) justice without mercy is cruelty."*

Therefore, being merciful without a sense of what is fair and just to all involved undermines accountability and creates chaos because there is no means to hold individuals or programs to a standard of expectation. At the same time, simply applying the existing policy and associated consequence without consideration for the individual circumstances at hand exerts a heavy hand and lack of understanding and compassion that should be present in our program as a ministry of the Catholic Church.

In short, when approaching requests that do not adhere to the rules, policies and processes of CYO Athletics, leadership seeks the exceptional cases that justify a departure from the existing way of operating.

Eligibility information is on pp. 16-18 in the CYO Athletics manual. Here are some considerations when submitting eligibility or special requests to CYO Athletics.

### BEFORE THE REQUEST

1. Make sure registration deadlines are early enough, prior to the CYO Athletics Team Registration deadline, so it will be known exactly what grades to combine, or what teams will need to combine with other parishes to make teams viable.
2. PLEASE NOTE: For Soccer, Spring registration is ideal. Keep in mind, there may be new students to your parish/school in the Fall, and you should have a process for being able to include these new players.
3. Reach out to other AD's as soon as possible so people know what the needs are for the combinations that may need to take place.
4. Reach out to CYO Athletics ahead of time to clarify any question and what information would be most helpful for a specific request.
5. If seeking an exception to an existing rule, please answer the question, what unique circumstances justify this exception? If you have a reasonable answer to this question, pursue it with CYO Athletics.

### WHO SUBMITS THE REQUEST?

1. CYO Athletics reviews requests submitted via email by the AD or the pertinent sport coordinator (with AD cc'ed on the email).
2. CYO Athletics will NOT review requests submitted by coaches and/or parents.

### WHO REVIEWS THE REQUEST?

1. If the request is for a specific sport, it is reviewed by the committee for that sport in conjunction with the Director of CYO Athletics;
2. If the request is relevant to more than one sport or has ramifications that are larger than one sport, it will be reviewed by the CYO Athletics Advisory Committee also in conjunction with the Director of CYO Athletics;
3. Please note: in the case of Pierce County, requests will be reviewed by the body of Pierce County AD's and the sport coordinator for that sport in conjunction with the Director of CYO Athletics;

## TIMING OF REQUEST

1. Requests are best submitted in time for the registration deadline for the sport in question. Because the pre-season sport committee meetings usually take place after this deadline. The one regular exception to this is soccer.
2. This allows the committee in question to discuss the request in person instead of via email – this is most important for more nuanced requests that require conversation.
3. If you are planning on submitting a request and want to know when the sport committee will be meeting, consult with the CYO Athletics calendar or contact the office.
4. Generally, decisions on requests will be communicated after the pre-season committee meeting unless more information is necessary to make the decision.
5. If a request is submitted after this meeting has taken place, the timing often takes longer because back and forth over email and phone conversations is less efficient, please plan accordingly.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION – QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

When reviewing requests, leadership is dependent upon the submitting AD to communicate a sense of why the request is what works best for the requesting community and can also be justified to the larger community of CYO Athletics.

1. **GRADE COMBINATION** – *belief is that the experience for our youth is best, from an enjoyment and development standpoint, when they compete with teams of their peers but there may be times when this is determined at the parish/school level to be the best approach.*
  - a. Have you exhausted possibilities in the relevant grades within the school?
  - b. Have you exhausted possibilities in the relevant grades within the parish?
  - c. Have you exhausted possibilities in the relevant grades with neighboring programs?
  - d. What are your numbers right now? Is there any chance they will change?
  - e. Has the invitation been extended to all possible participants who will be playing up? We do not currently allow split of a grade (some playing up a grade, some playing at their grade).
  - f. How will the players playing up respond to this experience? Are they physically mature enough, skilled enough to do so?
  - g. How will the older players respond to playing with younger players? Will they feel held back? Will they be positive leaders in the experience?
  - h. Are you aware of family/athlete conflicts and how that will impact team viability?
2. **COMBINATION BETWEEN PARISHES/SCHOOLS** – *while this may create some logistical barriers it does reinforce the belief that we are “one community” in CYO Athletics. Many of these kids will be attending school together in high school and so may give them advance opportunity to develop those relationships.*
  - a. This must be discussed and agreed upon with AD’s from both giving/receiving communities in writing. While one AD may submit the request, the other AD(s) involved must be cc’ed on the request to CYO Athletics.
  - b. What are your numbers from each parish/school right now? Is there any chance they will change?
  - c. Are you aware of family/athlete conflicts and how that will impact team viability?
3. **NON-CATHOLIC** – *justification of non-athletic relationship is important so that this request is not seen as a means to recruit participants for their athletic ability and instead maintain/further develop relationship with and within a community.*
  - a. Do you have expressed support from pastor? How does he and pastoral leadership view this as part of parish evangelization to this individual? Their family?
  - b. If this is a former student at the school – does the principal support this?
  - c. As per described policy, what is the depth and impact of the non-athletic contact?