

TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT that is the big question

When a coach has more than enough players sign up for a team, the question now is, “How do I pick the 12 players I want for the team?”

Question #1: Do I keep 15 (this could be the maximum number of players allowed on the roster)?

- Many coaches do not want to keep more than 10 to 12 players. This number allows them to scrimmage among themselves with 0 to 2 subs to worry about. When you have 15 or more, it becomes difficult to sub and give each player a fair amount of playing time. There should be a mission statement and goal philosophy in place before the season starts. Coaches need guidelines to follow prior to the start of the season.

Example of a Mission Statement: “The mission of the Catholic Youth Organization of the Archdiocese of Detroit is to develop young people from diverse backgrounds through leadership and recreational activities where youth from 7-17 in southeastern Michigan learn teamwork, a healthy sense of competition and service to others based on Catholic values. Programs are primarily organized by or through Parishes, for both Catholic and non-Catholic participants.”

Question #2: Do I drop 1-2-3 or more players when I have reached the maximum amount allowed on the roster?

- It is difficult to tell a player they cannot play because the roster is full. Some programs have a “no-cut” rule. A lot has to do with the “win-win” philosophy of the coach versus the “everyone-plays” approach. There should be a mission statement in place addressing these issues; the goals of the program and the specific grade levels they pertain to. The goal to win is a healthy goal when done in a Christian atmosphere. It’s all in how you approach the goal. A coach has to be realistic in their assessment of the talent on the team.

Example of a Mission Statement: “To promote and provide programs of athletic development and participation; inculcate spiritual evangelization; encourage training for social relations based on respect for others and for one’s person; and create an element of social cohesion for the youth and parishioners of our parish.”

Question #3: If I have to have a “tryout”, what procedure do I implement to make a fair and honest decision.

- One suggestion is to have neutral parties come in and observe a scrimmage/drills and have them select the recommended individuals for the team. The coach would have the final say.

- How many tryouts would you have to have to convince the parents/player everyone had an equal opportunity to be seen? There are other considerations to be aware of: What grade are you involved with? Sometimes it is safer to take more than 12 because young player’s (grades 4-5-6) end up getting the typical grade-school illnesses during the school year.

- When you pass the required amount allowed on your roster, you would have to inform the parent their child will be put on a “waiting list.” An opportunity may arise whereby a player becomes injured prior to the start of the season; a player leaves the team for whatever reason; a player gets sick, etc. The first player on the waiting list earns the vacated spot.
- Suggest to the players if they can recruit 2/3 more players, you would consider having two teams of 10 or more players rather than cut 2/3 players. The added problem here is recruiting another coach. You need to have a knowledgeable coach; one with the right priorities regarding the team. You don’t want to have a “body” in place without proper screening.

Again consideration must be given to the Mission Statement of the program. Are you addressing the needs and desires of the athletes? Can the coach follow the criteria for the program without jeopardizing the interest level of the aspiring athlete? You do not want to give the parents or players the impression you are playing the “favoritism game” with some of the players. This is not what playing youth sports should be about.

Key Components of a CYO Mission Statement

Here are some key components to incorporate within a mission statement for your parish program: participation, learning to play as a team, skill development, fun, discipline, winning, execution, following directions, leadership development, spirituality, inclusiveness of all players. This would be a jump-off point for creating your own mission statement. The statement needs to answer the needs of your particular parish environment.

SPORTSMANSHIP IS THE BACKBONE OF CYO NASSAU/SUFFOLK (LI, NY)

All persons associated with CYO: players, coaches, coordinators, spectators and officials, are expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner that exemplifies Catholic values that should be fostered in our young people. These values include a mutual respect for and consideration of others.

Many programs concentrate on skill development of the particular sport. It is strongly suggested to address the competitiveness of the game in the middle school grade levels: 6 – 7 - 8.

- Clinic/Intramural Programs: There is a lot to be said about a clinic or intramural program. A successful clinic program in grades 1- 2 – 3 enables many of the players to be prepared for travel team competition. The emphasis at this level should be about the fundamentals of the game. All the youngsters in the program are to be encouraged, motivated and taught the rules of the game; the duties of the official; the basics of the game in preparation for entering the travel program later on. The registration fees collected from the Intramural program can be earmarked towards the expenses of the travel teams such as official’s fees, equipment, uniforms, etc.
- Levels of Competition: Inquire if your program considers putting teams in levels of competition commensurate to their talent:

Ex.: “A” teams with A team talent (highly skilled); “B” teams with B team talent (Average skilled); or “C” teams with C team talent (less skilled).

Nothing is gained by having an A level team play against a C level team. This type of competition can lead to discouragement for the C team – create a unhealthy atmosphere – low self-esteem and trigger animosity towards their opponents fueled out of frustration.

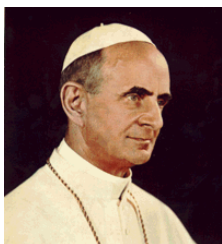
Everyone must have fun while learning. When a team is properly trained, given the correct tools, winning is the by-product of conscientious skill development. The greatest compliment a coach can receive is when the whole team is eager to return for next years season.



Pope Paul II addressed the value of sports in the church:

“Sport, because of the wholesome elements it gives value to and exalts, may become more and more a vital instrument for the moral and spiritual elevation of the human person and therefore contribute to the construction of an orderly, peaceful and hardworking society.”

“The church approves and encourages sports seeing it in a form of gymnastics of the body and of the spirit, a training for social relations based on respect for others and for one’s own person and an element of social cohesion which also fosters friendly relations...”



Pope Paul VI said:

“So be good sportsmen, dear sons and daughters; but be better citizens, with that equipment of virtues and qualities that make your existence fruitful and worthy. Still more, be excellent Christians who understand the value of life as the generous response to God, the Creator and Savior.”