MISSION STATEMENT
CYO Athletics is sports done a different way – as one community. Individuals and teams strive for greatness in accordance with Gospel values. To develop the whole person, we teach success is not measured solely by the scoreboard, but by the effort, team play, and fun of the experience.

ONE COMMUNITY
The CYO Athletics community is organized around the parish or school as its center of activities, as this is a natural environment that provides a resource of volunteers and financial support necessary for the implementation of activities for youth.

To support our parish community, CYO Athletics schedules around parish and school conflicts, and games will not begin before noon on Sundays to allow families to attend mass.

STRIVING FOR GREATNESS - PROGRAM GOALS
1) To provide opportunities for youth to grow in faith;
2) To increase self-confidence and self-reliance;
3) To increase interpersonal competence;
4) To increase a sense of caring toward others.

In other words, CYO Athletics is teaching Gospel values that aid boys and girls in their social, spiritual, physical and emotional development towards adulthood.

SPORTS AS MINISTRY
The Latin ministerium means “service”. All Christians, not just ordained, are called to ministry through baptism. CYO Athletics is a ministry of the Catholic Church. As such, sports becomes a vehicle for reaching young people, for providing opportunities to grow in their faith, to apply the lessons of faith to their daily lives. To our athletes, success should not be measured by the scoreboard, but by giving full effort, being the best teammate they can be, and having fun.

COMPASSIONATE COMPETITION
CYO Athletics should reflect an integration of the Gospel values we are called to live out through our baptismal call. It is not a choice between compassion and competition. It is not an either or proposition. One of the great elements of athletics is the aspect of competition. If we were to remove competition, we would remove one of the essential aspects of athletics that provides teachable moments and lasting memories. It is often competition that brings out the best in who we are and helps us become something more than we believed capable.

The word competition comes from the Latin com meaning “with” and petere meaning “to strive”. It is important to note that we do not compete against someone else, we compete with them. We strive with them to bring out the best in ourselves and those we compete with. Likewise, if we are to remove compassion from athletics, we remove the framework of our faith that should inform every action we take.
The word compassion comes from the Latin *com* meaning "with" and *pati* meaning "to bear, to suffer". Compassion is the sorrow for the sufferings of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help. Christ's passion is that which He suffered and endured on our behalf on the cross. His passion is in union with us and with God. Through this act, He reconciles us with God. We are called as disciples to take up that cross and to act in our lives with that same sense of suffering or endurance on behalf of others, to have and to show compassion for those we encounter.

One of the ways this is lived out specifically in CYO Athletics is in our lopsided score policy. Our emphasis on trying to eliminate lopsided scores comes from a number of values of the CYO Athletics program and the Catholic Church.

It is healthy for a coach to ask a player to focus on a less developed skill or weaker part of their skill set in order to grow as a player. That is not about reducing effort or achievement. It is simply redirecting effort from a skill that they clearly have grasped (or one they can achieve relative to their opponent) to one that they need to develop further.

In the end, while that player may not score a basket or a goal, they are better served as a competitive athlete for using lesser developed skills in a game environment and they likely made the game more competitive, which for most athletes and spectators is more fun. Because they have developed their skills, they will be better equipped to compete against a more skilled team.

**WHY HAVE PLAYOFFS?**

This question is sometimes asked within and about CYO Athletics. With its emphasis on the development of all participants and the concept of compassionate competition, why do we have a season ending experience where some teams qualify and some do not? Why do we have championship tournaments or events where we hand out trophies? Is this really what CYO Athletics is all about? If we reflect on the prayer for the courage to be great that is based on the life of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frasassi, known as “the Man of the Eight Beatitudes”, there is congruence.

Much like Pier Giorgio (www.FrasattiUSA.org) and the example of his life, we are called to seek greatness but not at the expense of others.

Striving for the highest goals is in line with the message of CYO Athletics that all participants should maximize their potential in order to become a champion. This is not limited to our involvement with sports. Like Pier Giorgio, the striving to be a champion as an athlete should be matched by the desire to do so in other areas of life — as a student, as a friend and family member, as a member of the community. To be a champion disciple encompasses all of these things.

Playoffs and championship competition provide an opportunity for individuals and teams of proven talent and ability to compete with other individuals and teams of like capability and accomplishment and bring out the best in themselves and others in the field of athletics. In most individual sports, the challenge is the athlete against the time or distance while in team sports the challenge is how a group of individuals can not only maximize their individual contributions but also their output as a team, all the while in dynamic competition with an opponent who is striving to do the same. Playoffs and championship competition are both an acknowledgement of achievement and an opportunity to refine excellence.

The difference in CYO Athletics is that the achievement and excellence should be rooted in the Gospel values that inform our entire lives as disciples, like Blessed Pier Giorgio. If there is an issue of reform this is where we need to be vigilant, to ensure that every level of competition reflects the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice.

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**Prayer for the Courage to be Great**

“Heavenly Father,

Give me the courage to strive for the highest goals,
to flee every temptation to be mediocre.
Enable me to aspire to greatness, as Pier Giorgio did,
and to open my heart with joy to Your call to holiness.
Free me from the fear of failure.
I want to be, Lord, firmly and forever united to You.
Grant me the graces I ask You through Pier Giorgio’s intercession,
by the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.”
GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING CYO ATHLETICS’ PHILOSOPHY

The goal of coaches in CYO Athletics should be to assist every player on his or her team to utilize their God-given talents to the best of their ability in the hope that each child will leave the season with a feeling of individual accomplishment and an increased sense of self-worth. At practices, each youth will receive equal attention regardless of playing ability.

Each child who faithfully attends practice must be given meaningful opportunity to play in games. Each parish may determine specifics above and beyond the minimum requirements, but CYO Athletics has minimum playing time requirements specific for each sport.