

CHEERLEADING RULES & POLICIES

3rd-8th graders in NVJCYO

REV. 11/2/2023

CONTENTS

PAGE(S)

Leading in Faith/Coach Modeling

Components of Youth Ministry.....	2
Prayer.....	3

Safety

Safety Guidelines.....	4
Uniforms.....	6

Cheering at NVJCYO Basketball Games

Games.....	7
Prayer and Departure.....	7

Optional Competition/Exhibition

Guidelines for Event.....	8
---------------------------	---

Facilities, Behavior, Discipline

Acting Commissioner.....	9
--------------------------	---

Eligibility/Waivers.....	10
--------------------------	----

Rosters/Registration.....	14
---------------------------	----

*All rules and policies may be amended by the Diocese at any time.



Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries

“Sports contribute to the love of life, teaches sacrifice, respect and responsibility, leading to the full development of every human person.”

—St. John Paul II

	Specifically how is our parish/team using sports to...	Coaches can promote...
Advocacy	...ensure a safe environment for youth? ...foster leadership in each youth? ...foster the development of marginalized youth? ... promote confidence?	...self-confidence; supportive environment among teammates, parents; the idea that <u>each</u> youth has leadership potential by providing opportunities to lead drills and activities; the support of players who need the most work or seem ostracized; a safe environment; identification of leaders of all sorts.
Catechesis	...teach and reinforce virtue in real-life experiences?	...sportsmanship; humility; obedience; respect; relying on others; care for others; corporal & spiritual works of mercy; persistence.
Community Life	...promote the team as community? ...make each youth feel part of the parish community? ...encourage family involvement?	...teamwork; engagement in the larger community; the idea of coach as role model; families getting involved in the parish; team socials; team activities and service for—and with—the parish (altar servers, etc.); authentic hospitality to guests.
Evangelization	...help each youth understand that how we play reflects our values? ...help each youth to be more Christ-like?	...demonstration of virtue and sportsmanship during practices and games to allow us to live our faith and for others to see that (effective player and coach role modeling makes others want what we have).
Justice and Service	...learn about the importance of respect? ...teach about service to others?	...assisting teammates who are in a tough spot; helping teammates outside of practice/games; respecting opponents, refs, coaches; corporal & spiritual acts of mercy; a team service project.
Leadership Development	...identify existing youth leaders and cultivate leadership characteristics in all? ...build confidence in each youth?	... youth respectfully advocating for themselves at practice; providing each youth with a responsibility and a leadership task; encouraging contributions by each youth; the rotation of team roles.
Pastoral Care	... to promote the total development of each youth? ...develop adult leaders and coaches to have the skills and attributes necessary to develop each youth?	...the total development of each youth; understanding each’s strengths and weaknesses; treating others fairly in a game or practice; the art of winning and losing gracefully.
Prayer and Worship	...help youth become comfortable with prayer in their daily lives? ...encourage participation in the sacraments of our faith? ...help youth reflect on spiritual needs?	... faithfulness & what that looks like for a Catholic; prayer, by the coach being comfortable in leading prayer and ensuring the team prays before & after each practice and game; personal reflection by players about expected attitudes and behaviors in parish sports; team/families attending Adoration, Confession, Mass together.

(Components of Youth Ministry in left column developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Vision.*)

SECTION: LEADING IN FAITH

I. Prayer

Prayer is essential to our lives, our community, and to this activity. Please make certain that all coaches and players reinforce its importance in practices and at games and activities.

- A. All practices and team activities must **begin and end** with a prayer.
- B. Cheerleaders should all stand and participate in the team prayer before the basketball games, modeling that behavior for everyone in the stands.
- C. Gym (including spectators) should be quiet and reverent prior to the start of prayer. Coaches, please ask your spectators who are able to stand during prayer.
- D. Cheer coaches must close each post-game wrap up with a prayer.

II. Coach Modeling

Coaches should make a conscientious effort to:

- Implement the components of youth ministry discussed in the chart on the preceding page
- Pay attention to the coach's own faith life and seek to grow closer to our Lord in word and action within the activity and beyond
- Help the team to set team/personal goals related to the activity and a youth's faith life
- Consider seeking assistance from other OPCYP/child protection compliant adults (Director of Youth Ministry, parents, parochial vicar, pastor, religious sister, etc.) to assist you in creating ways within your practices/activities to foster these components.

SECTION: SAFETY

I. Safety Guidelines

Safety must always be the TOP priority! It is well documented that cheerleading is one of the most dangerous sports for youth and teens, primarily because coaches who are not properly trained in stunting and gymnastics try to do skills that are beyond their capacity to teach and supervise. Do not fall into that trap! If you are not qualified, do not engage in activities/skills beyond your capacity. Generally speaking, we will follow the [AACCA guidelines](#), but please see the additional rules below. To the extent there are any conflicts beyond those specified in the NVJCYO safety guidelines contained herein, the more restrictive rules apply. Coaches must review these guidelines and ensure that all activities conform to them. Other safety information may be found in these rules. Be certain that you review the rules, guidelines, and other safety information relevant to the youth you will be coaching. If you find conflict in the rules, consult the Commissioner immediately. (The commissioner will confer with the appropriate personnel at the Diocese.)

- A. **Parish programs and coaches must always err on the side of caution, making sure that coaches only have their teams attempt skills that are firmly within the coach's capacity to teach and supervise and the youth's capacity to execute. There is nothing to be gained, other than heightened risk of injury, from trying to do stunts that are unsafe for your team.**
- B. Be sure to warm up the team with stretching exercises before attempting any stunts or gymnastics.
- C. No flyer should ever be higher than shoulder-level.
- D. No basket tosses are permitted.
- E. One foot must be in contact with a basing cheerleader at all times except during a cradle.
- F. Cradle dismounts are permissible **only with proper training and spotting**.
- G. No stunts or gymnastics should be done at practices unless the entirety of the stunt or gymnastics sequence is on mats appropriate for the activities.
- H. All thigh stands must have an assister/spotter in back of the stunt. This person will help lift the flyer onto the thighs and keep hands on her waist while she is up to provide added support and stability.
- I. All stunts where anyone is at shoulder level (including "prep" lifts, sitting or standing on shoulders, or any other stunt in which a cheerleader is elevated to the shoulder level), must have **at least** one dedicated spotter in addition to all the bases and lifters. When learning stunts, there should be additional spotters until the stunt is consistently steady. Coaches should also use their discretion to place extra spotters behind stunts, always erring on the side of caution and safety.
- J. Being a spotter is a very important job and it must be impressed upon the cheerleaders that this is the case. This is NOT the place to "hide" your least skilled cheerleaders if they are not sufficiently strong, tall and focused to handle the responsibility of spotting. **In general, spotters:**
 - 1. Must be trained by the coaches or appropriate personnel on their role and expectations prior to serving as a spotter.
 - 2. Must be appropriately tall and strong in order to help catch and support a flyer who wobbles or falls.
 - 3. **Cannot** be providing support for or lifting any part of the flyer. His/her sole responsibility is to be there in case of any trouble with the stunt.
 - 4. Must be in a position to protect the head, neck and shoulders of the top person should the stunt fall.
 - 5. Must be focused on the top person at all times and not look away even for a second.
 - 6. May not have hands behind his/her back.
 - 7. May not hold any objects in his/her hand, including signs or pompoms.

- K. All dismounts from shoulder height must be assisted. The assistance must be sufficient to slow and support the momentum and landing of the top person. Cradle dismounts are permissible but only when properly taught, supervised, and spotted.
- L. Only cheerleaders who have taken adequate gymnastics classes should be allowed to do gymnastics at practices, games, or any competitions unless coaches are trained and certified to teach gymnastics. This includes forward rolls which may seem innocuous, but present dangers to the neck if not done properly. Cheerleaders should only do skills that they can confidently and securely do. Practices are NOT the time for “skilling up” unless coaches are trained and certified in teaching gymnastics. The following rules apply to both practices and exhibition:
1. No dive rolls.
 2. Flips and twists can be no more than one rotation.
 3. Landings must be made on the feet (no landings directly to the knees or prone position).
 4. Only the most skilled and trained gymnasts should do more than 2 skills in a row. All skills must be performed on mats in their entirety from start of the run to final dismount.
- M. Nails should be short and rounded.
- N. All coaches must have a fully stocked first-aid kit with them at all times and have at least 5 useable ice packs for all practices and games.
- O. All coaches must have medical release forms available to them at all practices and games in case of injury or illness.
- P. Concussion Awareness.
1. All coaches must take the free CDC online concussion awareness course <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/coach.html> and provide evidence of having done so to the parish representative. You must provide proof of successful completion of the training to your NVJCYO parish representative and keep a copy for your records.
 2. A parent/guardian of each participating youth must have submitted a signed form indicating that they have reviewed the CDC concussion information sheet with their child https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/parent_athlete_info_sheet-a.pdf
 3. Download this PDF and keep at activities: https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/coaches_engl.pdf
 4. If anyone hits their head at all, that child should cease all activities for the day and parents must be notified immediately. They should be given full and clear details of what happened and anything that the coach has observed since the head was hit.
 5. The youth may not return to play or practice or activity for 24 hours and may only do so then with **written permission** for return to the activity from an appropriate health care professional.
- Q. For all injuries that require ER, hospital, doctor or outside clinic care, you must fill out the Diocese mandated Student Injury Accident Report which can be found here: http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/risk/risk_mgmt_forms.aspx Please also check with your parish to see if it has any additional injury reporting standards or requirements.
- R. Coaches and other volunteers must complete the Volunteer Risk Awareness Agreement form and provide to their NVJCYO Parish Representative. <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Youth-Ministry/Sports/Rules---Forms/>
- S. Two rules that bear repeating in this document:

- (a) All coaches, assistant coaches, and anyone with substantial contact with youth must meet all diocesan and parish child protection and other requirements and be approved by the Pastor prior to the beginning of any activity, practice, or game.
- (b) There must be at least 2 parish-approved OPCYP compliant coaches per team and they cannot be relatives. If one coach cannot attend a practice/game/activity, there must be another fully parish-approved-child-protection-(OPCYP) compliant adult present at the practice/game/activity who is not a relative of the other adult.

II. Uniforms

- A. No one should wear any jewelry while doing stunting or gymnastics unless it is a medical alert or simple religious medallion. If these are worn, they should be taped down with medical tape while practicing and cheering.
- B. Any cheerleader involved in stunts should not be wearing earrings of any sort during any practice, game or competition in which stunts are being practiced or performed. The only exception is for anyone with newly pierced ears who cannot yet remove the earrings while scar tissues is still forming. In any case, dangle or hoop earrings are not permitted while cheering as they present injury hazards. (No earrings of value should be worn as there is no coverage for any lost or damaged items.)
- C. Anyone doing stunts or gymnastics at practices/competition must be wearing proper athletic sneakers. Tennis shoes with no traction or support for the foot are not acceptable or safe footwear. All shoelaces must be tied securely (double-knotting is recommended), and long loops and laces should be tucked in for safety.
- D. Pom poms, megaphones, signs and any other accessories are allowed but are purely optional. **There should be no noisemakers of any kind used at games (megaphones, if used at all, can only be used during cheer routine—not during game play).**
- E. Parishes need not spend a lot of money on uniforms. Teams may also cheer in gym uniforms if desired. All that's important is that everyone look neat, unified, and that there is no restrictive or costume-like apparel that may cause potential for injuries. The cost of uniforms should NOT be a barrier to having a cheerleading team.
- F. Each parish may set its own appearance guidelines that may be more restrictive than these for safety, modesty, or other reasons.

SECTION: CHEERING AT NVJCYO GAMES

I. Guidelines for Participation at Games:

- A. See Leading in Faith section above related to prayer at the start of games.
- B. You may cheer at games for 6th, 7th and 8th grade teams only. The distraction of cheerleading isn't appropriate for younger grades due to the more instructional nature of the basketball games.
- C. You are encouraged to cheer for both boys' and girls' teams and to cheer for as many teams as you can throughout the season. Most teams pick one or two games per weekend for cheering (two if you have two teams that are playing back-to-back).
- D. If for any reason, you have concerns about any parish, team, referee, or set of fans, please let the cheer commissioner know and the commissioner will work with you to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- E. Positive cheering only! You may not cheer "against" other teams, boo, or display any unsportsmanlike behavior.
- F. No cheering or talking is allowed while a team is taking foul shots. Indeed, cheerleaders should endeavor to refrain from talking and chatting while on the sidelines to the maximum extent possible. Cheerleaders should be paying attention to the game and cheering on the team, not socializing.
- G. If there are two cheerleading teams at the same game, you should take turns doing cheers and NEVER try to cheer "over" one another as that is unsportsmanlike behavior. Enjoy the fun of having two teams and trade cheers back and forth, engaging each other where possible!
- H. At halftime, teams may perform a routine that's no more than 1 minute long. If there are two teams, the home team gets to choose if they go first or second.
- I. Cheerleading coaches should introduce themselves to the opposing team's coaches, let them know where your team will be cheering, and assure them it will all be positive cheering only.
- J. Teams may have a mascot but the mascot must be approved by the pastor or parish staff designated by the pastor.
- K. Any coach or youth who is ejected from a venue for unsportsmanlike conduct will, at minimum, be automatically suspended from the team's next cheering opportunity/game/exhibition. Parishes or the CYO can impose more stringent discipline than this depending on the circumstances.
- L. Cheerleaders cannot use the halls and foyers to warm up before games. There isn't enough room with all the spectators who are coming in and out.
- M. Teams should not cheer at gyms where there is not adequate space. These gyms include: St. Agnes, St. Ann. (This list may be expanded during the season based upon parish dictates, safety concerns, etc.)

II. Prayer and Departure

- A. Due to time constraints related to gym space, coaches and youth should immediately clear the benches/stands after the game and depart the gym.
- B. Coaches must ensure that their players AND spectators stay off the court after a game so the teams may warm up.
- C. If there is a game after the one you just cheered for, post-game wrap-up talk should be held outside—not in the gym.
- D. Post-game wrap up must close with a prayer.

SECTION: OPTIONAL COMPETITION/EXHIBITION

I. Guidelines for Participation at Competition/Exhibition: [Judy, not sure if you had changes to below.]

Each season, typically in February, there is the option for NVJCYO teams to be invited to participate in Bishop Ireton's Winter Blast Competition. Please note that all of the guidelines offered below may change at the discretion of the Diocese or the venue from year to year based on space, availability, interest, safety, participation, etc.

- A. For the 2023-24 season parish 3rd-8th grade teams will have the choice to either compete in a "Varsity" division in which they will be scored and placed relative to the other competitors, or they can participate in the "Junior Varsity" division where they will receive scores and constructive feedback from the judges. Age of the cheerleaders does not determine which division you are in. Each parish can choose the division in which it will participate.
- B. Parishes may have more than one team if they so desire and they can participate in the same or different divisions.
- C. Though some teams will be scored, we encourage everyone to emphasize the low-pressure nature of the event so that everyone has a great time.
- D. One parish will also be presented the Spirit Award. All parishes regardless of division will be eligible for this award and it will not be based on how a team scored, but rather, how strong their parish spirit and sportsmanship is.
- E. Routines may include cheering, dancing and/or stunting. There is no prescribed format so do what makes most sense for your team. Routines should be no longer than 2 minutes and 30 seconds total.
 - a. If you use music and dance, please be sure to select suitable songs and dance moves appropriate for a Catholic event and venue. Nothing lewd, suggestive or too mature please. **Please review ALL the lyrics in any song you use, not just the section you are using. If there's anything inappropriate in any part of the song, please select something else. If in doubt, select something else.** Remember, your team represents your parish. Bishop Ireton will provide all necessary equipment for playing your music, which you will submit to them electronically in advance of the event.
 - b. You must also have a valid license to play the song at the Exhibition. Please discuss with the Commissioner if you have any questions about this.

SECTION: FACILITIES/BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

I. Acting Commissioner

- A. There should be a volunteer basketball Commissioner or Acting Commissioner (AC) at games designated to address any behavioral concerns. Cheer coaches should take care of their own teams but if there are any other concerns, please address them to the basketball Commissioner or AC at the game and subsequently alert the Cheer Commissioner.

II. Game Facilities

- A. Coaches, players, cheerleaders, and spectators shall abide by the diocesan, parish, school and gym rules set forth at venues/facilities used by the league. This includes the following rule among others: **NO FOOD, NO CHEWING GUM, NO DRINKS, AND NO SMOKING** in the gyms. Water bottles should be left in safe foyer areas.
- B. Each head coach is expected to see that the team adheres to the facility rules and to oversee any other aspect of the behavior of the team. Each head coach is expected also to advise the team's supporters of the rules of facilities and to take an active part in preventing or stopping any misbehavior (including abusive language) by the team's supporters. Spectators, participants, and coaches are expected to abide by the Diocese of Arlington Code of Conduct. Any spectator, participant, or coach exhibiting misbehavior or any breach of the Code of Conduct shall be subject to suspension or expulsion by the League Commissioner, Acting Commissioner, Basketball Program Manager or the Diocese of Arlington Office of Youth, Campus and Young Adult Ministries.
- C. If coach, player or spectator is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct from a game, the coach, player or spectator will be suspended, at minimum, for the team's next scheduled game. If the player, coach or spectator is ejected a second time the player, coach or spectator will be suspended for the rest of the season. Any coach, player or spectator that has been suspended for a game may not attend that game, nor any other Diocese of Arlington league game regardless of league, while serving the suspension.
- D. All sanctions for any rule or policy in this document or inappropriate behavior not delineated in this document are at the sole discretion of the Diocese.

SECTION: ELIGIBILITY TO CHEER

A primary goal of the diocesan youth ministry sports program is to foster Christ-centered relationships within the *parish* community. As such, all programs are designed to revolve around the parish; youth should participate with their respective parishes. Research shows that the more positive interactions young people have with multiple faithful and appropriate adult role models throughout their parish community, the more likely it is that they will remain in the faith. If done properly and under the oversight of the pastor, the program can truly become a ministry of the parish rather than simply one of a dozen sports options available in the larger northern Virginia area.

Principles and Requirements of Participation

1. The spirit of the eligibility rules is as important as the letter of the rules. Violations may affect a parish's ability to continue participation. Be vigilant as the consequences may not simply impact an individual or a team but multiple teams and the entire parish.
2. The program is only a ministry if each person involved treats it as such. If you, as a parent, coach, or participant, do not feel like a focus on ministry is appropriate or can be your focus, please take advantage of one of the scores of other leagues available in Virginia.
3. The league is parish-based—not school-based.
4. Though children from parishes that do not have a cheer team may be eligible to participate on your team, there should be ZERO active recruitment of individuals outside of your parish's boundaries (e.g., you or your youth asking a friend from your youth's neighborhood/community, all-star cheering gyms, AAU, travel or various other leagues to play in this league).
5. Team shopping is not permitted (e.g., playing for one parish's basketball team and another parish's track team) unless a given sport is not offered by the youth's parish. (Even then, the preference is that the parish without a team begins one.)

6. No one is guaranteed participation. Parish and diocesan resources including gym space, volunteers, and staff are finite which may influence the level of participation for individual parishes.

In addition to other requirements for eligibility stipulated in this section...

7. A Roman Catholic youth who wishes to request to participate in the league **must be:**
- a. **registered** in a Catholic Diocese of Arlington parish
 - b. **attending Mass regularly** (at minimum Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation)
 - c. **registered by October 1, regularly attending, and actively participating in religious education within:**
 - **a Catholic Diocese of Arlington school; OR**
 - **a non-diocesan Catholic school of the Latin Rite; OR**
 - **a religious education program of a parish of the Diocese; OR**
 - **a home-schooling Roman Catholic religious education curriculum** approved by the youth's Catholic Diocese of Arlington pastor or pastor's designee.
- i. A youth who is attending a Catholic Diocese of Arlington school or religious education program at the youth's home parish must play for that home parish if they have a team.
 - ii. A youth who is attending a Catholic Diocese of Arlington school outside of the youth's parish and wishes to play for that school's parish may do so as long as the youth's home parish does not object.
 - iii. A youth of a Catholic Diocese of Arlington parish who is attending a Roman Catholic school but not a Catholic Diocese of Arlington school (e.g., a Roman Catholic school in Washington, DC or a non-diocesan Catholic school in northern Virginia) must play for his or her home parish unless that parish does not participate in the league.

8. All participation must be in accordance with diocesan and parish guidelines related to child protection and other guidance.
9. Youth must play for teams of their biological sex and in alignment with the intent of Bishop Burbidge's "A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology" and the Catholic Diocese of Arlington's Policy for Schools & Ministries Related to the Human Person and Gender Ideology.
10. A youth of a Catholic Diocese of Arlington parish who has already received Confirmation in another diocese must still be participating in religious education prescribed by the pastor (e.g., further youth ministry participation, etc.)
11. A youth who is not Roman Catholic who wishes to request to participate must be taking Roman Catholic religious education (at a Catholic Diocese of Arlington parish school or, if actively seeking initiation into the faith, other education approved by his intended Catholic Diocese of Arlington parish's pastor).
12. Requests for a waiver to the eligibility requirements must be submitted to the league through the parish representative to the league.
13. All inquiries related to eligibility must come through the respective parish representative. (If more than one parish is involved, the requesting parish representative should communicate with the other parish prior to inquiry to the league.)
14. An individual parish may have guidance that is more strict or restrictive than these guidelines for participation in/from their parish.
15. The parish must approve (via the official roster submission with appropriate signatures) each coach and participant's eligibility prior to consideration by the league. The parish or Diocese has the discretion to rescind those approvals at any time before or during the season.
16. A youth who registers for religious education and agrees to attend—but then does not do so—automatically forfeits his or her ability to continue to play in the league for the current year as well as the subsequent year. Extenuating circumstances may be considered by the league but they must be fully supported by the evidence

and receive permission of the Pastor or Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry prior to the request being made to the league.

17. 9th graders are not eligible to participate even if he or she meets the age criteria.
18. Boys may only play on boys teams and girls may only play on girls teams.
19. All approvals of participation or waivers are subject to the discretion of the diocesan Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries.
20. All approvals of league participation are subject to being rescinded at the sole discretion of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington and the Diocese reserves the right to change eligibility at its discretion at any time.

Steps Required for a Youth to Participate for a Parish Other than The Youth's Home Parish When the Home Parish Does NOT Have a Team:

1. By October 1, the youth must be actively participating in the parish school or religious education program at the youth's home parish.
2. The youth's parents/guardians must demonstrate that they have attempted to get their home parish to begin a team (currently or for the future). This requirement is an attempt to further the goal stated at the beginning of the eligibility section related to fostering parish community. The family should work with the parish representative to seek out other youth from their own parish to begin a team(s).
3. The youth's home parish must share at least one common boundary with the parish for which the youth wishes to participate.
4. The youth's parents must contact the parish representative for the parish for which the youth wishes to play and ascertain whether there are any openings on teams. As long as all other Catholic education, age, and other requirements are met it is as the discretion of the parish whether the parish permits the youth to play.

Steps Required for a Youth to Participate for a Parish Other than The Youth's Home Parish When the Home Parish DOES Have a Team:

1. By October 1, the youth must be actively participating in the parish school or religious education program at the parish for which the youth wishes to play.
2. The youth must demonstrate via some correspondence approved by the Pastor, the Director of Youth Ministry or the parish's representative to the league that the youth's home parish does not object to the youth playing for the parish where the youth attends a Catholic Diocese of Arlington school or religious education program.

FAQs

1. Q: Does the parish's representative to the league need to fill out waiver form if...:
 - ❖ ...a youth's parish does not have a team and the youth wishes to play for the youth's school or adjoining parish?
 - A: **NO. All other requirements must be met.**
 - ❖ ...a parish wishes a youth to "play up" a grade or more?
 - A: **NO** (Keep in mind that there may be size, skill, and maturity differences so parents and a parish should be aware of the various concerns involved and the parish representative to the league should consult with parish staff.)
 - ❖ ...a youth transferred into the parish's school or religious education program after the October 1 deadline but meets all other requirements?

- **A: It is at the discretion of the parish of whether to allow participation of this individual. NO, a waiver is not required (but an amended roster must be submitted for approval).**
2. May a youth who is a parishioner of **parish A** (who has a team) but is homeschooled and participates in home-school religious education with a homeschool group centered around and made up primarily of families from **parish B** play on a team with parish B?
- A: The strong preference is that the youth participates with the youth's home parish in order to foster that parish community. However, in this circumstance, as long as the youth meets all other requirements and the pastor or his designee at parish A indicates his approval to the parish representative at parish B then this will be permitted.

Other Eligibility Criteria

1. A player must meet the following age/grade criteria:
- 8th grade leagues: 8th grade or below and will not have reached his/her 15th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - 7th grade leagues: 7th grade or below and will not have reached his/her 14th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - 6th grade leagues: 6th grade or below and will not have reached his/her 13th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - 5th grade leagues: 5th grade or below and will not have reached his/her 12th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - 4th grade leagues: 4th grade or below and will not have reached his/her 11th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - 3rd grade leagues: 3rd grade or below and will not have reached his/her 10th birthday prior to the next June 1.
 - No more than (1) 2nd grader may be on any 3rd grade team. (2nd graders cannot participate in higher grades).

SECTION: ROSTERS/REGISTRATION

I. Coaches.

- A. The parish representative and coaches are responsible for ensuring that each roster includes at least two unrelated (to each other) responsible adults, 21 or older, who meet all the child protection and other requirements of the Diocese and parish prior to being placed on the roster as the coaches (or assistant coaches) of the team. These are the legally responsible adults/chaperones.
- B. All coaches and other persons with substantial contact with youth must be approved by the parish's liaison for youth and child protection prior to participation in any practices, games, or other activities.
- C. All coaches and other persons with substantial contact with youth must register using the league-designated registration system.
- D. All coaches and other volunteers must sign the Volunteer Risk Awareness Agreement and provide to the parish representative for the parish to retain.

II. Players/Youth.

- A. Parent/guardian must register their youth using the league-designated registration system. (For questions about registration, please contact your parish representative. Please do NOT contact the Diocese as the Diocese will not be familiar with your situation or specific parish requirements.)
- B. A player may not be rostered on—or play on—more than one NVJCYO team (per sport).
- C. Each player shall have a completed official NVJCYO Permission Slip/Medical Release Form before participating and will provide that completed and properly signed form to the coach.
- D. A new completed Permission and Release form shall be submitted for each NVJCYO sport.
- E. Parents/guardians of each rostered player must sign the Concussion Awareness form and provide it to the coach who will compile and give to the parish representative.

III. Submission and Retention of Forms.

- A. The coach should retain a copy of the NVJCYO Permission Slip/Medical Release Form during all practices, games and other activities.
- B. The NVJCYO Permission Slip/Medical Release Form must be kept on file at the parish and is subject to review by league/Diocesan officials.
- F. The NVJCYO Roster must be signed by the appropriate individuals (i.e., Pastor, Principal, or Director of Religious Education, depending on the circumstances) by the deadline established by the Diocese. The signed rosters are retained by the parish. The league and Diocese will use the rosters submitted electronically; however, the league also has the right to check the signed form at any time. The oversight of the parish representative is important. Any paper rosters that differ from electronic submissions by the parish are not considered official.

IV. Team Size.

- A. There are no minimum or maximum team sizes required by the league (a parish may set its own if so desired). However, be aware that at some venues the entire team may not be able to perform.