

2026 CYO Cadet & 56 Soccer Leagues
Rules & Regulations

Section A - Purposes & Conduct

1. The purpose of the leagues is to provide supervised competitive recreation for boys and girls in the CYO Grade School age group, thereby giving them an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of soccer and to develop spiritually, mentally, and physically.
2. Any team member or coach conducting him or herself in an unsportsmanlike manner shall be liable to suspension from the league. The CYO Athletic Code of Ethics must be followed at all times, and it is the responsibility of the coaches to adhere to and enforce these standards.
3. It is expected that the coach will not tolerate bad language from the players, assistant coaches or him or herself. Officials are to eject players and coaches from a game for the use of bad language or for fighting and file a report with the CYO Office. Anyone ejected cannot return to participate in that game.
4. All offenders will be subject to actions outlined in the CYO Athletic Disciplinary Policy.

Section B - Special Scheduling Notes

1. No team may take it upon themselves to postpone a game. The schedule is to be strictly followed, except in extremely inclement weather. Any postponed game must be made up. The CYO Office must always be notified.
2. Games are expected to begin at times designated on the official schedule, except when the start is delayed by an incomplete game. Parishes providing fields for the CYO program have the prerogative of charging admission. A 15-minute grace period is allowed the offending team before a forfeit can be claimed.
3. Practice sessions must be conducted with the idea in mind that we are dealing with growing boys and girls. Therefore, no single practice session may exceed two hours in length, and no team may conduct supervised practice more than once a day. Coaches should also provide plenty of water for the players.
4. The CYO Office will keep league standings. Scores must be reported to the CYO website immediately following each game at www.cyoarchindy.org.
5. In all CYO leagues, our greatest concern is always the physical safety of the boys and girls.

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Section C – Eligibility

The following general eligibility rules are taken from the CYO General Eligibility Standards:

Cadet Age Group

1. **Age & Grade** - Fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who have not reached the age of 16 before the completion of the athletic season in which they are competing.
2. **Parish and School Affiliation** – In order to participate in CYO grade school sports, all participants must be either a student enrolled in a Catholic school or a child residing in a household registered in and participate in a Catholic parish. A participating household is determined by official registration on the parish roster. However, pastors, at their discretion, may also require attendance at Mass and or active participation in the religious education or youth ministry programs offered by the parish.
3. **Special Note:** If a student has completed the 8th grade and has graduated with his or her class from grade school, that student is no longer eligible to participate in the grade school athletic program.

56 Age Group

1. **Age & Grade** - Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students who have not reached the age of 14 before the completion of the athletic season in which they are competing.
2. **Parish and School Affiliation** – In order to participate in CYO grade school sports, all participants must be either a student enrolled in a Catholic school or a child residing in a household registered in and participate in a Catholic parish. A participating household is determined by official registration on the parish roster. However, pastors, at their discretion, may also require attendance at Mass and or active participation in the religious education or youth ministry programs offered by the parish.

Section D - General Information

1. There may be individual cases involving youth affiliated with another parish or school who want to participate because their own parish or school does not sponsor that activity. These individuals may participate for a bordering parish when that parish is willing to grant permission.
2. CYO participants and coaches are required to register for CYO athletic programs through the CYO website, www.cyoarchindy.org, once each school year to be eligible for participation. After logging on to the website parents click on the Register Child link and coaches click on the Coach Registration link to register. If coaches and participants do not register through the website, they cannot be added to a team as a coach or to a roster as a participant.

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3. After a parent has registered the child through the website they must download and print a physician's examination form from the site. These mandatory physical forms, once completed by the physician, will then be turned into the parish athletic director and are to be kept on file at the parish or school and are valid for the entire school year.
 - A. In all leagues, every boy and girl who takes part in the CYO Soccer League must have a physical examination before they play in a game, recorded on the CYO Physician's Certificate. If possible, each parish should arrange for a group physical for the entire team at one time or require each boy or girl to be checked by his or her family doctor. These blanks are to be turned in to the parish athletic director and are to be kept on file at the parish or school and are valid for the entire school year.
 - B. A player may not begin the regular season with the Cadet team and move down to the 56 team after participating in a Cadet game. They may move up to the Cadet team after the opening of the season but may not return to the 56 team. This rule takes effect on the opening day of the regular season.
 - C. In addition to the general eligibility standards for participation in CYO sports and the specific eligibility rules for each sport, all student athletes are subject to the academic policies of the sponsoring parish. Scholastic eligibility is always the prerogative of the Catholic school administrator. (See Catholic schools policy manual 502.2.)
 - D. In all leagues, players eligible to participate may be added to a roster up to the roster freeze date of April 15th if a properly completed eligibility blank, including the physician's certificate is submitted, and the registration fee is paid to the CYO Office.
 - E. In both leagues no protest other than those concerning player's eligibility violations will be accepted by the CYO Athletics Policy Committee. Protests must be filed with the CYO Office in writing not more than 48 hours after the incident.
 - F. In both leagues a team involved in a violation of any of these eligibility rules may be penalized as follows: the player is removed from the team; the team forfeits all games in which this player has participated; the school is put on probation for six months; and, the school is suspended from the CYO Grade School Program for one year if a second violation occurs during the probation period. All such violations shall be subject to review by the Athletics Policy Committee of the CYO Board of Directors.
 - G. **Due to the act that postseason participation is determined by the outcome of regular season games, players are not allowed to float between games during the season. Players are only allowed to play for the team on which their name appears on the roster.**

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Section E - Special Playing Rules

Play in the leagues shall be governed by the rule book issued by the National Federation of State High School Associations (IHSAA), with certain exceptions, which shall be listed in these rules:

A. CYO Soccer Minimum Playing Time Rule

The following rule is intended to ensure that all participants, regardless of their skill level, are given the opportunity to play a reasonable amount of time in every game. When a child signs up for the CYO program they expect, and have the right, to play in all Games. Coaches need to respect all the young athletes if they are to have a rewarding experience in sports. **Athletes First - Winning Second!**

1. This rule is in effect for all CYO Soccer regular season and postseason games.
 2. The CYO does not permit the cutting of players from team rosters.
 3. All players listed on the official team roster and dressed for a game must play in each official game. It is up to the head coach to be sure that all team members have the opportunity to play **one-fourth of each half during a game** so they feel they are contributing members of the team.
 4. Coaches do have the prerogative to exclude a child from being in uniform for a particular game due to a disciplinary situation, an injury, absenteeism, personal, etc. In these cases, it is strongly recommended the reasons for exclusion be discussed with the child's parents. If a child is dressed for a game, they must play.
 5. The substitution rules as outlined in the CYO Soccer Rules and Regulations remain in effect.
 6. Any coach who violates these rules is subject to probation or suspension for a portion or all of the season. In addition, serious violations may be referred to the CYO Athletics Policy Committee for appropriate action. Depending upon the circumstances, rule violations may also result in a game being forfeited.
- B. If a player is ejected by a game official for any reason authorized in Section A, or by the Rule Book, the player's team must proceed in the game with one player short. The same process will be followed for additional ejections. Any player who is ejected is subject to possible suspension, pending review of the incident.
- C. **Official Game** – If weather interrupts a game, the game will be official if one half has been played.

D. Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players. The substitution process is as follows:

1. The coach beckons the referee regarding a substitution.
2. The referee then motions the player in the game.
3. Substitutions are only allowed at the following examples: between periods; throw-in; corner kicks; goal kick; ball crosses goal line; and when a goal is scored.

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4. All youngsters should play at least one-fourth of each half during a game.

E. All team coaches must stay in the CYO Assigned Bench Area which is 10 yards either side of the half-line and 2 yards behind the touch line.

F. We recommend a numbered shirt with a CYO patch sewn on the left arm of the jersey, two inches below the shoulder seam.

1. **Each team is required to bring a set of white T-shirts with them to all games. This will help if both teams wear the same color team jerseys.**

2. The goalkeeper on each team must wear a contrasting color jersey than their teammates.

G. We recommend soccer style shoes or sneakers to be worn. No shoe with a screw-on cleat may be worn.

H. Shin guards are required for all players.

I. The official ball for the CYO 56 Soccer League is the #4 soccer ball. The official ball for the CYO Cadet Soccer League is the #5 soccer ball. The referee shall decide which team's ball is in better condition and that ball will be the official game ball.

J. Each team will consist of 11 players.

K. Length of periods in each league will be as follows:

1. 56 league - each half 25 minutes;
2. Cadet league - each half 30 minutes;
3. Half-time must never last more than 10 minutes;

L. If a regular season game is tied at the end of regulation play, the game will be considered a tie. No overtime period will be played.

M. Two overtime periods and a shootout, if necessary, will be used to determine a game winner during postseason play.

The following tie-breaking system will be used throughout the postseason. It will operate as follows:

1. If the score is tied at the end of a postseason tournament game, two 5-minute overtime periods will be played.
2. If the score is tied at the end of the second overtime period, a shootout (penalty kicks) will be used to determine the winner. The players on the field at the end of the second overtime period must participate in the shootout. No substitutes will be allowed.

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3. Coaches will be permitted to enter the playing field prior to the shootout to position their players to kick from the penalty line. A coin toss will determine which team has the option of kicking first. Each coach will then choose five players who will kick five alternate shots toward the goal. If, after each team having the opportunity to win the game by scoring more goals than their opponent during the first five alternate kicks, the game remains tied, one player from each team will then alternately attempt a shot on goal until a winner is declared. In all cases, each team will have an equal number of shots on goal during the shootout.

The following point system will be used to determine division champions:

1. Each team will receive 3 points for a win;
 2. Each team will receive 1 point for a tie;
 3. The total number of team points is then divided by the number of games played to determine the division champions.
 4. **If there is a tie for a division championship, head-to-head competition during the regular season is the first tiebreaker for determining a division champion.**
- N. In all league games, **two paid referees will be assigned** and both teams are to provide a linesman.
1. If a referee does not appear by 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time, the teams should play the game with all volunteer officials, if possible. Each coach has the right to refuse in such an instance, but we recommend that the game be played.
 2. The referee will be responsible for keeping the official time of the game.
 3. If a game is played on a field with a stadium clock, then the official time will be kept on that clock.

O. Roster Freeze Date

All team rosters are frozen as of April 15th of each soccer season. After this deadline, no switching of players between the parish teams is allowed and no new players may be added to a roster unless a new participant has recently moved into the parish.

P. No Jewelry Allowed

Federation rules prohibit the wearing of jewelry of any kind while playing in a soccer game. This includes but is not limited to items such as hair or head accessories, earrings, or jewelry of any kind. Also, under no circumstances shall a player be allowed to place tape or a covering of any type over a piercing.

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CYO Concussion Initiative and Policy

There has been no issue more important in athletics in recent years than concussions and head injuries. The CYO has adopted a concussion policy that will be in effect for all CYO sports. This policy was formulated in conjunction with the physicians, athletic trainers and administrators of St. Vincent Sports Performance and the Athlete's Concussion Alliance. The CYO wishes to thank everyone at St. Vincent Sports Performance who helped to develop this important concussion policy.

Concussions or mild traumatic head injuries are common injuries in sports resulting from a blow or bump to the head. Early recognition and appropriate treatment of concussions are vital for recovery, prevention of future concussions and the safe return to playing athletics.

The following policy pertaining to concussions will be followed in all CYO sports:

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game, match or team practice until the player has passed a sideline concussion evaluation and test. Some of the warning signs of a concussion are loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems.

Each team will be given a sideline concussion evaluation and test that has been prepared by St. Vincent Sports Performance so that all coaches will be able to recognize a possible player concussion. This sideline concussion form will list the many symptoms of a concussion and will include several tests to administer to the player with a possible concussion. These include a memory function test, a concentration test and a balance test all designed to help coaches recognize the signs of a concussion.

If the athlete incorrectly answers any of the questions, exhibits any single symptom of a concussion or cannot perform the balance test, he or she may not, under any circumstances, return to play for that day. If a player fails the concussion test the player may not return to play or practice until the athlete has been cleared by a licensed health care provider. Written approval must be received before the young athlete may participate again.

After the sideline concussion evaluation and tests have been completed, the person conducting the evaluation and tests, the head coach and the player's parents or legal guardians must sign the evaluation and test form attesting to the fact the concussion evaluation has been completed and whether the player has passed or failed the evaluation. A copy of the signed form must be mailed or emailed to the CYO Office with an additional copy given to the parish athletic director.

All pertinent information can be found on the CYO Website www.cyoarchindy.org under the Athletics Link.