

Excerpt from CYO Handbook (2024-2025)

Grade School Residence Requirements

1. General Residence Eligibility

a. Athletes must either be registered members of the parish or attend the parish school, otherwise they cannot participate.

b. Registered members must be Catholic and must be registered at the Parish before the start of the season.

2. Change of Residence

a. Before the season starts- If an athlete moves out of his/her parish prior to the official start date of the sports season, the athlete is ineligible to participate with his/her former parish.

b. After the season starts- If an athlete moves on or after the official start date of the sports season, he/she may choose to participate with their new or old parish

c. Changing Parishes without changing Residence- Individuals or families that change parishes without changing residence will not be eligible to participate with the new parish for a period of one year from the date of transfer. The waiting year does count towards a year of eligibility. The athlete may participate with their old parish program, or can participate on a limited basis with the new program (practices only, not game eligible).

NOTE: After the sport's roster deadline, athletes may no longer change teams. Once an athlete chooses to participate on a team at their new parish (i.e. the change of parish must take place before August 1), he/she cannot participate for any teams at their former parish. The adjustment period is for that CYO Year only. Also, for CYO purposes, no family may change the parish with which they are registered, without a change of residence, during the current CYO Year.

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D. Grade School Scholastic Regulations

i. Parish-School Students

1. A Student-athlete who attends a parish's school is eligible to participate on that parish's CYO team.

2. A Student-athlete who attends a separate parish's school from his/her registered parish may, in certain circumstances, participate with either parish's CYO.

a. Upon establishing a preference, the student-athlete must participate with the designated entity for the remainder of the CYO year.

i. Exception: If the chosen entity does not offer a particular sport, then the student-athlete may participate, for that sport only, with the entity that was not originally selected.

b. AT NO TIME may a student-athlete participate for the same sport at two different CYO entities.

3. School Transfers- Individuals who transfer schools (including parish, Regional, or Mission) will not be eligible to participate with the new school for a period of one year from the date of transfer. The waiting year does count towards the athlete's years of eligibility. The athlete may participate with their old parish program, or can participate on a limited basis with the new program (only practice, not game eligible).

ii. Non-Parish-School Students

1. A student-athlete who is a registered member of the parish and attends a school (public, private or Catholic which is not part of CYO) other than their parish's school or is home-schooled is eligible to participate for their registered parish's team.

a. NOTE: It is strongly recommended that non-parish school students be required to participate in the parish's religious education program. This is ultimately decided by the Pastor.

iii. Combined Schools/Regional Schools

1. Parishes who share a "combined school" may either offer CYO sports through their own individual parishes (suggested) or through the school as a combined program. If the parishes choose to combine through the school, the following conditions must be met:

a. Participation is limited to the students who attend the school and those registered members of the parishes involved in the combined school

b. All involved parishes' Pastors must submit letters of acknowledgment and approval of the combined school CYO program to the Regional Athletic Board and CYO Director.

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iv. The Small Parish Merger

1. Parishes who face smaller participation numbers have the option to merge with another program for specific sports to give an equal opportunity to participate as well as maintain a Parish CYO program

a. Criteria:

i. Two or more "small parishes" in the same Region may request a merger

ii. Parishes without schools may request a merger

iii. The merger must be necessary for ALL parishes to sustain a team

iv. No merger will be granted that gives any parishes involved a competitive advantage

v. Parish mergers must be approved on a season by season basis. Mergers are only granted for one sport, for one season.

b. Procedures:

i. The cut-off date for requesting a merger is two weeks after the official start date of the season. This allows for teams to conduct registrations and determine numbers

ii. The Pastors at all participating parishes must submit written approval to the Region and AOP CYO Director

v. High School or Professional Athletes

1. Any CYO athlete found to be rostered with any high school team at any level, or any professional team in that same sport will be ineligible and result in the team's ineligibility as well.

vi. Eligibility Violations

1. Athletes found to be non-compliant with any of the "Eligibility Standards" outlined in this handbook may face the following penalties:

a. Immediate discharge of the athlete from the violating team and the athlete will serve a one-year suspension from all CYO sports

b. Forfeiture of any competition in which the violating team participated with the athlete

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D. High School Athletic Eligibility

i. High School Age/Grade Regulations:

1. Varsity (Class B)

a. Athletes must be 11th or 12th grade students who have not reached their 19th birthday before September 1

b. Athletes in 9th or 10th grade but over 17 years of age may be eligible for Varsity (Class B)

c. Athletes who would have completed secondary school had they remained enrolled are not eligible

d. Parishes with not enough players to form a Junior Varsity team may allow 9th and 10th graders to participate with Varsity

2. Junior Varsity (Class C)

a. All athletes must be 9th or 10th grade students who have not reached their 17th birthday before September 1.

b. 8th graders too old to compete for Grade School Varsity may compete in the appropriate age class for high school

NOTE: Any team or player found to be in non-compliance to any rule outlined in this Handbook will face sanctions.

ii. High School Residence Requirements

1. Parish Resident- All athletes must be Catholic and registered members of the parish

2. Residents of Parishes with no Team- A parish without enough athletes to form a team may request that their athletes play with a neighboring parish. The Pastors of both parishes must provide written approval to the Region and AOP CYO Director

3. Change of Residence- Athletes changing residence must comply with the same grade school guidelines

iii. High School Religious Regulations

1. Non-Catholic Athletes- who live within the parish boundaries are permitted to participate for that parish provided the following criteria is met:

a. The athlete complies with all eligibility rules

b. The Pastor provides a letter of request to the league Commissioner, Regional Board, and AOP CYO Director. If approved, a letter of approval must be provided by the Pastor

c. In order to create fairness, Regions may determine a limit of the number of non-Catholics a team may have

d. Teams Rostering non-Catholics are not eligible to participate in State CYO tournaments.

Track and Field Small Merger Addendum:

Two or more parishes will be permitted to merge and compete as one CYO Cross Country and/or Track & Field team when all of the following conditions are met:

1.) The combined number of unique participants competing in CYO sports in the previous school year for all the parishes involved must be less than 250.

a. Unique Participants is defined as all male and female athletes in 4th through 8th grade participating in inter-parish CYO sports programs sponsored by the parish.

b. Unique Participants must be verifiable through the parish roster.

2.) In any of the previous two years, neither parish fielded a CYO Cross Country team or Track & Field team of more than 18 total athletes (boys & girls combined), respectively.

3.) In the year of merger, the merged team will not have more than 36 total athletes (boys & girls combined).

The following rules and procedures apply to all requests to merge parishes for CYO Track & Field:

- Private Academies are not permitted to merge with an eligible parish for CYO Track & Field.

- All requests for merger must be sent to the Archdiocesan Cross Commissioner or Track & Field Coordinator. Separate requests must be sent for each sport. Approval in one sport does not guarantee approval in the other.

- The attached form must be used and the requested information must be included with the request. Requests should be emailed to the Archdiocesan Cross Country Commissioner, Mary Ellen Malloy, sunrisexc@aol.com and the Track & Field Coordinator, Terry O'Connell, at terence.m.oconnell@gmail.com.

- Cross Country - Requests for approval to merge for the CYO Cross Country season must be submitted before September 10th. All other Cross Country rostering rules still apply.

- Track & Field - Requests for approval to merge for the CYO Track & Field season must be submitted before March 20th and the complete roster for the initial merged season must be received by the Archdiocesan Track & Field Coordinator by April 1st.

- If approved, merged teams will compete under the existing name of one of the parishes, however, separate rosters must be prepared for the different parishes and approved by the respective pastors.

- Once a request for merger is approved, the merged team must remain together for a period of two years. The unique participant rule and total number of cross country/track & field athletes rule apply only in the first year of merger. Merged teams must re-apply after two years competing together and may be denied in subsequent years based on the growth of their CYO or CYO Cross Country and/or Track & Field programs.

- Ineligible "large" parishes may be permitted to merge with an eligible smaller parish if credible hardships or other qualitative factors make such a merger the best option for the smaller parish. The decision to waive one or more condition will be at the sole discretion of the Cross Country Commissioner or Track & Field Coordinator, respectively.