

# CYO DIOCESAN TRACK LEAGUE

## COACHES' HANDBOOK

### Philosophy of the C.Y.O. Track League

The purpose of the CYO Track League in the Diocese of Brooklyn is to provide boys and girls with positive experiences in the context of the sport of track and field, to foster self-esteem, and to impart fundamental values such as respect for others, self-discipline, dedication to goals, and true sportsmanship. The CYO Track League's operating principles and procedures are geared to helping each child develop his or her talents in a supportive environment, reflecting the underlying Christian philosophy of the Catholic Youth Organization.

### The Coach's Role

It is the role of each parish coach, and each adult associated with parish track teams, to do all he or she can to promote the overall goals of the CYO Track League, to work for the benefit of EVERY boy and girl who participates in the League throughout the Diocese, and to serve as a mature role model reflecting Christian values. In consideration of these objectives, the following guidelines are presented.

### Guidelines for Coaches

1. Recognize the importance of your role as an adult entrusted with the care of children. Act at all times in a reasonable, mature manner, reflecting positive Christian values. Always be conscious of your influential position as a role model for those young people entrusted to your care.
2. Instruct your athletes about the basic rules of the sport, and provide them with a physical conditioning program, geared to their respective age levels, which will promote good health and fitness, and prepare them to participate in the sport. Remember that short-term success is of no importance when compared with long-range development of a boy's or girl's skills, physical capacities, self-confidence, and love for the sport. The goal should be to encourage each boy and girl to see track and field as a positive experience, and a sport which can be pursued for a lifetime.
3. Help your athletes understand the meaning of sportsmanship, and its relationship to the basic human virtue of respect for others. Teach them to have respect for all other athletes, both teammates and competitors, and for all coaches, officials, and parents. Help each boy or girl to understand that the essence of track and field is not to "beat" another athlete, but rather to get the very best performance out of himself or herself. Explain that anyone who can do that is a true winner. Encourage your athletes to show outward signs of good sportsmanship toward their competitors (such as shaking hands before events and congratulating or cheering for each other afterwards), recognizing that outward manifestations of sportsmanship create a positive overall atmosphere and eventually help each boy and girl to internalize sportsmanship as a fundamental attitude. Help your athletes to recognize that any form of taunting an opponent is inherently wrong, not only unsportsmanlike but also un-Christian.
4. Take advantage of further opportunities to foster respect for others among your young athletes. Show by your words and actions that judging others by color or ethnic origin is unacceptable; the multiracial and multicultural makeup of the parish teams in the Diocese provide an opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other as people, and not view others as stereotypes. Make it clear as well that violence in any form is unacceptable, including fighting, verbal abuse or foul

language. Recognize that your leadership and example can complement the work of the home and the school in developing character in the boys and girls you coach.

5. Treat your fellow coaches and volunteer officials with respect, recognizing that all who are involved in the C.Y.O Track League are sacrificing their time and devoting their energies for the good of the children in the program. In a real sense, all C.Y.O. Track coaches are members of the same "team," working together for the good of the children. Encourage your fellow coaches whenever possible, and offer assistance as needed. Always act with complete honesty in the spirit of the rules, and in the event of a dispute of any kind, bring the issue in a respectful manner to the C.Y.O. Director (or in his or her absence, to a Diocesan Track Committee member) for resolution. Help the other adults associated with your parish team to understand that arguing, shouting, and especially using inappropriate language is completely out of place, and conveys the wrong message to the children present. With calm, responsible behavior, coaches, parents, and officials can help children see that differences of opinion can be resolved in a peaceful, non-threatening manner.
6. Be grateful for the opportunity you have to convey to boys and girls both the lessons of the sport, and lessons for life. Take your role as a mentor seriously. Pray for guidance that you will fulfill it well. Remind yourself often that your team members are children first, athletes second. Remember that words of praise are far more powerful than words of criticism. In the end, measure your success not in trophies and medals, but in smiles.

#### **C.Y.O. Prayer**

Almighty God and Father. We ask your blessing on all who participate in today's activities.

Thank you for bringing us together in your name.

Watch over all who run today and all who made this meet fun and enjoyable.

Thank you for giving us the chance to teach our faith to others by our actions.

In Jesus name Amen.