



CATHOLIC YOUTH &
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Diocese of Wilmington

Rule Book

Football 2025-2026

CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY-BASKETBALL
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Football Rules 2024-2025

1. Summer Conditioning:

- a. May begin on the 3rd Monday of June
- b. Must end by 1st Friday in August
- c. Conditioning Workouts only – no footballs or equipment permitted
- d. Practice attendance is 100% voluntary.
- e. Practices can be twice per week and 90 minutes in duration each time.
- f. Heat/humidity rules found in the Tryout/Practice Dates must be followed.
- g. Violations could result in teams being ruled ineligible for playoffs.

2. Regular Season Practices:

- a. May begin on 3rd Monday prior to Labor Day
- b. Scrimmages may not be held prior to a team's tenth practice.
- c. During an individual player's first 5 practices (regardless of starting date):
 - i. Practices must be spent on physical conditioning that can include on-field practice and conditioning drills.
 - ii. Players are not to be involved in person-to-person contact drills.
 - iii. Players are permitted to wear helmets beginning with their first practice. Players may not wear any pads during the first three days of practice.
 - iv. On the fourth day, players are permitted to wear shoulder pads and helmet.
 - v. On the fifth day, players are permitted to wear full gear. Use of bags and sleds is permitted, however, there may not be physical contact or tackling.
 - vi. A player that begins after the first team practice must adhere to the above limitations for *his* first five practices, regardless of the number of team practices that have already taken place.
- d. First violation of above sections will result in a 2-game suspension (sight & sound) of the head coach of the team. A second violation (same season or following seasons) will result in the head coach being dismissed from the league.
- e. Practices prior to Labor Day:
 - i. Teams may not practice more than 5 days in a calendar week
 - ii. Teams may not practice more than 5 consecutive days (For example Fri/Sat/Sun one week and Mon/Tue/Wed the following week)
- f. Practices after Labor Day:
 - i. All practices must end by 8:30 p.m.
 - ii. Practices may not be held on Mondays for both JV and Varsity teams.
 - iii. JV teams in addition to Monday must also eliminate a 2nd night (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) practice.

- iv. Varsity teams, after the 4th Sunday in September, must also eliminate a 2nd night (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) practice.
 - v. Practices on Saturdays are limited to a maximum of 2 hours in duration with helmet only.
 - g. No team is permitted to play more than 1 game and/or scrimmage per week (CYM or other) following the first week of CYM scheduled games.
3. **Weight Designations:** the following weight designations apply at the time of regular season weigh-in:
- a. Junior Varsity
 - i. Players whose weight is **95.0** pounds or below may play any position. (“back” or “unrestricted player”)
 - ii. Players whose weight is **95.1-107.0** pounds may play offensive or defensive end positions, lineman or linebacker positions. (“linebackers”)
 - iii. Players whose weight is **107.1** pounds or more are considered restricted linemen, and may play any line position (offense or defense) other than offensive or defensive end. (“restricted linemen” or “X-Men”)
 - b. Varsity- the following weights apply to regular season. For playoff weight rules, see Section 6 below.
 - i. Players whose weight is **140.0** or below may play any position, including offensive or defensive end. (“back” or “unrestricted player”)
 - ii. Players whose weight is **140.1** pounds or more are considered restricted linemen, and may play any line position (offense or defense) other than offensive or defensive end. (“restricted linemen” or “X-Men”)
 - c. Helmet Markings for Ends – any JV player designated as an end must have a line of tape running front to back on his helmet, which must be visible to game officials. It is recommended that teams use minimum 1” tape with a color directly contrasting the helmet color.
 - d. Helmet Markings for Restricted Linemen – any JV or Varsity player designated as a restricted lineman must have a large “X” on the helmet, which must be visible to game officials. It is recommended that teams use minimum 1” tape with a color directly contrasting the helmet color.
 - e. Violations – if a game official determines that there is a violation of Section 3 (c or d), a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct will be issued against the head coach. The player must leave the game and may not reenter until the helmet is properly marked. Subsequent infractions may result in a forfeit or disciplinary action. The CYM Office will not entertain complaints about rulings/penalties.
 - f. Illegal use of player – in the event a player exceeds the weight limits in this section (a and b), and plays in a regular season or playoff game, the team may forfeit that game, and additional disciplinary action may be taken against the coach, all in the discretion of the CYM Office.

4. Weight Designation - Position Restrictions

- a. Backs/unrestricted players have no weight-based position or location restrictions.
- b. Ends
 - i. JV ends are not permitted to play as defensive backs. They may play anywhere on the line of scrimmage or in the linebacker position. As a linebacker they must be located no more than 5 yards off the line of scrimmage and no further out than the inside shoulder of the tight end (the linebacker box). In the event there is no tight end, then the linebacker cannot be any further than the outside shoulder of the tackle. In the event there are more receivers than defensive backs or non-stripe linebackers, a single-stripe defensive end may move out of the above linebacker box to cover the receiver closest to the vacant tight end position. In such a case, the JV end must line up on the line of scrimmage. A team cannot have more than 1 single stripe end beyond the linebacker box.
 - ii. For JV, an offensive end with a single stripe on the helmet may not receive the ball behind the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. Violations are illegal formations carrying a 5-yard penalty.
- c. Restricted linemen
 - i. On both JV and Varsity, offensive linemen must be in the center, guard or tackle position, and may not be the last individual on the line of scrimmage. The maximum number of X-men permitted on the line is 5. An X-man on the offensive line must be covered by a non-X-Man.
 - ii. On both JV and Varsity, defensive linemen must be in a 3- or 4-point stance, on the line of scrimmage (within 1 foot), and no further outside than the head of the offensive tackle. On/after the snap, the defensive lineman may only move forward, and may not move backward unless driven back by the offensive player or in pursuit of the ball after it has moved behind the lineman.
 - iii. JV/Varsity restricted linemen may not play linebacker or defensive back.
 - iv. Restricted linemen are not permitted to carry the ball. In the case of an interception or fumble recovery, the ball will be blown dead at the spot of the interception/recovery.
 - v. Violations other than of Subsection (iv) above are illegal formations carrying a 5-yard penalty.

5. Weigh-In Procedures – Regular Season

- a. Weigh-ins for teams will be held on the Saturday after Labor Day at a time and location announced at the pre-season coaches meeting.

- i. There will be no weigh-ins prior to the first Saturday after Labor Day. Requesting an exception due to extreme circumstances must be submitted and approved by the CYM Football Coordinator and CYM Office.
 - ii. Requests for a make-up weigh in after the first game must be submitted in writing by the head coach by email to the CYM Football Coordinator detailing the reasons for the request. Make ups will be at the sole discretion of the CYM Football Coordinator and may be denied.
- b. Weigh-in Sheets will be prepared by the CYM Office using the rostered players from each team. At the weigh-in the CYM Football Coordinator will list the jersey number and the weight (once the player is weighed). If a player has different numbers on home and away jerseys, both must be listed with an indication of which is home and which is away.
- c. Each team must have a rostered coach (head or assistant) present at the scale while that team is being weighed.
- d. Players must appear for weigh-in wearing game day uniform jersey with number, and gym shorts.
- e. Prior to stepping on the scale, a player may remove his uniform shirt, but must be wearing gym shorts at a minimum. A player reporting to the scale or attempting to step on the scale in an undergarment will not be weighed and will be designated as a restricted lineman (X-man) as defined in these rules.
- f. Once a player is weighed, the weight is recorded with no 2nd attempts.
- g. A player that chooses not to be weighed, or that does not show up for weigh-ins, will be designated as a restricted lineman (X-man) as defined in these rules. Players planning to play as restricted linemen due to weight or otherwise need not appear for weigh-ins, but will still be listed on the weigh-in log.
- h. Parents are not permitted in the building where weigh-ins are taking place. Any parent who approaches a coach or CYM representative (including third-parties employed by CYM) to complain or discuss weigh-in results may be banned from attending game(s) for a period of time determined by the CYM Office.
- i. Once a player arrives to weigh-ins, he may not engage in any exercise or physical activity prior to weighing in. If a player is found doing so, he will be designated as a restricted lineman.
- j. Once the weight has been recorded, the player will be eligible to participate in all regular season games for positions allowing that weight as described in Section 2. Weights listed in these rules are “recorded” weights at time of weigh-in.

6. Weigh-in Procedures - Playoffs

- a. The CYM Office will announce a date/time/location for pre-playoff weigh-in.
- b. Varsity players that weighed **130.0-140.0** pounds at regular season weigh-in must be weighed again prior to the first playoff game. Varsity players that weighed less

than **130.0** pounds or more than **140.0** pounds at regular season weigh-in will not be weighed prior to playoffs and will retain their original designation.

- c. Varsity players designated as backs/unrestricted players at regular season weigh-in (**140.0** pounds or less) may retain their unrestricted designation provided that they weigh **150.0** pounds or less at playoff weigh-in. If such player weighs **150.1** pounds or more, he will be redesignated as a restricted lineman.
- d. Players that are required to weigh-in prior to playoffs, but who do not appear at playoff weigh-in, will be classified as restricted linemen regardless of prior classification.

7. **General Game Rules** – applicable to both Varsity and Junior Varsity. If a rule is not specifically addressed herein, NFHS (“Federation”) rules apply. In the event of a conflict between sets of rules, these rules control.

a. Coaching Rules

- i. All coaches, managers and team personnel (other than those managing chains and down markers) must remain within the team box. A first violation will result in a warning; a second violation is a 5-yard penalty; a third violation is a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - ii. During JV/Varsity overtime, the head coach (no other coach or player) may exit the coaching box to stand between the 10-yard line and the goal line. If any other coach or player does so, the penalty provisions of section 7(a)(i) above apply.
 - iii. The head coach must identify himself to the head official prior to the start of the game.
 - iv. Only 1 coach is permitted on the field of play during a time out, except in the event of an injury that necessitates otherwise.
 - v. Only the team captain(s) may speak with the officials during a penalty.
 - vi. The home team is responsible for manning chains and down markers, and both must be on the home side of the field.
- b. Overtime – all regular season games that end in a tie will continue for a maximum of 2 overtime periods. If the score remains tied after 2 overtime periods, the game will end in a tie. Overtime format will follow the “10-yard line overtime procedure” as described in Federation rules.
- c. Unbalanced line – defensive linemen that are restricted linemen must line up within the heads of the offensive tackles regardless of field location. The spot of the ball may not be the center of the defensive line. Notwithstanding the foregoing, defensive linemen that are not restricted linemen are permitted to line up in front of the center or any other permissible position. Violation of this rule is a 15-yard penalty and automatic 1st down.
- d. Punters – a punter who is an end or restricted lineman may not advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. In the event of a bad snap from center or a

fumbled snap, the punter may run forward in an attempt to punt the ball, however, he may not pass the ball or cross the line of scrimmage. Violations will result in an illegal procedure 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

- i. Fake punt – when a player who is an end or restricted lineman is in punt formation, it is a legal play to snap the ball to another player who is not an end or restricted lineman, and that player may advance the ball, via pass or run. No other fake punt play is permitted from this formation. Violations will result in an illegal procedure 5-yard penalty and loss of down. Other fake punt plays are permitted as long as no end or restricted lineman is in punt formation.
- e. Protecting the center in punt or shotgun formation – While a defensive player may line up in front of the center, he shall not charge directly into the snapper when the offensive team is in punt formation or when the quarterback is in shotgun formation regardless of the distance behind the center. This includes anytime there is not a direct hand-to-hand exchange of the ball between the center and QB regardless of distance. Once the center rises up and is in a position to defend himself the center is then considered a blocker and no longer afforded protection from this section. Shotgun formation is defined as the quarterback not over center. The penalty for a violation of this rule is 15 yards and automatic 1st down.
- f. Extra points – successfully running or passing will result in 1 point. Successfully kicking will result in 2 points.
 - i. Restricted linemen cannot hold the ball, but can kick the ball. When in kick position, they cannot run the ball or block for a runner. In the event of a bad snap or fumble, they may only fall on the ball to recover it.
- g. Kick Offs - We will not have kick offs at the JV or Varsity level this season. The ball will start on the team's own 35 yard line. On a safety the ball will start on your opponents 45 yard line.
- h. For onside kick purposes only, teams that are behind by 21 points or less in the last 5 minutes of the 4th quarter may elect to have an "onside kick". However, rather than kick the ball, they will get one untimed down from their own 35 yard line. They must successfully get 10 yards on this play or the ball will be turned over at the spot of the stoppage. If they are successful, they will continue their offensive series from the new spot. The clock will resume on the next snap.

8. Junior Varsity Game Rules

- a. Games will consist of four 8-minute quarters with normal stopped clock rules.
- b. The "end around" play is not permitted. A violation is a 5-yard penalty.

9. Varsity Game Rules

- a. Games will consist of four 10-minute quarters with normal stopped clock rules.

- b. Varsity teams may employ the “end around” play, as long as the end is an unrestricted player/back. (i.e., not a restricted lineman or end designation)
- c. In varsity playoffs, there will be no ties, and the overtime procedures described in Section 7(b) will continue until one team wins.
- d. Playoff procedures:
 - i. 8 or more teams in the league - playoffs will be split into two divisions. Once teams have been seeded for playoffs, the top 4 teams will be Division I playoffs and the remaining will be Division II playoffs. The winner of Division I will be designated as the Diocesan champion. The 9th or lower teams will not be eligible for post-season play.
 - ii. Less than 8 teams in the league – playoffs will be one division. **In 2022 we only have 5 teams total. Only the top 4 will make the playoffs.**
- e. Playoff seeding/tie-breakers – seeding and division assignment for playoffs will be determined by record. In the event of a tie, the following tie-breakers shall apply:
 - i. Head to head record;
 - ii. In the case of a tie between two that is not broken by the above, a coin flip/hat draw will determine seed position and division assignment;
 - iii. In the case of a tie between three or more teams that is not broken by the above, a hat draw will determine seed position and division assignment.
 - iv. The CYM Director of Youth Sports and the CYM Football Coordinator reserve the right to make changes to the playoff format if they deem it to be in the best interest of the football program.

10. Equipment

- a. Balls – JV will use Wilson Stock #1360 model TDJ or equivalent game ball. Varsity division will use Wilson Stock #1300 model TDY or equivalent.
- b. The home team is responsible for padding goal posts and setting out field markings prior to the start of the game. No game may begin without post padding. If padding and markers are not set up within 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time, a forfeit will be awarded to the visiting team.
- c. All players must be in uniform and wearing equipment that meets the requirements detailed in rule #1 of the Federation handbook.
 - i. All players must wear the uniform number listed on the team’s weigh-in log. In the event a change in number is needed, the head coach must notify the CYM Football Coordinator by noon on the Friday before the next game, via email, and confirm receipt of the email. The head coach must also notify an opponent head coach at least 30 minutes before a game. If a number change is required during a game, the coach must notify the officials and opposing coach prior to the player entering the game.

- ii. If an individual is found playing with a number different than that listed on the weigh-in log, and the procedure in Section 10(c)(i) was not followed, the penalties will be (1) forfeit of the game, (2) suspension of head coach for 2 games. A second offense will result in the team being ineligible for playoffs/JV tournament, the head coach dismissed from the league, and any additional sanctions the CYM office deems appropriate.
- d. Helmets must be recertified every other year. All helmets must have a current certification sticker or appropriate identification proving certification.
- e. All players must wear a mouth guard of any color other than clear or white.
- f. The use of electronic equipment of any kind to communicate with coaches and/or players is strictly prohibited. In addition to any in-game sanctions, violations are subject to sanction as determined by the CYM Office.
 - i. Teams may record their own games, and may exchange videos with opponent coaches if mutually agreed. Teams may not record games of upcoming opponents, or any games in which they are not a participant.
- g. Barriers, Ropes – If a field does not have a barrier separating spectators from the sideline and/or bench area, each team must rope off their bench area at least 10 yards from the sideline.

11. Officials

- a. If officials are not present 30 minutes from the start of the JV game, the game will not be played. Reschedules are to be discussed.