

DIOCESAN RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
**CONSTITUTION**  
Adopted October 2005

**Article 1: Mission of the Diocesan Recreation Program**

The mission of our program is to unite the youth of our parishes and to help promote their spiritual, physical and social welfare by bringing Catholic truths, principles and ideas into their everyday life. The programs are intended to be character builders, reflecting the ideals of good sportsmanship and Christianity.

**Article 2: Goals of Parish Recreation Programs**

The goals of the parish recreation programs, as models of Catholic Youth Ministry are: 1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; 2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; 3. To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

**Article 3: Eligibility of Children/Youth**

The programs sponsored by the Diocesan Recreation Association are parish-based. Any child registered with the parish is eligible to participate in their parish's recreation program regardless of where they attend school. Recreation programs must be accessible to young people with disabilities and open to their full participation, according to their capacity.

Children and youth are to participate in the recreation programs of their own parish, unless prevented from doing so for a valid reason approved by the Diocesan Recreation Association. Parishes must submit (and adhere to) an accurate roster of participating children to the diocese at the beginning of the season.

Children enrolled in a parochial school outside of their own parish are eligible to participate in the recreation program of the parish that operates their school if approved by the pastors of both parishes. Non-Catholics attending a Catholic school are eligible to participate in the recreation program of the parish if approved by the pastor.

Communication regarding the parish recreation program or a particular team must reflect that it is associated with the parish and not a school.

**Article 4: Rules, Policies and Guidelines**

This constitution serves as a resource and reference for coaches, athletic directors, pastors and parents. Although it contains some general rules, policies, and guidelines, it is by no means comprehensive. Individuals and parishes should consult the *Policies and Guidelines for Parish Youth Ministry Programs*, other diocesan policies and specific sport rulebooks for further information and clarification.

**Article 5: Coaches**

Every team participating in the diocesan recreation program must have a coach of at least age eighteen (18). All coaches must be registered with the Diocesan Recreation Association.

**Article 6: Conduct of Coaches and Athletic Directors**

In keeping with the moral values advanced by the teachings of Christ, the tenets of the Catholic Church, and the policies and regulations of the diocese, coaches and athletic directors are expected to be examples of Christian charity, moral behavior, professionalism, and good sportsmanship. As parish lay ministers, coaches and athletic directors should avoid conflicts with parish liturgies and faith formation programs.

**Article 7: Conduct of Teams and Spectators**

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team and the spectators, including parents, for their team during all games and events sponsored by the Diocesan Recreation Association.

**Article 8: Maintaining Safe Environments**

Coaches and athletic directors must be in compliance with all diocesan policies addressing child protection. These include the completion of a criminal background check and participation in a *Protecting God's Children* workshop. Coaches and athletic directors should also complete a standard application form and sign a code of conduct when they begin their service to the parish. All volunteers should be made familiar with the diocesan policies regarding harassment.

**Article 9: Accountability of Coaches, Athletic Directors, Associations, and Clubs**

Coaches and athletic directors are directly accountable to the pastor (or his representative) in fulfilling their position descriptions and responsibilities. Coaches and athletic directors are accountable to the Diocesan Recreation Association in implementing and following the rules and policies established by the association. All parish recreation associations and booster clubs are accountable to the pastor (or his representative) and must follow all parish and diocesan financial policies and procedures.

**Article 10: Suspensions and Probations**

The Diocesan Recreation Association may suspend or put on probation a coach for unsportsmanlike activities or violations of association rules.

**Article 11: Grievances and Appeals Process**

A grievance is defined as "an alleged violation of ethical and/or professional conduct affording reason for a complaint." If a coach that has been suspended or placed on probation feels that such a violation has taken place, he/she may appeal the decision of the Diocesan Recreation Association to the Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry. Such appeals must be made in writing and submitted within 10-days of the grievance. Any questions or concerns regarding the policies, procedures, or rules of the Diocesan Recreation Association should be submitted in writing to the DRA Board of Control.

**Article 12: Competitive and Developmental Programs**

As sports-ministry programs of the parish, the activities sponsored by the Diocesan Recreation Association are open to all children. Although team placement is decided at the parish level, all children on a particular team should be given the opportunity to play and be valued by the team. In recognition of the diversity of needs among young people, the Diocesan Recreation Association does allow for teams to be split into "Competitive" and "Recreational" teams in the middle school basketball program. Parishes should demonstrate prudence in team selection and encourage and exercise Christian charity in such cases so every child has an opportunity to participate and have a positive experience. The team that affirms the dignity of the children on both teams is truly the winner, regardless of the final score.