

# CYO clinics address scheduling shifts

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

PENFIELD — Stricter enforcement of schedules, as well as of games' starting times, are the key issues being addressed in season-opening meetings around the diocese for Catholic Youth Organization basketball.

The five meetings, called athletic-ministry clinics, were arranged by diocesan officials in conjunction with CYO and are taking place through mid-November. Parish athletic directors, coaches and other officials, particularly youth ministers, have attended.

For the first time, parishes are required to sign forms calling for a 30-game limit per season for CYO league contests and tournaments, as well as a stipulation that no Sunday contest will begin before 1 p.m. Parishes are required to return the forms to the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry by Nov. 16. Teams not complying with the guidelines will be subject to suspension.

Sue Versluys, program specialist for the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, said that some CYO teams had been playing up to 60 games per season. Bob Huber, who serves as scheduler of CYO league contests, said the more common number for squads exceeding the limit was between 30 and 40.

Versluys said the 1 p.m. Sunday rule is being enforced to ensure that families of CYO participants can attend Mass together. This allows non-Catholic participants to attend their respective Sunday services as well, she added.

Ivan Matthew, CYO program director, noted that the 30-game limit will not extend to teams that play in the CYO league but are sponsored by organizations other than Catholic parishes, such as Hillel and the Boys and Girls Club. However, he said the 1 p.m. Sunday regulation will apply across the board.

Matthew and Huber said they initially had thought that eliminating Sunday-morning games would cause a shortage of playing time in the gymnasiums available to CYO. But they said such schools as Aquinas Institute and Bishop Kearney High School have adjusted their scheduling of gymnasium time to accommodate the new rule.

The "new" CYO guidelines actually were released three years ago at the urging of Father Joseph Hart, moderator of the diocesan Pastoral Center and one of two diocesan vicars general. Yet Versluys said many parishes never followed through on them. Matthew, who works primar-

ily with the CYO program in Monroe County, said the lack of response may have grown out of what he termed an "us-against-them" perception between CYO and diocesan officials. He added that the specially convened athletic-ministry meetings have helped ease tensions while also explicitly stating the guidelines' importance.

"The buy-in process is a little better this time," Matthew said.

Another key component of the meetings is the call for parishes to work toward integrating CYO athletics and youth-ministry programs. Tom Cali, for one, said he will welcome the additional support. He's the volunteer athletic director for St. Rita Parish in Webster, which he expects will field 17



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier  
Father Joseph Hart addresses participants in the CYO athletic-ministry clinic at St. Joseph Church in Penfield Oct. 26.

CYO basketball teams this year. Cali hopes to align with staff members of St. Rita as well as neighboring parishes whose youths play for St. Rita because they don't have CYO programs of their own.

"I would love them to help, to be honest with you. Right now, this is overwhelming," Cali said following the Oct. 26 clinic at St. Joseph Church in Penfield.

In addition, parishes are being reminded that CYO should not become so competitive that it overshadows the program's original goal of promoting prayer, sportsmanship and participation by youths of all skill levels.

"We're not playing secular sports. We're playing CYO," said Versluys, who organized the clinics.



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as good stewards of God's  
varied grace"

1-Peter 4:9-11

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