

Sports Camp XVIII to be held in May

Eighteen years ago, a dedicated group of Courage members decided to start a men's Sports Camp, an opportunity for men to overcome inhibitions about team sports, while experiencing healthy, chaste camaraderie in a supportive Catholic environment. Sports Camp has become a favorite annual event, in which the Lions compete against the Dolphins to win the coveted Harvey Cup (named by members after Fr. John F. Harvey, OSFS, the much-loved co-founder of the Courage Apostolate). Fully in keeping with the Five Goals of Courage, Sports Camp is an experiential weekend that allows men to embrace the joy of team sports in an atmosphere of Catholic charity.

Men who attend Sports Camp will have the opportunity to learn four different team sports (currently basketball, flag football, soccer and softball) with instruction provided by patient and caring volunteer coaches. Men with little or no athletic experience, or who have feelings of insecurity about their athletic abilities, are especially encouraged to attend. Sports Camp also greatly enriches the spiritual life of the men, with a schedule of daily Mass, prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, opportunities for confession, and the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office), all led by faithful priests who serve as Courage chaplains. The program is organized by volunteers on the Steering Committee, many of whom have commented that the weekend has allowed them to develop important mentoring and leadership skills.

Perhaps the best way to understand Sports Camp is to hear what past participants have had to say about their experience:

Javier G.: Growing up I had a very negative experience playing sports: I was teased by my classmates and was often picked last on a team. Sports Camp changed all that. The excellent and encouraging coaching that I've received at Sports Camp has allowed me to improve my athletic ability and knowledge. It has been life-changing for me. ... All I ever wanted was to be one of the guys, to be wanted on a team, to receive proper and good coaching and sports mentoring. Sports Camp has given me this and more. In addition to learning how to play sports, Sports Camp has allowed me to form great friendships with other men whom I consider my brothers in Christ.

Tom D.: Sports Camp is a super-fun and supportive experience! As a relatively new member of Courage, I really loved everything about the event: the warm welcome when I arrived, the awesome worship and music, and all the camaraderie. The coaching helped me learn and gain a bit of self-confidence, and the leadership did a great job of making sure everyone had a chance to get out on the field and play. I will definitely return to the Sports Camp!

Philip Y: I attend Sports Camp every year, and in truth it is my favorite weekend of the year! This is very surprising to me, because growing up I had a great deal of trouble fitting in with other guys, and particularly found sports to be a source of embarrassment and humiliation. At Sports Camp I have not only learned about sports in a safe and supportive environment, but have also learned a great deal about how to relate to other men in a healthy, chaste way. By attending Sports Camp over the years, I have formed some of the best friendships of my life. I thank God for my "Sports Camp brothers" who encourage and support me in my life as a faithful Roman Catholic. Sports Camp is awesome!

Sports Camp is for men ages 18 and older. To learn more about the Courage Apostolate's Sports Camp, or to request a registration form, please visit the website of Courage International, at <https://couragec.org/courage/sports-camp/>