

Michigan Knights of Columbus State Cornhole Tournament

Event Overview

The state-level tournament is designed as a round-robin format with **8 teams**: one representing each of Michigan's seven Catholic dioceses (Detroit, Grand Rapids, Gaylord, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette, Saginaw) and one team consisting of State Officers. This ensures every team plays every other team exactly once, promoting fair competition. The event is held over one day at a date and location to be determined (TBD). All play follows the official ACO (American Cornhole Organization) rules [ACO-Rules-for-the-Sport-of-Cornhole-2024](#), which include:

- Game Format: Doubles play (two players per team, one at each board end). Games are played to **21 points** using **cancellation scoring** (only the net difference scores; e.g., if Team A scores 7 points and Team B scores 2, Team A gets 5 points toward the win total).
 - Bags on the board ("woody") = 1 point each.
 - Bags through the hole ("cornhole") = 3 points each.
 - Matches can be best-of-3 games if time allows, but for efficiency in a one-day event, consider single games per matchup unless specified otherwise.
- Court Setup: Boards are placed 27 feet apart (front edge to front edge). Pitcher's boxes are 4' x 3' on either side. Full court is 8 feet wide and 40 feet long.
- Equipment: Use ACO-approved boards (hardwood plywood, 24" x 48" with 6" hole) and bags (16 oz, resin-filled, 6" x 6").
- Conduct: Underhand pitches only; alternate throws; 15-second time limit per pitch. Fouls (e.g., stepping over the foul line) result in dead bags and potential strikes leading to forfeits.
- Winning the Tournament: The team with the best win-loss record wins. Tiebreakers: (1) Head-to-head result, (2) Total point differential across all games, (3) Total points scored.

Schedule Structure

Assuming **4 sets of boards** available (allowing 4 simultaneous games per round), the tournament consists of **7 rounds with 4 games each (total 28 games)**. Estimate 15-20 minutes per game, plus 5-10 minutes between rounds for scoring and setup—total runtime about **3-4 hours**, fitting a **one-day event**. Start with a brief opening ceremony and end with awards.

Teams are labeled as follows for the schedule:

	Round	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4
• Team 1: Detroit Diocese	1	1 vs 2	3 vs 4	5 vs 6	7 vs 8
• Team 2: Grand Rapids Diocese	2	6 vs 8	5 vs 7	2 vs 4	1 vs 3
• Team 3: Gaylord Diocese	3	5 vs 4	1 vs 8	7 vs 3	2 vs 6
• Team 4: Kalamazoo Diocese	4	3 vs 6	7 vs 2	1 vs 5	8 vs 4
• Team 5: Lansing Diocese	5	7 vs 1	4 vs 6	3 vs 8	5 vs 2
• Team 6: Marquette Diocese	6	2 vs 3	8 vs 5	4 vs 1	6 vs 7
• Team 7: Saginaw Diocese	7	4 vs 7	6 vs 1	8 vs 2	3 vs 5
• Team 8: State Officers					

- **Post-Round Procedures:** After each round, teams report scores to a central scorer. Use a scoreboard or app for real-time standings.
- **Breaks and Logistics:** Include a 30-minute lunch break after Round 4. Have referees or certified officials for disputes. Provide water stations and seating for spectators.

If fewer boards are available, extend rounds accordingly (e.g., with 2 boards, each round takes twice as long).

Qualification Tournament Layout Plans

Qualification tournaments feed into the state level: councils qualify teams to districts, districts to dioceses, and dioceses select one team each for state (plus the State Officers team, which may not need qualification). Since the number of teams at each level varies (e.g., councils might have 4-10 local teams, districts 8-16, dioceses 16-32+), plans are scalable. Use ACO rules for all play. Suggest holding these over one day or evening per level, with date/location TBD by organizers.

1. Council-Level Tournaments (Local Qualifiers)

- **Purpose:** Select 1-2 top teams to advance to district level.
- **Recommended Format:** Round-robin for small groups (4-8 teams) to ensure everyone plays multiple games; switch to single elimination for 9+ teams to keep it quick.
- **Example for 6 Teams:**
 - 5 rounds, each team plays 5 games (total 15 games).
 - With 3 boards: 3 games per round, ~2 hours.
 - Winner: Best record; advance top 1-2.
- **Tiebreakers:** Same as state level.
- **Tips:** Keep it casual; no entry fees needed. Ideal for parish events.

2. District-Level Tournaments (Mid-Level Qualifiers)

- **Purpose:** Select 1-2 top teams per district to advance to diocesan level.
- **Recommended Format:** Double elimination for 8-16 teams (gives second chances, fair for moderate sizes); round-robin pools (e.g., 2 pools of 4-6) leading to a playoff for larger groups.
- **Example for 12 Teams:**
 - Divide into 2 pools of 6; round-robin within pools (5 games/team, ~15 games/pool).
 - Top 2 from each pool advance to a 4-team single-elimination playoff.
 - With 4 boards: ~3-4 hours.
 - Advance top 1-2 overall.
- **Tips:** Use brackets for elimination phases. Charge a small entry fee for prizes if desired.

3. Diocesan-Level Tournaments (Final Qualifiers)

- **Purpose:** Select 1 top team per diocese to represent at state.
- **Recommended Format:** Double elimination for 16-32 teams (handles larger fields efficiently); or pool play into playoffs for 32+ (e.g., 4 pools of 8, round-robin in pools, top 2/pool to 8-team bracket).
- **Example for 16 Teams:**
 - Double elimination bracket: Losers get a second bracket; overall winner after ~20-25 games.
 - With 4 boards: ~4-5 hours.
 - Winner advances to state.
- **Tips:** Seed based on district results if possible. Include spectator areas and simple concessions for a festive atmosphere.

These formats can be adjusted based on actual team counts and venue constraints. For software to generate custom brackets/schedules, tools like Playpass or LeagueLobster are free and user-friendly. If needed, incorporate byes for odd team numbers.

Tie Breaker information

For your **Michigan Knights of Columbus state cornhole tournament** (and the qualification levels at council, district, and diocesan), tiebreakers are essential in round-robin formats like your 8-team state event, where teams play everyone once and ties in win-loss records are common. Since the event follows **ACO (American Cornhole Organization) standard rules**, which focus on gameplay (cancellation scoring to 21+, no busting over unless specified), tournament organizers typically define tiebreakers in their own ruleset for standings.

The official ACO rules don't prescribe exact tiebreaker sequences for overall tournament rankings (they emphasize per-game scoring and formats), but common practices from ACO-sanctioned events, ACL guidelines, community tournaments (including Knights of Columbus events), and apps like Scoreholio align on fair, objective methods. These prioritize direct competition and performance metrics over random chance.

Recommended Tiebreaker Sequence for Your Tournament

Use this clear, progressive order in your event rules (announce it upfront for transparency and to prevent disputes):

1. **Head-to-Head Result** The team that won the direct matchup between the tied teams gets the higher rank.
 - This is the most common and fairest first tiebreaker in round-robin play.
 - For 2 teams: Simple—who beat whom?
 - For 3+ teams: Compare records only among the tied group (e.g., mini round-robin results). If still tied, move on.
2. **Point Differential (Total Across All Games)** Calculate net points: (Total points scored by the team) minus (Total points allowed/against them).
 - Higher differential wins.
 - This rewards consistent dominance and is widely used in cornhole because of cancellation scoring—strong wins rack up big margins.
3. **Total Points Scored (Offensive Output)** The team with the most raw points scored across all their games ranks higher.
 - Good secondary if differentials are close; favors aggressive play.
4. **Fewest Points Allowed (Defensive Strength)** The team that gave up the fewest points overall.
 - Useful if the above are tied.
5. **Sudden-Death or Playoff Game** (If Needed for Top Placement) For championship/advancement ties (e.g., deciding who represents the diocese at state), play a quick single game or best-of-3 to 21 (or first to a set score like 5-7 for speed).
 - Some events use a "sudden-death" frame: First team to score any points in an extra round wins.
 - In one-day events, keep this short to avoid delays.

Online customized brackets generators, you can use free online generators:

- scheduler.leaguelobster.com Round Robin
- printyourbrackets.com 8-Team Round Robin
- [BracketMaker.app](https://bracketmaker.app)
- diamondscheduler.jp