

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY AND GUIDELINES

August 2, 2011

The following Travel Baseball Policy and Guidelines, which have been recommended and approved by the AYRA Board of Directors, will be observed by the AYRA Travel Baseball Program, Teams, Managers (use of the word Manager means the Coach designated as the lead or head Coach), and Coaches (use of the word Coach or Coaches means all Coaches including the Manager). Specific exceptions to these policies and procedures may only be made by AYRA Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis.

The goals of the Policy shall remain consistent with AYRA policies. The guiding principle of this Policy is, and shall remain, that all decisions and policies shall place a priority on and consider the impact upon the Full AYRA Baseball Program. In conformity with this principle, this Policy will ensure that the AYRA Travel Program does not reduce or eliminate, in quantity or quality, any opportunity for Recreational Baseball Program participants. The Travel Baseball Program is to be run as a developmental program designed to provide advanced skilled instruction and elevated competition for those players possessing exceptional ability, positive team orientation, motivation to learn and the capability to make a significant commitment to the Travel Baseball Program.

ADMINISTRATION

The Travel Teams Coordinator will serve as the Administrator of this Policy for the Board of Directors.

NEW TEAMS

1. Development of new Travel teams will come from grassroots levels only. This means that having a full age by age compliment of teams is NOT necessary and is NOT an AYRA goal. Only when a team rises up from, say, an All-star team from one of the leagues would this be entertained by the Board.

Starting a travel team directly as full-time travel team has proven to be a huge challenge with the steep learning curve for all involved Coaches, parents, and players. These same challenges can occur with Sunday-only travel teams. In order to 'seed' the grassroots program, AYRA will endeavor to start Sunday-only teams at levels below 12U. Successful Sunday-only efforts will be given preferential treatment for moving to Full-time travel.

2. Evaluations of players are critical in the formation stage of a team. The Sunday-only programs allow flexible rostering for a ramping into the more formal roster rules at the Full-time level. AYRA expects that its travel program is focused on the development of players only, and all players are there to be coached up to the level of the competition.
3. The evaluations for new teams or teams with significant turnover will have involvement from the Board and/or Travel Teams Coordinator or designee. Significant turnover shall be defined as four or more players.

The Board strongly encourages the use of AYRA family and area players on rosters before moving outside. As teams are developed, there should not be a need for having open tryouts for every

position. That is how a Metro-type Travel team would be recruited. The Board would need to know of this and approve it before this is communicated and executed. This approach is inconsistent with our current Mission.

Tryouts if necessary will be announced through the website and be open to all. The preference is to select and develop players from within the AYRA program.

SELECTION OF MANAGERS and COACHES

The Board will empower the Travel Teams Coordinator to develop a method of selecting the Manager of new teams. This includes both Sunday-Only and Full-time Travel teams. In the case of teams that are being developed directly from the AYRA Recreational (Rec) program, the Rec Commissioner of the League that the team is coming from and going into will be consulted on the selection. The Travel Teams Coordinator will make a recommendation to the Board with details on all considered candidates. The Travel Teams Coordinator may delegate the performance of the process but not responsibility for seeing that the process is performed as planned herein.

1. All Managers and Coaches – Travel and Rec – are entrusted with the most significant resource provided to AYRA – the players. At the same time, Managers and Coaches are also resources. AYRA will endeavor to develop Coaches for the entire Baseball Program. In doing so, there will be required training and ongoing observation and quality control. AYRA takes this very seriously and reserves the right to replace any Manager and/or Coach if it deems this as being in the best interests of everyone involved. All first year Managers and Coaches are considered on Probation.

Should there be a need, the process for removal will be initiated by the Travel Teams Coordinator and, ultimately, approved by the Board by a majority of the votes cast in a regular meeting or by at least the number of votes necessary to represent a majority of full Board Member votes should a 'special meeting' be held that has less than 75% of the voting members in attendance personally or via proxy.

- a. Coaches will be evaluated on how well the Manager and Coaches did towards meeting the intent of these Travel guidelines every year by the Travel Teams Coordinator and the board if necessary. Winning or losing has nothing to do with Coaches evaluations. Teaching does.
 - b. This evaluation will be done via observation of games, scorecards, defensive playing assignments, and surveys/discussions with parents, players, and Coaches.
 - c. The evaluation results will be reported to the Board at least annually in the form of a recommendation on whether to allow the Manager and Coaches to continue their current positions with a Travel team for the following season.
 - d. The Travel Teams Coordinator has the authority to deputize responsible parties to assist in the fulfillment of this evaluation.
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PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION OF TEAMS

1. The AYRA program has not in the recent past had any Metro-level travel teams. As such, the expectations for winning and development need to be considered in the light of what AYRA is seeking through its travel program which is to further the Baseball careers of all of its players. The lack of an ability to take a championship to a higher level minimizes the reason for winning at any and all costs. This should be reflected in the team plan and carried through in the day-to-day, game-to-game, and inning-by-inning operations of each team. Any goals that go beyond readying players to play on High School teams and even College teams must be vetted by the Board.
 2. Any worthwhile endeavor that takes place over time and involves more than several people requires a plan. All teams must have a formal annual plan that includes a budget. The plan should be in line with League goals and should be vetted with the AYRA Board. The plan will be discussed and approved by the families before money is collected.
 3. It is the responsibility of each team's Manager to ensure his team's budget is paid in full. The economic costs of running and playing on a Travel team are not insignificant. The families need to know this to be able to plan for the costs. The league needs to know that it will be reimbursed for monies extended on behalf of travel teams. All teams will establish payment plans that enable the League to pay the team's costs from funds collected rather than having the League lend money. This includes uniforms and Winter Workouts. The failure to have your team's budget paid in full by the appropriate deadline will result in that player(s) not being eligible to play. Every team with an April 1 (or thereabouts) start date will pay the entire Spring season cost by March 1. Any team with a Mid-May start will pay the entire Spring season cost by April 15. Fall season costs should be paid before the season starts. Winter workout costs will be paid before those begin.
 4. The application to play in a travel league (MABA, MCBA, et al) or a tournament shall be made on behalf of the AYRA organization and the team. As such, the league shall at all times be informed. The team name shall not be altered or amended without the express consent of AYRA. Rosters submitted for these leagues and tournaments shall be submitted to the Travel Teams Coordinator also. The Travel Teams Coordinator shall be a named coaching party on every Travel Team.
 - a. Many leagues require specific notification regarding the termination of a team and the release of players from teams. By naming the Travel Teams Coordinator as a listed Coach will enable AYRA to avoid the situation where a team disbands without an appropriate ending for the players. The purpose here is for AYRA to have the ability to step in and affect the end in ways that are consistent with how we have defined our mission. This may be also necessary to obtain a refund of deposits and fees.
 5. Communications with families will provide complete transparency with regard to how the team will be operated including down to playing decisions. This must be done before any money has been collected. This will be in writing and acknowledged by the families. The enforcement of this document will be by the Travel Teams Coordinator on behalf of the Board.
 6. Travel teams are a part of the AYRA family. They represent the organization and in many cases are the only outward expressions that outsiders have of AYRA. The uniforms will be based on standards determined by the Travel Teams Coordinator and approved by the Board. This will include all gear other than bats, shoes, gloves, or other personal items. Jersey's, warm-ups, hats, sox, belts, pants, bat bags, and any other gear with AYRA, Bears, or other team logo, are part of the uniform standards.
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7. Statistics and scorebooks that include both offensive and defensive participation will be maintained for every game. These will be made available to the Travel Teams Coordinator upon his request.
8. The development of baseball players will be done in a manner that is appropriate for age level AND is consistent with the highest level of appropriate baseball methods. This requires training for Coaches. All Travel Coaches must commit to AYRA specified mandatory training (e.g. clinics, mandatory meetings).
9. The development of Coaches to become the next Sunday-only or Full-time Travel Coach doesn't just happen. Each Travel Team must commit qualified Coaches or Managers to training AYRA Rec Coaches for at least 4 hours/ year. This is a way for these Coaches to give back to AYRA. This training may be in the form of e.g. mentoring, teaching how to operate/manage a team, organizing practices.
10. Each team will have one person designated as the person in charge. It is contemplated that this individual will be the Manager. The Manager will be responsible for all operations of the team including those that are delegated. The Manager will affect a plan that allows for ease of operation with AYRA and outside leagues.
11. AYRA will provide support for players and families where the Board deems that their Travel team experience has not lived up to intent of these guidelines. In accordance with Travel & Rec League rules, AYRA will work to ensure that the player is properly released from their team and provided a spot within AYRA's Rec Program. This option can only be invoked in the beginning of the Travel team's Spring season per Travel League rules as well as the rules for the Rec League if applicable

In addition, if there is a Code of Conduct (Expectations on the website) issue that a Coach or Manager is having with a player and/or family, the Manager is expected to communicate the issue with the Travel Teams Coordinator as soon as possible after addressing it with the player and/or family. If the issue is unrecoverable, it may be necessary to discuss with the player and/or family so AYRA can assist with finding another playing opportunity within AYRA.

ROSTER SIZE AND PLAYING TIME

1. Rosters will be limited to 12 players unless approved by the Board in advance. A roster size of 11 is recommended through 14U. The rules for many leagues allow the addition to a roster prior to a Memorial Day (for Spring). This eliminates the need to carry an extra player just in case. Note that when adding a player in this instance that a preference for "calling up an AYRA player from Rec" is considered preferable to simply bringing someone in from the outside. However, competitive situations in the Rec program should be considered and such call ups approved by the Travel Teams Coordinator and League Commissioner and in accordance with rules for the age group, and affiliated league rules. For instance, the "call up" player may need to be on the team's roster upon submission to their affiliated league.
 2. The preference is for teams to bat your entire lineup through 12U and for all Sunday only teams. This should be done except in situations, such as tournaments and playoffs situations where there is significant play in a short period of time. Specific Leagues (MABA & MCBA) have rules at various levels for batting the lineup. The Coach's full choices are contained within those rules. However, we
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expect the 12U and younger Full- time Travel teams AS well as any Sunday-only team to be fully and completely developmental in nature. This requires batting the entire lineup.

3. Commit to playing every player in the field in each game. Ensure players start the next game in the field if game circumstances dictated that a player didn't play a previous game in the field (this is a defensive rule not a pitching rule) e.g. slaughter rule, game ended early due to weather, lack of light, or time constrained ending. Any player that does not start a game will start every other game forward until all other players have not started. While injury, sickness, and availability could alter a Manager from being 100% in compliance, the spirit of the rule is absolute. Once parents and players understand this rule, it will police itself.
4. Establish minimum playing time in the field per game.

As a model, saying that there are 20 games at 6 innings per game that would be 120 innings. With 9 players playing per inning, that equals 1080 player position innings. With 12 players, that would equal 90 position innings per player. That is 75% position playing time per player. Any player with more than 85% or less than 60% of the innings PLAYED would constitute an exception that will require explanation. [Note that PLAYED means defensive innings that are started. If games are cut short by weather, the inning counts. If players don't go on the field due to the Home team being ahead at the end of a game or for 'unplayed innings' in a truncated game do NOT count. This can be validated through the scorebooks. This established minimum will be written and published.]

COMMUNICATION

1. Winning is great but teaching is paramount. No player should be compromised for wins.
2. Managers and Coaches must communicate their plan for players and families to ensure that Travel team's commitment aligns with their investment. Even though this plan may remain unchanged, the communication must be done before each season and specifically before the collection of any funds for an upcoming season.
3. Players should be taught early on that sitting on the bench does not mean not being involved. The bench players should be taught how to and responsible for keeping: a log of pitch counts, pitch charting, umpire tendencies, catcher arm strength to 2nd base (if applicable), keeping score, etc. Players that play travel ball and especially full time travel have a commitment to wanting to learn all they can. The Coaches should be both encouraging AND allowing them to do so. If it is too much for certain kids (attention problems) so be it, but all players, parents and Coaches should have the chance to be the best that they can. If they choose not to or can't handle it, at least it was offered to them. The intention is to make baseball fun and a constant learning experience.
4. Scorebooks MUST have field playing assignments attached to each game and summarized for each 10 games to be reported to the Travel Teams Coordinator.

Players should have a chance to play multiple positions. All positions should have several individuals, at least, that share time. All players will have infield and outfield innings except players that play pitcher and/or catcher for significant innings. Infield and outfield assignments are not to be treated as token assignments to meet league requirements. This is essentially affirmative action for every

player on your team. Upon reaching the 90' bases, this rule will be slightly relaxed given that players have specialized positions. In 13U+ ball, the teams will largely be made up of starters and reserves. Reserves will get play in both the infield and outfield. Starters will also. If for no other reason than to allow the team to be ready for the inevitable situation where players are forced into uncomfortable positions, this will be done.

5. The easiest way to make sure that allegations of nepotism never come up is to not let it happen by sitting your son first.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

All teams will be self-sufficient in terms of paying their own way. This includes paying for the shared costs of running AYRA. Other than contemplated by scholarships as documented herein and elsewhere, there will be no exceptions to this.

Sunday-only teams and All-star teams are encouraged to participate in tournaments at the conclusion of their season (or, at times, during the season). The Sunday-only team's costs specific to running the Sunday Only team shall be differentiated from the cost of the All-star team participation in tournaments. AYRA will structure fees each season to provide for the payment of a single tournament for the All-star team for the IL and NL. This amount shall not exceed \$450. The roster for that particular tournament will be determined with the assistance of the League Commissioners and shall include players that have earned All-star status but who may not be on the Sunday-only team for whatever reason. The use of players in All-star tournaments shall have the All-star team as defined by the individual League as the primary basis for lineups. This is a situation that needs to be handled with care with both players and families. The tournaments and opportunities to play should be made known early in the season. The All-Star team should be determined before May 15 so that practice may begin. This might mean that All-Star players would begin to participate in Sunday Only Team practices.

At the conclusion of each travel season, a team may have unspent or "excess" funds. These funds are retained on behalf of the team. Any player not remaining with the team after the conclusion of the season may have their portion of the excess funds refunded. This shall be an element of the agreement with any team going forward. The only exception, which must be approved in advance, relates to the collection of funds over a period of time designated for payment for an extraordinary tournament or other efforts. For purposes of this rule, any tournament that has a total cost of over \$200/player (including any and all costs) is considered extraordinary.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournament play is strongly encouraged. There are many local tournaments available for participation. Tournament should be identified early in the season planning and costs should be factored into the Team's planned costs.

The decision to go for an extraordinary tournament is a Team decision and should be made as early as possible. A team that is planning to do an extraordinary tournament requires Board approval before making an application

FUNDRAISING

Any Fundraising undertaken by any Team or group of Teams must be within the policy established and in force for Fundraising by the Board.

1. All travel teams will be assessed a one-time “team fee” to be established each year by the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Directors. This fee is to be paid by each team before that team may expend any funds for any purpose. This fee will be used for capital improvements to the baseball facilities and to offset AYRA player costs such as insurance and field maintenance. These funds can come from travel registration fees, travel sponsor funds, special fundraising events and/or sponsors obtained by a full-time travel Manager. Any combination of the aforementioned funding types may be utilized to meet this obligation. These funds are provided to help offset administrative and maintenance costs incurred by AYRA as a result of travel baseball.
 2. The use of fundraised money for Travel Team purchases of uniforms, player equipment, and other hard items will not be allowed.
 3. Scholarships for players on Travel teams may be available. They will be made, if possible, in amounts up to the amount of the fee for a similar aged Rec player. These must be made in advance of agreement to the travel team plan by families if at all possible. Beyond that, these must be brought to the Board. Items that will be considered in the scholarship decision are: home location (in AYRA area), need, prior AYRA participation, and commitment from the family to fully participate.
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