

# Bethel Park Baseball Travel Program

## Travel Baseball Eligibility and Tryouts

Bethel Park Baseball (BPB) will coordinate a youth Travel Baseball program for players who have advanced skills and abilities to provide them with the opportunity to participate in a competitive environment.

### Overview:

The Travel program's goal is to be able to provide a spot to every kid possible. In that goal, we must put together competitive teams. We will have one top level team (Orange) for each age group from ages 7 - 14. In certain circumstances, we try to have a second tier team (Black) and another additional team if players and volunteers can be confirmed. For some younger age groups, 7u in particular, the travel committee might make the decision to have the players split evenly so the Orange and Black team will be of equal talent levels.

### Eligibility:

In order to be selected to a travel team, the player must have participated in the BPB in-house spring recreation program AND played in a minimum of **50% of regular season in-house games scheduled**. If a player meets this criterion at the time the travel team is selected and subsequently fails to meet the eligibility criteria by the end of the in-house spring regular season (playoff games excluded), that player may be removed from the team. In addition, a player not currently meeting the minimum eligibility rule that could achieve the minimum eligibility rule prior to the end of the in-house spring season should be considered for selection. The decision to remove and/or add another player will be addressed at that time by the BPB Travel Committee and/or BPB Board of Directors. Extraordinary circumstances (i.e., injuries, family emergencies, etc.) will be reviewed by the BPB Travel Committee and/or BPB Board of Directors, which can make an exception to the eligibility criteria stated above.

Should a player verbally accept an invitation to join a BPB travel team and then leave said team for reasons that do not include injury/illness/personal family circumstances said player will not be eligible to play on a travel team for the remainder of that season, plus the following season.

A player selected to a travel team must be committed to play in tournament games during the travel baseball season, which typically runs from the second weekend in June through the end of July. The BPB Board of Directors does recognize that this same period may also be the only time available for family vacations. Players may miss up to one tournament for family vacations.

Age cutoff - April 30th is the age cut-off for each age. However, players that are in the grade above, but have a late birthday (after 4/30), do have the opportunity to try out their corresponding grade.

Any player that would like to try out for an older age group (non-grade level scenario) must attend the first tryout in their current age group and be recommended to try out for an older age group by receiving approval from the travel committee and assessor.

Additionally, said player will have to finish with the highest score in their current age group, as well as finish in the top 3 of the older age group to be considered for moving up.

### Travel Team Tenure:

The travel team(s) for ages 9u to 14u will be selected each fall (August) and remain the travel team for each respective age group until the team is re-evaluated and selected the following year. 7U and 8U will

be finalized after winter training and before the spring season.

The teams picked in August will remain together until the following August tryout for the next year. The tryout process will remain the same as for the younger age groups, each player must make one tryout. If a player attends both tryout dates the higher of the two scores will be used.

### Player Evaluations:

Any player that has expressed interest in playing travel baseball will be evaluated to determine the player's ability. Travel tryouts will be scheduled, and advanced notification will be given to all rec. participants and players. **Participation in at least one of the tryouts is mandatory for consideration on a travel team.**

### Player and Manager Selection Timing & Roster Size:

Players and managers will be picked within 10 days of the second tryout. Rosters for all ages will have a minimum of 10 players. Any team who has roster spots open up during the season or needs call ups, must first reach out to any "cut" players.

### Travel Tryout Process:

9u-14u August tryouts dates will be announced by July 1st each year.

Additional items to note regarding tryouts:

\*\*\*No Travel Uniforms or hats\*\*\*

\*\*\*USA BATS ONLY (or BBCOR for Pony age players)\*\*\*

# Bethel Park Baseball Travel Team Guidelines

## Code of Conduct:

Each travel team player and parent will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct to ensure that we are representing Bethel Park in a positive manner. If any player or parent violates the Code of Conduct, the BPB travel committee and/or BPB Board of Directors will determine what level of discipline, if any, is applied.

## Travel Uniforms and Bags:

Each player will receive uniforms that are expected to last 2 years (barring a design change). (1) black uniform top, (1) orange uniform top, (1) hat (replaced yearly). Pants are selected by the team/coach and purchased separately by parents. BPB bags have always been and continue to be an optional additional item that can be purchased individually. Information will be sent to each travel player before November 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## Travel Season for all age groups:

**7u -8u:** These are the newest players to the Travel Program. It is important to note that we must build the team before traveling to out-of-town tournaments. A typical travel season includes winter training, and Sunday Spring games/practices as well as (4) Summer Travel Tournaments. Estimated cost per player is \$300 to \$400.

**9u -10u:** These are still the younger ages where it is more important to establish techniques and play together as a team than traveling out-of-town for overnight tournaments. A typical travel season includes winter training, and Sunday Spring games/practices with (4-6) Travel Tournaments. Estimated cost per player is \$400 to \$500.

**11u-12u:** As the players grow and continue to establish the important techniques, traveling out of town for overnight tournaments becomes available and sometimes the only option for competitive play. The typical travel season includes winter training, and weekend practices/games with (4-6) Travel Tournaments. Estimated cost per player is \$400 to \$500 (Not including Travel/Hotel Cost).

**13u -14u:** As the players have been in the program or have years of competitive travel experience, traveling out of town for overnight tournaments becomes options for competitive play. A typical travel season includes winter training, spring practices and weekend games with (4-6) Travel Tournaments. Estimated cost per player is \$450 to \$550(Not including Travel/Hotel Cost).

Bethel Park Baseball takes pride in maintaining one of the lowest cost travel programs in the area. Occasionally, coaches and parents may opt for additional tournaments or activities that are not included with the standard registration fee.

## Fundraising and Financial Information

There are many fundraising opportunities that can help to mitigate additional costs. When fundraising, the travel teams will need to seek approval from the BPB Travel Committee as we do not want to have an overlap of fundraising from the BPB's current sponsors and other travel teams. All funds raised need to be submitted to the BPB travel treasurer for deposit and to be allocated towards the team who raised the funds. Travel expenses need to also be paid out from the BPB travel treasurer. At no time should a coach or other parent hold onto funds and pay out funds on their own. Below are some reasons as to why a team might seek to do extra fundraising:

1. Specialty or extra travel tournaments (Ripken, Cooperstown, spring/fall tournaments)
2. Pictures and photo banners for home tournaments
3. Additional specialty uniform or hats

## Recreation vs Travel Program

The BPB Recreation and Travel Program are maintained as two separate but interconnected programs. Funds from each program are kept separate and each program operates independent of each other. The expectation is always that the recreation program takes precedence over the travel program. At no time is a player allowed to miss a recreation practice or game for a BPB travel practice or game. If at any time a recreation event needs to occur on a field, those events take precedence over any scheduled travel event.

## Winter Training

### 7U and 8U

These age groups will be practicing this winter on Sunday morning, and 4 teams will have the entire D-Bat facility to themselves. We encourage coaches to work with one another to create plans that best use the space. Some of the cages can be combined to create larger areas for longer ground balls, throwing drills, and infield practice.

General practice plan:

Warmup (5-10 minutes) – We recommend that each coach create a repeatable warmup that can be used all year. Jogging, slides, Frankenstein's, etc. for calisthenics and a throwing routine. If coaches are unsure what to do here please reach out to Clay Swango or Jody Wilkerson for ideas.

Station work (60 minutes) – Each team will have, at a minimum, 3 cages available to them. 3 stations, rotating every 20 minutes, is an excellent use of this time. Ideas for stations: ground ball form and footwork, underhand flips (star drill), baserunning – timing swings, sliding (sliding mats available), throwing form and footwork, tee work, soft toss, front toss, live batting practice, etc.

\*\*Keep in mind that the machine cages are also available to you, setting a curveball to the slowest speed on the machine is a great way to slow the pitching down for this age group.

End with a game/competition (20 minutes) – tic-tac-toe on a 9 square, batting practice with points for hits, throw a ball at a target (tee with a ball on it), play dodgeball, GET CREATIVE!

### 9U

These age groups will also be practicing on Sunday morning, and will have the entire D-Bat facility to themselves. We encourage coaches to work with one another to create plans that best use the space. Some of the cages can be combined to create larger areas for longer ground balls, throwing drills, and infield practice.

Warmup (5-10 minutes) – We recommend that each coach create a repeatable warmup that can be used all year. Jogging, slides, Frankenstein's, etc. for calisthenics and a throwing routine. If coaches are unsure what to do here please reach out to Clay Swango or Jody Wilkerson for ideas.

Station work (60 minutes) – Each team will have, at a minimum, 3 cages available to them. 3 stations, rotating every 20 minutes, is an excellent use of this time. Ideas for stations: ground ball form and footwork, underhand flips (star drill), baserunning – timing/reading pitches and secondary leads, sliding (sliding mats available), throwing form and footwork, tee work, soft toss, front toss, live batting practice, etc.

In addition to the station work listed above, this age will need a ton of time to work on pitching. Since we have the entire facility, 4 mounds should be available every week. Please designate a coach (rotating or otherwise) as a pitching coach and have them pull players from station work to spend time working 1 on 1 with pitching and catching. You can also make this a full station if you wish and work it into the rotation for all kids. There are various drills you can work on with all kids including the towel drill for pitchers and using tennis balls for catchers to learn to catch and block from a squatted position.

\*\*Keep in mind that the machine cages are also available to you. This is an opportunity to maximize

down time without needing additional coaches!

End with a game/competition (20 minutes) – tic-tac-toe on a 9 square, batting practice with points for hits, throw a ball at a target (tee with a ball on it), play dodgeball, GET CREATIVE!

### 10U-14U

Our older age groups will have a minimum of 3 cages available to them during their 90 minute time slot. Offseason/Winter work is a time for these age groups to work on fundamentals and individual training. Warmup (5-10 minutes) – We recommend that each coach create a repeatable warmup that can be used all year. Jogging, slides, Frankenstein's, etc. for calisthenics and a throwing routine. If coaches are unsure what to do here please reach out to Clay Swango or Jody Wilkerson for ideas. Designate a weekly captain(s) to run warmups.

Station work (60 minutes) – Each team will have, at a minimum, 3 cages available to them. 3 stations, rotating every 20 minutes, is an excellent use of this time. Ideas for stations: ground ball form and footwork, underhand flips (star drill), transfers, double play footwork, baserunning – taking leads, sliding (sliding mats available), throwing form and footwork, tee work, soft toss, front toss, live batting practice, etc. Pitching should be a focus here as well. Holding runners will become hugely important. Station work is a good time to incorporate this.

End with a competition (20 minutes) – tic-tac-toe on a 9 square, batting practice with points for hits, throw a ball at a target (tee with a ball on it), play dodgeball, GET CREATIVE! While this may not look the same as the younger age groups, and may be more baseball driven, creating healthy competition within the team can go a long way towards preparing them for a competitive tournament season.

### Parent/Assistant Coach Participation:

\*\* The more parents are willing to be involved in winter workouts, the more productive these workouts will be. Not everyone involved needs to be baseball savvy. Our younger age groups may need help getting from one station to another. The machine cages will need to be monitored. Someone can help by timing the station rotations. While good planning and communication from the coach(es) is imperative, EVERYONE can, and should, participate in some way when they are available!

### Practices, and Scrimmages

During recreation seasons, the fields are reserved on Sundays for travel practices and/or scrimmages. Outside of recreation seasons, the fields are available to be reserved on weekdays for travel practices and/or scrimmages.

Coaches can sign up through the travel committee to schedule practices and/or scrimmages on reserved fields. If there is a scrimmage scheduled at a field with a concession stand, the stand must be opened. If the scrimmage requires an umpire, the game is required to take place at a field with a concession stand and the stand must be opened. Sales at the concession stand during scrimmages are to help offset the cost of baseballs, field supplies, and umpires.

### Parent Responsibilities:

In order to have a successful experience, it is very important to have parents take an active role on their child's travel team. There are many areas of help that a coach might need to help things run smoother which will allow a better experience for your child and you. Even before practices and games start, all parents can help with communication.

1. Please respond to your coach with availability for practices and games in GameChanger with at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled start. This helps better plan the structure of practices and games.
2. Please let your coach know as far in advance as possible about any planned trips that might interfere with a weekend during the summer travel season.

There are also other roles on a team that parents can step up and volunteer for:

1. The most obvious area of assistance is stepping up to be an assistant coach to help run practices and games.
2. For younger ages, having a parent, even one without any baseball knowledge, to help manage the kids in the dugout is always of huge help!
3. Some teams have had a parent volunteer to run live video streams on GameChanger. While this isn't something that has to be done, many parents do enjoy being able to watch the game if they are unable to attend.
4. A team manager is a position that is not required but this person can assist with things outside of games/practices such as: fundraisers, advertising the home tournament and managing registrations, extra items such as photos/banners,
5. Concessions team manager - a mandatory position for someone not on the coaching staff for the home tournament.

Recognizing that the home tournaments are a source of revenue for the BPB travel program, it is imperative that the parents of each travel team assist in the administration of the tournaments for their respective age group. Typically, this requires dedication of several hours of time during the tournament, working in the concession stand, announcing games, field maintenance, scorekeeping, etc.

### Coaching Responsibilities:

When coaching youth sports, it is vital that the head coach and all assistant coaches are on the same page with the Travel Program expectations. As coaches, we are here to develop the team and players with positive coaching instruction. Winning at all costs is NOT the priority. Developing our young participants into well-rounded, positive players is our #1 priority. Keeping the players coming back to the program is of the utmost importance. All coaches must consider the health and well-being of the player over winning. During the travel season, we ask that all coaches follow the MLB Pitch Smart outline in the following link - <https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart>. Starting at 9u (pitch coach) it is expected that Coaches will use GameChanger to score games and track pitch counts. The BPB travel committee reserves the right to monitor pitch counts via GameChanger to ensure MLB pitch-smart guidelines are followed.

As head coach it is expected that you will perform all of the usual coaching duties such as managing practices and games. There are also additional responsibilities including but not limited to those listed below:

1. Compile list of uniform and hat sizes
2. Set up and manage gamechanger for parent communication and scheduling
3. Provide clear and timely communication to parents regarding schedules and expectations for them and their child
4. Managing your home tournament
  - a. Seeking and managing outside team registrations
  - b. Tournament scheduling
  - c. Field and event management
  - d. Temporary fence setup and teardown within municipality required timeline
  - e. Ensuring the concessions committee requirements have been met
5. Seeking appropriate tournaments to "travel" to and completing the registration for them
6. Being fiscally responsible with BPB provided equipment and materials.
7. Provide your required clearances and ensure any of your assistant coaches have done the same
8. Given the extensive list of head coach responsibilities, it is highly recommended that you identify a team manager (non coach) that can assist with this.

### Outside Community Tournaments

Coaches will be able to seek out and register for tournaments on their own. Payment for these tournaments must be made by the BPB organization and coaches are expected to follow the procedures given to them by the BPB travel treasurer. It is recommended that coaches seek advice from other BPB coaches and/or the BPB travel committee on which tournaments to register for. Coaches are not able to register for more than the max number of tournaments listed below or spend over the maximum amount listed below without approval from the travel committee (your home tournament counts as one of the registered tournaments).

7u-8u	Max of 4 Tournaments	Max of \$2,000
9u-11u	Max of 6 Tournaments	Max of \$2,500
12u-14u	Max of 6 Tournaments	Max of \$3,000

### Team Equipment Supplied by BPB:

Bethel Park Baseball will supply coaches with all of the equipment necessary to play out the season. Below you will find a list of equipment for each age group. 1 box of new game balls (1 dozen) will be supplied to each coach prior to outdoor Spring practices. These baseballs can be used for scrimmages or tournaments that require game balls to be provided. Any additional game balls needed for the season can be purchased by the team, at cost, from Bethel Park Baseball. The funds used for these purchases would come from team fundraisers/collections.

**\*\*All equipment, including used and new baseballs (unless additional game balls were purchased) will be returned to Bethel Park Baseball at the conclusion of the season (August).**

7U/8U – Coaches bag containing the following:

- Catchers gear (shin guards, chest protector, catcher’s mitt, helmet)
- Pitchers Helper gear (facemask and heart guard)
- 1 bucket of practice baseballs (approximately 3 dozen)

9U-14U – Coaches bag containing the following:

- Catchers gear (shin guards, chest protector, catcher’s mitt, helmet)
- 1 bucket of practice baseballs (approximately 3 dozen)

## **Bethel Park Baseball Home Tournaments**

Bethel Park Baseball takes pride in maintaining one of the lowest cost travel programs in the area. One of the main reasons we can provide such a great program at a low cost is by the money raised during our home tournaments. Hosting a home tournament is a requirement for all teams 12u and younger. For 13u and older, it is highly recommended but not required. For any required team who does not host a home tournament, players are required to pay an additional \$200.

### **Advertising of home tournaments**

The BPB travel committee will be responsible for listing all home tournaments on the McCandless Athletic Association (MCAA) website. Each head coach and a member of the travel committee will be listed as a contact for potential teams to reach out to. This website is the main location where local tournaments are listed and able to be found. It can also be a good idea to create a flyer on your own and share out on local social media pages if you are struggling to find teams.

### **Tournament Game Scheduling**

Home tournaments will consist of 2 pool-play games and then single elimination bracket play. Any deviation from this format needs prior approval of the BPB travel committee and/or board of directors. When creating your home tournament schedule, you are typically paired up with another team. When creating schedules, it is imperative that you communicate with each other to ensure you are playing at opposite times from one another when possible. Doing so allows coaches and families to complete required tasks when their child is not playing. All schedules are required to be sent to the BPB travel committee and concessions committee a minimum of 14 days prior to the first day of the tournament for approval. Once approved, it can then be sent to your registered teams and posted to GameChanger.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

BPB Travel Committee – provide advice/guidance/direction when asked and necessary

Head coach – manage all aspects of home tournament

Assistant coaches – assist with field prep and monitoring of games

Concession Committee – stock stand prior to the start of the tournament, provide signage, be available by phone for issues, order additional items if necessary, create signup genius for concession shifts

Concessions Team Manager – be the liaison between the team and concessions committee, ensure deposits are made correctly and appropriately, picking up any special orders throughout the weekend as directed by the concessions committee,

Parents - Each family should expect to spend at minimum around 3 hours working the concession stand and an additional hour helping out with some of other things.

### **Concessions**

The concession stand is a large reason our programs are so affordable and the reason we are able to continue to make improvements to our programs and fields. A lot of time and energy is spent by our concessions committee to help manage and run these stands. They will help support and direct but are unable to be there for your entire tournament. Each team must provide the name of their Concessions Team Manager by May 1st to the Concessions Committee. The concessions committee will then coordinate with them the expectations and specific deadlines that need met for their individual tournament. Below are some of the deadlines you can expect:

1. Any extra menu item requests must be made 3 weeks prior to the start of the tournament so there is enough time for ordering, setting prices, and creating signage. Please understand that not all requests can be granted.
2. Tournament game schedules must be provided 2 weeks prior to the start of the tournament so that the concessions committee can create the signup genius for families to sign up to work shifts at the concession stand. Having the schedule early also allows the concessions committee to properly schedule deliveries and stock the stand.

The regular Simmons menu will be available the entire tournament. We typically also add a limited supply of fruit, muffins, and pasta salad to the regular menu each week. In addition to regular items, our teams have the option to sell meal specials and other approved food items. Other extra items can be purchased by concessions or donated by families. Examples include jersey mikes, pulled pork, cookies, brownies, and energy bars.

All items sold at the concession stand must be approved by the concessions committee. Nothing is to be purchased by individual teams/tournaments. Any purchasing will be done by the concession committee and the committee will set the sale price. Money is not to be taken from the concessions till for any expenses. Any items sold, including donations, will go to the entire BPB travel program and not individual players or teams.

If teams are doing any special raffles, they must be sold outside of the concession stand, and the money kept separate from the concession stand cash drawer, venmo, and paypal.

Any raffles sold at the tournament must use the BPB travel venmo account and not a personal account.

### Sample outline of tasks for a 4 day tournament (Thurs-Sun):

#### Wednesday night:

- Help is needed to set up temporary fencing on the fields
- Review the concession stand if you aren't familiar with how to work it, where things are, how to make certain food, etc.
- Hang up banners (team specific if purchased)
- Clean out the dugouts
- Add supplies to the front and back field boxes - MVP pins (used for pool play only), bags field liner, game balls, check for umpire equipment
- Spray paint foul lines in the outfield grass
- Spray paint bases if necessary
- Find correct base distance boxes and dig out, cover up other base distance boxes if necessary

#### Thursday night:

- Prep fields for games (drag with cocoa mat, lines, set out bases, get out game balls, MVP pins)
- Have representative at each field during games for any questions or issues that come up (likely one of our coaching staff)
- Other BP families will work the stand during our games
- Our families work the stand during any games the other BP team plays in
- Help man and sell the raffle ticket booth

#### Friday night

- Field prep for games (drag with cocoa mat, lines, set out bases, get out game balls, MVP pins)
- Other BP families will work the stand during our games
- Our families work the stand during any games the other BP team plays in
- Help man and sell the raffle ticket booth

### Saturday:

- Field prep for our game (drag with cocoa mat, lines, set out bases, get out game balls, MVP pins)
- Other BP families will work the stand during our games
- Our families work the stand during any games the other BP team plays in
- Prep field in between all pool play games (drag with cocoa mat, lines, set out bases, get out game balls, MVP pins)
- Have a rep at the fields during games for any questions or issues that come up (likely one of our coaching staff)
- Help work the concession stand throughout the day - If bracket play begins and both BP teams happen to play at the same time, coordinate so the stand is always covered and open. (times are always TBD and up in the air since it depends on seeding)
- Continually check and empty trash cans near all 3 fields and concession stand
- Check on bathrooms for cleanliness and toilet paper needs (address as needed)
- Help cover and sell the raffle ticket booth

### Sunday:

- Prep field in between all bracket games (drag with cocoa mat, lines, set out bases, get out game balls) (no mvp pins for bracket play)
- Have rep at both fields during games for any questions or issues that come up (likely one of our coaching staff)
- Help work the concession stand throughout the day - If both BP teams happen to play at the same time, coordinate so the stand is always covered and open. (times are always TBD and up in the air since it depends on seeding)
- Continually check and empty trash cans near all 3 fields and concession stand
- Check on bathrooms for cleanliness and toilet paper needs (address as needed)
- Help cover and sell the raffle ticket booth
- End of day: Tear down any temporary fencing and put away, put away bases, supplies, etc., and clean concession stand