



OKEEHLEE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION, INC.
TRAVEL POLICY

These rules shall govern the Okeehlee Baseball Association, Inc.'s (the "Association") Travel Baseball Program and shall remain in full force and effect until such time as they are modified or amended by the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Association. They shall not be modified or amended except upon approval of a majority of the members of the Board.

The Association's Travel Baseball Program will be governed and managed by the Association's Board, under rules and policies established by the Board. The Association's Travel Baseball Program shall be operated by volunteers, and no one associated with the travel program—including Board Members, Managers and Assistant Coaches shall be paid by the league, or with league funds. Paid Managers and Assistant Coaches will be paid by the travel team directly.

The purpose of the Association's Travel Baseball Program is to provide the community's youth in the area the opportunity to compete on a statewide and national level and to provide talented young athletes the opportunity to develop their athletic skills and sportsmanship-like attitudes in a more competitive atmosphere.

The following rules shall govern the Association's Travel Baseball Program:

- **FOR ALL AGE DIVISIONS:** Rules and regulations instituted by the Association, and the rules and regulations of any other organizations or associations under which the Association's Travel Baseball Program may be sanctioned (e.g., LOCAL LEAGUES, USSSA, PG, etc.).

TRAVEL RULES:

1. General Policy.

- a. An objective of the Association is to develop good citizens as well as good athletes. Although the Travel Baseball Program is a more competitive program, with an increased emphasis on winning, the emphasis shall not be on "win at all cost." Managers, coaches, players and parents that demonstrate "win at all cost" behavior is not wanted in the Association, even in the Travel Baseball Program.
- b. The code of behavior adopted for our Recreational Program also applies to travel. Travel managers and coaches shall report to the Association's Board any violation of the Creed or General Regulations by a manager, coach, player, or anyone officially connected with the Association. The violation of these rules and guidelines may result in ejection, suspension, or such other penalty as the Board in its discretion may prescribe.
- c. The Executive Board of the Association shall develop and maintain policies regarding the operation and administration of the Travel Baseball Program. These policies, and any subsequent revisions, shall be governed by the overall Association policy and shall be submitted to the Association's Full Board for approval.

2. Non-Burdening of Association Recreational Program.

- a. Every player, coach, manager, and team registered with the Association's Travel Baseball Program shall give priority to the Association's recreational program during the Spring Season. While every effort will be made by the Travel Director and the Association to coordinate the Association's recreational and travel baseball programs, there will undoubtedly be instances where it is difficult, if not impossible, to do so. In such instances, priority will be given to the recreational program, but all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the travel program as well.

3. Travel Director.

- a. The Association's Travel Director, who shall be appointed by the President of the Association, shall have responsibility for coordinating with the Association's Uniform Approval Requests, working side by side with the Scheduling Director, and overseeing all requests and concerns associated with the Travel program. The Travel Director will present all concerns to the Board of Directors.

4. Selection of Managers.

- a. All Managers must apply in writing and be approved by The Board of Directors and receive their Travel Team Onboarding Package.
- b. Unless otherwise approved by the Board, all Managers or Coaches must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older. Further, such managers or coaches must possess the maturity, responsibility, character, and adherence to Association rules and regulations required to remain a manager or coach in good standing with the Association and must complete a mandatory background check, and the same requirements the recreational managers complete.
- c. Travel Managers term will be for one year beginning Aug 1 of the calendar year and ending July 31 of the following year. During this tenure, the Manager will facilitate selecting coaches and players, as well as, managing during the Fall and Spring travel seasons.
- d. Managers must provide at least one open tryout before each Fall season. Without any cause, Manager or Coaches may continue in their capacity the following years.

5. Manager Responsibilities.

The responsibilities of any Travel Team Manager shall include, but not limited to:

- a. Ensuring players and coaches reflect the ideals of the Association at all times. This includes maintaining a spirit of fair play and sportsmanship on and off the field.
- b. Maintaining adequate supervision and control of all Association Travel Team players while in uniform before, during, and after the game while at the field.
- c. Immediately advising the Travel Director for the Association of any issues arising with respect to his or her travel team that may impact Association travel policy.
- d. Ensuring all coaches and parents that have any contact with players has completed a background check and the concussion test.

6. League Responsibility to Travel Teams.

Okeeheelee Travel teams will be selected and administered by the league and will receive prioritized benefits with their registration fee, such as;

1. Team Insurance, permanent weekly lighted practice fields, bullpens, hitting stations, batting cages, groomed & lined fields for all Home games with the help of the county (teams are responsible for coordinating their lined fields and umpires).
2. Fundraising opportunities at the park for individual teams, with board approval.
3. Cooperstown Dreams Park reservations (12U team only).

- a. The Executive Board may decide to field a second travel team in the division if they feel there are enough interested talented players remaining and an approvable manager can be determined to lead the team.
- b. Players may be cut during the season due to behavioral issues or other issues, which must be brought to the attention of the board. If the board deems the need to have the player released from the team it will be up to the board to decide and not the sole discretion of the manager.
- c. Managers and Coaches may be suspended or expelled from the association if it is found that the Code of Conduct Policy was not adhered to.

7. Eligibility for Travel Team Participation.

- a. All eligible players who are selected to play on our Travel Team must be registered in the Association's Spring Recreational baseball program, with the exception of the Babe Ruth division. It is encouraged that all players on a Travel team make themselves eligible for participation in the leagues All Star program which begins at the conclusion of the Spring Rec season's regular season.
- b. Each Travel Team must complete the Travel Roster Form, and collect a \$50.00 per player Fall Fee, paid to the Association, to cover fees of lights, field permits, and player insurance.
- c. The Travel Team Fall due will be nonrefundable if a player, or entire team were to voluntarily leave.
- d. A Travel Team may request for a player or team refund to the Board of Directors for certain acceptable reasons, similar to, but not limited to, a player's injury, relocation, etc.

8. Travel & Recreational League Interaction.

- a. Spring recreation league games shall take priority over any Travel participation event. Out of town travel tournaments will not interfere with Okeeheelee tournaments and will not conflict with the spring recreational baseball season or All Stars if that player has chosen to participate.
- b. If any player, coach or manager misses a Recreational program activity due to a Travel program activity, and it this action results in a forfeit, the player, coach or manager will be subject to an immediate 1 game suspension and the Travel manager may be responsible to pay restitution to the league for costs associated with the forfeiting game (i.e., umpire costs, field preparation, scorekeepers, etc.). The player, coach or manager may also be subject to removal from All-Star participation, and multiple violations of the rule can result in expulsion from the Recreational and Travel programs.
- c. During the Fall recreational league, travel teams should compromise as much as possible to balance travel activities and recreational league activities as well as other team sports that may be played in the Fall by its players. Fall recreational teams shall not penalize participating travel players for missing events assuming the travel players make a good faith effort to keep the recreational league manager aware and apprised of travel league activities. Fall travel players will be treated no different than players in other sports having conflicts with the Fall recreational league.
- d. If a travel player or travel head coach associated with any travel program (Okeeheelee and/or another organization and/or travel team) does not participate in Fifty Percent (50%) of Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc.'s Spring Recreation regular season then that player and/or head coach shall be ineligible to participate in All Stars for that Spring recreation season.

9. Playing Up / Down in Age.

- a. Players may be permitted to play up in age, if in the sole discretion of the Director of Travel with the Boards' approval. Team Managers will make the request. Players playing up will be justified based on the size, skill, or experience of such a player and is not prohibited by any organizations under which the Association's travel program may be sanctioned. Parents of the player playing up will provide in writing, releasing and waiving the Director and the Board of any from any and all liability. Parents may ask the Association for a Player League Advancement Request form.

10. Late Registrant(s) and Player Removal.

- a. Late registrants can be evaluated by the Travel Managers. Managers may pick up additional players after the team has been selected but may not cut players already on the roster without justified reason due to discipline of player or parents. No player shall be cut by the team to make room for a more talented player. Players leaving/quitting a team will not be reimbursed for any fees after the team selections are finalized.

11. Registration Fees.

- a. Besides the League registration fees, the Team Manager shall establish registration fee each season by establishing a working budget for the team to cover the teams' individual expenses, such as uniforms, umpires, tournaments, etc. The fee will be paid by the Team to the Treasurer at the beginning of each season. The philosophy of the Association shall be that its travel program shall not be called upon to pay for its recreational program and the travel program shall not burden the recreational program.

12. Team Rosters.

- a. The minimum roster size for any Travel Team shall be eight (8) players. There is no maximum. The roster form must contain the player's name, uniform number, date of birth, address, phone number, and email address. A team book shall be maintained by each team with a completed waiver and release form, team roster, and copy of each player's birth certificate.

13. Parental Authorization/Release Forms.

- a. All players are required to have their parents execute a Parental Authorization/Release Form granting such player permission to play in the Association's Travel Baseball Program and releasing the Association from any liability for injuries that may be sustained as a result of such participation. All Travel Teams are required to submit such forms with each player's registration and to keep a copy in the Team Notebook for review prior to the game. All visiting teams are required to maintain similar executed authorization/release forms in the Team Notebook for review by the Association prior to any games being played on Association facilities.

14. No Must Play Rule.

- a. In the absence of any rules to the contrary as specified by any inter-league, tournament, or other rules that may be applicable, there is no must play rule in effect for any division of the Association's Travel Baseball Program. However, it is recommended that travel teams play everyone both offensively and defensively. This guideline should not be construed to mean that all players must receive equal playing time or that everyone must play in every game.

15. Pitching Restrictions.

- a. One of the primary considerations in coordinating the Association's recreational program with its travel program is protecting the health, safety and welfare of all the participants in its program. It is up to the TEAM MANAGER to protect and ensure the safety of their pitchers. The manager shall use their best judgment and follow any pitching restrictions that are placed upon the division and league the team is playing in. Remember that in the 12u/13u/14u/15u divisions, a lot of the boys play middle school or JV-baseball and this should be taken into account when pitching a player.

16. Financial Responsibility of Travel Teams.

- a. The Executive Board of the Association must specifically approve all fundraising to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the fundraising activities connected with the Association's recreational

- baseball program, including post-season All-Stars.
- b. All Financial Accounting for Approved Travel Teams shall be handled by the Approved Team's Manager. It shall be the responsibility of the Approved Travel Team's Manager to collect and keep track of all registration fees, sponsorship fees, hotel money, and other monies turned in for the benefit of such travel teams.
 - c. As a general rule, funds may be used to pay actual reasonable and customary expenses associated with the players' and coaches' travel.
 - d. The Executive Board of the Association may request at any time full access to the financial records, including bank statements, of the entity associated with each Travel Team. Such a request must be furnished within five (5) business days.

17. Tax Filing Requirements.

- a. It is the sole responsibility of the Approved Travel Teams Manager to remain compliant with IRS tax exemption guidelines.

18. Uniforms.

- a. Uniform Requirements All Travel Teams within Okeeheelee shall ensure that rostered players and coaches are provided with matching uniforms. These uniforms must adhere to the following guidelines:
 - b. Uniform Design and Display of Association Name Each uniform shall prominently display the Association name "Okeeheelee" or the letter "O" on the front of the jersey. This display should take precedence over any other image and must maintain a minimum scale of 60/40 compared to any sleeve patches. Teams have the flexibility to design their own uniforms and select their team's name, but both design elements must be submitted to the board for approval. The Okeeheelee name must remain prominent on the uniform.
 - c. Headwear Okeeheelee hats must display the league "O" on the front. A team logo can be placed anywhere on the hat to compliment the "O".
 - d. Color Palette The official Okeeheelee Organization Colors consist of White, Red, and Navy.
 - e. Uniforms must incorporate these colors in any combination, using some, all, or only one of the palette colors.
 - f. Additional Team Uniforms Teams that adhere to the Okeeheelee Organization Colors and provide a minimum of [2] two board-approved uniforms, meeting the required Association Colors palette each season (Fall & Spring), may request approval for an additional uniform that deviates from the Association Colors palette.
 - g. Special League-wide Uniforms Board members, including the Travel Director, may design league-wide uniforms for special occasions such as holidays, awareness causes, or other reasons.
 - h. Uniform Request and Approval All Okeeheelee Travel Teams must submit their uniform requests to the Travel Director, who will then present them to the board for approval or denial.
 - i. Numbering All uniforms are required to have numbers, and no two players on the same team may have the same number.
 - j. Game Uniform Requirement All teams are obligated to be in complete uniform during games, including socks, shirts, pants, and caps.
 - k. Non-Compliance Consequences Failure to adhere to the Okeeheelee Travel Team Uniform Policy will result in the following consequences, which are not limited to:
 - a. A fine for each occurrence.
 - b. League suspension.
 - c. Expulsion from the league.

Any incidents of non-compliance will be reported to the board for appropriate action.

19. Practices & Practice Sites.

The following guidelines shall apply:

- a. All teams must take at least one day off per week from practice, games, or travel.
- b. The Travel Director, in conjunction with the Scheduling Director, shall be responsible for coordinating field usage between the Association's Recreational and Travel programs and shall assist in finding sites to conduct team practices.
- c. All Travel Teams will be assigned a permanent practice field for a minimum of one night per week under lights and once per weekend in the Fall and at least once a week during the Spring seasons if schedule of rec league allows.
- d. No sling machines are to be used in the batting cages.
- e. Cleats of any sort are prohibited in the batting cages and the bullpens.
- f. Bullpens are for pitcher and catcher work only. No ground balls for purposes of working on defense are to be hit or thrown in the bullpens.
- g. During Fall and Spring recreational seasons, travel teams are to give priority to teams using the facilities to warm-up 60 minutes prior to their games.

20. Code of Conduct.

Managers and Coaches are required to adhere to the Associations Code of Conduct. Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc. reserves the right to enforce consequences for violations of not abiding to the Associations Code of Conduct. These consequences may include fines, suspension and expulsion from the Association, or removal of the current Manager or Coaches role within the affiliated team. The Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Managers and Coaches will place the emotional and physical well-being of their players ahead of the desire to win.
- b. Managers and Coaches will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development within their team.
- c. Managers and Coaches will provide a safe playing situation for their players.
- d. Managers and Coaches will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries.
- e. Managers and Coaches will organize practices that are fun and challenging for all players. They will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players.
- f. Managers and Coaches will provide a sports environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.
- g. Managers and Coaches will be knowledgeable in the rules and will teach these rules.
- h. Managers and Coaches will use coaching techniques appropriate for each division they're involved in.
- i. Managers and Coaches will remember they are a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
- j. Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with players, league officials, game officials, parents, and spectators.
- k. Managers and Coaches will not have outbursts and belittle their players.
- l. Treating all players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators with dignity and respect.
- m. Maintaining a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions including but limited to dangerous weather, inadequate field maintenance, and faulty equipment.
- n. Seeing that all players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

- o. Conducting practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.
- p. Adopting the position, teaching and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others as we would like to be treated.
- q. Exhibiting gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- r. Abiding by and supporting the rules of the game and league as well as the spirit of the rules.
- s. Using the influential position of youth coach as an opportunity to demonstrate, promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.
- t. Never incite unsportsmanlike conduct which includes but is not limited to running up the score, seeking revenge on another player or team, leading the team in any kind of taunting chants/sayings and anything else that is not consistent with good sportsmanship.
- u. Teaching techniques that do not enhance a risk of injury to players and opponents.
- v. Exercising your authority/influence as a coach to control the behavior of the fans and spectators.
- w. Discouraging illegal contact or intentional dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc. will not tolerate any form of unsportsmanlike conduct, from any player, coach, official, umpire parent and/or fan. This conduct includes, but not limited to, negativity, disrespectful behavior, offensive language, spitting, throwing of objects, hitting, fighting, and/or threats of violence, toward any player, coach, official, umpire, parents and/or fans.

21. Discipline of Managers, Coaches, Players & Parents.

- a. The Executive Board will consider any complaints regarding Board Members, Managers, Coaches, parents, players, fans or spectators brought to its attention in writing by the complaining party. The Executive Board will discuss the complaint and if, in its discretion, the complaint warrants additional investigation, it will conduct the same.
- b. The Executive Board shall have complete discretion in determining any sanction or penalty, if any, of any manager, coach, parent, player, fan or spectator. The board may choose to suspend or expel any coach or manager that it finds has not adhered to the Associations Code of Conduct.
- c. The Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors shall have the authority to discipline any Player, Manager, Coach, Umpire, Adult, or other person whose conduct is in violation of the Rule and Regulations of Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc. (including but not limited to: Player Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct, Coaches Code of Conduct, and or any other code of conduct and/or behavior instituted by the Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc.) is considered detrimental to the best interest of the League. The Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors shall have authority to discipline any Okeeheelee Baseball Association, Inc. member who is in such violation.
- d. Any travel player, manager or coach who is ejected from a game will have an automatic additional one (1) game suspension. Abusive actions following the ejection may result in additional suspension. Additionally, any travel manager or coach who is ejected may be called upon to come before the Board to discuss the ejection. The Board reserves the right to expel any travel player, manager or coach for the remainder of the travel season after a second ejection.
- e. The Board of Directors have the authority to ask any manager, coach, umpire, parent, player, fan or spectator to leave the park for any reason they find inconsistent with our Code of Conduct
- f. Any travel player, manager or coach who desires to appeal an ejection must do so by filing a written request with the Travel Director within 24 hours. **Failure to file such a request within 24 hours acts as a waiver of any appeal right.** Such filing will toll the suspension for the subsequent game until the Executive Board of the Association has had an opportunity to hear the appeal. The denial of any appeal of an ejection may be subject to an additional game suspension (i.e., two games total) in the event the Board determines the appeal was not made in good faith.
- g. All person's subject to discipline shall have the right to a hearing before the Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors before such discipline is imposed. The Guardian and/or parent of any

person under the age of eighteen (18) shall be required to come to any hearing for said person. If the guardian and/or parent does not come to the hearing then the Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors shall proceed as if the minor was not present.

- h. The Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors shall do its best to notify the person that is subject to discipline in a timely manner about the hearing.
- i. Persons (youth or adult) who refuse to comply with the Okeehlee Baseball Association, Inc. rules and regulations may be considered for disciplinary action.
- j. Okeehlee Baseball Association, Inc. recognizes the difficulty for establishing specific penalties for an array of violations of unacceptable conduct including violations for any code of conduct instituted by Okeehlee Baseball Association, Inc., the following penalties may be imposed (Warning, Probation, Suspension, and/or Removal from the league). The Board of Directors and/or Executive Board of Directors may impose the penalty, which, in their opinion, appears to match the severity of the offense.
- k. Players who serve a suspension may attend their game but are not allowed on the playing field

OKEEHLEE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION, INC. ("the Association"), hereby expressly reserves the unequivocal right to enforce and impose appropriate consequences for any violations or nonadherence to, or failure to abide by, the travel policies and Code of Conduct in effect. Such enforcement is in furtherance of maintaining primarily the safety of its participants within the association, the integrity and discipline within the Association's affiliated teams and ensuring the orderly and ethical functioning of the organization. The scope of consequences to be imposed by the Association for such violations is not exhaustive and may encompass a range of measures, including but not limited to:

- 1. Fines:
 - a. The Association retains the discretion to levy financial penalties upon individuals found in breach of the travel policies or Code of Conduct. The assessment of fines shall be commensurate with the severity of the violation and may vary on a case-by-case basis.
- 2. Suspensions:
 - a. In its sole judgment, the Association may enact suspensions, temporarily barring an individual from participating in Association-affiliated activities. The duration of any suspension shall be determined by the Association, taking into account the circumstances surrounding the violation.
- 3. Expulsion from the Affiliated Team:
 - a. The Association may opt to expel an individual from the affiliated team with immediate effect, thereby precluding their participation in team-related activities. Such expulsion shall be enacted in conformity with the Association's established procedures and guidelines.
 - b. Expulsion from Association Roles: Individuals found in breach of travel policies or the Code of Conduct, who serve in roles such as manager, coach, or parent within the Association, may also face expulsion from their respective positions, as deemed appropriate by the Association's governing body.
- 4. It is imperative to note that the determination of the consequences, as well as the severity of the measures imposed, shall be at the sole discretion of the Association, and such determinations shall be made in accordance with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

All individuals associated with the Association are hereby advised to meticulously adhere to the travel policies and Code of Conduct to avoid any potential consequences as outlined herein. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action as determined by the Association, consistent with its commitment to preserving the integrity and values it upholds.