

## **2008 Tewksbury All-stars Tournament/Travel Program**

### **1. Program Objective**

Tewksbury Baseball Little League (“TBLL”) provides an opportunity for a select number of players to participate in an All-star travel/tournament baseball program. This segment provides for the opportunity to play in a competitive environment while emphasizing sportsmanship, skills development, and an enthusiasm for the game. While winning is an important part of the environment, the greater goal remains the experience of competitive play with the creation of a fun atmosphere in which children can learn the benefits of physical fitness, teamwork, confidence, sportsmanship, and other values that they can build on and carry through life.

### **2. Player Eligibility**

Only Tewksbury residents, or all those players who are eligible to matriculate in the township school system, or those players who are eligible to play in the current year’s TBLL recreation program are eligible to participate in the Tewksbury All-Star tournament/travel baseball summer program. However, a player who presents special circumstances may be eligible to play if the TBLL Board, in its sole discretion, grants a waiver to said person and if necessary a waiver is granted from the Little League District and Bristol Office allowing a player to participate in the Williamsport tournament. Players must have played in at least 50% of the current years spring recreation season games to play at the tournament division level and must also qualify as further defined by the specific tournament league rules.

Any teams formed under the guise of the TBLL to participate in a tournament without the permission of the TBLL Board will be considered non-sanctioned. Coaches and players, who participate (either in game play or practice) on one or more of the aforesaid non-sanctioned teams, may be prohibited from participating on a sanctioned team. However, a player may play on another baseball team which is formed outside of the TBLL as long as all other rules and regulations of the TBLL are not violated.

Furthermore, any player who accepts a position on a tournament/travel team and subsequently resigns or otherwise refuses to participate will be ineligible for participation on a subsequent tournament/travel team during the following calendar year, unless excused by the Board. Examples of excusable reasons include family hardship, illness or injury, or such other acceptable conditions that will make the player substantially unavailable. Excusable reasons do not include participation on a non-sanctioned team or another baseball team once a commitment is made to play on the TBLL team.

### **3. League Officials**

The entire Tewksbury Little League Board and a designated All Star Coordinator shall comprise the Tewksbury Travel/Tournament Board (“Board”).

The Board is elected positions and are responsible for the following:

- Oversight of the selection process for players and coaches.
- Communication of league polices and practices to players, parents, and coaches.
- Coordination of travel tryout times and assignment of evaluators.
- Ensure that tryouts are conducted fairly and that the necessary forms, equipment, and materials are available for the evaluators.
- Address candidates and parents at the beginning and conclusion of tryouts to explain the process.
- Coordination of team equipment and uniforms ordering;
- Coordination of tournament administration when multiple teams are attending specific tournaments including payment and assigning representatives to attend meetings.

#### **4. Selection Committee**

A Selection Committee (“SC”) will be formed for the purpose of selecting teams and coaches.

Once the teams and coaches are selected, the committee will submit their recommended choices to the President for final approval. The Selection Committee for each age group will consist of the All Star Head Coach, Recreation Head coaches of the specific age and the All Star Coordinator. The President may also assign other members to the Committee who, in the President’s judgment, would contribute to the selection process because of prior experience and expertise. In the event of a conflict or issue, the same shall be decided by the Travel/Tournament Board, which decision shall be final. Any member of the Board with an interest in the decision shall abstain from the vote.

#### **5. Coaches**

Travel Coaches, and Scorekeepers are considered ambassadors of the travel program and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the league.

## **6. Coaches Selection**

The Selection Committee will present a list of coaches to the Board prior to the selection of players and assignment to teams. The Board shall choose one head coach for each age group and its decision shall be final. Coaches must have officially been listed on the roster as a Coach or Assistant Coach in spring recreation play to be considered. Head Coaches shall choose their assistant coaches and scorekeeper.

For All-star teams, first consideration shall be given to Coaches with current year Recreation experience. The Board, at the recommendation of the President, may replace the Coach at any time for reasons of gross misconduct or repeated failure to adhere to the Program Objective. Prior managerial or coaching experience with Travel teams is encouraged, though in and of itself does not guarantee annual selection.

Coach selection should consider the coach's experience, contributions, and commitment to the league. The Board, at the recommendation of the President or Player Agents, may replace any Coach at any time for reasons of gross misconduct or repeated failure to adhere to the Program Objective. A team may not have more than one Head Coach and three "official" coaches and one Scorekeeper for all sanctioned tournaments.

## **7. Teams and Selection Process**

The Board authorizes and directs the formation of travel baseball teams to compete in various Tournaments in the 8U 9U, 10U,11U, and 12U year old age groups. These teams are to be made up of the available players in each age group considered best able to compete for a championship title.

If not enough players try out for a specific age group, that coach may recruit other age appropriate eligible players and submit their names to the Selection Committee for approval.

## **8. Placement According to Age**

In consideration of the Age Determination Rule instituted by Little League, and all other youth baseball organizations for the 2008 year and years thereafter, the TBLL will allow travel players to choose to play at their age group (calculated as of April 30th of the current year) or at their grade level. Players must declare the age group for their primary team prior to the tryouts before they will be considered for team. Players can only be assigned to an age group/primary team which they have tried out for.

The Selection Committee shall create such procedures and guidelines that are necessary for the efficient implementation of this rule. When a candidate registers and participates in a tryout for the chosen primary team, he is considered to have declared for that age group. He may not thereafter declare or try out for another age group until the following year.

After a player is selected to a primary team, the head coach of another team may request that a player or players be permitted to play as an alternate on his team on the condition that the player is age eligible to play on the second team and as long as the tournament rules permit the same. The decision to request a player(s) as an alternate and determine how many games/innings a player plays whether a primary or alternate player is in the sole discretion of the head coach and acceptance is in the sole discretion of the player/parent so long as it does not materially interfere with the primary team of the requested player and if it does materially interfere, then the decision rests in the sole discretion of the coach of the primary team.

## **9. Team Tryouts**

The purpose of the tryouts is to provide a means by which the Selection Committee can evaluate specific skills in a controlled setting in addition to the performance of the player during the regular season. The player's performance during the regular season, both in practices and games, shall be considered in evaluating the player. Players will be evaluated over one or two tryout sessions in the areas of hitting, fielding (outfield and infield), and throwing. A 5-point scale is used for each skill, relative to the appropriate age bracket, with five being used for an outstanding grade and one for poor. Candidates will receive two grades, one for hitting and one for fielding (infield and outfield play combined). The hitting grade may be given the same or greater weight as the combined fielding grade. The skill of pitching shall also be considered a factor for the evaluations. In the event of two tryout sessions, each player shall only be entitled to participate in one session.

Tryouts will be conducted by evaluators drawn from the Board and recreation coaches under the guidance of the Board. In no event shall an evaluator participate in the decision of his own child as that decision shall be made by the other designated evaluators.

Parents are invited to watch tryouts, but may not interfere with the process or approach the evaluators. Questions or concerns about the tryouts must be addressed to the Allstar coordinator or a Board member outside of the tryout session.

- Allstar Tryouts will be tentatively scheduled for the second week of May (so as not to interfere with spring break).

There will be one tryout session or if two tryout dates are scheduled they will be on consecutive weekends.

- After the final tryout date, the Head Coach will present the SC with a list of 10 to 14 players who have earned Tournament/Travel Team status. The Head Coach shall have sole discretion to determine the number of players on the team. The Head Coach may designate one or more players as alternates and who will be roistered, but who will not dress for every game but will commit to the season and be available to play at the discretion of the Coach when called up by the Coach. All alternate players will be notified and must commit before the public announcement of the team.

- The Head Coach, Selection Committee and board will make its selections based upon

all of the information available for each candidate. Travel tryouts provide an opportunity to evaluate specific skills in a controlled setting where players can be observed “side by side”. They will also consider feedback from travel and regular season coaches when available, as this illustrates a player’s ability to perform in actual games relative to his peers.

## **10. Player Participation**

Every player dressed and available for a game is encouraged to make an appearance in that game, regardless of type of game (District, State, Regional or Tournament) however, the final decision of which player shall play in any game is in his sole discretion of the Head Coach.

## **11. Player Safety – Pitching**

The most important responsibility of every Coach in Travel Baseball at every age and competitive level is the safety and overall healthy development of each child in the program.

Pitchers are at particular risk for long term arm and shoulder injury from overuse or poor pitching mechanics. The American Sports Medicine Institute (ASMI) conducted a study that was published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine in 2002 that showed “a significant relationship between the number of pitches thrown and the risk of shoulder and elbow pain in youth baseball,” and that joint pain indicates the early development of a potentially serious joint injury.

For this reason, each Travel Baseball Coach should immediately remove from pitching any player who complains or shows signs of arm pain or fatigue during a game. Each coach is encouraged to monitor pitch count for every pitcher used in every game. Recommended limits for youth pitchers are set by the Little League rules and should be followed.

Pitch counts pertain to pitches thrown in game situations only, and do not include instructional pitching or throwing drills during practice, which are important for development of technique and strength. In addition, pitchers should not throw breaking pitches in competition until their bones have matured – typically at least 13 – 14 years of age. Focus should be on good mechanics, fastball, a good change-up, and good control.