

BETHLEHEM TOMBOYS GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE TRAVEL PROGRAM POLICY (10.29.2014)

The Bethlehem Tomboys Girls Softball League is first and foremost a recreational softball league serving the Towns of Bethlehem and Ravena, as well as our surrounding communities. Any resident of Albany County is eligible to play in our recreational league. This is our recognized and Board of Directors adopted territory. In limited instances, we may allow for a girl from outside of Albany County to play as well. The Bethlehem Tomboys Girls Softball League is affiliated with the A.S.A. locally and nationally. The league plays under the codes and rules of A.S.A. with select modifications for recreational ball play as needed and approved by the Bethlehem Tomboys Girls Softball League Board.

Bethlehem Tomboys also offers its players the opportunity to participate in more competitive softball via our affiliation with the Hudson Mohawk District Travel League and Junior Olympic A.S.A. tournament play in District 7, the State of New York and surrounding territories. This opportunity is provided through our Travel Team Program. Our Travel Team Program conforms to the same geographic territory as the recreational league.

The Travel Team Program is a vital component of our mission, helping to grow and maintain our participant's passion to play the sport of softball at a more advanced level. As such, the Bethlehem Tomboys Travel Team Program provides girls who are inclined and skilled to play at a higher competitive level than is available through the recreational league program.

The Bethlehem Tomboys may offer opportunities for Travel teams to be formed at a series of age classification levels per A.S.A. code. These age classifications include 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U & 18U. A player's age as of December 31 determines the age classification in which the player is eligible to play the following year. Players of younger age may play in older age classifications, but an older age classification player may not play in the younger age classification.

The Bethlehem Tomboys Travel Team Program will attempt to support teams at respective age classifications if there is organizational interest and competitive divisions available in our affiliated associations. The Travel Team Program is not required to form and support any specific number of teams at any given age classification. Team formation requires a dedicated manager, coaches and most of all qualified skilled players. Teams will not be formed based on interest alone.

The Policy of the Tomboys Travel Team Program is developed and implemented by the Bethlehem Tomboys Travel Committee, under direction of the Board of Directors V.P. of the Travel Program. All activities and recommendations are subject to approval by the Bethlehem Tomboys Board of Directors.

Funding for any travel tier teams is not directly supported by the Bethlehem Tomboys Girls Softball League or its Board of Directors. Teams are required to budget, collect revenue and pay expenses on their own accord with assistance/guidance from the Travel Team Committee and the Bethlehem Tomboys Board of Directors and Treasurer(s).

The Bethlehem Tomboys Travel Program is comprised of three tiers designed for various desired levels of competitive play. The tiers in order from top to bottom are Elite, Premiere and Select. The policy governing formation and management of teams for each of the tiers at their respective age classifications is as follows:

A. Tier One – Elite

The goal of the Elite tier is to provide an opportunity for girls to practice and play with frequency striving to reach the highest competitive level possible. Elite tier teams will play in tournaments locally, regionally and possibly nationally year round. Interested participants should anticipate playing in 8-10 tournaments minimally a year, with year round practices. A long term goal for Elite tier teams may be for the players to be seen by college coaches and at showcase tournaments at the 16U and 18U age classifications.

- a. Only one Elite tier team is permitted per age classification level.
- b. Elite tier teams will only be permitted at the 14U age classification and above.
- c. An application to manage an Elite tier team must be made 30 days prior to the beginning of the Travel Program tryouts, or on such notice as the Travel Program Committee deems appropriate.
- d. Applicants for Elite tier team managers need not be residents of our recognized territory or have prior affiliation with the league. However those applications from outside require a resume and at least (2) letters of recommendation from individuals not affiliated with the Board of Bethlehem Tomboys Girls Softball League.
- e. Applicants for Elite tier team managers from within our recognized territory should have at minimum two years of managerial experience in a Travel Softball Program (or an equivalent – High School, College, etc), preferably with Bethlehem Tomboys.
- f. The Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Tomboys, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, is charged with the responsibility to approve Elite tier team managers and coaches.
 - i. All Managers are required to be A.S.A. Ace Certified with an approved background check and are further required to update their certification and background check as needed while Managing.
 - ii. All Coaches are required to have an approved background check and are further required to update their background check as needed while coaching.
- g. Elite tier Team roster composition must be at minimum 50% from our recognized territory
 - i. Example: a roster of 10 players must include 5 from our recognized territory; a roster of 11 players must include 6 from our recognized territory.
- h. Direct recruitment for players in and out of our recognized territory for Elite tier teams is authorized.
- i. Players on Elite tier teams must register in the Bethlehem Tomboys recreational organization and pay any applicable fees, regardless of territory.

- j. Players are permitted to play up one age classification on Elite tier teams. Tomboys Board of Directors authorization to play up on an Elite tier team is not required.
- k. Elite tier team managers have the responsibility to select players for their rosters.
- l. Upon approval of the Tomboys Travel Program Committee and the Tomboys Board of Directors, Elite tier team managers may elect to have complete open roster tryouts or announce select position tryouts based on specific identified needs for their team.
- m. The Travel Program Committee is responsible, if necessary, to schedule, organize and conduct tryouts for all travel tier teams, including Elite tier teams.
- n. Tryouts for Elite tier teams, if necessary, may be conducted jointly with Premiere and Select tier teams of the same age classification, at the discretion of the Travel Program Committee.
- o. Elite tier teams are entitled to all of the benefits of the Bethlehem Tomboys Travel team tiers, including use of fields, facilities, concessions, securing practice space, equipment, storage, game scheduling, tournament scheduling and access to insurance coverage through our organization.

B. Tier Two – Premiere

The goal of the Premiere tier is to provide the opportunity for girls from our recognized territory to play travel softball at a high level while fielding the most competitive teams possible. Premiere tier team expectations minimally will include some off season practices, likely participation in local Fall league play, participation in local Summer league and participation in 5-6 local and regional tournaments.

- a. Depending on the availability of eligible and qualified players, and with consideration of league needs, the Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, may authorize more than one Premiere tier team at a particular age classification.
- b. An application to manage a Premiere tier team must be made 30 days prior to the beginning of the travel program tryouts, or on such notice as the Travel Program Committee deems appropriate.
- c. Manager applicants for Premiere tier teams must be residents of our recognized territory and have managed at least two seasons in our recreational league.
- d. The Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Tomboys, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, is charged with the responsibility to approve Premiere tier team managers and coaches.
 - i. All Managers are required to be A.S.A. Ace Certified with an approved background check and are further required to update their certification and background check as needed while Managing.
 - ii. Coaches are required to have an approved background check and are further required to update their background check as needed while coaching.
- e. Direct recruitment of players is permitted for Premiere tier teams, only when authorized by the Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, to the extent it is necessary for the composition of a team,

either because of insufficient players from our recognized territory or the specific needs for a particular Premiere tier team roster.

- f. Players on Premiere tier teams must register in the Bethlehem Tomboys recreational organization and pay any applicable fees, regardless of territory.
- g. Players are permitted to play up one age classification on Premiere tier teams, unless the circumstances of the Travel Program needs require otherwise (see examples below). Travel Program Committee authorization is required to request to play up on a Premiere tier team.
- h. Premiere tier team managers have the responsibility to select players for their rosters.
- i. Tryouts for Premiere tier teams, if necessary, may be conducted jointly with Elite and Select tier team tryouts of the same age classification, at the discretion of the Travel Program Committee.
- j. Premiere tier teams are entitled to all of the benefits of the Bethlehem Tomboys Travel team tiers, including use of fields, facilities, concessions, securing practice space, equipment, storage, game scheduling, tournament scheduling and access to insurance coverage through our organization.

C. Tier Three – Select

The goal of the Select tier is to provide the opportunity for girls from our recognized territory to play travel softball at an appropriate competitive level, developing advanced skills, while fielding the most competitive teams possible. Select tier team expectations minimally will include some off season practices, possible participation in local Fall league play, participation in local Summer league and if warranted participation in local tournaments only.

- a. Depending on the availability of eligible and qualified players the Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, may authorize more than one Select tier team at a particular age classification.
- b. An application to manage a Select tier team must be made 30 days prior to the beginning of the travel program tryouts, or on such notice as the Travel Program Committee deems appropriate.
- c. Manager applicants for Select tier teams must be residents of our recognized territory and have managed at least two seasons in our recreational league.
- d. The Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Tomboys, upon the recommendation of the Travel Program Committee, is charged with the responsibility to approve Select tier team managers and coaches.
 - i. All Managers are required to be A.S.A. Ace Certified with an approved background check and are further required to update their certification and background check as needed while Managing.
 - ii. Coaches are required to have an approved background check and are further required to update their background check as needed while coaching.
- e. Players on Select tier teams must register in the Bethlehem Tomboys recreational organization and pay any applicable fees, regardless of territory.

- f. Playing up one age classification on Select tier teams is prohibited, unless there is no available team to play for in the Tomboys Travel Program at the appropriate age classification level.
- g. Select tier team managers have the responsibility to choose players for their rosters.
- h. Tryouts for Select tier teams, if necessary, may be conducted jointly with Elite and Premiere tier team tryouts of the same age classification, at the discretion of the Travel Program Committee.
- i. Select tier teams are entitled to all of the benefits of the Bethlehem Tomboys Travel team tiers, including use of fields, facilities, concessions, securing practice space, equipment, storage, game scheduling, tournament scheduling (if applicable) and access to insurance coverage through our organization

Eligibility: Generally, girls in the Bethlehem Tomboys Junior Division and older are eligible to play travel ball, however, travel ball is determined by age, not grade level. All girls playing in our Travel Program must register with the league and pay the recreational registration fee.

Girls through grade 7 must play Bethlehem Tomboys recreational ball and attend at least 75% of her team's games in order to remain eligible on a travel team roster. The only exceptions to this eligibility requirement will be documented restriction for play due to illness/injury. Phony schedule conflicts or faked illness/injury will not be tolerated. Players/families having been found to do so may be suspended or dismissed from their team at the managers request to the Travel Committee.

Girls from within the recognized Bethlehem Tomboys territory (the towns of Bethlehem, Ravena and Albany County) will be given priority for team slots for all Premiere and Select teams as per the above Policy stipulations. Exceptions can be sought on a case-by-case basis via the Travel Program Committee and authorization of the Tomboys Board of Directors.

Tryouts: If in the judgment of the Travel Program Committee there are more players interested in playing than available slots, the Travel Committee is required to conduct fair and impartial tryouts (to the best of its ability) for Elite, Premiere and Select level teams.

Tryouts for 12U age classification and below will be conducted with the assistance of independent 3rd party evaluators (usually Capital Region A.S.A umpires).

Tryouts for 14U age classification and above for Premiere & Elite level teams may be conducted with evaluations done by the approved managers and their coaches with consent of the Travel Program Committee. If there will be two Premiere teams at a given age classification, the managers and Travel Committee will agree prior to a selection process and tryout format, which may include but does not require independent 3rd party evaluators (usually Capital Region A.S.A. umpires).

Select tier teams require independent 3rd party evaluators regardless of age classification, unless there are less girls trying out than spots anticipated to complete the potential roster.

Before tryouts commence the Tomboys Board V.P. of the Travel Program or a Travel Committee member as their delegate shall outline to parents/guardians and or player to the best of their ability the expectations of each players participation, both from a time and financial commitment at the various levels they might be eligible to play for in the coming seasons.

Tryouts if and when necessary will be held each August after the conclusion of the prior season. Tryouts will be announced on the Bethlehem Tomboys web site, and via e-mail. When girls have made applications to play-up one age classification, travel team tryouts, whenever possible, will be scheduled from the oldest age division to the youngest. If there are enough eligible managerial candidates and potential players for multiple teams in a particular age classification, tryouts will be jointly conducted. The Elite tier team, if necessary, will finalize its roster first, followed in order by the Premiere team(s) and Select team(s).

Rosters: Travel rosters may not exceed 14 players without approval of the Travel Program Committee. Premiere and Select Tier Team rosters, including substitutes, must be approved by the Travel Program Committee prior to submission for travel play.

At her parent's request, a girl may try out for a position on an Elite tier team one age classification up if a position is available or an open roster tryout is being done. With approval of the Travel Program Committee after consideration of a girl's playing ability and league needs, a girl may try out for position on a Premiere tier Team one age classification up. Girls may not play up an age classification for a Select tier team, except under unique circumstances. After any tier team roster is finalized, players cannot be removed or added to the rosters without the approval of the Travel Program Committee.

Season: The Bethlehem Tomboys Travel season begins after roster selections in Mid-August and runs through the end of the following July. The core season is defined as spring and summer, but there are three distinct periods. Fall (possible practices, fall ball and tournaments weather permitting) Winter (possible practices, conditioning programs, clinics and tournaments) Spring/Summer (practices, league games, tournaments).

Managers and coaches for all team tiers will be encouraged to hold practices and to play games through all periods of the year as time, facilities and team funding allows.

Elite and Premiere team managers/coaches can at their discretion develop a practice/play participation policy for their team regardless of time of year. Any policy must be clear upfront to participants before they are offered spots on a team. These teams are seeking to play at the highest competitive levels possible and need the participation and dedication to do so.

Select team managers/coaches can hold non mandatory practices and games during the fall and winter time periods. Select tier team players however who do not participate in fall/winter practices/workouts may find themselves falling behind their peers and should anticipate playing time accordingly.

Priorities: The league and travel program recognizes and supports girls who wish to play other sports and participate in other activities. School district sports and school district functions will always take priority regardless of travel tier. Managers should prepare and plan accordingly. Managers and coaches should be clear about expectations, regardless of tier, parents need to reciprocate and inform them of conflicting schedules in a fair and timely manner.

The spring & summer season for possible tournaments and Hudson Mohawk league play is and must be a player's top priority, regardless of tier. Players may not miss games or practices for events unrelated to school district sports, school district functions or Bethlehem Tomboys events without prior approval from their manager. Failure to comply may result in suspension or dismissal from the team by a manager's request to the Travel Committee.

In the event of a scheduling conflict, any school requirements and activities shall be a player's first priority. It is the job of the team Manager and each individual Players parents/guardians to discuss and agree upon expectations and management of conflicts that are NOT school related.

No mandatory practices, games/tournaments, scrimmages may be scheduled in conflict with the Bethlehem school softball schedule of fundraisers/events/practices/games for the 12U, 14U, 16U, or 18U teams, even for Elite and Premiere tier teams.

Thereafter, the order of priority shall be Hudson-Mohawk regular season travel and tournament games (as allowed by the defined scheduling of the travel policy – see below), recreational games, travel practice and recreational practice.

Managers and Coaches: As noted above those interested in being a team manager will be asked to express their interest in writing prior to tryouts. Travel team managers and coaches will be recommended by the Travel Program Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Selection and approval will be based on experience, teaching ability, parent and player feedback, previous teams' results (if any) and league needs. The league recognizes that managers and coaches have different strengths and that girls can sometimes benefit from playing for various managers and coaches. Therefore, managers and coaches are not guaranteed reappointment each year.

Scheduling: Managers and coaches must schedule home games through the league. Tournaments may be hosted at home fields only with approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

During the recreational league regular season and playoffs (including League Picnic), with the exception of Memorial Day weekend, travel teams at the 10U and 12U level may **not** schedule tournaments, home or away. At the 14U level and up, Premiere teams may play 1 tournament other than Memorial Day during the recreational regular season. These tournaments **MUST NOT** be held during the Tomboys Recreational League playoffs or on the date of the Tomboys League Picnic. The only exception for playing on these blacked out recreational league dates would be for Regional Qualifier Events. For teams to be granted that exception it must be presented in writing to the Travel Committee at least 8 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the event. Elite tier teams may schedule tournaments at any time. Managers should check with the

V.P. of Travel and or the Executive Board of Directors as to the exact dates of the recreational season each year. Managers failing to comply with these league needs and requirements may be suspended and face dismissal.

Managers seeking scheduling accommodations outside of the stated policy must present them in writing to the Travel Committee or VP of Travel for consideration of the Tomboys Board of Directors at minimum 30 days prior to a scheduled event.

Uniforms: Travel team uniform must be in some combination of black, orange, and white, and include Bethlehem in the name. Girls are responsible for paying for their own uniforms.

Financial Support: Bethlehem Tomboys Travel Program teams are to be self-funded through parent/guardian/player contributions and or fundraising activities as set by each individual team based on budget needs. All revenue collected directly via contributions, fundraising or from tournament entry fees should be budgeted and spent during the calendar season to the extent that is possible.

All revenue from fundraising, home game and tournament fees and concession stand receipts belongs to the league and will be dispersed by the Board of Directors. Any fundraising done by a travel team must be processed through the Bethlehem Tomboys organization. Any capital items purchased through direct contributions or fundraising will be property of the Bethlehem Tomboys, not the individual team.

Any remaining budget surplus at the end of a travel season for a team (approximately July 31 of each calendar year) shall be reported to the Travel Program Committee which will be confirmed with Tomboys Board of Directors Treasurer.

If a surplus budget is determined to exist the funds will be evenly divided among the roster players for that team. These funds will then follow a player to their next team if they continue to play travel ball with Bethlehem Tomboys, or will be refunded to the family never in excess of the maximum direct contribution that has been made by each individual family of a team. The team's manager or appointed budget director is responsible for accurately maintaining parent/player contributions vs tournaments revenue and other revenue channels, i.e. Sponsors.

In the event a deficit exists at the conclusion of a season, the manager of the team is required to notify the Travel Committee and a plan must be submitted for how the deficit will be rectified which will be submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration and approval. If denied the Board of Directors will notify the manager that a new plan is required.

In the event the Board of Directors shall provide financial support for teams, it will be on an equitable basis if sufficient funds are available and after consideration of team parent staffing of the concession stand. Board support for the travel teams will be considered each year along with the annual budget presented at the annual budget board meeting in October. The Travel Program Committee and the Board V.P. of Travel shall coordinate and recommend all requests for financial support and present them to the Board of Directors.

League Needs: In order to meet the objectives of the Bethlehem Tomboys organization, including providing girls with an opportunity to play travel team softball and to field the most competitive teams possible at each age classification, requests to try out for a position on an Elite Tier team one age division up will only be denied under the following circumstances:

- a. If the playing ability of the requesting player is deemed to be inadequate (based on prior observation or evaluation) to compete at the next higher level
- b. If the physical and/or emotional development of the requesting player is deemed to be too immature to ensure a positive experience at the higher level, or would present a concern for the safety of the player; and/or
- c. If the removal of the requesting player from her appropriate classification level would leave too few qualified players to field a single complete competitive team.
- d. Approval to tryout an age classification up does not guarantee a player a slot on any team at the higher level.

Team Assignment: Placement of all players, whether age appropriate or playing up, will be made based on an objective evaluation to the best of the managers and Travel Committee's ability of each player's skills with consideration given to each player's primary/preferred position and subjective criteria like ability to be coached/taught, commitment and attitude.

Trying out does not guarantee placement on any tier of team. Prior year placement on a team does not guarantee placement on any future team. The cumulative number of girls trying out at a given age classification will not dictate the number of teams formed.

Tryouts with 3rd party evaluators (generally Hudson Mohawk A.S.A. umpires) must be held for all tiers in the 10U & 12U age classification teams and 14U, 16U Select tier teams. Only expectations will be if less girls than roster spots needed are trying out at a given age level.

Tryouts for 14U and above Elite and Premiere tier teams may be done by either 3rd party evaluators, or the managers and coaches of those teams.

If and when a player is offered a spot on a team, the Manager extending the offer must be clear as to what position(s) and within reason the foreseeable playing time the player will receive on the team at that position(s). If there are two or more teams at the same age classification level, a player may elect to pursue placement on another team, only insofar as it meets the player and leagues developmental goals.

If a girl qualified to "play up" is competing for a Premiere tier team position with an age appropriate player and both are objectively evaluated as being equal, the girl playing up may not displace the age appropriate player.

If a girl qualified to "play up" would only negligibly increase that Premiere tier team's competitiveness and or that player's opportunity to develop would be limited due to reduced playing time (based on her primary/preferred position assignment) AND the competitiveness of the next lower team would improve significantly by her assignment there, she will be assigned to the next lower team.

Example: the objective rating of a girl seeking to play up places her in the middle of the 12U

Premiere Tier Team's ratings, but she would be the 3rd pitcher and would see very little playing time in that role AND the 10U Premiere Tier Team has one or no qualified pitcher - that player's assignment to the 10U Premiere Tier Team would further the league's goal of providing competitive teams at all levels and provides a more appropriate opportunity for that pitcher to develop.