

Bloomington Traveling Baseball Association

Parent Tryout Guidance Manual for 10U through 14U players

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The Bloomington Traveling Baseball Association (“BTBA”) will post tryouts on the BTBA.org website as soon as dates are known and prior to opening the new season for registration. 15U, Junior Legion, and Legion players will have separate tryouts, usually in mid-May, which will be posted separately.

The tryout/evaluation process is the first step in a successful baseball season. The BTBA Board makes every effort to provide a fair and transparent process for conducting tryouts/evaluations and selecting teams. The tryout and team assignment process can be a stressful time for both players and parents. We hope to eliminate some anxiety by helping parents and players know what to expect. This Tryout Guidance Manual was drafted to help answer questions from players, parents, or potential coaches.

1. Tryout Logistics:

- Each age group (10U, 11U, 12U, 13U, and 14U) will be assigned a designated time slot for each day of the tryout. All players are expected to tryout during their age group’s assigned time unless previously approved by the BTBA Board.
- 10U tryouts include 8U, 9U, and 10U players, as it is possible that players from those three age groups could be placed on the same team. All other tryouts are conducted by a single year age group.
- All players will check in at the tryout registration table at least 30 minutes before their age group’s assigned time slot on each day.
- Players should wear appropriate baseball attire to each evaluation (including a cup and baseball hat). Players are not allowed to wear traveling baseball spirit wear, uniforms or team hats from BTBA or Club teams. However, BTBA helmet decals do not need to be removed.
- Tryouts are conducted over two days and take around 60 to 90 minutes each day per age group.
 1. During the **first day** of tryouts, players will be evaluated on **pitching and fielding** (infield and outfield).
 - Players will need a hat and their gloves (no bats or helmets). Wear tennis shoes and do not wear cleats for indoor tryouts.

- Players will warmup prior to being placed in groups at stations. Evaluators will monitor players as soon as warmups begin. It is not a good idea for a player to be inattentive, boisterous, or unruly during the dynamic warmup period. Evaluators, Head Coach candidates, and BTBA Board Members will be observing and monitoring this process.
 - Infield/Outfield - Players will be evaluated on positioning/mechanics, accuracy of throws, and arm strength.
 - Pitching - The evaluator will examine pitching mechanics, form, velocity, and control
2. During the **second day** of tryouts, players will be evaluated on **hitting**. Players should bring their helmet, bat, and batting gloves. Wear tennis shoes and do not wear cleats for indoor tryouts.
- Players will be evaluated at a batting T, at a soft toss station, and with a pitching machine.
 - Evaluators are judging mechanics (stance, load, stride, and weight transfer), contact, and power.
 - Players will be given a warmup period before hitting off the pitching machine.
- **Tryout attendance policy** - A player must participate in all scheduled tryout sessions unless the BTBA Board grants an excused absence prior to the start of that session(s).
 1. A player who is absent without being excused may be disqualified and the Board reserves the discretion to place players at the appropriate level within the age group if a player is absent.
 2. Extenuating and unusual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, including review of previous year's team placement, coach evaluations and tryout scores. Every year there are instances when a first-year BTBA player or a returning BTBA player cannot attend tryouts.
 3. Parents have an obligation to notify the BTBA Board as early as possible if their son will not be able to attend tryouts. The Board then determines how best to proceed, as described in this Guideline Manual.
 - **Twin/Sibling policy** - Parents of siblings who can play at the same age level, such as twins, will need to inform the BTBA Board how they want their same age siblings evaluated prior to tryouts :
 1. Each same age sibling evaluated independently and placed on the level they qualify for even if they are on separate teams or;
 2. All same age siblings placed on the same team based on the appropriate level for the lowest rated player.

- There will be a mandatory parent meeting during each age group's first tryout session. The Parent Meeting will be led by a BTBA Board Member who will answer any questions. At least one parent or guardian for each player is required to attend this meeting.
- The Jefferson Activity Center ("JAC") is the most likely location for BTBA tryouts. However, the tryout location may change on a year-to-year basis due to availability. Therefore, please verify time and location via the www.btba.org website before the tryout.
- All tryouts are **closed** to parents and the public. Parents, friends, and family, are not allowed to observe tryouts in any manner. At JAC, parents are not allowed to "walk the track" on the upper level or surreptitiously observe tryouts from an adjacent court. Only evaluators, BTBA board members, and BTBA Head Coach candidates are allowed to observe tryouts.
- Communication between players/parents and Head Coach candidates is strongly discouraged from the time tryouts for their age group begin until the teams are posted. The BTBA Board will enforce this rule, including the possibility of disqualifying a coaching candidate from serving as Head Coach.
- Similarly, Head Coach candidates and players shall have no contact with the independent evaluators during tryouts. Even BTBA Board members shall have no contact with the independent evaluators during tryouts for their child's age group. The BTBA Board will enforce this rule, including the possibility of disqualifying a coaching candidate from serving as Head Coach.

2. Evaluators and Evaluation Process:

- BTBA hires and pays Independent Evaluators to conduct tryouts.
 1. Evaluators are typically the Jefferson and Kennedy High School Coaches and their Assistant Coaches.
 2. The evaluators are chosen based on their baseball knowledge and impartiality to the age level they are evaluating.
 3. Evaluators have exclusive input and discretion into all evaluation scores. The scores are not shared nor revealed to BTBA Board members until after the conclusion of the tryout.
 4. The independent evaluators will not speak to players or Head Coach candidates, even if they know the family.
- A pool of Head Coach candidates at each age group will be selected prior to tryouts. Those selected are allowed to observe, but not participate, in tryouts. It is important to note that the BTBA Board and 10U-14U Head Coach Candidates **do not** conduct tryouts and **do not** have input into the evaluation scores provided by the Independent Evaluators.
- Players will be evaluated on running, infield, outfield, pitching, catching, and hitting skills. Many factors are considered in determining the rankings of the players. Players should be at their best during the tryout and be aware that the Independent Evaluators look at many things in evaluating the overall player including: attitude, attention, behavior, ability to

follow directions, teamwork, teammate interactions, listening, and courtesy to all persons at tryouts.

- During tryouts, each Independent Evaluator will be assigned to the same station and grade the same task (i.e., pitching or fielding or a hitting station) for all players in an age group, so there is uniformity when scoring.
- 10U-14U Head Coach candidates are allowed to observe the tryouts and take notes, but they are not allowed to talk to or interact in any way with the Independent Evaluators or the players. Head Coach candidates have no input into scores. Head Coach candidates shall be inconspicuous during the tryout process. The BTBA Board will enforce these rules with Head Coach candidates, including the possibility of disqualifying a coaching candidate from serving as a Head Coach.

3. Team Format:

- BTBA will field teams based on registration numbers and guidance from our governing body, the Metro Baseball League (MBL). Teams will be formed at three competitive levels with MBL requiring a AAA team at each age group unless BTBA petitions and obtains permission from MBL not to field a AAA team at a certain age level. Levels of BTBA teams are based on the following guidelines from MBL:
 1. “AAA” -The highest competitive level and every Association shall have the right to enter teams in the AAA level.
 2. “AA”- The intermediate level, primarily intended to provide a uniform competitive experience for communities that are not able to compete at the AAA level or communities that already have teams at the AAA level.
 3. “A”- Offered for 10U-15U only. The intermediate level essentially is designed to be a developmental league to provide a competitive experience until the players are ready to advance to a higher competitive level. The 14U and 15U players are combined at this level.
- Players will be placed on a team based upon their own merits (skills, athletic ability, hustle, enthusiasm, coachability, attitude, character, etc.). If players have played on a previous year’s BTBA team, then their prior commitment, performance and character may be considered. No player will be placed on a team over a more deserving candidate simply because he/she has previously played on a travel team for BTBA or another Association.
- Players and parents do not get to make “friend requests” or requests to play at a specific level of play. However, if parents notify the BTBA President in writing at least 24 hours before tryouts begin that a family does not want their child to play at the AAA level, then this request will be considered.
- The BTBA Board wishes to eliminate or minimize players being cut during the tryout process. This overriding goal of the Board to eliminate or minimize cuts will guide the Board in its decision-making process to form teams. However, in order for travel teams to remain competitive and provide playing time for players, tryouts and leveling are necessary and cuts may be unavoidable based on numbers. Please note that the Bloomington Athletic

Association (BAA) hosts an in-house program as an option for any players not selected by BTBA. Any player who registers for BTBA and who is cut following tryouts will receive a refund of their registration payment.

- The preferred roster size for traveling teams is 12 players, although teams may have as few as 11 players and as many as 13 players assigned. In an unusual situation based upon registration numbers, one team in an age group may have as few as 10 players. The preference is for “AAA” teams to have the smaller roster and for “A” level to have the higher roster if there is an imbalance in numbers.

4. Team Selection and Notification:

- The BTBA Board compiles the scores provided by the Independent Evaluators only after the tryout is completed and the Board then selects Head Coaches from the pool of candidates.
 1. Certain Board members will enter the evaluation scores into a spreadsheet. The scores will be independently audited by a second Board member.
 2. The scoring summaries are viewable only by limited Board members and will not be viewed by members who have a conflict due to having their child’s scores included in the applicable age groups spreadsheet.

**Note: Not all BTBA Board Members are given access to the scoring so do not ask BTBA Board members how your son scored.*

3. All players will be ranked within their age group based on the evaluation scores. For example, if 45 10U players tryout, then 10U players will be ranked 1-45.
 4. Following tryouts, BTBA will first determine which players are eligible for the AAA level based on ranking and then evaluate if any of the eligible player(s) has a parent who is a Head Coach candidate. If there are no eligible AAA players with parents who are Head Coaching candidates, BTBA will try to recruit a Head coach from the list of eligible AAA players. If BTBA is unable to recruit a Head Coach from the list of players, BTBA will select the AAA Head Coach whose player has the next highest ranking. BTBA selects the AAA Head Coach first based on player ranking, followed by the AA Head Coach, then the A Head Coach.
- Team selection guidelines for all teams:
 1. The AAA Head Coach or the Head Coach selected for the highest team at the age level will select first. Thereafter, the AA Head Coach(es) will be selected and chose his team following the AAA team selection. The A Head Coach(es) will follow AA.
 2. If there are two teams at the same level (i.e., two 10AA teams), then the BTBA Board will determine whether teams will be tiered or formed through a draft.
 3. If the team consists of 11 players, the Head Coach must keep the top 7 rated players, as determined by the Independent Evaluators’ scores at tryouts. However, if the team consists of 12 or 13 players, the Head Coach must keep the top 8 players.

4. A Head Coach may petition the BTBA Board to replace **one** of the top 7/8 players but the Head Coach has to persuade the BTBA Board of the reason(s) to do so. If the Board is not satisfied with the Head Coach's rationale, the player will remain on the team.
 5. Players who are in the top 7/8 but not selected may only be moved down one level. For example, if a player is not selected to AAA, then they must be placed on an AA team, assuming that the age group fields teams at the AAA, AA, and A level.
 6. The remaining players selected for each team are based upon the Head Coach's discretion and selection based on needs such as pitching, skill positions (i.e., catcher/SS/CF), speed, batting, etc. Team selection is subject to approval by the BTBA Board.
 7. Every effort will be made to post teams to the BTBA website by the Wednesday evening following the conclusion of tryouts.
- **Dual Roster Policy** - Players in the BTBA travel program are not allowed to play on other traveling baseball teams or Club teams from May 1 through the last game of the travel season, including State Championship Tournaments and MBL playoffs (except for any player participating on a high school team). Any player found to be playing with another team during this time frame will be subject to discipline, including the possibility of being removed from the BTBA team at their expense. The BTBA Board solely determines all discipline and consequences for violating the Dual Roster Policy.

Those players participating on a Spring team prior to the start to the travel season or participating on a Fall team after the travel season will need to ensure that team commitments to a non-BTBA team do not interfere with BTBA team obligations. A player's Club team affiliation has no bearing on a player's qualification for a BTBA team or level of play for the traveling baseball season. BTBA will rank players based solely on BTBA tryouts and other criteria per the Parent Tryout Guidance Manual. Membership on a Club team does not guarantee that a player will be ranked ahead of or below another player.

5. Post Tryout Grievance Procedure:

- If a player or parent has a grievance after teams have been selected and posted on the BTBA website, then a 48 hour "cooling off" period applies. During this 48 hour period neither the player nor parent may contact the coaching staff or board members regarding team selection. Players are expected to be at practice for the team they were placed on. After this 48 hour period, parents may request an in-person meeting to receive feedback from the tryout but they may not ask about other players.
- This post tryout grievance meeting will consist of the player, player's parents, applicable Head Coach, and one or more BTBA Board members.