

WAA Tournament/Summer Baseball (ages 9-12): What Parents Need To Know 2010 edition

Overview

WAA offers a variety of summer baseball options. This document attempts to describe the offerings and the rules/guidelines surrounding participation and coach/player selection/ placement.

Options for Summer Baseball:

Little League (RTW) tournaments

As a Little League chartered organization, Webster is a part of District 4, Section 1, and the Mid-Atlantic (eastern) region. There are almost 40 districts and 4 sections in NY. Each district conducts a tournament, and the district winners meet in 4 sectional tournaments. The 4 sectional winners then play to crown a state champion. At the 11/12 yr old level, those winners advance to the regional tournament. Regional winners advance to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. For this reason, this tournament is commonly referred to as the RTW (Road to Williamsport) tournament. WAA (usually) sends two teams at the 11/12 age level, 2 teams at the 10/11 level, and 2 teams at the 9/10 level (age determination date is April 30, there are no exceptions for play up or play down requests). The tournaments for teams in the 9/10 and 10/11 age groups stop at the regional and state level, respectively, although there is talk about a 9/10 World Series in the near future.

WAA is split into 2 divisions (required by Little League), American and National. For Little League tournaments, players can only be selected for the team from their division. Placement of teams into divisions is done prior to the league drafts.

All games at each level are played at a single location, in a town hosting that level of the tournament. In the past, the 11/12 tournament consisted of 4-5 games followed by playoffs. The 9/10 and 10/11 tournaments play more games (8-10) because the schedule is not as strict beyond the district.

The RTW tournaments typically start around July 1 and end within 2-3 weeks. There is a strict schedule to be able to comply with the sectional, state, and regional schedule. Teams should expect to play every other day during this period but may play on consecutive days.

Local tournaments

Players not selected for a Little League tournament team may be selected to play on local tournament teams. These teams travel to other towns to play, and some games are played in Webster. There is a round-robin portion followed by playoffs, crowing an eventual tournament champion. There is no advancing beyond the local tournament. For the most part all teams must

be Little League chartered and play by Little League rules, with some minor modifications. WAA usually sends 2 teams at the 11/12 level and 2 teams at the 9/10 level. There is no 10/11 local tournament. If enough kids register, and enough coaches volunteer, **and** WAA feels the team can be competitive, an extra team may be formed and entered into a local tournament, provided there is room.

Normally, Greece Little League hosts the 9/10 local tournament. In the past, Pittsford and Fairport each have run the 11/12 local tournament. Games may or may not be played in the home team's park (I.E. some games in Webster, some games in other towns).

The local tournaments usually start around July 1 and run for 4-6 weeks, playing an average of 3 games per week. Because of the number of games, this is often referred to as a "second season" or "summer season" not to be confused with the WAA summer house league.

It is important to note that not being selected for a Little League tournament team is not necessarily a reflection of the players' abilities. Players and parents should be excited and proud to represent WAA on any team they are selected for.

WAA Summer house league

Players not selected for either the Little League or Local tournament can choose to participate in the WAA Summer House League. This is a 5 or 6 week league that mirrors our Spring leagues, except that we do not schedule games on the weekends, freeing them up for family activities. There are 2 games per week and rules are relaxed/changed to encourage player participation and development. In many cases players are allowed to "play-up" into a league they would participate in the following year. All games are played at Empire park unless there is a conflict with a local tournament home game.

Tournament Coach Selection

Tournament team coaches must have been coaches during the WAA regular season (April-June), and informed WAA of their desire to be a tournament coach. The final decision on who is made manager (head coach) is made by a WAA committee. Volunteering to be a coach does not guarantee the coach or his son/daughter a spot on a team. The manager selects his/her assistant coaches, with approval from WAA.

Coaches must attend a WAA tournament coaches meeting where they will be briefed on rules and be given necessary paperwork, as well as a meeting at the tournament location where they will receive schedules and official rules.

Coaches should expect to devote a substantial amount of time to their teams, including extra practices and travel time. If a coach is planning a summer vacation during July or August, it may not be prudent to volunteer.

Tournament Player Selection

Throughout the season, those who wish to coach are watching players and gathering input from other coaches. As the regular season plays out, reasonable assumptions may be made about players' eventual selection to a specific team. Players may be asked to attend an evaluation session. The evaluation session is more for the kids the coaches may not have seen or know much about. Coaches are trying to build competitive teams and it becomes important to try to select players skilled at specific positions. A coach may not select 5 players skilled at catching, for multiple reasons: first, some of the kids might not receive much playing time, and second, the other tournament teams also need catchers. WAA's goal is to create competitive tournament teams but not at the expense of other Webster teams. The amount of time a player is unavailable (vacations, etc.) may also affect which team they are selected for.

Tournament team rosters cannot be announced before June 15. On or around that day, after WAA has reviewed and approved the selections, the coaches of the RTW 11/12 teams will contact their players. As selection, participation and eligibility are confirmed, the coaches of the RTW 10/11 teams will contact their players, and finally, the RTW 9/10 coaches will contact their players. Ten year-olds can be selected for either the 9/10 or 10/11 teams. Eleven year-olds can be selected for either the 10/11 or 11/12 teams. This decision is made by the coaches and WAA. Players selected for a RTW team will be required to provide 3 proofs of residency and a copy of their birth certificate. This information will remain with the coaches throughout the tournament and will be returned once the tournament ends.

The local tournament coaches will select players remaining in the pool at the appropriate age levels. There is a maximum of 14 players per team, however, the coaches will decide how many players to carry on their rosters.

Players cannot participate on multiple tournament teams (I.E. sub for a RTW or local team).

There are travel baseball teams not affiliated with WAA whose players also participate in WAA. Playing on a travel team does not guarantee a spot on a WAA tournament team.

Players not selected for a tournament team can choose to participate in the local WAA Summer house league. Players selected for a tournament team can not join the Summer house league when their tournament ends.

Players should expect to participate in many practices during the tournament season. It is not uncommon to have a baseball function (game or practice) every day during the RTW tournaments. Local tournament coaches also conduct practices on off-days. Families planning extensive summer vacations should consider the impact it will have on the player and team. WAA requests that parents submit vacation plans when registering for tournament baseball.

Tournament Rules

The most misunderstood component of tournament baseball is the rules. WAA uses a modified set of Little League rules during the regular season to guarantee participation and encourage the rotation of positions. Little League rules are much more strict, especially regarding playing time

(mandatory play rule), the one rule that frustrates parents and players the most. In RTW games, a player is required to bat once and play 3 defensive outs to meet the mandatory play requirement. The continuous batting order (everyone in the batting order always hits) is NOT used. This means there will be players who during a game, will only bat once and play defense one inning. They may sit the rest of the game. There is never a parent who thinks their child will be the one sitting most of the game, and when it happens to their child, there are almost always feelings of frustration that spread through the stands and dugout. These rules are emphasized and re-emphasized during the player selection process and practices. However, again, as you read this now, you are most likely telling yourself, “They’re not talking about my kid.” Be prepared. Tournament games are much more competitive and intense. Each player has a role that they (and their parents) need to accept. In a lopsided game, coaches may give lesser-used players more opportunities to play, but it is not guaranteed nor required.

Another rule used in RTW tournament play that WAA does not use is the **mercy rule**. After 4 or more innings (3.5 or more if the home team is ahead), the game will end if a team is ahead by 10 or more runs.

Local tournaments usually play with a continuous batting order (thereby not using the mandatory play rule above) and a 10, 12, or 15 run mercy rule. The rules are announced at coaches meetings held just before the tournaments begin.

Closing

Tournament season is an exciting and special time of year for all of us. Parents rely on WAA to conduct a fair and equitable player selection process, and WAA volunteers work very hard to achieve that goal. Your support is very much appreciated.

Hopefully this document has provided sufficient information on WAA tournament baseball. Questions can be addressed to playeragent@waabaseball.org or president@waabaseball.org