

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

TRAA Baseball Mission:

The Two Rivers Athletic Association Baseball Program provides access to baseball activities dedicated to creating a fun, fair, competitive and safe baseball environment which increases participation and provides the opportunity to improve personal skills, while developing respect for others, self-confidence and teamwork in our youth athletes.

TRAA Baseball Vision:

Develop athletes who have the skills to contribute at next level programs and a life-long love of baseball.

TRAA Baseball Core Values:

1. **Respect:** Treat others better than you expect to be treated.
2. **Sportsmanship:** Foster a sense of fair play, humility in victory and graciousness in defeat, as well as friendship with teammates and opponents alike.
3. **Integrity:** Demonstrate honest and fair play, beyond simple adherence to the rules and regulations of the game.
4. **Excellence:** Pursue the highest level of personal achievement as a player, and collective achievement as a team and an organization.
5. **Teamwork:** Learn the value of working together. Baseball is a team sport. Success on the field, as in many aspects of life, is best achieved working as a team, towards a shared goal.
6. **Loyalty:** Develop a loyalty to the ideals of the sport and the fellow members of the baseball community.
7. **Enjoyment:** Have fun teaching and learning the game of baseball and have satisfying and rewarding experiences that benefit all participants.

Eligibility

The Two Rivers Athletic Association (TRAA) baseball program supports traveling baseball at the 9U-15U year old age levels.

Players who are selected for traveling baseball at the 9U-11U ages, do not play in-house baseball. In-house baseball will be available for players at the 9U-11U year old level that choose in-house baseball or are not selected for a traveling team. There is no in-house baseball for the 12U-15U year old age levels.

Community Eligibility requirements are set by the league that TRAA Travel Baseball is organized through, Metro Baseball League (MBL). As a baseball community our boundaries are defined as the ISD 197 area. We welcome families to participate in our program who live within or attend a school within the ISD197 area. Any player who is ineligible based on the aforementioned criteria must notify the Baseball Commissioner to review the request. If the Commissioner approves the request the petitioning player must obtain a waiver with signatures

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

from both the athletic association that serves their high school area and MBL prior to being placed on a team. Similarly, players from the Two Rivers Athletic Association community who wish to try out for a different athletic association must first obtain a waiver signed by both associations and MBL. We understand that some families may experience a change in what community they identify with (based on changing schools, moving residences or other circumstances) and we work with families and other associations directly to ensure we provide access to competitive baseball opportunities that foster skill development.

Age Eligibility requirements are set by the MBL: Players in their respective age groups must not reach the next age before May 1st of the current year. For example, a 10-year old may play in the 11- year old division, but an 11-year old may NOT play in the 10-year old division.

It is permissible for 8U players to try out for 9U and for players to “play up” from their designated age division where appropriate (play with their grade or skill level), but they may not play down an age level. A player who expresses interest in playing up from their age division must demonstrate extraordinary skills (e.g., top 5 evaluation score) for consideration. Players are encouraged to play with their grade; however, the Baseball Commissioner will have the final decision of a player’s age level with regards to the best interest of TRAA baseball as a whole.

Family Commitment

The program offers opportunities to develop confidence and teamwork while competing with teams representing other communities. Traveling baseball requires a significant time commitment from players, parents and coaches.

Players and parents are expected to assist with field maintenance (before and after practices and home games) and tournaments hosted by TRAA.

Participation and Attendance

Players interested in playing on a traveling team must be available for the entire scheduled season in order to be selected for a traveling team. If a player has any known conflicts for the upcoming season, they must be brought to the attention of the Baseball Commissioner and accepted by the head coach of the team prior to the selection of teams.

Unexcused absences may result in a reduction in playing time, but overall, we understand that growing families have many needs. Coaches and parents are encouraged to discuss obstacles for players participating and compromise to ensure participation and needs are met.

Roster Size

Traveling teams are determined on a tryout basis. Each team will consist of approximately 11-12 players, but larger rosters may be necessary to assure all boys at an age are rostered. The Baseball Commissioner will determine the number of players on each roster.

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

Playing Time

TRAA forms teams to play competitively in travel baseball and parents and players should understand that playing time will not be equal for every member of the team. Coaches should provide meaningful playing time for each player and adhere to the guidelines summarized below. Parents and players should also understand that playing time can be reduced due to behavior or absences. Performance or prerequisites required to participate at certain positions will limit playing time at those positions, but players and families should be informed of these prerequisites.

9U-12U

- Minimum playing time is 4 defensive innings in a typical 6-inning game.
- Sit no more than 2 innings/game unless for disciplinary reasons
- Players have minimum of 3 non-pitching positions and should gain exposure to infield and outfield positions.
- All players should play a minimum of 2 innings at an infield position in league games.
- Develop and use a minimum of 8 pitchers
- Continuous batting and rolling batting order in league games
- Play to win in tournament games. Positions and batting order at discretion of coach to position the team for best chance of success.

13U-14U

- Minimum playing time is 4 defensive innings in a typical 7-inning game.
- Sit no more than 3 innings/game unless for disciplinary reasons
- Develop and use a minimum of 6 pitchers
- Continuous batting
- Players have 2-3 primary non-pitching positions.
- Play to win in tournament games. Positions and batting order at discretion of coach to position the team for best chance of success.

15U

- Players earn the right to playing time.
- Playing time is at the discretion of the coach based on needs of the team, attitude, work ethic, and commitment.
- Players have 1-2 primary non-pitching positions
- Skill development focused on primary position(s)
- Batting order follows high school rules with 9 batting and a DH allowed.

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

League games are for player development and coaches should approach them with a different philosophy than tournament games. Coaches should approach tournament games in a manner that competitively positions the team to give them the best chance to win; whereas league games provide an opportunity to develop players at positions (catcher, pitcher, infield, etc.) they may not play as much in tournaments. The goal is to remain competitive but give doses of experience for players' developing skills. Players should not be put into positions where they are unprepared, but where they are stretching skill development when it is earned.

Preseason Practices

Travel teams gather to conduct indoor practice in mid-March through mid-April, weather pending, prior to outdoor practices. Winter indoor practices are also conducted as a part of an optional program run by TRAA Baseball travel coaches, as determined by each travel coaching age level or team's availability.

TRAA Baseball attempts to accommodate other off-season sports by doing our best to not have required team activities that invade fall and winter sports seasons. TRAA Baseball believes that multi-sport athletes are best prepared to not only love and play baseball but extend fitness and a love of competing and playing sports throughout their lifetime.

League Season Schedule

MBL league play is 14 games (12 games for 15-year olds and 14/15A) typically beginning the first week of May and ending in early July. League games are scheduled by the coaching staff in the spring.

A subsequent practice schedule is planned around league games and tournaments at the discretion of each coach. You should expect to practice two or more times per week, depending on game schedules.

MBL Playoffs

This is an optional single elimination bracket play tournament at the end of the league season, seeding based on league season standings. It begins at the conclusion of the regular season and may last until late July.

Weekend Tournaments

In addition to participating in MBL, each team will participate in weekend tournaments, including the state tournament, if your team earns a qualification bid. State Qualifying Tournaments occur in May, June or July.

These weekend tournaments typically run Friday through Sunday. An out-of-state tournament (requires travel and related expenses from participating families) may be planned by teams.

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

The state tournament varies by age level and class, starting as early as the 2nd weekend in July and ending as late as the last weekend in July.

The baseball program expects head coaches to plan the Spring/Summer weekend tournament calendar as early as December in the previous year to ensure that all traveling baseball players are available on weekends.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Baseball Commissioner.

Home Hosted Travel Tournaments

Each one of our TRAA hosted tournaments will have a team assigned as host. They are to assign the responsibilities of:

1. Tournament Director providing registration table, communications, data collection (scores and pitch counts), umpire planning and schedules for the tournament.
2. Concessions Stand Coordinator providing purchased concessions, staffing of stand and accounting of funds.
3. Field Maintenance Crew providing dragging/raking of field, filling wear spots at batters box and pitching mounds, chalking lines and batters box between games.

Net proceeds from concessions and tournament registrations are to be used for supporting host teams with extended travel baseball tournament experiences.

Traveling Baseball Tryouts

A team of impartial evaluators will evaluate every player's baseball skills at a skills evaluation clinic, traditionally held in early August after the previous baseball season. The evaluators will be people who are believed to possess the knowledge necessary to evaluate a player's skill at a particular level.

In addition to evaluation clinics, scrimmages are used to support the evaluation by coaching staffs of players in game like situations at positions that require deeper skill evaluation.

In the event an evaluator does not show up for an assigned tryout session, the Baseball Commissioner or his designee will fill that role. Evaluators will use a grading system reflective of the players' overall skill level and technique.

Players should not wear clothing from a prior year's traveling team, use any equipment identifying him/her as a previous traveling player, or wear any article of clothing with his/her name imprinted on it. Equipment used during tryouts must meet the Metro Baseball League (MBL) rules for the respective age level.

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

Players must participate in all scheduled tryout sessions unless the Baseball Commissioner grants an excused absence prior to the start of that session. A player who has registered for tryouts and cannot participate due to an injury or illness will be excused, prior to the start of the tryout session. A player may be disqualified for being absent without previously being excused. Extenuating or unusual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Travel Team Selection Process

Teams are selected based on several criteria: evaluation scores, firsthand coach scrimmage evaluation, and previous season travel team coach evaluations. Evaluation scores dictate the top ranked “locks” for each team, and a head coach is selected from that group, who then has discretion to select players for remaining roster spots. Our coaches commit a significant amount of time with families and players and therefore have a significant influence on roster decisions. Outliers in evaluation scores exist and other criteria that may be utilized by coaches to select players include coachability, attitude, respect for teammates, love of baseball and availability to participate in all baseball activities. The Baseball Commissioner ultimately approves all rosters.

In any circumstance where numbers warrant that there is not a roster available for a player, TRAA will work with neighboring communities to combine rosters and do our best to assure we fulfill our mission and provide access for baseball to all boys who want to play baseball.

For our younger ages (9U, 10U and 11U), it is important to weigh heavily on evaluation scores. The top nine (9) players determined by evaluation scores will be placed on the highest-level team. The remaining three (3) players are selected at the discretion of the coach, requiring final approval from the Baseball Commissioner.

After the first traveling team roster is finalized, the next (9) players as determined by evaluation scores will be placed on the next traveling team, if applicable. The remaining (3) players are at the discretion of the coach, with final approval of the Baseball Commissioner. This will continue to be applied until all rosters have been finalized.

For 12U, 13U, 14U and 15U teams will be similar, with evaluation score guidelines determining eight (8), seven (7), six (6) and five (5) roster spots respectively. Subsequent teams will be selected using the same method described above.

In the case where two teams of the same age are entered at the same level of competition, the Baseball Commissioner shall apply an appropriate method of team selection.

TWO RIVERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TRAVEL BASEBALL POLICY

In-House Tournament Team Selection Process

The in-house tournament team provides an opportunity for 8/9 kid pitch players to play additional baseball at the 9AA travel baseball level. The team typically participates in two weekend tournaments in June with the option of an MBT State tournament (if qualified) in July.

The team is formed based on composite skill scores from in-house evaluations held in March. The top nine (9) players as determined by scores will be placed on the team. The Commissioner will select a parent coach from the group of nine (9) players. The remaining three (3) players are selected at the discretion of the coach, requiring final approval from the Baseball Commissioner.

Coach Selection Process and Expectations

The Baseball Commissioner will select the head coach for each team based on previous commitments to TRAA or other youth sports coaching. Baseball knowledge and skill is important, but leading other adults and boys that demonstrate our baseball program's core values is top priority.

All coaches must pass the state mandated background check and complete child safety and concussion training. Coaches are also expected to protect athlete private data in regard to evaluation scores, health concerns and other personal information. This information cannot be disseminated in any communication form outside the coaching staff, TRAA baseball and TRAA executive board.

Late Registration

Players who register late may be placed on a waiting list. Placement on a traveling team will be based on availability and subject to the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner.

Refunds

Refunds are at the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner.