

Apple Valley Travel Baseball Board
Special Meeting CO-OP Discussion
November 4, 2021 and November 8, 2021 at 9:00

Members Present: Mac Noland, Jeremy Jackson, Katie Jackson, Jess Hodgson, Brian Ames, Ann Chamberlain, Lonnie Provencher, Ryan Tauer, Brad Willis, Chris Halgren, Alli Weaver

Co-Op Conversation Updates (Mac, Jeremy, Chris)

- Eastview
 - Would like to do a full co-op
 - Aligned with separate registration and new brand. E.g. *Apple Valley / Eastview*
 - Vested and motivated to make this happen. Board voted 11-5 to move forward
 - Not interested in adding BV into the mix for year one, outside of helping them with numbers if players want to register through AV. Adding BV in would put us at 400 kids and 35-40 teams across 19 levels.
- Burnsville
 - Would like to do full co-op with EV and AV
 - Aligned with separate registration and Firehawk brand
- Sam Firpo has been brought into the loop.
 - Gets the reasons why we are looking at co-op. Concerned about losing kids to other high schools and so asks that we beef up our community building activities
 - Summer camp, Sunday night practices, AV swag, etc.
- VAA board is aware we are going to be bringing back a proposal.
 - Unclear the exact rules, but need their approval to move forward.
 - EV board is aligned on moving forward.
- MBL is aligned on moving forward with a co-op
 - Were surprised this has taken so long to have the conversation
- Budgets will be separate with expenses follow the head
- Coaches interview will be conducted by both board member representation
- Volunteer time, fundraising, tournament planning, etc., would all remain separate as well
- Cooperstown team remains AV only. Would take top AV 12-13 kids from tryouts or Cooperstown tryout.
- Would like to host as many AV tournament as possible. 9AA-->15AAA
 - We will do analysis to figure how many we can do.
- One year trial
- Eastview needs a decision by 11/15

Pros and Cons

Eastview

- Pros
 - Have numbers to help field competitive teams
 - Less likely to have to recruit/cut players to make numbers work
 - Motivated to make this happen with strong participation
 - AV field allocation becomes much easier
- Cons
 - They are larger. About 2x.
 - AV board and coaches will need to remain strong
 - We will need to increase our tie back to AV high school efforts. VAA night, swag, etc.
 - We will have AV kids that played on the top team, playing on the second or third team

Burnsville

- Pros
 - About our size. (A little bigger, but not by much)
 - Small trial run in 2020/2021 and aligned with some other sports
- Cons
 - Don't want to co-op at 15U in year 1. We will need to send this grade to EV again.
 - May not be able to field three teams at every grade and will have number issues
 - We will have AV kids that played on the top team, playing on the second or third team

Committee's Final Thoughts

- This is a very tough decision
- There is not a right position, or wrong position
- Not everyone will be happy with any decision. Co-op or no Co-op
- It's a one-year co-op

After discussion, it was decided to hold off voting in order for board members to take time to think about pros and cons of co-oping with Eastview. Board members were also encouraged to reach out to families to get some feedback. Meeting picked up on Monday, November 8th to ask additional questions and provide feedback from families that board members reached out to about co-op. The following are questions raised by board members and answers. Board members added questions and concerns via a shared google doc.

Agenda

- feedback and any last questions
- share any parent feedback we have received
- The vote will be anonymous via a survey Ames is putting together.
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R6C8S2S>

High Level Items

Here are the high level things we've needed alignment on before making a go/no-go decision. It's the committee's feeling that these have all been aligned on.

- Brand
- Registration
- Tryouts
- Coach selection
- Separate boards

Details

Here is a list of things that will need to be figured out post the go/no-go decision. These will all need to be flushed out by the board in the next five months.

- How many tournaments will we host
- What tournaments will we register teams for
- Who orders what jerseys and hats
- How we will divide equipment, fields, etc.

Questions and feedback:

Do we have any idea on Eastview's numbers are at each level? Or our numbers?

- We don't have their numbers at each level. However, we do have their high level number of 180. $180 / 7$ age groups = 25 kids per grade
- AV projections are below. Taken from last year's data. I.e. $90 / 7 = 13$ kids per grade

Estimate of how many kids are playing at wrong level. Are we basing the co-op on a handful of players playing at wrong level or number struggles at certain age groups.

- Good question. My gut says the breakdown is this at our AA teams.
 - AAA = 2-3 kids
 - AA = 3-4 kids
 - A = 4-5 kids

How will tryouts be conducted and teams formed?

- The Cages would run the program with independent evaluators.
- 9-11U the top 6 kids from the Cages ranking are locked. Then the head coach for that level selects the next 5-6 kids from the rankings + taking into consideration EV and AV coach rankings from the previous year. Coach must explain why they are taking a child outside of the top 12.
- 12-15U the top 4 are locked then follows the same coaches selection from above.
- I think this needs a little refinement. It's really hard to tell the difference between kids' abilities after just a 2-hour try-out (especially at The Cages -- Is there an actual baseball field there?) If there's not a significant drop-off between kids in rank positions 7-12, for example, then maybe we should level out the teams with closer to half AV/half EV kids, not go with coach's choice. Since coaches are never allowed to watch or be there, they have nothing to go on except the kids they know already.
- Committee feels that tryout can be negotiated
 - Eastview has allowed coaches that applied to watch and score tryouts
 - Maybe we can change that to coaches can watch but not grade
 - Coaches will be selected prior to tryouts but not selected at which level they will coach

- Bigger pool of coaches to choose from
 - Eastview is going back to provide player evaluations from last season
- 13s-15s try out at Cage and savage dome (flyballs)
- 9's-12s just at Cages
- Can evaluate ground balls and hitting at Cages

Will both AV and EV host tournaments? Is tournament revenue shared?

- Tournaments will be separate and revenue will not be shared.
- EV is running MBT state and August Classic
- AV is running our Mother's day tournament.
 - Do we have to ensure a spot for every co-op team at each level?
 - Feels like this would be tough so we'd have to work through how this is handled.
15AAA, 15AA, 15/14A, ...9AAA, 9AA = 19 levels
 - 19 levels * 8 teams = 152 team tournament....

Will boards be fully combined and duties shared?

- Boards are separate. Any items that need cross board participation, will have representation from both sides. E.g. coach selection, tournament registration, uniforms, etc.

How/when will we present our decision to parents/players? Do we expect any push back from families?

- We would need to send out a communication in the next two weeks. Probably the week of 11/15.
- We need to be prepared for pushback. We will have upset families. We will also have happy families.
- Baseball board asked families they knew for feedback but idea of co-op was not presented to all families for feedback or question prior to vote

Is there a new name yet? How will a Co-op name be decided? Team colors? Mascot?

- The only alignment has been so far that it will be Apple Valley / Eastview <something> with the colors being some combination of the two entities. Idea would be that if we move forward, we marry our uniforms resource (Brian) with theirs to work with the vendors on coming up with a proposal.

How will fields be allocated for practices/games?

- Idea would be to have our fields resource (Brad) and theirs to work through this. Probably a mixture of fields we are used to and fields on the east side of town.

Will one association handle all umpire scheduling, with the other association reimbursing? Doesn't EVAA have their own pool of umpires that they use?

- Good question. We would need to align on a new entity in MBL, or re-use one of ours, and assign a single umpire company. Yes, Eastview uses a different entity.
- Another option would be to run a portion of the teams through Apple Valley with our umpire company and a portion through Eastview with their umpire company. E.g. we take 10 teams and they take 15.

Will registration fees, volunteer requirements, fundraiser requirements, etc. match between the associations?

- They should be close, but probably won't be exactly aligned. Eastview does charge a bit more as they don't have to do fundraising.
- Could be running short on volunteer hours if we host too many tournaments.
- Tournament size has to be something we can support.

How will AVHS and EVHS support the co-op, so as not to feel like either is a stronger partner?

- Sam is concerned about losing players to EVHS. This is a concern for all of us.
- Sam also understands the underlying driver for the co-op, and supports it.

Will Community Baseball stay separate?

- Yes, separate.

Do we need approval from MBL/MBT?

- They have approved this.

How do EV numbers compare by age level to AV for 2021? Can we get a breakdown of these numbers?

- 25 kids per grade roughly.

Can AVTB AAA players waiver out if AVTB doesn't offer a AAA level team?

- Yes, we had multiple 14s last season play with EV in order to play on a AAA team

How can we ensure that we retain our top players?

- From a HS perspective, we will want to continue and double down on things like VAA night with the HS team, establish summer camp in partnership with Coach Firpo and VAA, and more.
- Question as to who we are motivated to serve? Top level players who might leave anyway or lower level who could be at bigger risk of losing from program
- Many area club teams already had tryouts and teams are set for next year
 - Would not affect kids from jumping into club this year but possibly for 2023 season

How will it be determined who will coach the top teams at each level?

- An interview of coaching candidates will be conducted by a committee of board members from both EV Traveling Baseball and AV Traveling Baseball
- Can we have at least one coach from the AV side and one coach from the EV side for each team?

Can unforeseen consequences of a coop be undone after a 1 year trial? What is the impact of open enrollment for athletics?

- 100%. 2023 can revert to the 2021 model if the co-op has significant issues

Has EV coops really been successful in other sports? What coaches might have experience with this? Do we have any 3rd party forms of success?

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Did EV provide any statement why they'd agree to a coop?

- EV is seeing some of the same issues. Players leaving for clubs, inability to field AAA teams due to numbers.

Differing rules between associations...how will they be decided?

- ie: rules around playing up an age level
- Need to make sure we're aligned on this. Maybe create a combined by-laws.

Help me read this table below!

- Min and max numbers at each age group

- Sorry -- I still need more explanation on numbers below!
 - Mac can explain what table means

How will this affect Cooperstown teams/bids for 2022 and beyond?

- No impacts for the Cooperstown team.

Who will schedule tournaments?!

- AV age coordinator and EV age coordinator

If we are looking pretty good at the younger ages and struggling more at the older ages (where people tend to start thinking about club), could we consider just an older ages co-op, maybe 12-13-14-15s?

- Co-op was discussed as all in not at certain age groups or levels.

Since MBL allows players to double roster on community and club teams, is there an expectation that if a player plays at AAA level AV/EV co-op team that it will take priority over club team during summer season?

- Only the 2nd summer MBL has allowed double rostering. We can't set expectations but try to avoid conflicts. Suggested that we need to accommodate these players.

What do we as the travel board do to reach out to VAA community baseball to promote travel baseball as next step?

- Communications go out to all baseball registrants travel and community.
- Mac suggested that we meet with 2nd grade community parents to present what travel baseball is all about

What will happen for AV players who get cut?

- We will do everything to avoid any cuts. We will work with BV and other associations to try our best to have teams for all kids. Referring them to Community baseball is also an option.

Should AVTB accommodate specific families, age group

- Not trying to accommodate specific families. Trying to grow the program stronger.
- Idea is that if we have the numbers to fields teams at each level, players will be placed on a team that matches their skill level (A, AA, AAA)
 - This will allow for more opportunities to grow their skills and playing time

Will some kids not go out?

- This is a concern. Could lose kids that aren't fully invested. Might not play baseball because it's not with AV kids. If you don't have three close buddies, would be at a higher risk of attrition. When you don't know kids, it makes it less likely to want to go. When you know and play with your friends, it makes it a stronger draw for the kids. Seems like we can work with EV to see what options we can have to make sure no single AV kid is by himself.

Do we really need 2 boards?

- Yes.

What happens if we lose identify as AVTB?

- Leadership has to remain strong.

What impact will that have on AVHS?

- Hopefully it's a positive for the school.

What does success mean?

- Mac
 - Increased VAA baseball enrollment
 - Field a team at every age
- Lonnie
 - **Success:** Maintain and / or grow enrollment for both Eastview and VAA (currently estimated at 300 combined; 120 VAA, 180 EV). **Where does this VAA number come from? The last one I saw said VAA's estimate is 90.** 2021 had 107 registrations. 6 players from 14/15A team were actually Prior Lake players that registered with VAA. Burnsville players went through Burnsville.
 - **Failure:** Mass exodus of total enrollment (regardless if it happens at the VAA or EV side). My concern is that this exodus event could happen at the A level, potentially from kids that were previously playing at the AA. I personally don't feel that the formation and/or success of a few AAA teams would appropriately justify the loss of participation at the lower levels. VAA's non-profit charter/mission here ***"The purpose of VAA, as a non-profit, volunteer organization, is to benefit the youth in the communities of ISD 196 by providing a means of athletic and social development through organized sports. VAA's goal is to recognize the importance of all participants and to conduct our programs in a manner that provides the opportunity for the development of all participants."***

Apple Valley	
Low	High
4	6
18	20
3	4
4	6
8	10
14	17
2	3
3	4
6	10
8	9
0	3
4	5
2	4
16	18
3	4
3	4
8	10
10	12
0	3
4	5
3	4
6	8
2	3
1	2
4	5
76	90

Vote - will be anonymous via Survey Monkey.

- Boards members have until 12:00 on Tuesday, November 9th to cast their vote
- Motion made by Jeremy Jackson
- Motion Seconded by Katie Jackson

Meeting adjourned at 10:00pm

Vote Results Sent by Mac on November 9th at 5:42

- 6-5 not in favor of full co-op with Eastview. Motion failed. Mac will contact Jason Hill and update regarding the co-op decision.