

HEAT BASEBALL ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is Heat different than playing TMYBA?

Participation in Heat is in addition to playing in TMYBA. Our TMYBA leagues are open to all interested youth between K5 and 8th grade who reside in Mequon or Thiensville or attend a public or parochial school within the school district boundaries. TMYBA activities are limited to Monday through Thursday. Heat teams are selected from TMYBA eligible players and are designed to provide a more competitive level of baseball for our more skilled and interested players. Heat teams begin practicing indoors starting in January or February. Once the TMYBA season begins, Heat activities are limited to Friday through Sunday as players are participating in the TMYBA leagues on Monday through Thursday.

What is the cost of participating in Heat?

Heat costs are in addition to the standard TMYBA registration fee. Heat is entirely self-funded. Costs vary by team, but coaches are asked to try and keep costs at or below \$400/350 per player excluding uniforms. The minimum uniform options can be purchased for \$100 to \$125 and frequently can be used for more than one season. Many families do elect to also purchase the optional items including bat bags, sweatshirts, etc. As coaches are volunteers, the primary costs are for tournament entry fees, umpires, and gym rental costs for indoor practices.

What is the time commitment?

Indoor practices typically begin in late January or February. Teams generally practice once or twice per week in various locations, primarily school district gyms and the batting cage facilities nearby. Some teams rent space in other area facilities in Cedarburg and Mequon. Once the TMYBA season starts, teams generally practice once per weekend, often on Friday nights, and play games Friday through Sunday. If Heat teams don't have games early in the outdoor season, they may practice twice on the weekend. The Heat season is generally over at the same time as the TMYBA season. With approximately 12 weekends during the season, teams generally have games on 9 or 10 of those weekends. Teams are prohibited from playing in tournaments during Fun Before the Fourth weekend so players are available to play in the TMYBA All-Star games.

How many games do Heat teams play?

The number of Heat games is generally between 20 and 35 with younger teams closer to 20 and older teams closer to 35.

Are all Heat games played in tournaments?

At the younger ages, many teams schedule individual games against teams from other local communities. The advantage of these games is the schedule is known in advance allowing families to better plan. Younger teams do participate in some tournaments. Older teams primarily participate in tournaments. The advantage of tournaments only is the players enjoy the opportunity to play in a tournament format, teams have the opportunity to play against teams from a wider geographic range,

and the competition is generally tougher. The disadvantage of tournaments is the initial schedule is typically not known until one or two weeks in advance and if teams do well, they can continue to advance making it difficult to plan other activities during the weekend.

When are tryouts typically held?

Tryouts are generally held on two weekends in late July/early August for the following year.

Why are tryouts held the summer prior to the Heat season?

Holding outdoor tryouts gives the evaluators a better chance at seeing the players true skill level compared to watching them in the controlled environment of a gym. It is also difficult to evaluate some skills in a gym such as fielding fly balls. Holding summer tryouts also makes it more likely that a player is closer to “in-season form” compared to not having played baseball for an extended period of time. Finally, since practices begin in February, we can’t wait until the outdoor season starts to hold tryouts. The primary disadvantage of holding tryouts eight months before the following outdoor season begins is that if a new player moves to the community during the winter months, they are not able to tryout. Our tryout schedule is typical for most select teams.

How are teams selected?

Selection is based on a combination of performance at tryouts and the evaluations from the TMYBA coaches. Our goal is to select the most skilled players. Having previously played on a Heat team is not a guarantee for making the team the following season. It is rare that our rosters do not experience some level of turnover each season.

When are teams announced?

Our goal is to announce teams within a few weeks of the tryout conclusion. We need time to assess the evaluation scores and review the evaluations from the TMYBA coaches.

How are coaches selected?

Coaches are parents of selected players. Once the players are selected, parents interested in coaching contact the Heat Director. A head coach is selected based on consultation with others who have been involved with that individual in the TMYBA leagues or at the Heat level. The head coach is generally responsible for selecting the rest of the coaching staff.

How many different age levels are there for Heat?

We currently field teams at U9 through U14. U9 means 9 and under, not under 9. It should really be 9U to make it easier to understand, but for some reason, U9 is the standard nomenclature.

What is the cutoff date for age determination?

The cutoff date is age as of April 30 for the season being played. For example, the 2019 season will be based on age as of April 30, 2019. To be eligible to play U9 in 2019, players must be 9 or younger as of that date.

Are 8 year-olds allowed to tryout for U9?

Yes. We have had 8 year-olds selected to play U9. However, if we determine two players to be of similar skill, we will favor a 9 year-old over an 8 year-old.

Are players allowed to play above their age level?

This is most common with 8-year olds playing U9 since that is the youngest age we offer. Our preference is for players to play at their age level. We realize this is not always preferable for the players as the Heat age groups do not align with school grades, or the TMYBA leagues, and players often want to “play up” if it means participating with more of their classmates. Unless a player is considered to be one of the top players on the age above, we prefer that they play at their age level. Typically, this is better for their baseball development as they are more often a key contributor, including pitching, if placed at the appropriate level.

Is there any consideration to starting a team at the U8 level?

Currently, we have no plans to start a U8 team. It can't be ruled out in future seasons as we didn't offer a U9 team until 2006. Some organizations have started to offer U8 teams, but the number remains limited. At this point, we believe that U9 is young enough to begin playing select ball. We realize some families believe their 8 year-old is skilled enough and ready to handle the pressure of playing at the select level. For this reason, we do allow 8 year-olds to play U9. Typically when we have a U9 White team, there are several 8 year-olds on the team, but we have not seen enough demand to justify starting at the U8 level.

What if a player can only make one, or none, of the tryouts?

We schedule two tryouts per age group and attempt to separate them so that family vacations typically allow players to make one of the tryouts. We realize some families take extended vacations that don't always make this possible. If a player can't make either tryout, we try and arrange an individual tryout if the timing works. Individual tryouts are discouraged as it is preferred to evaluate players when they can be directly compared to the others.

If a player can make both tryouts, should they?

It is not necessary to attend both, but players frequently do. If a player has a solid first tryout, it is not necessary to attend the second. However, if a player has a poor first tryout, they are encouraged to attend the second so the evaluators have a second chance to assess the skill level.

How are evaluators selected?

Ideally, we would have three to four independent evaluators who can be at both tryouts. Our preference would be to have several evaluators who do not know the kids at that age level to remove all biases. Unfortunately, this is often difficult to accomplish given the time commitment on summer weekends. Our evaluators are typically a combination of the current Heat coach, coaches from a different Heat age group and former Heat coaches with older kids.

How much travel is involved?

Almost all of our tournaments are played within a one hour drive of Mequon. For example, popular locations are Waukesha, New Berlin, Germantown and West Bend. For the past several years, some of our teams have elected to play a tournament in Wisconsin Dells or the Fox Valley area. Teams have typically limited their schedule to at most one tournament that involves staying overnight in a hotel. This cost is in addition to the costs discussed above.

What is the expected attendance requirement?

We limit our rosters to 12-13 players in order for players to receive appropriate playing time. Due to our small rosters, the expectation is that players will make the vast majority of team activities. Players who expect to miss more than one or two weekends from May through mid-July should not participate in Heat.

Can a player participate in another sport, or another baseball team, during the season and still be eligible to play Heat even though there may be conflicts?

Read answer to question above. Our expectation is that Heat will be the player's primary activity during the baseball season and Heat activities will be given priority. Playing on another baseball team besides the player's TMYBA team is not acceptable.

What is the expectation for attendance at TMYBA activities?

Heat players are expected to attend almost all TMYBA activities. We realize there may be the occasional conflict, but attendance at 80% or more of TMYBA activities is expected.

My child participates in a winter sport, which may conflict with indoor practices. Are they still eligible to play Heat?

We encourage kids to be involved in multiple sports. Specialization at a young age is discouraged. Kids specializing in one sport are at greater risk of repetitive stress injuries. As our expectation is that players make their baseball activities during the baseball season, we understand that winter sport activities will take priority over indoor baseball practices. We ask that you be sure to communicate the conflicts with the coach.

What are the advantages/disadvantages of the TMYBA model?

Although TMYBA is not affiliated with Little League, our model is very similar to the Little League model that has been used with great success throughout Wisconsin and the country. We do realize several organizations have been formed to allow kids to only play "select" level ball without requiring them to play in "recreational" leagues. When these organizations were just starting, we had some parents ask that we change our requirement that Heat players also play in TMYBA. Our response was that there already are opportunities to do that if the family prefers. However, we believe strongly that our model is the right one.

Advantages

1. Heat players benefit from playing in TMYBA games
 - a. Opportunity for the weaker Heat players to play “better” positions
 - b. Heat players are generally team leaders
 - c. Kids enjoy playing with and against classmates
 - d. Kids enjoy playing in games
 - e. When considering both the Heat and TMYBA activities, players typically get more practice time and comparable number of games to travel only organizations
2. Second or third grade is not the appropriate age to select which players are select players and which are not.
3. Organizational advantages
 - a. Field access for our Heat teams – VERY IMPORTANT
 - b. Lower costs and higher priority for gym rentals
 - c. Lower insurance costs
 - d. Higher quality offering for our TMYBA games
 - i. Having better players improves the quality of the game for all players
 - ii. Heat coaches are often some of our more experienced TMYBA coaches
 - iii. TMYBA games are an important part of community activity in the summer
 - e. Losing Heat players would reduce TMYBA revenues and impact our ability to maintain the quality of our fields
4. Combined costs for playing Heat and TMYBA are lower than most travel only organizations
5. Select only teams often have mid-week games at 5:30 that can be an hour or more from Mequon. Players would generally be expected to arrive by 4:45 requiring leaving Mequon as early as 3:45 and returning after 8 pm for a single game.

Disadvantages

1. Quality of play in TMYBA games is not as high
2. Potential for lost practice time with select team, but kids prefer to play games
3. Potential for arm injuries when playing for two different coaches who might not know how much a player pitched for the other team.

We have now had several years with competing travel only organizations. The impact of these competing organizations varies by year, and we frequently see players returning to TMYBA/Heat for all of the reasons listed above. We believe the competitive success of our Heat teams, including against travel only teams, demonstrates that playing in TMYBA games is not detrimental to development as a baseball player.

We hope this document answered any question you may have about our Heat program. If not, let us know and we will be glad to answer any additional questions.

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