



Bloomington Traveling Baseball Association

Tryout & Team Formation Parent Information

Thank you for participating in Bloomington Traveling Baseball!

The tryout process is the first step in conducting a successful baseball season. This document is intended to provide an overview of what to expect from the tryout and team formation process, as well as expectations of you and your player throughout all phases of evaluations through team formation. We encourage you to review this document with your player(s) to ensure everyone is prepared for tryouts and have similar expectations.

BTBA Mission

The mission of BTBA is to create a positive, rewarding experience for the serious baseball player by helping them further develop their baseball skills and understanding of the game in preparation for high school level play and beyond. This is achieved through competitive play with other organizations while focusing on the fundamentals of baseball, strong mechanics, good sportsmanship, and respect for others.

BTBA Philosophy

BTBA is committed to providing its players with a safe environment and the best baseball experience possible through quality volunteer guidance, equipment, and facilities.

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Preparing for Tryouts

BTBA makes every attempt as soon as possible to post on BTBA.org, the BTBA Facebook page and elsewhere – as well as email to BTBA families – the dates, times, and locations for our tryouts.

- Tryout time slots are generally 1–2 hours each and will be provided for each age group.
- 9U tryouts will include all players age 8–9, and all players in this group will be evaluated using the same criteria.
- Be sure to complete your registration on the BTBA website prior to the posted deadline.
- Age group birthdate cutoff is regulated by Metro Baseball League (MBL) and Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS) guidelines.
The birthdate range at a particular age level is May 1 – April 30.
 - 9-year-olds completing 3rd grade
 - 10-year-olds completing 4th grade
 - 11-year-olds completing 5th grade
 - 12-year-olds completing 6th grade
 - 13-year-olds completing 7th grade
 - 14-year-olds completing 8th grade
 - 15-year-olds completing 9th grade
- Players who wish to **play up** (e.g., play 11U when age cutoff dictates a 10U placement) must try out at their determined age level AND the level up they wish to play. They will be evaluated separately at each level. In order to play at the higher age, the player must qualify and be selected for the AAA team at that age level. Families should notify BTBA in writing of their intention to **play up** prior to try-outs. Playing up in previous seasons does not guarantee playing up in future seasons.
- Exception to the above to **play up**: players who are in school a year older than their baseball-determined age level may play on a team whose players are at the same school grade level as the player (and will only try out at their school grade level).

Tryout Attendance

- All players are expected to tryout during their designated times unless they have prior approval from the BTBA board of directors. Any player who is absent without being excused may be disqualified. Every attempt will be made to provide a make-up tryout date.
- Parents have an obligation to notify the BTBA Board as early as possible if their player will not be able to attend tryouts.
- For players who do not try out, the board reserves the right to place a player at the appropriate level.
- Extenuating and unusual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, including review of previous-year's team placement, coach evaluations, and prior tryout scores.
- Parents of siblings who can play at the same age level, such as twins or 8-yr/9-yr pairings, will need to inform the BTBA Board in advance on whether they want players paired on the same team or placed independently. Paired players will be placed based at an appropriate level based on the lower-rated player.



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The Day of Tryouts

All tryouts are closed to parents and the public. Only evaluators, BTBA board members, and BTBA head coach candidates may observe. BTBA board members are not allowed to observe their player's age level unless they have applied for a head coaching position for that age group.

- Please plan to check in at the registration table 30 minutes prior to your designated time slot. We are attempting to provide the best possible experience accommodating hundreds of parents and players. Your timeliness and patience throughout the process are much appreciated.
- Players should wear appropriate baseball attire to each evaluation (baseball pants, cup and cap at a minimum). If evaluations are indoors, players should wear turf/athletic shoes, NOT cleats.
- Players should have glove, bat, and a batting helmet. Players must use a legal USA or USSSA certified bat.
- Players should NOT wear any BTBA, club, or other team uniforms to the evaluations. Logos on helmets or bags do not need to be removed. BTBA and our evaluators want to set a level playing field to assess every player equally based solely on their performance during the evaluations. Please use best judgement.

Tryouts

- Players will warm up prior to being placed in groups.
- All players should be attentive, considerate, respectful, and focused during warm-ups and throughout the entire evaluation process. Baseball is a game of catch. Evaluators and coach candidates may observe warmups.
- BTBA hires and pays independent evaluators to conduct our tryouts. These evaluators are chosen based on their impartiality and knowledge of baseball mechanics appropriate to the age level they are evaluating.
- Evaluators have exclusive input and discretion into all evaluation scores.

Hitting 35%

- Players will be evaluated on a set number of *swings* consisting of underhand throws and machine-pitched balls.
- Focus on mechanics and contact:
 - Stance & load
 - Lower body & balance
 - Hands & timing
 - Pitch selection



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Fielding/Defense 35%

- Players will be evaluated fielding grounders at shortstop and catching at first base; as well as ground and fly balls in the outfield.
- Focus on:
Mechanics: footwork, hands, transfer
Throwing: accuracy & strength
Movement to ball
Overall play-making speed

Running 15%

Players will run timed sprints.

Pitching 15%

- At younger ages (9-11), all players will pitch and be evaluated at the pitching station. At older ages (12-15), players who do not pitch may not be evaluated as pitchers and overall scores will be adjusted accordingly. Players who do not evaluate as pitchers may not have opportunities to pitch during the season.
- Players will throw a set number of warm-up pitches from a first mound followed by evaluated pitches from a second mound and can throw from the wind-up or the stretch.
- For 13U and older, players may be asked to throw off speed pitches of their choice at the end of the evaluation.
- Mechanics will be evaluated: balance, form
- Accuracy will be evaluated: pitchers will be asked to throw ten pitches; total score will be based on strikes thrown. Perfect score = 10/10. Velocity will be considered.

Catching

- Catchers are encouraged to bring their own gear, but catcher's equipment will be available for all.
- Players will be evaluated on a set number of pitches:
Receiving – hands
Blocking – hands, body, footwork
Catch and throw to 2nd base – pop/transfer/footwork/throw: speed & accuracy

**Please Note that Catching will NOT be used in a player's overall score. These scores are used as secondary evaluations to help coaches balance teams with skilled catchers.*



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Team Formation Overview

Team formation and head coach selection are conducted by the Team Formation Committee (the Committee), which is composed of up to five BTBA Board members. The Committee is assembled with the goal of representing a broad range of player age groups to support balanced and informed decision-making.

Players will be placed on a team based upon their own merits: skill, athleticism, baseball IQ, hustle, enthusiasm, coachability, attitude, attention, character, etc.

- Independent Evaluators will submit tryout scores to the Committee following tryouts. Evaluator scores are verified and recorded, then independently audited by a second Committee member to ensure reasonability. Scores are available only to the Committee, and are not shared with players or parents. Committee members who are head coach candidates will NOT have access to rankings for their child's age group.
- A player's ultimate rank will be a composite of [50%] tryout score and [50%] previous year coach evaluation. Players with no previous-year coach evaluation will be ranked by 100% tryouts score.
- 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: AAA, AA, and A. MBL requires a AAA team at each age group unless BTBA petitions and obtains permission from MBL not to field a AAA team at a particular age level. The number of teams by age and level is dependent on the number of eligible players and can vary from year to year.
- To provide the most playing time and flexibility, 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 to one team. MBL rules allow players to move up in level during the season if needed due to injury or absence, but players cannot move down.
- BTBA does not accommodate "friend requests" or requests to play at a specific level. If a family *does not* want their child to play at the AAA level, parents should notify the Director of Player Development in writing before team selection.
- Players not selected for a team will be placed on a waitlist. BTBA wishes to eliminate or minimize players being waitlisted after the tryout process. Considering competitiveness, safety and field availability, tryouts and leveling are necessary. A waitlist may be unavoidable based on player numbers.
- Waitlisted players may look to nearby traveling associations for playing opportunities. Upon request, BTBA will provide a waiver for waitlisted players. Another option for waitlisted players is the Bloomington Athletic Association's (BAA) program.
- Active players in the BTBA traveling program are not allowed to play on other traveling baseball teams or Club teams from the first game of the season through the last game of the MBL 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 and/or ineligibility for the following season.



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Head Coach Selection Process

- Head coach candidates must complete a coaching application. This is separate and additional to any check boxes found in the player registration process.
- Head coaches are selected based on coaching experience, playing experience, coaching philosophy, and previous BTBA coaching experience, as submitted on the coach application. Previous BTBA parent feedback will be considered.
- Previous BTBA coaches will be provided with feedback from the annual post-season parent survey. If negative feedback is provided, the Directors of Coach and Player Development will discuss the feedback with the coach before selecting new coaches (preferably as close to end of season as possible). Previous BTBA coach experience does not ensure future selection.
- Behavior that reflects poorly on BTBA or violates the Coach Code of Conduct may result in a ban from coaching future BTBA teams (head or assistant). The Committee may replace a coach at their discretion at any time based on such behavior.
- Head coaches are selected by the Committee. Head coach candidates who serve on the Committee will not be included in the Committee's coach selection at their child's age level(s).
- The Committee will contact selected coaches individually to communicate their selection and assigned age/level, prior to team selection.
- The AAA head coach for each age is selected from applicants whose player is ranked in the top 16 players. The AA head coach is selected from applicants whose player is ranked in the top 16 ranked players not chosen for AAA. The A coach(es) are selected from applicants whose player ranks among remaining players.
- Assistant coaches will be selected by the Head Coach after team selection.
- All coaches are strongly requested to complete a post-season evaluation of their team. Failure to submit the evaluation may impact selection to coach future seasons.



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Team Formation Process

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. Access to evaluation scores and rankings are available only to the Team Selection Committee, who are not permitted to share results with parents, players, or other board members. Limited information will be available to Head Coaches in the team formation process.

- Lack of coach volunteers who have completed a coaching application will delay the start of team formation.
- If there are two teams at the same age, the Committee will determine the level for each, based on previous experience and tryout evaluation. If there are three teams at the same age, BTBA will follow BTBA guidelines to form AAA, AA, and A teams – unless circumstances warrant a waiver request to play below AAA. If there are more than three teams, there will be one AAA team, one AA team, and two or more A teams. The Board and Team Selection Committee reserve the right to use tryout data and coach feedback to determine what level(s) are appropriate for each age.
- The AAA Head Coach for each age group will select their team first. Once this team is formed, the AA Head Coach is selected and that team is formed.
- Teams consisting of 12 or 13 players will choose from the top 16 players and must retain the top 8 remaining players based on ranking. A team consisting of 11 players must keep the top 7 remaining players. A Head Coach may petition the BTBA Board to replace one of the top 7/8 players based on acceptable rationale, but may not replace a player ranked 1-4.
- After each team is selected, Head Coaches will offer players roster positions. If any family does not accept their offer (see Refund Policy), Head Coaches will choose a replacement player from the original pool of remaining players (i.e., the top 16).
- The A team(s) coaches will then be selected. If there are multiple A teams, head coaches will draft teams from remaining players. The coach with the higher-ranked player will select first. If two teams: alternating picks. If three or more teams: snake format, i.e., 1-2-3-3-2-1-1-2...
- For 14- and 15-yr-olds, players not selected for AAA or AA teams at their respective ages will be placed in a pool to be selected for a 14/15A team.
- Upon receiving an offer, families shall not share their player's placement with other families/friends/etc. – not everyone will be selected on the same day – please practice understanding and respect for those who may not be selected early.
- Keep in mind team selection for all teams may take days after the first teams are selected.
- Teams will be posted on the BTBA site after all teams are rostered.

Please know, there should be movement between levels, AAA, AA & A as kids grow physically & mentally, and as their passion for the game changes.



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Membership Fee, Registration Fee, Refund Policy

- **NEW for 2025**, there are two parts of the registration fee for a player to play on a BTBA team: a *non-refundable* \$100 *BTBA Membership fee* and *Registration fee* (9U = \$299, 10U+ = \$399). Other than for increased costs/general inflation of program costs, the separation into two portions is not meant to and does not increase the cost to play.
- Only players who have paid the *BTBA Membership fee* will be eligible for tryouts and for any off-season BTBA-sponsored clinics.
- During team formation, families will be offered a roster spot. If a player chooses not to accept their roster offer due to changes in circumstances or other reasons, families may, at time of offer, request and receive a refund of *Registration fee* if such request is made within 48 hours.
- If a player or parent has a grievance following the offer of a roster spot, then a 24-hour *cooling off* period applies. During this 24-hour period neither the player nor parent may contact the coaching staff or board members regarding team selection. After this 24-hour period, parents may request a meeting to receive feedback from their player's tryout but they may not ask about other players, their player's ranking, or specific tryout scores. This post-tryout grievance meeting will consist of the player, player's parents, and one or more members of the Committee. Grievance meetings will be scheduled as soon as possible, and may be telephonic. After a grievance meeting, if a family does not accept the invitation to play with BTBA, they may request and receive a refund of the *Registration fee* if such request is made within 48 hours of the roster offer.
- Grievance meetings may delay formation of other teams.
- After 48 hours of the offer, and no request for refund, roster positions will be considered complete and the *Registration fee* is non-refundable.
- After all teams are selected, players who are not offered a roster spot will be placed on the waitlist. Waitlisted families may, upon request, receive a refund of their entire *BTBA Membership + Registration fees*. Waitlisted players will receive, upon request, waivers to play in neighboring associations.
- Non-waitlisted players who receive an offer to play on a BTBA team will not receive waivers.

FAQs next page.



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Frequently Asked Questions – Refund Policy

Q: Is this a new refund policy?

A: Yes.

The old policy was no refund after a player had been placed on a roster. The new policy aims to be more family-friendly. Instead of no refunds, families may now receive a full refund of the *Registration Fee* if they request it within 48 hours of being offered a roster spot.

The old policy was not well known, nor was it communicated clearly or expressly. The new policy is meant to be more transparent for families.

Q: Why split the fee into a Membership Fee and Registration Fee?

A: The tryout and team formation process is expensive in both time and financial resources. The Membership Fee covers those costs. Players who go through the tryout process and choose to not play Bandits Baseball will forfeit the paid Membership Fee.

Q: Is the **full fee** payable prior to tryouts?

A: No. Families can pay 100% of fees at time of registration (prior to tryouts) – OR – they can pay \$100 at registration and the remaining in monthly installments?

Q: What if my player doesn't make a roster?

A: Players who are not rostered during team formation will be placed on a waitlist. At any time, waitlisted players may request to be removed from the waitlist and receive a full refund of both Membership and Registration fees.

continued



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Frequently Asked Questions – Refund Policy

Q: **For next year's 15U players:** School baseball teams and summer programs that may be affiliated with them will not be known until next spring. Should we register now or take our chances with making a school team or other, non-Bandits summer team (e.g., Jr. Legion)?

Related: Is the BTBA Membership fee of \$100 non-refundable if we move forward with fall tryouts but ultimately decide there is a fit with a high-school-related program?

A: There are many aspects to the answer of this question.

- The short answer is: Yes, register your son to play Bandits so they are evaluated in tryouts and placed on a team suited to their baseball abilities. Whether they play Bandits or somewhere else, they should have a team to play for without having to take a chance they won't.
- For 15U ONLY: If your player makes a different summer team which is a better fit with his high school teammates, he should play there if he chooses. BTBA understands the unique situation of this age group and is committed to working with families to avoid extra costs. At the end of the day, we're all in the same boat, or will be in that boat eventually.
- The high school freshman season does not interfere with the Bandits season.
- American Legion tryouts are generally in spring, after Bandits practices start.
 - In Bloomington (Post 550), there are currently two teams: Jr. Legion and Sr. Legion. Sr. Legion is made up of 17- and 18-yr-old players. Jr. Legion is made up of 15-17-yr-old players. In the 2025 season, two 15-yr-old players made the Jr. Legion team.