

MVAA BASEBALL GUIDELINES

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Philosophy: Every Child Plays

Playing time for participants in MVAA Baseball shall be allocated as follows:

Regardless of the level (competitive or instructional) through age 14U, each child shall play at least half of every game and get a minimum of one at bat. If the rules of a league or tournament allow for the use of running batting orders and free substitution, MVAA teams shall compete under these rules. Coaches should attempt to make every effort to equalize defensive playing time among players. Notwithstanding the foregoing, MVAA coaches may reduce a player's playing time for disciplinary reasons (*e.g.*, behavior, attendance, lack of effort, etc.).

If the rules of a league or tournament do not allow for running batting orders and free substitution, players shall play half of the game. For example, in a 7-inning game a child must play at least 3 innings. Should a game end early for any reason and a child not get to play half of that game, this time must be made up in the next game. This rule supersedes all league or tournament rules (*i.e.*, all MVAA teams competing in pre-season, regular-season, or post-season league games or outside tournaments must comply with these rules).

MVAA Baseball recognizes that beyond the 14U level, players may specialize in a position (*e.g.*, pitchers) and team sizes may increase dramatically at older levels. While MVAA Baseball strongly encourages coaches beyond the 14U level to abide by the standards set forth herein, these rules will not be strictly enforced.

Levels

- 6U (Tee-ball): 5 or 6 prior to 4/30.
- 8U: 7 or 8 prior to 4/30.
- 10U: 9 or 10 prior to 4/30. Recreational and Select/Travel levels are available.¹
- 12U: 11 or 12 prior to 4/30. Recreational and Select/Travel levels are available.
- 13U or 14U: 13 or 14 prior to 4/30. Recreational and Select/Travel levels are available.
- 15U, 16U, 17U, and 18U: 15, 16, 17, or 18 prior to 5/1. Only Select/Travel level is available.

MVAA teams at the 6U, 8U, 10U, and 12U levels compete in the Tri-County Cal Ripken Baseball League. All Star teams at the 10U and 12U levels may participate in additional or alternative competitive leagues such as the Mid-Atlantic Baseball Association ("MABA"). MVAA recreational teams at the 14U level compete in the Mid-Maryland Baseball League.

The focus of play beyond the 12U level (13U through 18U) is intended to prepare registrants to participate in high school baseball and beyond. Accordingly, MVAA teams at these levels will participate in highly competitive leagues, will play numerous games, and may play in national tournaments located anywhere within the continental United States. Participation at this level is for serious baseball players only and the commitment level is very high. MVAA's 13U Select/Travel teams and above will compete in MABA, although these teams may participate in additional or alternative competitive leagues. Try-outs for Select/Travel teams beyond the 12U level may be held and positions

¹ The terms "select" and "travel" are used interchangeably. In particular, the terms connote a competitive level of baseball that may require greater commitment and travel outside of the geographic area for recreational play.

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may be offered to players in the fall prior to the Spring season although players may also be added following standard registration.

MVAA Baseball considers all play above the 14U level to be at a Select/Travel level (very competitive). Players beyond the 14U level must try-out for and be offered a position on a team based upon the player's ability as determined by the head coach. Any registrant (above the 14U level) who does not make the team will be granted a full refund.

Evaluation Procedures

For 13U/14U Select/Travel and age groups above 14U, try-outs will be conducted by MVAA before the season, including in certain instances in the fall before a new spring season. (Note: positions may be offered to players for a spring season in connection with a fall try-out.) The format of the try-out will be determined by the Director of Baseball and/or the Select/Travel level coaches. MVAA's Select/Travel level coaches above the 12U level have the discretion to choose their players based upon their independent evaluations, subject to override by the Director of Baseball. Any such override by the Director of Baseball will be reserved to unusual situations (similar to an "abuse of discretion" standard). Evaluations for the 14U recreational level may be scheduled on an as needed basis.

Evaluations will be conducted at an indoor facility for the 8U, 10U, and 12U levels. All players are expected to appear at the indoor evaluation site in appropriate baseball attire (tennis or athletic shoes only, no cleats please) and standard protective gear (*i.e.*, athletic supporter and protective cup). Player evaluations will be performed in the context of skill stations. Each station will have 4 adults (if possible) assigned to it; 1 adult will "run" the station and 3 adults will score the players according to the following guidelines:

- No ½ point scores.
- Evaluators should reach a consensus and record one score per player / per station.
- Rate players relative to their group; some players will merit a "5" relative to their group; feel free to revise scores as necessary.
- **Evaluating your child:** When your child's age group is evaluated, if you are an evaluator, excuse yourself from the evaluation process. If necessary, a parent may run a skill station for their child's age group, but should not participate in the evaluations for that age group.

Stations

Five stations running concurrently -- each player will get 10 repetitions at the following stations:

- Throwing.
 - Evaluate throwing only (not catching)
 - 1st 4 throws at moderate distance; next 3 at longer distance; final 3 at longest distance
- Fielding Grounders.
 - Evaluate fielding only (not throwing)
 - 3 each front/left/right
- Fielding Flys.
 - Evaluate fielding only (not throwing)
 - 2 each front/back/left/right
- Hitting.

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- Pitching (10U, 12U, and older) and catching (only 10U, 12U, and older) - players wishing to be evaluated as a catcher should inform the volunteer at the check-in table. A player who is not evaluated as a catcher remains eligible to play the position of catcher during the season.

A player's total score will be the sum of their scores for the 4 "main" stations; pitching and catching skills will be evaluated separately and used as a differentiator; in the case of a "tie" score, the pitching or catching score may be used as a "tie-breaker." Also, a player could make a Select/Travel Team solely based on his/her pitching or catching ability.

Rating System

1. Little or no skill
 - a. Rarely catches the ball
 - b. Poor throwing mechanics, little accuracy, weak arm
 - c. Poor hitting mechanics, rarely makes contact
2. Below average skill
 - a. Sometimes catches the ball
 - b. Fair throwing mechanics, some accuracy, weak arm
 - c. Fair hitting mechanics, sometimes makes contact
3. Average skill
 - a. Usually catches the ball
 - b. Shows fair or good throwing mechanics, fairly accurate, average arm
 - c. Fair or good hitting mechanics, usually makes contact
4. Above average skill
 - a. Almost always catches the ball
 - b. Shows good throwing mechanics, fairly accurate, fairly strong arm
 - c. Fair or good hitting mechanics, usually makes contact
5. Very skilled
 - a. Catches everything within reach
 - b. Shows good throwing mechanics, very accurate, very strong arm
 - c. Good hitting mechanics, nearly always makes solid contact

Comments/Observations

As you evaluate the players, please make note of anything you observe that cannot be numerically scored (*e.g.*, attitude, hustle, demeanor); this information will be considered as part of the overall player evaluation.

"Playing Up"

For levels 8U – 12U, a player may "play up" one level if their ability (as judged by their numeric evaluation) or other factors as determined by the Director of Baseball warrant such a result. It is the philosophy of MVAA Baseball that playing up may take place only under exceptional circumstances. While some children may have the physical ability to play at an advanced level, they may lack the focus or emotional maturity necessary to play at the higher level. Parents must be aware that a child who plays at an advanced level may play with and against children who are two full years (or more) older than their child and who have significantly greater strength, ability, and maturity than their children. MVAA Baseball may consult with prior season coaches in evaluating whether a child may play up. Special consideration for playing up will be given by the Director of Baseball for players who are 12

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years olds under the rules and in 7th grade because players in this situation will soon be playing high school baseball, which requires that the player compete with and against players in their grade. To be eligible for consideration under the numeric evaluation procedures:

1. The player's parents must notify the Director of Baseball via e-mail (Doug@mvaasports.com) at least 1 week prior to player evaluations.
2. The player must attend the player evaluations for both his age level and the level at which he wishes to play.
3. The player must achieve a total score of at least 17 for his age level according to the criteria outlined in *Evaluation Procedures* above.
4. The player must achieve a total score of 14 or higher for the level at which he wishes to play, according to the criteria outlined in *Evaluation Procedures* above.

For instance, an 8 year-old player with a 8U score of 20 and a 10U score of 14 or higher could play on a 10U team (Recreational or Select depending on his 10U score). The Director of Baseball has final say on all players requesting to play up.

Team Selection Procedures

Tee-Ball

- Ideally there will be between 8-10 players per team.
- 6 year-old players will be evenly split between teams alphabetically.
- 5 year-old players will be evenly split between teams alphabetically.
- Coaches will be selected by the Director of Baseball from all that volunteer.

8U

- There must be 12-15 players per team; 12 is ideal.
- There will be a player evaluation at the end of January/start of February.
- Each coach may select one asst. coach/player combination. This asst. coach must agree to assist before selection. All other players will be assigned to teams starting with the players with the highest evaluation scores and working down to the players with the lowest evaluation scores. This will first be done with the oldest players, and then repeated with the youngest players. The coach and asst. coach's sons/daughters shall be counted in the selection procedure wherever their scores would normally place them. Those with the same scores shall be dealt out alphabetically. The only exception is in the case of siblings playing at the same level. They shall be placed on the same team. The sibling with the highest evaluation score shall be assigned to a team in the normal selection process. The subsequent sibling(s) shall then be placed on that team with their score(s) counting in the normal flow of the process. Teams shall be assigned their place in the order of selection randomly. This shall be done by the MVAA Director of Baseball and witnessed by the Level Coordinator. Coaches will be selected by the Director of Baseball from all that volunteer. It is the intent of MVAA Baseball for all teams at this level to start the season with as even distribution of talent as possible.
- There may be a U8 level All-Star team to be selected by an additional evaluation at a date to be determined. This evaluation will follow the guidelines and selection process as outlined below for Select level play.

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10U, 12U, 13U, and Older

Ripken

- There should be 12-15 players per team. 12 are ideal for 10U and 12U teams. Older teams may carry additional players.
- There will be a player evaluation at the end of January/start of February.
- Each coach may select one asst. coach/player combination. This asst. coach must agree to assist before selection. All other players will be assigned to teams starting with the players with the highest evaluation scores and working down to the players with the lowest evaluation scores; this will first be done with the oldest players, then repeated with the youngest players. The coach and asst. coach's sons/daughters shall be counted in the selection procedure wherever their scores would normally place them. Those with the same scores shall be dealt out alphabetically. The only exception is in the case of siblings playing at the same level. They shall be placed on the same team. The sibling with the highest evaluation score shall be assigned to a team in the normal selection process. The subsequent sibling(s) shall then be placed on that team with their score(s) counting in the normal flow of the process. Teams shall be assigned their place in the order of selection randomly. This will be done by the MVAA Director of Baseball and witnessed by the Level Coordinator. Coaches will be selected by the Director of Baseball from all those that volunteer. The coach selection will be made after evaluations are completed. It is the intent of MVAA Baseball for all teams at this level to start the season with as even distribution of talent as possible.

All Star

- There should be 12-15 players per team. 12 are ideal for 10U and 12U teams. Older teams may carry additional players.
- There will be a player evaluation at the end of January/start of February.
- The coach will be selected by the Director of Baseball.
- All Star level play requires a greater level of commitment than Ripken play, including a greater financial commitment to share ratably in the cost of winter practice facilities, uniforms, umpiring fees, tournaments, etc. Parents who wish for their children to play at a All Star level, may be asked to sign a document agreeing to the requirements of All Star level play.

Significant discretion is vested in the coach in choosing players for a All Star Team, including factors such as attitude and hustle. The All Star coach or coaches may use the evaluation scores to aid in team selection. The coach subsequently could invite as many players as he feels is necessary for a second evaluation to help in the selection process. The coach has the final say in all player selections, subject to override by the Director of Baseball. Any such override by the Director of Baseball should be reserved to unusual situations (an "abuse of discretion" standard).

Criteria for Allocating Multiple All Star Teams

The Director of Baseball will authorize the creation of a second All Star Team if in the Director's judgment, the skill level of evaluated players warrants the creation of a second All Star Team. There also must be universal agreement between the Director of Baseball, the Level Coordinator, and the prospective coach to create a second team. All prospective players' parents would then be contacted to gauge interest and commitment level. Only then may a second Select level team be formed. It should be noted that this approach will yield an "A" team and a "B" team. The coach of the "A" Select Team will identify players before the coach of the "B" Select Team. Player age will not be a factor in

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determining team selection. Situations may also develop wherein intermediate levels of select play may be possible (11U, 12U, 13U, etc.)

Additional Information

- You may not request a specific coach.
- Teams are established at the recreational level by the Director of Baseball in an effort to create parity between the teams. Neither coaches nor parents may transfer, “trade,” or otherwise arrange for certain players to be assigned to a particular team.
- Those eligible for All Star play may elect not to play at that level.
- If there are only enough players for one team at any level, the Director of Baseball and the Coach of that team must agree whether the team will play at a Ripken or All Star.
- There may be a second evaluation date the weekend following the first evaluation date. The first evaluation date is the primary date. In order to be eligible for consideration at the second evaluation date, parents must contact the Director of Baseball a minimum of one week prior to the first evaluation date.
- Players not evaluated are not eligible for All Star level play.
- It is in the interest of all players and parents to attend the evaluations in order for the MVAA baseball program to function properly.
- It is the intention that all who register shall be placed on a team. Occasionally there are more players than can be placed on one team but not enough for a second team. Should this occur the process is as follows: those failing to attend evaluations and not making provisions for a second evaluation shall not make the team. Then, the evaluation scores shall dictate the make up of the team.

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