

# Travel Baseball Frequently Asked Questions

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## **General Program Info**

### How much money does travel baseball cost?

The cost of the program is \$300 for youth 10-15 plus a nonrefundable \$30 tryout fee. The cost for 16 or older is \$435. Pants are required but last for a number of years unless outgrown. They cost \$85. Helmets are also required and cost \$15. They also may be used as long as they are sound and they fit. There may be an out of town tournament during the season. League play and most tournaments are in the metro area. There is also a volunteer requirement that requires a \$150 deposit. The commitment is for 9 hours of work during the season, almost all at our hosted tournaments.

### What is the length of the season?

The season is typically 16 games beginning in early May and ending in early July. Games are typically scheduled on weekday evenings Mon-Thu and are split between home and away.

### Where do they play?

The fields we use differ by age and are listed on the website, found at [www.easports.org/Sports/TravelBaseball/](http://www.easports.org/Sports/TravelBaseball/). One half of the regular season games will be played on these fields. The remainder will be on other communities' fields generally in the metro area depending on division and league.

### Our family has a cabin. Is it OK to join travel baseball and have our son participate only in those tournaments that work out for our family?

This is not encouraged since the team is typically counting on each player to field a team for each game. During the season there are injuries, illnesses, etc. that can lead to challenges fielding a team. For one player to show less commitment to the team and then expect equal playing time is not encouraged. Remember, that often for your son to make a team someone else's son has been cut. If you are unwilling or unable to make the commitment, please consider other programs that better fit the schedule of your family.

### Who can coach?

Any adult willing to volunteer their time may volunteer to coach. EAA will run a cursory background check for violent or abusive behaviors. A coach selection committee is formed and will interview applicants, rank them, and select coaches based on this ranking. We are looking for coaches who are role models and who have baseball knowledge and an ability to work with children.

### Is ETB all volunteers?

Yes, Eagan Travel Baseball is an all volunteer organization.

### What is the most important thing to know about travel baseball?

It's got to be fun.

### [What is the mission?](#)

The Mission of the Eagan Travel Baseball program is to provide Eagan youth, between the ages of 10 and 19, intensive skill development and a high level of competition. For more information see the web site at [www.eaganbaseball.org](http://www.eaganbaseball.org).

### [What are the goals and the philosophy of ETB?](#)

#### **Goals**

The goals of the Eagan Travel Baseball program are to develop skills, confidence, sportsmanship, teamwork, and to have fun.

#### **Philosophy**

Every player should have an equal opportunity to participate and develop. This does not necessarily equate to equal playing time. Actual playing time may vary based on positions played, age level, roster size, and other circumstances. Coaches must use judgment in balancing the needs of individuals and the needs of the team. Winning is important, but only in the context of individual and team development.

### [What is the intent of ETB?](#)

The intent is to allow children to have fun playing baseball while developing their baseball skills as much as possible.

### [What determines success in ETB?](#)

Kids having fun while enjoying competitive play is probably best measured in return traffic. One clear indicator is the number of players returning for the next season.

### [Where can I find more information on league play?](#)

On the Metro Baseball website @ <http://www.mbl.bz>

### [Where can I find more information on tournament play?](#)

The Metro Baseball website @ [www.mbl.bz](http://www.mbl.bz) lists tournaments. There are also Gopher State (myas) and Minnesota Sports Federation among others.

### [What should my child expect?](#)

Your child should expect to play a lot of baseball. He should expect to meet new friends and have a lot of fun. He should expect to be challenged by his expectations and opposing pitchers. He should expect to receive instruction and drill on baseball fundamentals. He should expect to feel the pain of a tough loss and the exhilaration of a come from behind victory. He should expect to learn that it's a game but a challenging one to learn.

### [What should I expect?](#)

You should expect that your child will learn and develop good baseball skills and will have fun doing so. You should expect that you will watch a lot of baseball this year. You should expect to be relieved when it's over but that you will soon look back on the season and the people and the fun and want to do it again.

### [Can I request that my child play with his friend?](#)

No. Team selection is based on tryouts. The only placement request allowed is a parental request before tryouts to not have their child play on the AAA team. Please see the team selection page for additional information.

### [Will my child play with his friends?](#)

He may. He should expect to see new faces but maybe some familiar ones also. This is a travel sport in a competitive league. The teams are picked accordingly and consist of children who live in Eagan, go to school in Eagan, or both.

### [How do I get involved?](#)

Volunteer your time. If one of the directorships interests you speak to that director. You may always speak to the ETB Director and attend the board meetings.

### [What can I do to improve the program?](#)

Be supportive. Get involved. Be active. Volunteer your time. Help out when asked. Ask questions about what you don't understand and offer ideas or constructive suggestions for improvements.

### [What forum do I have to have my voice heard?](#)

All ETB and EAA board meetings are open and visitors are invited. Please see the website for a listing of EAA meeting dates and times. Contact the ETB director for dates and times of ETB meetings.

### [To whom do I address any concerns?](#)

Inside the program the team parent or the coach should be the first point of contact. You will have the most daily interaction with them. Any concerns or items that may be sensitive or uncomfortable to express at this level should go to the ETB director @ [tbaseball@eaasports.org](mailto:tbaseball@eaasports.org).

### [What is EAA?](#)

The Eagan Athletic Association is a non profit volunteer organization made up of the parents of children involved in youth sports in the city of Eagan. It was founded in 1962 to promote and encourage youth sports. It is run by a Board of Directors comprised of the directors of the sports under its umbrella and an executive committee. More information on EAA may be found in this web site.

### [What is ETB?](#)

Eagan Travel Baseball is a competitive youth baseball program comprising one of the sport programs under EAA. This sport was added as an EAA offering in the early 1990's.

### [Do board members get special treatment?](#)

No. Board members' children are not scored differently at tryouts nor do they obtain special privileges. While board members do not fill the required 9 volunteer hours at tournaments most have *far* more than nine volunteer hours into the program well before the season begins.

### Why do the directors' kids all play on AAA or AA teams?

They don't. There are directors whose children played on A teams. There are also directors whose children were career AA players. The majority of current directors have children playing at the AA level.

### What does 'on the bubble' mean?

When someone refers to 'the bubble' or says that someone is a 'bubble player' it means that the player is on the cusp or borderline between two levels. It is most often used to refer to players who could make the AAA team but for whatever reason were not selected.

### Who is the ETB board?

The Board is comprised of volunteers who have committed time to the Travel Baseball program. Positions include:

President	Lynn Estes	tbaseball@eaasports.org
Academy	Adam Husemann	
Coaches	Dan Hennes	
Database	Jennifer Fall	
Volunteers	Alana Pixler	
Treasurer	Gary Martin	
16+ Program	Paul Clements	
Equipment	Bill Style	
Facilities	Don Kamper	
Tryouts	Tom Seiberlich	
Uniforms	Joan Muckenhirn	
Tournaments	Jessica Grunklee	
Concessions	Mike and Cathy Lutz	

### Important Dates and Times

#### What are the important dates in the season?

##### April

- 3 Fielding and 1st Hitting Tryouts – Rosemount Dome U10-15 Players
- 4-6 2nd Hitting Tryouts - Rosemount Dome U10-15 Players
- 9 Team Selection/ Player cut phone calls U10-15 Coaches
- 10 Coaches to contact team members U10-15 Coaches
- 12 General meeting 7:00-9:00 DHMS All Parents, Coaches

##### May

- 2 League play begins, 10U-14 U10-14 Players
- 16 League play begins, 15, VFW and SBR 15+ Players
- 20-22 Eagan Tournament AAA U10-15 Players AAA

##### June

- 3-5 Eagan Tournament AA U10-15 Players AA

10-12 Eagan Tournament AA U10-15 Players AA

## July

7 AAA MBL Regular Season end U10-15 Players AAA  
11 AAA MBL Playoffs Begin U10-15 Players AAA  
14 AA MBL Regular Season end U10-15 Players AA  
18 AA and A MBL Playoffs Begin 10-15 Players AA, A  
8-10 MBT 10-15AAA, 14AA, and 10-12A State Tournaments  
15-17 MBT 10-13, 15AA, 13, 14/15A State Tournaments  
20 AAA League Championships  
28 AA League Championships

## August

3-7 August Classic

### [How long is the season?](#)

Teams are selected immediately following tryouts and begin practicing as soon as we can get on the fields, weather and field conditions permitting. This is usually mid-April and will practice 2-3 times a week until the season begins in early May. There are often 2 games a week and tournaments or practices on most weekends throughout the regular season, which ends in early July. Playoffs are in early to mid July (see important dates, above) and typically end in late July depending of the success of the team in the playoff process Travel baseball participants should plan on at least 3 baseball activities each week, with significant weekend activity.

### [How many games and tournaments will we play in?](#)

Your child will play in 30-40 or more games during the season. They will also attend 10 or more practices during the season. Each team is budgeted to play in 3\* tournaments which generally include 3 tournaments in the metro area and a state tournament if the team qualifies. Some teams opt to play in more tournaments but that decision is typically a joint decision of the parents and coach and may require additional funds should the team decide to do so. Please note that most tournaments fill up quickly and most of the tournament choices may have been made and committed to well before the season starts.

### [How many weekends are involved?](#)

This depends on the coach more than anything else. The coach has some leeway in scheduling practices and they are dependent on the availability of practice fields. Some coaches are more desirous of practices than others and some teams need more or less practice, depending on the circumstance and the judgment of the coach. It is not uncommon to have practices on most weekends that are not tournament weekends.

### [How many week nights are involved? \(see question “How many games and tournaments will we play in?”\)](#)

This depends on the coach and the schedule. Some weeks there will be two games or one game one practice if space is available. Sometimes there may be nothing or three games.

How much travel? (see question "How many games and tournaments will we play in?")  
Half (8) of the league games are away games so you will be driving to other communities once or twice a week for them.

## ***Rules and Procedures***

### What are the rules?

Rules vary somewhat between age groups but follow those established by Metro Baseball League. They can be found on the Metro Baseball website @ [www.mbl.bz](http://www.mbl.bz).

### What is fair play/equal play?

A lot of time can be spent on this topic! Equal play means exactly that. We have found it difficult to judge this on a daily basis, or even a weekly one, but have found it to be pretty well followed at the younger age levels and to be pretty equal over the course of the season. Coaches usually count pitches and track innings and we have not seen problems with this. Equal opportunity for each child to make the play or to contribute is more important than everyone playing the exact same number of innings.

At 14 the game changes to nine man baseball and free substitution is no longer an option for the coach. By this time most players are distinguishing themselves as “role players” and differentiating themselves in positions. At this point the emphasis is on fair play not equal play. Fair play means that each player has a role and should have an opportunity to contribute. There is always discussion on whether an inning played is measured by time in the field or plate appearances. Some coaches consider both, some one or the other. With an odd number of innings, player specialization, and the High School rules, it is impossible to enforce equal play so we do our best to make it fair play and to provide all players similar chances and opportunities.

## ***Tryouts and Team Selection***

### [Are the rules always followed?](#)

Yes. The tryout process and team selection processes follow established procedures that exist.

### [What options have you looked at for tryouts?](#)

Since the program began in Eagan in the early 90's we have had tryouts and a tryout process. There have been changes and evolution since then and some differing things were tried and then discarded or modified. The current process has been in place without significant changes for several years and is believed to be as solid as we can reasonably make it. We do look at tryouts each year and the ETB Board reviews the process and considers improvements, suggestions, or program modifications. Should you have additional suggestions we encourage you to join the board and get involved!

### [Why are tryouts in the spring?](#)

We feel having tryouts immediately before the season is the most reliable indicator of playing form that season.

### [Why aren't tryouts in the fall?](#)

Because almost any child could grow four inches, three shoe sizes, and gain 20 pounds in six months, Eagan has chosen to conduct their try outs in the spring. While we appreciate the challenges associated with indoor tryouts, the spring tryouts are believed to give the most up to date assessment of player skills.

### [Who scores for tryouts?](#)

Individuals known to possess baseball knowledge and experience who do not have children in the age group being evaluated do the scoring. If you are interested in becoming an evaluator for an age group other than that of your child, please contact us!

### [How are the players ranked?](#)

Players are ranked according to the point totals garnered in tryouts. See the website for specific details related to scoring.

### [What can you tell me about tryouts?](#)

Whenever players are ranked according to performance it is viewed as a test and is a moderately stressful experience for most participants. However, it is required to allow us to group players into teams and place the teams at a competitive level that they will be challenged, but successful, playing at. The levels of competitiveness are, from most to least; AAA, AA, and A. Please remember that an individual player cannot single-handedly raise or lower the competitive level of a team. A team is placed at a level where the team is expected to be competitive and that level is less about an individual's talent or skill than about the collective skill and talent of the team as a whole. Tryouts

matter, and allow the coaches and the director to form effective teams. While the AAA team typically concentrates the top rated players from tryouts there may be a wider disparity in the AA and A ranks. This disparity depends on player numbers and team formation. In some age groups the disparity may be more pronounced as not all the kids who could compete at the next level can be placed there due to the necessity of forming complete and competitive teams.

#### [Are tryouts fair?](#)

Yes. We try to be as objective as possible in scoring and skill measurement. We recognize that tryouts are a stressful time for everyone concerned and we go to great lengths to minimize the stress on the players while obtaining the assessment we need.

#### [Why can't parents watch tryouts?](#)

Mostly they can, but since this is a stressful time for the participants we try to keep them relaxed and focused. The 2<sup>nd</sup> hitting trials are closed due to physical space limitations and our attempt to minimize distractions and stress for the players. There is enough going on without having the parents in the front row watching. Parents may not interact or interfere with the player or the process in any way. This means keeping the parents at a distance and our hitting facilities do not allow that. Specific rules and procedures can be found on this site under Tryout Guidelines.

#### [How are teams picked?](#)

After tryouts are finished the players' scores are tabulated and presented as a ranked and blinded list. Coaches and the ETB Director meet and a draft is held where the coaches pick their teams from the players on the list. Procedures for team selection are published.

#### [What are the rules for team selection?](#)

Selection rules are posted on the website. The players who score in the top twenty are the AAA pool. The players who score in the top two are "locks". Six of the next ten must be picked so eight of the top twelve are on the AAA team. The remaining four may come from thirteen to twenty. One pick (a pitcher or catcher) below number twenty may replace one of the players ranked thirteen to twenty.

Once the AAA team is picked the list is reordered removing those players. If there is more than one AA team the coaches pick in (coach) ranked order and alternate until their teams are filled. If there is an A team the list is reordered and contains the remaining players in rank order. The A coach may pick the team from this list.

#### [How are players picked?](#)

See the answer for the "What are the rules for team selection" question.

#### [How many players to a team?](#)

We typically roster 12 to a team at the 10-15 age levels and may go up to 18 at the higher age levels. It is the experience of those in the 16+ program that summer jobs sometimes preclude a player from participating in a game and there are extra players picked in order to be able to always field a team.

### [How are coaches selected?](#)

Coach candidates are interviewed by the coach selection committee for that age level. The candidates are then ranked according to the perceived capability of each. The highest ranked coach whose child finished in the top twenty is offered the AAA coaching position. In cases where a coach may pick another coaches son for a team some scrambling to find additional coaching may be necessary. It is sometimes difficult to find coaching for all age levels. Again, we encourage interested volunteers to let us know of your interest in participating as a coach or an assistant coach!

### [How are coaches ranked or graded?](#)

Coaches are ranked according to interview results, past performance, if applicable, survey results, if applicable, and of course, baseball knowledge.

### [Who is on the coach selection committee?](#)

The coach selection committee members vary by age group. It is the Director of Coaches or the ETB Director, or both, unless there is a conflict of interest in that age group and one or two other directors or other persons well known to the program for baseball experience or knowledge. The committee size for each age group is three of the above.

### [How do you determine the number of teams and the level of each?](#)

Teams are formed based on the availability of facilities, coaches, and players. Teams are placed at AAA, AA, or A depending on the board's determination of where we feel that team will be competitive. Competitive means the expectation of a .500 win loss record. This is based on tryout scores, prior year's results, and coach input.

### [Why do coaches have latitude in picking their teams?](#)

The travel baseball board believes that our selection process and the rules surrounding it provide the best method of fielding balanced and effective teams.

### [Are teams picked strictly by tryout scores?](#)

No. Coaches have some choice in picking teams. This is by design. Nine catchers does not necessarily make a good baseball team even if they were the nine highest rated players'. However, tryouts matter, and 8 of the top 12 from tryouts are always on the AAA team.

## ***Equipment and Uniforms***

### [Is a special uniform required?](#)

Yes. We require the players to purchase the uniform pants supplied by ETB. These are good quality baseball pants and will last for a number of years unless outgrown. They cost \$80 a pair and you may purchase an additional pair if desired. Helmets are also required and cost \$13. Helmets must also be purchased from ETB for safety and liability reasons. They also may be used as long as they are sound and they fit. Jerseys, vest, socks, belt, and hats are supplied by ETB each year as part of the program cost.

### [What kind of bats are required?](#)

Only aluminum baseball bats meeting the specifications for the age level it will be used in are allowed. There are requirements and bat specifications that exist primarily for safety reasons. Please see the answers to the bat related questions in this doc and review the rules regarding bats under the age specific rules on the MBL web site before purchasing one.

### [Does ETB provide bats?](#)

The equipment bags provided to the coaches at the younger age levels typically contain two bats but most players provide their own. Please note that bats can be expensive so care should be taken to avoid denting or damaging them.

### [How do I measure bats and what is a minus 9?](#)

Bats come in different barrel sizes and are measured in length and weight. The difference between the length and weight is the differential. A 29 inch bat that weighs 20 ounces is a minus 9. A 30 inch bat that weighs 20 ounces is a minus 10. A regulation stating that the bats must be minus 9 or less means that the differential must be 9 or less. A 29/20 and a 30/21 are both minus 9 while a 30/22 is a minus 8 and is less than 9 and so is also acceptable under the minus 9 rule. A 30/20 is a minus 10 which is greater than 9 and is not allowed if the restriction is minus 9 or less.

Please note that 10 year olds may only use 2 ¼” barrel bats. There is no differential limitation but the bat may not exceed 36” in length.

### [What are the barrel sizes of bats?](#)

Barrel size is the bat diameter measured at its widest point. Barrel sizes are 2 ¼”, 2 3/8”, 2 1/2”, 2 5/8”, and 2 ¾”. For all bats except 2 ¼” there are length/weight differential requirements that vary by age level. Bat size rules may be found on the Metro Baseball League under the rules for each age level.

### [Why are there rules regarding bat sizes?](#)

The bat rules exist primarily for safety reasons.

## ***Volunteers and Fundraising***

### [Why volunteer?](#)

This program is run entirely by volunteers. Some of them put extraordinary effort into making the program possible. Many hands make light work and the program has some functional requirements that require many hands to complete. This is a program for all of our kids and the more people volunteer the stronger the program is. The more effective we are at fundraising and coaching and organizing the lower the cost of meeting the need.

### [Can Volunteers have choices or buyout?](#)

We do require a time commitment but we also realize that people have a lot of things going on and sometime multiple children involved in activities and it's not always possible to donate time. To accommodate this we do allow parents to buyout of their 9 required volunteer hours for \$150. This allows us to hire replacement workers.

### [Do I have to volunteer?](#)

As part of the Travel Baseball program we host tournaments that provide a source of funding to defray the tournament entry fees for our own teams and to help cover facility and equipment costs. Traditionally the volunteer requirement is nine hours per family, per child in the program but we do allow, although not encourage, buyouts for \$150.

### [What about Fundraising?](#)

Fundraising is done primarily through the sale of apparel. There are jackets, bags, sweatshirts and a variety of other items for sale, each of which is "marked up" slightly in order that a small amount of money is donated to the program for each item.

### [When can apparel be purchased?](#)

Fundraising apparel can be purchased at sign ups, at the informational meeting, at tryouts and at the parent meeting held immediately after team selection. Because most items require approximately 4 weeks for personalization, we encourage you to order early so you will have the items ready for the beginning of the season!

### [Can I purchase fundraising apparel on line?](#)

At this point we obtain apparel items from various vendors and there is no on-line ordering available. If you have the skill set to assist in building a web site and are interested in volunteering, please contact a board member!