Glen Rock Baseball & Softball Association

Travel Baseball Program

Policies and Procedures

**Mission Statement**

The GRBSA Travel Baseball Program provides a higher level of competition beyond the Recreation programs (“REC”) for those players willing to commit to working hard and improving their skills. The primary focus of the Travel program is on player development and education, not just on winning. Particular emphasis is placed on developing position-specific skills. Our goal is to increase the competitive level of play to give players the opportunity to go beyond the basic skill sets and prepare players for success at the Middle School and High School levels.

All Travel teams are subject to oversight by the GRBSA. The Vice President of Travel will have full responsibility for running and enforcing the travel program and its policies.

Travel teams will be formed for ages 8 through 13 (and potentially 14-18). The number of teams at each age level will be determined by:

* Number of players at qualified level of play
* Availability of Manager / Coach Volunteers
* Available # of spots in appropriate Leagues / Tournaments
* Availability of fields

**The Travel program is not intended to be for everyone.** It is intended for those players who have had success at the REC level. While we want to encourage and accommodate participation for as many children as possible, the GRBSA must keep the level of play higher than the recreation program. We must keep the safety of the children in mind, and not allow any player to participate in the travel program who would put themselves or others at risk of injury due to insufficient skills. Unfortunately, due to the competitiveness and restricted size of teams, some kids WILL be disappointed if they are not chosen to be part of a team.  Before trying out for a team, it is important for parents to explain to their player that there is a chance they will not be chosen. Every parent should take this into consideration before allowing their player to try out.

For most, there is always next year, when the kids are a bit older and when you feel they are better able to handle the situation. Of course, those who do not play Travel Baseball are strongly urged and encouraged to continue to play recreational baseball with their friends and consider trying out again next year.

**Age Level Teams**

Players shall participate on Travel teams according to their age as of April 30th (inclusive) each year. Beginning in the 2015 season, all new players trying out for the 8U Travel team must be 8 years old by April 30, 2015 and for each subsequent year players must be at least 8 years old on or before April 30th to be eligible to begin playing in the GRBSA Travel program. Additionally, ALL new players who did not participate in the Travel program in 2014 regardless of their age, must try out for their age-eligible team and cannot “play up” with their grade level as they may do in the Rec program. Any player who has skipped 2014 Travel season must try out for their age-eligible team.

This policy will ensure all new players to the GRBSA Travel program will be playing at their age level, which will, in time, lead to all age level travel teams and increased competitiveness for the GRBSA Travel program.

**Playing Up / Grandfather Clause**

The GRBSA prefers that all players participate on teams that are age appropriate according to their birthdates as described above. However, the intent of this policy is to minimize disruption for those players who have played in the Travel Program in 2014. Therefore, players who are currently in the GRBSA Travel program will be grandfathered and may again try-out for their current grade-level Travel team that they have previously played with in the 2014 Spring and Summer seasons.

Under this grandfather clause, players have the opportunity to be selected for the 2015 “A” team of the grade-level team they played with in 2014. If the player’s skills are not suitable for the grade-level “A” team, the player will then be considered for the “A” team for their age-level or for the grade-level “B” team at the discretion/approval of the respective Travel coaches, VP of Travel and GRBSA President, if required.

Trying out for an older team does not guarantee a spot on an age appropriate team.

Exceptions to the above will only be considered if there are issues with the number of players on a specific team and will require the approval of the VP of Travel Baseball and the GRBSA President.

**Guidelines For Spring and Summer**

Spring and Summer travel seasons shall follow the guidelines outlined below for each age level.

Travel teams will aim to have Roster sizes of 12 players per team (including “B” teams). For any team attempting to have more than 12 players then approval must be obtained from the VP of Travel Baseball.

**8U**

The 8U age level is the first age at which the players will be participating in a higher level of competitive play. It is the goal of the GRBSA to make this the best experience for the players as possible. Players trying out for the 8U Travel teams must be 8 years old on or before April 30th of upcoming baseball season.

The Spring Season will consist of a “Spring Training” program, which would meet once or twice a week depending on field availability and would consist of working on skills needed for the higher level of play that are not used in Recreation Baseball.

Try-outs for the 8U level will be held under the direction of the GRBSA for team selection.

If there are enough players to form a second team, the teams shall be split equally to form two balanced teams. If the number of players interested is more than 24, an alternative method of bringing players to the games may be required or a third team may be added. Approval by the VP of Travel Baseball is required. A player who does not possess minimum level of skills needed to participate on a travel team may be asked to not play, but rather work on their skills and try again at 9U.

The 8U team(s) shall participate in a Summer Baseball League. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

**9U**

It is the goal of the GRBSA to make this the best experience for the players as possible.

The Spring Season may consist of a “Spring Training” program, which would meet once or twice a week depending on field availability and would consist of working on skills needed for the higher level of play that are not used in Recreation Baseball, or, alternatively, the 9U teams may participate in a local Spring Travel league with the approval of the VP of Travel Baseball.

Try-outs for the 9U level will be held under the direction of the GRBSA for team selection.

If there are enough players to form a second team, the teams shall be split equally to form two balanced teams. If the number of players interested is more than 24, an alternative method of bringing players to the games may be required or a third team may be added. Approval by the VP of Travel Baseball is required. A player who does not possess minimum level of skills needed to participate on a travel team may be asked to not play, but rather work on their skills and try again at 10U.

The 9U team(s) shall participate in a Summer Baseball League. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

**10U, 11U, 12U and 13U**

The 10U, 11U, 12U and 13U Teams will participate in a League, which will allow for a higher level of competition while allowing for the continued focus on skill development. “A” and “B” teams shall play in separate leagues, where possible, and commensurate with the skill level of the team.

If there are enough players to form a second team for any of these age levels, the teams shall be split into an “A” and a “B” team. If the number of players interested is more than 24, some players may have to be cut. Each player that tries out will pay a tryout fee which helps cover the cost of the facility and the third party evaluators.

It is the intent to maintain teams from the Spring Season through the Summer Season. The “A” teams will require players to commit to playing in both the Spring and Summer leagues with exceptions presented by parents to the “A” team Manager and on granted approval from the VP of Travel Baseball and the GRBSA President, if needed.

At the Manager’s discretion (with approval of the VP of Travel Baseball), players on the “A” Spring team may be asked to consider playing on the “B” Summer Team, if the player’s demonstrated abilities are not at the level expected of an “A” level player.

If open roster spots become available on the “A” 10U, 11U, 12U and 13U Summer Travel Teams, selection will be made from the “B” roster, at the same level, based upon the prior third-party evaluation and that player’s performance in the Spring Season.

Glen Rock 12U “A” Team has attended the annual Cooperstown Dream Park Summer Baseball tournament and will seek to continue sending a team to this tournament in all future baseball seasons. A change to this commitment will require approval from the VP of Baseball, the GRBSA President and the GRBSA Board.

NO 12U player who has previously attended the Cooperstown Dream Park tournament as a member of the GRBSA Travel league will be able to attend the tournament a second time unless under very unique circumstances (such as shortage of Travel players, unexpected injuries etc) which will need to be approved by the 12U Manager, VP of Travel and GRBSA President. The Player is eligible to play for the 12U “A” team but is not eligible to attend the Cooperstown tournament a second time given it is GRBSA’s desire to give as many Travel players the opportunity to experience this unique tournament (or its equivalent tournament if GRBSA ever decides to replace Cooperstown with another annual tournament of similar scale).

**14U**

Since many participants at this age level will play on the Middle School team, a Spring Season is most likely not to take place.

Tryouts may be conducted for the 14U Summer Travel Teams. If there are enough players to form a second team for the Summer Season at this age level, the teams shall be split into an “A” and a “B” team.

The 14U Teams will participate in a League which will allow for a higher level of competition while allowing for a focus on skill development. “A” and “B” teams shall play in separate leagues, where possible, and commensurate with the skill level of the team. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

**15U-18U**

There will be no Spring Season for these age levels. Summer teams shall be formed under the guidance of the High School Baseball program. Teams will play under the GRBSA Umbrella as appropriate.

**Fall Travel Seasons**

The fall travel season shall follow the following guidelines:

1. Roster size may be expanded.
2. Players participating in another Fall Sport will have the opportunity to participate in Travel baseball, but must commit to attending most of the Travel baseball games. If a player cannot so commit, the GRBSA asks that the player not try-out and take a spot from a player who could benefit from the playing time.
3. Many games may be played outside of Glen Rock due to fall field allocation limitations.

Minimal field time will be provided for practices. Coaches may choose to run practices at various indoor facilities at an extra cost to the player. The cost for practices run at such facilities will not be borne by the GRBSA and shall be split evenly amongst the team’s players. There will be no formal try-out for the Fall Season. The evaluation for the Spring/Summer season and performance by the player in the Spring/Summer shall be the determining factors in selection of the Fall teams. However, if a player did not try-out in the Spring or was not selected to a Spring/Summer team, the player can obtain an evaluation from the same or equivalent third-party evaluator for review, by contacting the VP of Travel Baseball and the GRBSA will arrange for the third-party evaluation.

**Role of the Vice President of Travel Baseball**

The VP of Travel Baseball bears the responsibility of ensuring a spirit of fair play, competitiveness and placing the interests of the young athletes first for the travel program.

In addition, the VP of Travel Baseball shall:

* Provide a list of candidates for the selection of the Managers\Coaching Staff to the GRBSA Executive Board: take part in the selection process; assure that all prospective candidates are R.U.T.G.E.R.S certified and have submitted paperwork and received approval under the Glen Rock Recreation Board background check requirements.
* Provide for an impartial and open process for Travel team tryouts.
* Be responsible for communication of any\all pertinent information to the Glen Rock Community, especially to the parents of players.
* Rule on any matters of concern to the Travel Program.
* Facilitate the administration of the Travel Program, providing advice, guidance, and serve as liaison with the league.

Any issue that cannot be resolved by the VP of Travel Baseball should be brought to the attention of the GRBSA Executive Board.

**Qualifications and Responsibilities of the Travel Team Manager**

Based upon the Mission Statement, the following qualifications will be used by the VP of Travel Baseball when assessing candidates for manager or coaching positions at the Travel team level:

* Baseball Savvy
* Ability to teach the fundamentals of the game.
* Poised and even-tempered.
* Experienced in managing youth teams at a competitive level or recreation level in baseball/softball or other sports.
* Dedication to the time commitment including willingness to schedule and run practices to improve skills
* Past performance evaluations at the travel and recreation level, if available.
* Must complete application and, if necessary, an interview process

In addition to the above qualifications, the following attributes will be considered:

* Competitive but compassionate to each player on the team and fellow coaches.
* Recognizes the importance and allows the players to have fun.
* Possesses a general sense of fairness.
* Open and honest communication with parents, players and peers.

It is desirable that the Manager for the “A” level team be selected from a pool of parents whose child is clearly an “A” player. At times, a candidate with a child below the clear “A” level may present themselves as the best fit for a respective team. If a candidate is selected whose child is not a clear “A” player, their child will automatically fulfill one of the roster spots.

At a minimum all managers must take the R.U.T.G.E.R.S. Sports Clinic or equivalent in order to be protected by the Little League Law and receive approval under the Glen Rock background check requirements. The VP of Travel Baseball may suggest additional training for the Traveling Team Managers.

The role of the Travel Team Manager extends far beyond the on-field responsibilities of filling out the lineup card and managing game situations. There is a significant investment of time and effort involved in running a travel team. Candidates must be willing and able to perform all responsibilities of the job, and make an honest evaluation of their availability, work schedule and personal commitments prior to assuming the role.

In coordination with the VP of Travel Baseball, the Travel manager must:

* Schedule, publicize and coordinate tryout sessions
* In conjunction with the VP of Travel Baseball, make the selection of the players for the “A” and “B” teams.
* Communicate selection of players through phone calls, emails or posting on the GRBSA Website (must be coordinated with the VP of Travel Baseball).
* Suggest a coach or two to assist with the team. The assistant coaches will be chosen AFTER the try out process and the selection of the Travel teams. The VP of Travel Baseball reserves the right to assign coaches to a Travel team.
* Ensure that team is registered in league appropriate to players’ capabilities
* Attend all league meetings to determine rules and procedures
* Obtain (and be accountable for the use and maintenance of) appropriate equipment
* Arrange for use of fields as schedule dictates – games and practices
* Arrange for umpires for home games or as league dictates
* Collect payments from players and remit to VP of Travel Baseball prior to season beginning. (Checks are made payable to the GRBSA Only).
* Follow up with league and GRBSA on any required paperwork, such as score reporting, pitching logs, etc.
* Assemble and maintain at all times roster and backing documentation (birth certificates, insurance, etc.)
* At the conclusion of each season, provide the VP of Travel Baseball with complete and accurate statistics for each player, as well as a written statement of each player’s performance during the season.

The Travel Team Manager must accept as a primary responsibility:

* Strive to make EVERY player on the roster a better baseball player;
* Work with the VP of Travel Baseball to schedule regular practice time, when available;
* Provide excellent Communication to parents and players;
* Clearly communicate Expectations of players and parents;
* Clearly communicate prior to the season the Team rules and penalties for violations thereof;
* Coordinate Practice and League game schedule;
* Provide Directions to away games;

**Selection Process**

**The term of a Travel Team Manager shall be one year.** Every subsequent year the VP of Travel Baseball will entertain new candidates for the Travel Team Manager position for each year. Candidates from the prior year may apply as well. Coaches may “move up” from grade to grade so as to remain with their child.

It is the responsibility of the VP of Travel Baseball to ensure communication to the community that the GRBSA will consider all applicants who meet the aforementioned qualifications to apply for a manager’s position at the traveling team level.

The VP of Travel Baseball will use all available means to solicit candidates for these openings, including but not limited to:

* Posting notices at registration.
* Notice on the GRBSA Website
* Contacting previous Travel Team managers
* Contacting Recreational League Commissioners

Any qualified candidates who are interested in applying should contact the VP of Travel Baseball for consideration.

The VP of Travel Baseball will present a list of candidates to the GRBSA Board for review. A special Selection Committee will be formed, comprising the President of the GRBSA, the VP of Baseball or Softball, the VP of Travel, and at least one other GRBSA board member. The Selection Committee will vote for candidates based on the criteria mentioned earlier. In the event of a tie vote, the VP of Travel Baseball will cast the deciding vote.

The VP of Travel Baseball will send evaluation forms to parents of travel team players as the Summer season progresses, asking for feedback on the Manager’s performance. The results of these evaluations may be used as the basis for future manager selections.

Where possible, the GRBSA will coordinate formal tryouts with evaluations by Third-Party Evaluators and most likely at a third party location.

If a third party tryout is not possible, the Travel Manager shall provide the VP of Travel Baseball with a tryout plan for selecting the team. The plan must be submitted to and approved by the VP of Travel Baseball before tryouts are held. This includes:

* Proposed tryout dates
* Ideally over a minimum of two sessions
* The VP of Travel Baseball must approve any tryout of less than two sessions
* Players must attend at least one tryout
* Other arrangements must be made for any child unable to make tryouts

The ideal Travel Manager will be someone who is and has been actively involved with the GRBSA Baseball programs. The Travel Manager for the “A” Level 10U-13U teams will be actively involved and have a majority of responsibility for selecting the “A” level teams. The Travel Manager shall use the Third Party Evaluations as the primary tool in those selections. The Travel Manager may also use player’s maturity level, previous year’s performance and player’s commitment track record as factors in selecting teams.

The Travel Manager will provide the VP of Travel Baseball with a proposed roster and, if requested, justifications for player selections. The VP of Travel Baseball may override a decision if he/she feels the justification for a player’s selection is not warranted. The VP of Travel Baseball will have final oversight of team rosters, and may suggest additions or changes as deemed necessary.

For 8U and 9U only, when two teams will be equally split in terms of talent, the two selected Managers shall jointly select the teams using the tryout evaluations as the primary tool for team selections and the teams will need to be approved by the VP of Travel. Equal numbers of quality pitchers, catchers, etc. shall be placed on each team. If there are players to be cut in this scenario, both Managers shall meet with the VP of Travel Baseball to discuss before any final decision is made.

After 10U and above teams are selected, the Travel Manager will propose to the VP of Travel Baseball two assistant coaches for consideration for the “A” team. If a proposed assistant coach is a parent of a player at the age group, that parent’s child must have qualified for the “A” team to be considered.

If an “A” and a “B” team are selected, the “A” Travel Manager may assist the VP of Travel Baseball in selecting a “B” team Manager from a list of qualified candidates or assist in soliciting a qualified “B” team Manager. If the proposed “B” team Manager is a parent of a player at the age group, that parent’s child must have qualified for the “B” team to be considered. If a qualified Manager is not available from the “B” team parents, the GRBSA may, at its discretion, name a Manager of the “B” team and allow that Manager’s child to play on the team, even if they were not originally selected.

After teams are selected and approved by the VP of Travel Baseball, rosters will be posted on the GRBSA website.

**Travel Team Player Eligibility and Guidelines**

Only players who participate in the GRBSA Recreation regular season are eligible to try out for a travel team. Further, the VP of Travel Baseball and VP of REC Baseball shall discuss any situations where a player in Rec has missed a large number of games and determine if the player has played in a sufficient number of REC games to be eligible to play in the Travel program. All cases in which over 50% of REC baseball games have been missed will be evaluated by the VP of Travel Baseball and the VP of REC Baseball and a decision will be made if the player will be allowed to play for the Travel team.

Players who are playing for the Glen Rock Middle School baseball team must still make every effort to attend as many REC baseball games as possible (taking into account a Middle School player may miss more REC games than typical due to rainouts etc that need to be made up by the Middle School sports team).

The mission of the GRBSA Travel Baseball Program is to provide the youth of Glen Rock with a competitive experience for players who want to continue their pursuit of baseball at a higher level. The goal is to develop players for middle school and high school baseball programs. Selection to a travel team is through a competitive tryout process. Playing on a travel team is a major commitment for the player and family. All players are expected to attend all games and practices as scheduled by the team’s Travel Manager. It is strongly recommended that if you play for another travel baseball program that may interfere with your commitment to a GRBSA Travel team, such as a club team, or a Middle School sports team, you consider not playing on a GRBSA travel team. In addition, if you have vacation or other conflicting commitments during the seasons, you should consider not playing travel baseball, if same will interfere with commitment to the team.

Players who live in other towns but have qualified to play in the GRBSA Recreation program are eligible to play on travel teams. Out of town players who have not participated in the Recreation program are not eligible for Travel Teams. All players and parents must sign the Player Guidelines and Parental Consent forms, acknowledging their understanding of the program requirements.

**GRBSA TRAVEL TEAMS PLAYER GUIDELINES AND PARENTAL CONSENT**

**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this document is to provide information about our mission and to communicate general team requirements. Please review this with your child. Your signature at the bottom acknowledges your parental consent to the rules and expectations outlined in this document. Glen Rock Baseball and Softball Association Travel Teams were established to provide an opportunity for advanced competition with the best youth baseball teams in northern New Jersey.

**The Glen Rock Baseball and Softball Association travel teams** are for those players who:

1. Love the game of baseball\softball and willing to give 100% at all times.
2. Are able to listen, display a positive attitude, are committed to becoming their very best. Travel players must be willing to play ANY field position as deemed appropriate by the team manager.
3. View participation in Travel ball as an opportunity to learn both on and off the field.
4. Are willing to put the team goals ahead of any personal goals.

**TEAM RULES:**

1. The Team Manager has sole responsibility for all decisions on the playing field. Insubordination will be grounds for dismissal from the team.
2. Players will remain positive in their attitude toward teammates and coaches **AT ALL TIMES** and listen attentively when the coach speaks.
3. Players will **ALWAYS** respect teammates, opponents, coaches and umpires. Un-sportsmanlike conduct **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
4. Players or Parents will call the team manager if he is going to miss a practice or a game.
5. Playing time will not be equal for all players (please see next page)\*
6. Players may not leave the bench area during a game, without the permission of one of the coaches. Misbehavior **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

**CLOSING REMARKS:**

The Glen Rock Travel Teams seek to have very competitive teams and as such, the goals and expectations will differ from the GRBSA town recreational teams. The manager has sole decision-making authority on the field. Players must support the manager’s decisions. Parents do not have to like, or agree with, the manager’s decision, but they must also show their support to the Manager and the team! Remember, our kids are watching us and will model our behavior. Try to remain positive. If you have a concern, talk it over with the manager and away from the kids. Let’s remember to have fun!

Playing time will **NEVER** be equal. It is imperative that both parents and players understand that there is no guarantee with regard to amount of playing time. In addition, as players develop at specific positions, they may not be rotated to different positions in the field. The goal is to make a player more comfortable and confident at their established position, to help make the team more cohesive in the field.

I have read and understand the guidelines presented above and will abide by these rules for the upcoming traveling season.

Player’s Signature:

Parent/Guardian Signature(s):