

Brandon Valley Baseball Association

Program Outline

February 2008

Overview

The Brandon Valley Baseball Association coordinates the baseball program for youth living in the Brandon Valley School District. The goals of the Association are to provide participants with the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the rules and concepts of the game of baseball, to acquire basic baseball skills, and to play the game of baseball in an atmosphere that promotes good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, game officials, and the game of baseball itself.

The BVBA has a variety of age divisions as well as programs that allow for varying degrees of involvement and competitiveness. It is the philosophy of the BVBA to create baseball opportunities for as many youth as possible. In order to keep team size as low as practically feasible parents are encouraged to volunteer to be head coaches or assistant coaches especially at the younger age levels that depend on volunteer coaches. Below are basic descriptions of the leagues and teams administered by the Brandon Valley Baseball Association.

Coach Pitch Leagues

The BVBA Coach Pitch Leagues are designed for players ages 6-8 and represent the opportunity for youth to experience the game of baseball in a non-competitive, learning environment.

Rookies Coach Pitch League (6 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

The 2008 baseball season marks the first year of the "Rookies" division of the BVBA Coach Pitch League. The "Rookies" division was added this year to give 6 year-olds (age as of April 30, 2008) the opportunity to participate in a youth baseball program in our community. For 2008, the first 48 6 year-olds to register will be accepted and divided up into four teams of 12 players. The teams will follow the BVBA coach pitch rules posted on the BVBA website. The program will be evaluated at the end of the season. Please read the description of the Coach Pitch League below for more information.

Coach Pitch League (7 & 8 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

The BVBA Coach Pitch League is a recreation league for youth ages 7 & 8 as of April 30, 2008. At the end of the registration period the youth will be divided evenly into teams with 12-14 players (depending on registration numbers and the number of volunteer coaches. Coach Pitch teams practice and play regular season league games at McHardy Park on the east side of Brandon. Typically, regular season games begin in mid-May and continue through the end of June. Coach Pitch teams generally play twice a week with a total of 10-12 regular season games. Coach Pitch teams are encouraged to participate in the BVBA's Pizza Ranch tournament on Father's Day weekend in June in order to get a feel for the tournament atmosphere. As the league name implies, coaches do the pitching in this league and all players bat and free substitution is allowed in the field. Playing time is expected to be equal and all players must play at least two innings in the infield. For more information, please review the BVBA coach pitch rules on the BVBA website.

Bantam Leagues

The BVBA Bantam Leagues are designed for youth ages 9-12 and represent the opportunity to gain skills in an increasingly challenging and fun recreation league environment. The BVBA will strive to divide the registered players up into teams comprised of 11 to 14 players. This is dependent on the number of players registered as well as the number of volunteer coaches. Jr. and Sr. Bantam League players are typically divided up into teams via a coach's draft with the goal of having teams be as equally divided as possible. All players bat and there is free substitution in the field. No player will sit for more than two consecutive innings in the field. Please read the Bantam League rules posted on the BVBA website for more information about this league. The BVBA Bantam Leagues offer the opportunity for players to try out for competitive travel teams as well.

Jr. Bantam League (9 & 10 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

The Jr. Bantam League represents a big step up from the Coach Pitch League. Players are expected to do their own pitching and, as can be expected, the games become a bit more competitive. The BVBA Jr. Bantam League typically plays on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Aspen Park in Brandon. Practices start in mid-April and regular season games start in mid-May and run through the end of June, with the League year-end tournament taking the season into early to mid-July. Jr. Bantam League teams are encouraged to participate in the BVBA's Pizza Ranch tournament on Father's Day weekend in June in order to get a feel for the tournament atmosphere.

The BVBA may offer the opportunity for Jr. Bantam players to try out for one or two competitive travel teams that will play tournaments on weekends. This opportunity is dependent on finding volunteer coaches, and the formation of these teams will take the form of a competitive, skills-based tryout. There are additional time and financial considerations for travel team participants.

Sr. Bantam League (10 & 11 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

The Sr. Bantam League represents an additional progression in the youth baseball experience. The pitching mound and base paths are lengthened. Most other rules stay the same. The BVBA Sr. Bantam League typically plays on Monday and Wednesday evenings at Aspen Park in Brandon. Practices start in mid-April and regular season games start in mid-May and run through the end of June, with the League year-end tournament taking the season into early to mid-July. Sr. Bantam League teams are encouraged to participate in the BVBA's Pizza Ranch tournament on Father's Day weekend in June in order to get a feel for the tournament atmosphere.

The BVBA may offer the opportunity for Sr. Bantam players to try out for one or two competitive travel teams that will play tournaments on weekends. This opportunity is dependent on finding volunteer coaches, and the formation of these teams will take the form of a competitive, skills-based tryout. There are additional time and financial considerations for travel team participants.

VFW Leagues

The VFW baseball program represents another step in the baseball development of our youth. At this level, baseball begins the transition from a recreation program to a competitive program. The BVBA's VFW baseball program is divided up into two divisions - Varsity VFW for players 16 and under (as of April 30, 2008) and Jr. Varsity VFW for players 14 and under (as of April 30, 2008). The VFW baseball rules are posted on the BVBA website for your information. Typically VFW teams strive to have between 12 and 15 players per team, though the exact number is left to the discretion of the coach as are any decisions regarding playing time.

Jr. Varsity VFW Program (13 & 14 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

In order to ensure that all 13 and 14 year-olds have an opportunity to continue to play baseball beginning in 2008 the BVBA will offer a recreation league opportunity for registered players. Typically, the Jr. Varsity VFW program is divided into two teams - a Major team (the Thunder Cats) and a Minor team (the River Cats). All registrants who register for the Jr. Varsity VFW Competitive and Recreation option will be allowed to tryout for the Major team, though typically the Major team is comprised of 14 year-olds. Anyone not making the Major team (as well as anyone registering for the Jr. Varsity VFW Recreation League) will be assigned to one of two Brandon Valley recreation league teams that will play in the SEBA Jr. Varsity VFW recreation league. Any youth who is 13 years-old and who doesn't make the Major team and who signed up for the Jr. Varsity VFW Competitive and Recreation option will be able to tryout for the Minor team, which will most likely play in weekend tournaments. All 13 year-old youths will also possibly play on a VFW recreation league team if such a team is formed. If a player signs up for the Jr. Varsity VFW Competitive and Recreation option and does not make one of the competitive teams (Major or Minor) they will be refunded the difference between the competitive option and the recreation league only option on the registration form. The Major and Minor teams will most likely play 15-25 regular season games. The recreation league teams will most likely play 10-15 games in Sioux Falls. Volunteer coaches are needed for the two recreation league teams. The BVBA will provide paid coaches for the Major and Minor teams.

Varsity VFW Program (15 & 16 year-olds as of April 30, 2008)

The Varsity VFW program is designed for youth ages 15 and 16 as of April 30, 2008. Again, with the advancement to this level the baseball program becomes even more competitively oriented. At this level, team placement is made strictly on a competitive basis and there are no rules guaranteeing playing time. The BVBA typically has one Varsity VFW team (the Diamond Cats). Unfortunately, at this level some degree of cutting may be necessary dependent on the number of registrants. The Varsity VFW team typically plays about 40-50 games per season including tournaments. The Diamond Cats will represent our organization in VFW Regional play in late July to qualify for the Varsity VFW State Tournament in August. Paid coaches will be provided for the Varsity VFW team.

American Legion Baseball

Any player who resides in the Brandon Valley School District and is age 18 or less as of January 1st the season a youth wishes to play may register to play Post 131 American Legion Baseball. Typically this program is made up of 17 and 18 year-old players, though in the past 15 and 16 year-old players have been invited to play on the Legion team if they would be considered "core" players and would primarily be playing their strongest positions on a regular basis. Post 131 will represent Brandon Valley in American Legion regional play at the end of July to attempt to qualify for the American Legion State Tournament in August. Team placement is based on the number of registrants and there may be tryouts. There are no rules regarding playing time.

High School Baseball

Any player who attends Brandon Valley High School during the school year may register to play High School Baseball in the spring. There will be two separate teams for high school baseball, a combined varsity/junior varsity squad and a freshman/sophomore team. It is possible for freshman or sophomore players to make the varsity or junior varsity teams but juniors and seniors will not be allowed to play freshman/sophomore baseball. The high school head coach, high school assistant coach, and freshman/sophomore coach will handle team assignments and place players accordingly. The teams will generally play double headers with high school teams from Sioux Falls and other ESD schools. This schedule could be supplemented with other schools. Each team will play approximately 15-20 games during the season.

We hope that this overview has been helpful. Please refer to the BVBA website (www.brandonvalleybaseball.com) for additional information about BVBA programs and rules. Thank you for your support for youth baseball.