

Glen Rock Baseball Association  
Travel Baseball Program  
Policies and Procedures

Revised December 2009

## Mission Statement

The GRBA Travel Baseball Program provides a higher level of competition beyond the Recreation programs 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 pitchers and catchers, and 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 GRBA. The Vice President of Travel will have full responsibility for running the travel program.

Travel teams will be formed for ages 9 through 14 (teams from older players may come under the GRBA auspices in some circumstances). 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 much success at the REC level. While we want to encourage and accommodate participation for as many children as possible, the GRBA 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.

## Age Level Teams

Players shall participate on teams according to their age as of April 30<sup>th</sup> (inclusive) each year. For the 2010 Season, the following guidelines based on birth date shall apply:

14U – Born between May 1, 1995 and April 30, 1996

13U – Born between May 1, 1996 and April 30, 1997

12U – Born between May 1, 1997 and April 30, 1998

11U – Born between May 1, 1998 and April 30, 1999

10U – Born between May 1, 1999 and April 30, 2000

9U – Born between May 1, 2000 and April 30, 2001 (Note: 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders born after April 30, 2001 are eligible under the Playing Up requirements below. 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders and below are not eligible for any 9U team).

### Playing Up

The GRBA prefers that all players participate on teams that are age appropriate according to their birthdates as described above.

Players who feel that their skills are at a higher level than their current age may tryout for an older team. However, the following must be followed:

1. The player must also participate in their age group's tryout.
2. Players may only be selected for the "A" level team of the older group. If the player's skills are not suitable for the older age "A" team, the player will then be considered for their current age group and will NOT be considered for an older age "B" team.
3. Trying out for an older team does not guarantee a spot on an age appropriate team.
4. 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 GRBA President.

### Grandfather Clause

The intent of the policy is to minimize disruption for those players who have played in the Travel Program prior to this new policy adopted in 2008. New players must play at their age level, which will, in time, lead to all age level travel teams and increased competitiveness,

A player who played in the 2007 Travel Season will be grandfathered and permitted to try out and continue to play with that team should that player choose to do so, throughout his career in the travel program. However, if a player decides to try out with an age level team in 2008, they will lose the grandfather protection and will not have the option to play up in the following years.

All players trying out, who have not played travel previously, must try out for the age level team. A player who has skipped a year must try out at their age level.

## **Specific Age Level Guidelines For Spring and Summer**

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

Note that beginning in 2008, roster sizes will be capped at 12 players per team (including "B" teams), with the only exception possibly being at the 9U Level.

### *9U*

The 9U 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 GRBA to make this the best experience for the players as possible.

The Spring Season shall consist of a "Spring Training" program. The Spring Training Program shall meet once or twice a week depending on field availability and shall consist of working on skills needed for the higher level of play that are not used in Recreation Baseball. The 9U teams will also participate in a local Spring Travel league where the focus is on development.

The Spring Training program shall run in April and May and shall act as the determination for the splitting of teams for the Summer Travel team(s). Participation in the Spring Training program is not mandatory to play on a Summer Team, but is highly recommended. A mini-tryout may be held for players who do not participate in the Spring Training Program.

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. That program must be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball. 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 the Paramus Summer Baseball League. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

### *10U*

For the Spring Season, the 10U Team(s) will participate in a League that will allow for the focus on development of skills. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

If there are enough players to form a second team for the Spring Seasons, the teams shall be split equally to form two balanced teams. If the number of players interested is more than 24, some players may have to be cut. Tryouts will be held to determine the teams in late February or early March depending on availability of facilities.

Participation on a Spring team will be considered the tryout for the Summer Team. Players on a Spring team are not necessarily guaranteed a roster spot on a Summer Team. A mini-tryout shall be conducted for the 10U Summer Travel Teams for those who did not participate on a Spring Team. If there are enough players to form a second team for the Summer Season, the teams shall be split into an "A" and a "B" team. The 10U team(s) shall participate in the Paramus Summer Baseball League. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

### *11U, 12U and 13U*

The 11U, 12U and 13U 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. For example, "B" level teams should play in lower level divisions than "A" level teams. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the VP of Travel Baseball.

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. Tryouts shall be held in early to mid February depending availability of an indoor facility. It is the intent to maintain teams from the Spring season through the Summer Season. At the Manager's discretion, 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.

A mini-tryout shall be conducted for open roster spots on the 11U, 12U and 13U Summer Travel Teams for those players who did not participate on a Spring Team. Players on a "B" Spring team may try out for open roster spots on "A" Summer Teams.

### *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 shall 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 GRBA Umbrella as appropriate.

## **Fall Travel Seasons**

The fall travel season shall follow the following guidelines:

1. Roster size shall be at a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 14..
2. Players participating in another Fall Sport will have the opportunity to participate, but must commit to attending most of the games played. If a player cannot so commit, the GRBA asks that the player not try-out and take a spot from a player who could benefit from the playing time.
3. All games will 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 GRBA and shall be split evenly amongst the team's players.

Practices may be run at the GRBA batting cages or at facilities not conducive to typical baseball activities.

## **Role of the Vice President of Traveling Teams**

The Vice President of Traveling Teams 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 shall:

- Provide a list of candidates for the selection of the Managers \ Coaching Staff to the GRBA Executive Board: take part in the selection process; assure that all prospective candidates are R.U.T.G.E.R.S certified.
- 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 Vice President of Travel should be brought to the attention of the GRBA Executive Board.

## Qualifications of the Traveling Team Manager

Based upon the Mission Statement, the following qualifications will be used by the Vice President of Travel 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

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

- Competitive but compassionate.
- Allows the players to have fun.
- Seeks quality in playing time for all players (as game situations dictated).
- An innate 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. The VP of Travel may suggest additional training for the Traveling Team Managers.

## Responsibilities of the Travel Team Manager

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, the Travel manager must:

- Schedule, publicize, coordinate, and run tryout sessions
- Seek independent input on player selection and make the final selection of the players for the team
- Communicate selection of players through phone calls, emails or posting on the GRBA Website (must be coordinated with the VP of Travel).
- Suggest a coach to assist with the team. The travel team coaching staff is made of up the manager and not more than 2 coaches. The VP of Travel 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 Travel prior to season beginning (Checks are made payable to the GRBA Only).
- Follow up with league and GRBA 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.)

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 to schedule regular practice time, when available.
- Communication with parents and players:
  - Expectations of players and parents
  - Team rules and penalties for violations thereof
  - Practice and League game schedule
  - Directions to away games

## Selection of the Travel Team Manager

**The term of a traveling team manager shall be one year.** Every subsequent year the Vice President of Traveling teams 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 Vice President of Travel to ensure communication to the community that the GRBA will consider all applicants who meet the aforementioned qualifications to apply for a manager’s position at the traveling team level.

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

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

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

The VP of Travel will present a list of candidates to the GRBA Board for review. A special Selection Committee will be formed, comprising the President of the GRBA, the VP of Baseball or Softball, the VP of Travel, and at least one other GRBA 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 will cast the deciding vote.

The VP of Travel 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 will be used as the basis for future manager selections.

## Team Selection Process

Where possible, the GRBA will coordinate formal tryouts with evaluations by 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Evaluators and possibly at a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party location.

If a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party tryout is not possible, the Travel Manager shall provide the VP of Travel with a tryout plan for selecting the team. The plan must be submitted to and approved by the VP of Travel before tryouts are held. This includes:

- Proposed tryout dates
  - Ideally over a minimum of two sessions
  - The VP of Travel 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
- Outline of tryout sessions
  - Stations / skills to be assessed
  - Scoring method to be used
- List of impartial evaluators who will participate
  - Current travel team managers / coaches from other age groups, i.e. 12U coach to score 10U grade players
  - Past travel team and/or REC coaches from aged out groups

The ideal Travel Manager will be someone who is and has been actively involved with the GRBA Baseball programs and in particular at the age group for which they are selected. Except in the event when equally split teams are selected, the Travel Manager for the “A” Level will be responsible for selecting the teams. The Travel Manager shall use the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 will have final oversight of team rosters, and may suggest additions or changes as deemed necessary.

When two teams will be equally split in terms of talent, the two selected Managers shall jointly select the teams using the independent evaluations as the primary tool for team selections. 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 be in agreement with the decision.

After 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 shall 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 GRBA 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 GRBA website.

## Travel Team Player Eligibility and Guidelines

Only players who participate in the GRBA Recreation regular season are eligible to try out for a travel team. Further, the VP of Travel and VP of Baseball shall determine the number of REC games in which a player has participated. Any exceptions must be reviewed and approved by the VP of Travel Teams.

Unlike the REC programs, the GRBA Travel teams are categorized by age. Prospective players will tryout for the Travel team appropriate to their age.

Playing on more than one Travel Team requires approval by the VP of Travel. The needs and best interests of the player, rather than the team, will always be the overriding concern in making such decisions.

Players who live in other towns but have qualified to play in the GRBA 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. The GRBA does not permit stacking a team with “ringers” in order to win a tournament.

All players and parents must sign the Player Guidelines and Parental Consent forms, acknowledging their understanding of the program requirements.

## GRBA 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 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 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. Further travel players are 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 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 are very competitive teams and as such are different from the GRBA 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! 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. There may be occasions when a player does not enter the game at all, or play may be limited to pinch hitting or running. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_