

Mt. Zion Travel Softball Program 8U-16U

Goals and Philosophy:

The Mt. Zion Youth Baseball and Softball Association fully supports the Travel Softball Program as a means to improve the softball skills of players residing in the Mt. Zion School District. Our goal is to provide a competitive environment for Mt. Zion's best athletes to enhance their softball skills while instilling characteristics that will help them succeed in the community, school and later in life as they pursue a variety of interests.

Objectives:

1. Improve the softball skills of each of the players through practice and game situations.
2. Provide a competitive schedule of games and tournaments to compete at a high level.
3. Provide an environment similar to what will be expected at the junior high/high school levels.

Expectations for Players:

1. Maintain a positive attitude.
2. All players will represent themselves, family, community & Mt. Zion Youth Baseball and Softball in a positive manner.
3. Hustle always.
4. Show up to practices and games on time.
5. Refrain from unsportsmanlike gestures, talk, language, or profanity.
6. All players will show respect towards the umpires and their decisions. All decisions made by the umpires are to be accepted as final. No player should argue a call or judgment. Only the Manager and Coach should be questioning calls and judgments.
7. No team member shall throw a bat, helmet, glove or any object in disgust on or off the playing field at any time.
8. All players will follow the guidelines set forth for the team and the program.
9. Understand that the coach may impose additional rules, guidelines and/or policies that the player is required to follow and failure to comply with the rules, guidelines and/or policies is a violation of the player's commitment.
10. All players are committed to their respective Mt. Zion Travel Team for the duration of the team's season. Players are not allowed to be on another team's roster unless the player has obtained approval from their coach.
11. Mt. Zion Youth Baseball and Softball reserves the right to release any player from the team for poor sportsmanship by the player and/or the player's family during games or for other reasons to include but are not limited to lack of cooperation, poor attitude, lack of commitment, effort or attendance.

Expectations for Parents:

1. Respect coaches, umpires, players, parents, opponents & organization.
2. Demonstrate good sportsmanship.
3. Be involved and volunteer.
4. Refrain from giving the children instructions during the game - allow the coaches to manage the team and game.
5. Refrain from dugout visits.
6. Get your child to practice and games on time.
7. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game.
8. Do not ridicule or yell at your child or any other child on the team for making a mistake or for losing a game.
9. Set a good example. Children learn best by example.
10. Do not publicly question an umpire's judgment and never their honesty. Accept the umpire's decision as final and respect the fact that they too make mistakes.
11. Recognize the value and importance of volunteer coaches. Give them due respect.
12. If you have a problem/conflict with the Manager or Coaches, do not approach them during or after a game. Call the coach to discuss the matter or set a meeting with the Manager or coach to discuss the matter.
13. Accept the coaches' decision regarding playing positions and the amount of playing time, this is a Travel Program and there are no guarantees for equal playing time or position.
14. Understand that the Mt. Zion Youth Baseball and Softball reserves the right to release any player from the team for poor sportsmanship by the player and/or the player's family during games or for other reasons including, but are not limited to, lack of cooperation, poor attitude, lack of commitment, effort or attendance.

15. Understand that the coach may impose additional rules, guidelines and/or policies that all players and parents are required to follow and failure to comply with the rules, guidelines and/or policies is a violation.
16. Understand and acknowledge that the player fees are non-refundable. If a child is dismissed or voluntarily leaves a Travel Team the parents are not entitled to a refund and all monies are forfeited.
17. Make financial commitments or communicate arrangements.
18. Attend meetings as required.

Expectations for Coaches:

1. Respect opposing coaches and players, umpires, parents and community.
2. Ensure playing time commitments are achieved.
3. Provide a competitive schedule.
4. Ensure basic fundamentals are taught.
5. Manage funds appropriately and stay within the Board's approved budget.
6. Provide a quality life experience.
7. Represent Mt. Zion Youth Baseball and Softball is a positive light at all times. Playing Time and Positions played: There is no minimum playing time mandated on Travel Teams. The intent of the Mt Zion Youth Baseball and Softball Travel program is to develop each player at the travel level and to have every player participate in each game. Circumstances may dictate that a ball player will not play in a particular game. Playing time will not be equal and is not guaranteed. The coach makes ALL playing time, positions played and batting order decisions. Coaches will not be expected to discuss playing time decisions with parents. Playing time should be a discussion between player and coach and parents may be involved at the coach's discretion. There will be no parental input in playing time.

Attendance Expectations:

Attendance is mandatory! Players are expected to be on time and ready to participate for practice, meetings and games. Teams cannot achieve their goals and maintain a winning attitude if players are missing or arriving late for games and/or practices. If you will miss a practice or a game, for any reason, the manager must know about it as soon as possible. With the exception of school related activities, players are discouraged from being involved with other sports during the travel baseball season. However, if a player is involved with another sport, they are expected to put their Mt. Zion Travel obligation ahead of that other sport during travel season. If a player misses a travel game or practice to take part in another sporting event, they should expect it to have a negative impact on their playing time when they return to their team. Penalties for unexcused absences should be expected, depending on the circumstances, and it will be solely the coach's discretion to determine what the penalty may be, if any.

Team Eligibility:

All player must reside in the Mt. Zion School District. Players moving into the school district can request eligibility from the board provided there is evidence that the upcoming move is eminent and will occur during the season. Grade level is as of the start of the season. Age requirement: Must be the age of the program level (or under) by January 1st of the season year. (Cut-off per USSSA is April 30th).

- 8U: Must be 8 years old or younger by December 31st of the current year. Typically, 1st or 2nd grades. 8U Travel Players must also commit to play in the Mt. Zion Pinto Farm League.
- 10U: Must be 10 years old or younger by December 31st of the current year. Typically, 4th & 5th grade.
- 12U: Must be 12 years old or younger by December 31st of the current year. Typically, 6th & 7th grade.
- 14U: Must be 14 years old or younger by December 31st of the current year. Typically, 8th & 9th grade.
- 16U: Must be 16 years old or younger by December 31st of the current year. Typically, 9th or 10th grade.

Travel Costs:

Below are guidelines for expected per player costs for each age group. Final team fee is at the discretion of the coach, however, any fee above the top end of the range needs board approval. Sponsor money or fundraisers can be used to keep the cost below the recommended range.

- 8U: \$50-\$100
- 10U: \$250-\$350
- 12U-16U: \$300-\$400

Regular Season:

1. Practices begin indoors at the end of February.
2. Games can be scheduled around April 1 for 10U-16U. (8U Games start June 1st)
3. Season will end a week after our 4th of July Tournament to ensure time for family vacation.
4. Games after the 4th of July must be approved by the board.

Off-Season:

From the end of the season through August will be a dead period. Outdoor fall workouts should be limited one or two total and must clearly be optional. Indoor winter workouts should be limited to once per week with a total maximum of 8. Also, all off-season activity should be open to all players eligible for the following year's team. Adding players to the roster mid-season: If the need arises for a team to add players due to any reason, the following guidelines should be used. Long term, for the remainder of the season: The replacement player needs to be eligible for the team the same as above in "Team Eligibility". If the player added to the travel team is participating on a MTZYBS farm team, that player should be allowed to remain on the farm team. Pitching rules will still apply. However, since it is unlikely the farm team is using a pitch count, it will be assumed a pitch count of 20 pitches per inning thrown in farm. Short term, as needed: The replacement player, on a short term basis, can be from another Mt. Zion Travel team or the farm program provided the age restrictions are appropriate. The replacement player is not allowed to miss a game on his regular team to participate on the team in need. Pitching rules will still apply across the program. No pitching for the replacement player's regular team should be lost due to pitching for the team in need of a player. In a last minute emergency, a player can be added from outside the MTZYBS program provided it is absolutely necessary to field a team. Once a player from outside the program is used, that player is no longer eligible to be used as an emergency fill-in again in the same season.

Scheduling Guidelines:

The goals for scheduling should be to provide a competitive schedule with an opportunity for team success. Teams of a similar age, skill level, and community size are preferred, however, there are several factors to consider including travel distance, balancing home and away dates and the familiarity with the opposing coaches and their philosophies. Coaches will be given leeway in scheduling as they see fit, however, all schedules must be submitted to the board for approval by the March meeting. The tournament game guarantee will be used in the total games scheduled for a team. Coaches may over schedule by 4 games to account for rainouts, however, coaches cannot reschedule games due to rain out until the total games played would be under the maximum allowed.

- 8U: Play between 10-15 games including 1 tournament Practices in May and June one week night and one weekend day. Pinto farm practices and games have priority over travel.
- 10U: Play between 30-40 games including no more than 5 tournaments. One overnight tournament. Practices in April and May two week nights and weekends
- 12U: Play between 35-45 games including no more than 6 tournaments.
- 14U/16U: Play between 40-50 games including no more than 6 tournaments.

*An overnight tournament would be held in a town more than 1:30 minutes from Mt. Zion.

*A round robin consisting of 2 games does not count against the team's number of tournaments.

Games:

1. Most games will be double headers or round robins to ensure adequate playing time.
2. On school nights: Games should end no later than 9:30.
3. Travel to away games should be limited to 30 miles on schools nights. The number of away school night double headers (outside of Macon County) should be limited as much as possible.

Fields/Equipment:

- 8U: Diamond 7 – 60' bases
- 9U: Diamond 7 – 60' bases, 46' pitching mound
- 10U: Diamond 7 – 60' bases, 46' pitching mound
- 11U: Diamond 2 – 70" bases, 50' pitching mound
- 12U: Diamond 2 or 9 – 70' bases, 50' pitching mound OR 80' bases, 54' pitching mound, if opposing team agrees in advance. (Diamond 9 can be used at either distance)
- 13U: Diamond 9 – 80' bases, 54' pitching mound
- 14U: Diamond 9 – 80' bases, 54' pitching mound

Umpires:

The hiring of umpires is to be handled by the coaches using their discretion. The following are guidelines that are typically acceptable for most situations:

- 8U: parent, other adult
- 9/10U: One patched behind the plate. For one patched behind the plate, a base umpire can be use that is a high school age kid or other non-patched adult.
- 11U-16U: Two patched umpires.

Pitching:

All travel coaches will be provided information regarding pitching safety and are expected to use caution with all pitchers. At 9U, 10U and 11U only fastballs and change-ups will be allowed.

MTZYBS maximum pitch counts:

- 9U/10U: 75 pitches per three day period
- 11U/12U: 85 pitches per three day period
- 13U-16U: 95 pitches per three day period
- Exception: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs:
 1. That batter reaches base;
 2. That batter is put out;
 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

Rest Requirements:

Pitchers must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- 9U/10U: If a player pitches over 50 pitches over a three day period, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- 11U-16U: If a player pitches over 60 pitches over a three day period, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- All ages: If a player pitches over 35 pitches over a three day period, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.