AYBA TRAVEL BASEBALL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated 08-2025

What is the philosophy of travel baseball with the Alexandria Youth Baseball Association ("AYBA")?

Travel baseball is the section of AYBA where kids are encouraged to be competitive. Players are evaluated and assigned to teams based on where they are currently in their baseball journey. We allow the travel coaches, whom are selected by the AYBA, to have athletes play positions where they most benefit the team, while developing a generalized set of skills.

While our goal is to develop baseball players to the top of their given talent level, we are also striving to foster a good baseball community. We do not have a win at all costs mentality. Coaches will make decisions in certain situations or competitions that you may not understand or agree with, however, we are trying to develop better baseball players and increase "baseball IQ" over time. AYBA understands that we are trying to educate our youth in general baseball concepts and to know and understand baseball at a deeper level while having a positive influence on the growth of the individual. We want to be known for having great kids first and foremost.

Who is eligible to play in the AYBA Travel Ball program?

To participate on an AYBA travel team, athletes must be enrolled in a school within the Alexandria School District.

Does my travel baseball player also need to participate in the AYBA in-house program?

AYBA recently updated this policy. The 9U team, which serves as an "introduction to travel baseball," is required to also participate in the in-house league. For players at the 10U level and above, there is currently no in-house participation requirement.

When are the Travel Ball evaluations?

Evaluations will take place on **September 7th, 2025**, at **Knute Nelson Field**. The schedule is as follows:

- **8:00 AM** – 12U
- **10:00 AM** – 13U
- **1:00 PM** – 14U
- **3:00 PM** – 11U
- **5:00 PM** – 9U/10U

Please have your athlete arrive **15–20 minutes before** their scheduled time to warm up. They should come dressed in proper athletic attire and should not wear any previous team jerseys. **Plastic molded baseball cleats are permitted** on the field. Athletes must bring a **baseball glove, bat, and helmet**.

What happens if my athlete cannot make it to the travel ball evaluation date?

It is imperative to understand that travel ball evaluations are very time and labor intensive. All evaluators, while very knowledgeable in baseball concepts, are still volunteers and are giving the AYBA the gift of their time. With this in mind, we are unable to have a secondary tryout date.

Any player who misses the scheduled Alexandria Baseball tryout will not be guaranteed placement on a team. Additionally, missing tryouts may impact the player's evaluation score and may affect team placement. The extent of this impact cannot be determined until all tryout scores and evaluations have been reviewed. By choosing to miss tryouts, the player and family

acknowledge and accept the risk that this decision may result in placement on a lower team or no team at all.

If you have any questions about this, please reach out to the AYBA Travel Director at **travel@alexyouthbaseball.com** before the evaluation. All requests are subject to AYBA's final approval.

Why are travel ball evaluations in the fall/so far in advance of the actual travel baseball season?
AYBA understands this concern; however, after much discussion, we believe this timeframe is the most effective for evaluations. At this point in the year, athletes are coming off their summer baseball schedules, meaning their arms are in peak condition and their skills remain sharp. Additionally, the 5–6 week gap between the end of our association's organized baseball season and evaluations allows for further skill development before tryouts.

What age range does my athlete try out for?
9U - Cannot be 10 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 3rd grade in Sept 2025)
10U - Cannot be 11 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 4th grade in Sept 2025)
11U - Cannot be 12 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 5th grade in Sept 2025)
12U - Cannot be 13 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 6th grade in Sept 2025)
13U - Cannot be 14 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 7th grade in Sept 2025)
14U - Cannot be 15 prior to 5/1/2026 (typically entering 8th grade in Sept 2025)

What is evaluated at travel ball evaluations?
Athletes are evaluated on the mechanics of several core skills, including fielding ground balls, fielding fly balls, pitching, hitting, and, for players 13U and older, catching.

How are travel ball teams evaluated?
Each station is staffed with two evaluators who are volunteers without any current athletes in the AYBA travel program. These evaluators possess extensive baseball knowledge, and many have previous experience coaching within the travel system.

What is done with the information obtained during evaluations?
These scores are tabulated, along with prior coach evaluations, and are combined to generate an overall score for each athlete. This score is utilized to assign the kids to a team. Generally, AAA teams will have 10-11 athletes and AA teams will have 11-12 athletes.

How many teams are there per age level?
Typically, we field one to two teams per age level, depending on the number of athletes who participate in evaluations. Our goal is to form as many teams as possible at each age level.

What are the levels of play within the AYBA?
Per MYAS (MN Youth Athletic Service):
AAA - The highest competitive level, the top team from a traveling baseball association.
AA - The intermediate level of play. AA level is intended for teams from baseball associations that have already provided teams at the AAA level. AA may also (in some cases) be defined as a level for traveling teams that are not currently able to compete at the AAA level.
A - The developmental level of traveling baseball. The A level is often used to place teams trying to prepare for a higher level of play.

When will I find out what team my athlete is on?
The selection committee meets shortly after the evaluation to determine the teams. Parents will be notified by October 1.

How does the AYBA determine who coaches the teams?
AYBA will select the head coach of each team and the head coach will help to select the assistants, with final approval through the AYBA. In order to be a coach within the AYBA system, you need to be over the age of 18 years old and in good standing with the AYBA. The coaches for each team are typically parents of athletes on the team. It is important to know that the teams are selected first by the selection committee and the head coach is assigned after that. These are volunteer positions and if you are interested in coaching, please let us know.

Does the AYBA allow kids to "play up"?
Currently, AYBA does not permit athletes to play above their age or grade level. Our philosophy is that players should compete within their own age group.

What happens if my kid doesn't make a team?
At AYBA, our goal is to avoid cutting any athlete. However, we must also be realistic and acknowledge that some players may not yet have the skill level currently required for travel baseball. If your child is not selected, please keep the following in mind:

1. Baseball is a sport built on overcoming failure— even Major League players fail at hitting more than 70% of the time and can still make the Hall of Fame.
2. Take an honest look at your child's development, work on the fundamentals, and encourage them to try again next year.
3. Our strong and thriving in-house program provides an excellent opportunity for continued growth and skill improvement.
4. All decisions made by the AYBA selection committee are final.

How is my athlete assigned a position on the team?
In AYBA travel ball, the head coach assigns players to positions where they best contribute to the team's success while continuing to develop multiple skills. Players typically work on 2–3 positions during practices, with additional positions added as they progress.

Position selections are based on factors like speed, arm strength, and baseball IQ, and may change over time as players develop.

Note that travel ball does not require rotating players to different positions during games, and playing time is not guaranteed.

What is the commitment expectation for travel ball?
Travel baseball is a competitive program with minimum skill expectations at each level, which will be reviewed in detail during the pre-evaluation travel parent meeting.
Because of the demanding nature of travel ball, a high level of commitment is required from both the athlete and their family. Players are expected to attend all practices, games, scrimmages, and tournaments. Frequent absences not only hinder individual development but also negatively affect the team. Consistent attendance issues may result in reduced playing time or, in some cases, removal from the team.

What happens if my athlete's team qualifies for a state tournament?
If your athlete's team qualifies for a state tournament bid, consider that a big honor, but

it will be a head coach decision if the team attends. There are at least 3 state-wide youth baseball organizations and each one has their own state tournament. Currently, the AYBA considers this an “extra” tournament, and will pay for the registration fees associated with this.

What are the fees associated with AYBA Travel Baseball?
All athletes participating in the Travel Ball Evaluations on September 7th are required to pay a $20 non-refundable evaluation fee, which is due at the time of registration. Please note that this fee does not apply toward the overall AYBA travel fee, as it covers expenses associated with the evaluation process.
The travel fees for the 2026 season are as follows:

- 9U: $350
- 10U–14U: $525

Note: 1/2 of the Payment is due by October 15. This will be non-refundable. We do have payment plans available - details available during the registration process.

Are there other costs with AYBA Travel Ball?
Yes. Travel baseball can be costly. If there are extra expenses these will be communicated by the team’s coaching staff.

Families should also plan for other expenses that come with travel, including hotel accommodations, food, and potential admission fees at tournaments.

What equipment does my athlete need to play baseball?
The equipment needed for each athlete includes a batting helmet, a baseball glove, baseball pants, a baseball belt, baseball socks, plastic molded baseball cleats and a “cup” (to protect an athlete’s genitals). Optional equipment includes batting gloves, sunglasses, water bottles, baseball bag, sliding pants (worn under baseball pants for further protection) and base layer equipment if needed for colder games. Most kids have a baseball bat that they use. Baseball bats are not provided by the team. Each team is provided with catching equipment. Each age level has rules associated with bat specifics, please refer to the link for details.

What does AYBA provide for the uniform?
AYBA supplies each player with two jerseys and a team hat. The team will decide on a specific style of baseball pants, which families will need to purchase separately.

How does communication with the coaches occur?
Before team rosters are announced, each head coach will receive the contact information for the athletes assigned to their team. Shortly after the announcements, the head coach will reach out to the families. Most teams will hold a meeting to introduce the coaching staff, meet the players and parents, and provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions.

Are there any final points of emphasis with the AYBA?
I’m so glad you asked! We have a Coach’s Code of Conduct and a Parent Code of Conduct on the website that are expected to be reviewed and signed/dated. In summary, these documents should be considered common sense but include the following:
1) Remember you are representing AYBA and the city of Alexandria.
2) Cheer FOR your team and NOT AGAINST the opponent
3) Remember that umpires are human and that they make mistakes also.

If you have any other questions, concerns, etc please feel free to reach out to travel@alexyouthbaseball.com.

Travel Directors: Scott Dack and Alyssa Yrjo