

Babe Ruth Metro League Play: Ages 15-18 The Babe Ruth Metro League was established in 2008 to allow high school coaches the opportunity to keep a combination of their JV / Varsity players playing together during the summer vs. having them scatter-out and play for various tournament teams. The Metro League enables these school players to play locally against other comparable high school teams during the summer, continue to develop their team chemistry and continue to receive consistent fundamental instruction from high school caliber coaches. It also allows their high school coaches to keep a close eye on pitch counts and mechanics and avoid overuse of players' arms.

Our Stewards of the Game Metro League team is typically coached by a paid Varsity or JV coach; thus the higher registration fee. Since each team in the Metro League must be associated with a specific school, we partner with Southlake Christian Academy in helping us field this team. We typically hire a SLCA coach to coach this team; while also using their high school field. While many of the players on our Metro League team play at SLCA, there are always roster spots available to other high-caliber players. We compete against school teams from North Meck, Hopewell, Concord High, Northwest Cabarrus, Mallard Creek and a host of other Charlotte and Concord based high schools.

Depending on interest, there will be a 1-2 week-long tryout for this team early in the season. Players not making our Metro League team will have the option of being placed on our Babe Ruth 15/16 or 17/18U recreational teams within Stewards of the Game; assuming there are enough players to form these teams. These teams will then compete against other Babe Ruth recreational-level teams comprised of players of comparable skill level.

College Prep Showcase Play: Ages 19 & Under Based on demand, we may also field a Stewards of the Game Showcase team to meet the needs of players who possess the talent and drive to play college baseball. Most college coaches agree that players wishing to play college baseball should either be playing in College Showcase tournaments and/or on American Legion baseball teams during the fall of their junior year and the summer before their senior year.

There will be a try-out held early in the season for players seeking to earn a spot on this team. The team will practice several times a week and then play in select Showcase Tournaments on the weekends throughout the season. As with our Babe Ruth Metro League Play, coaches for this team will be paid professional coaches. Registration fees will incorporate the stipends paid to the coaches; as well as costs for insurance, uniforms, equipment and tournament fees. Families will be responsible for funding expenses related to travel and hotel accommodations for themselves and their player.

Advanced Play!



www.stewardsofthegame.org

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AP BASEBALL

ADVANCED PLAY Baseball Program



Philosophy

Stewards of the Game is committed to teaching young people sound, age-appropriate fundamentals of the game of baseball; regardless of the players' skill level. Whether players' interests lie in playing recreational baseball, high school baseball, college baseball or professional baseball; we are committed to develop and sustain programs within Stewards of the Game that can help players of all skill levels achieve their full-God given potential AND assist them in achieving their baseball dreams.

We feel strongly that through our AP Baseball program, we can "strengthen the weak without weakening the strong." At ages 12 and below, stronger and weaker players will play together; with the more talented players being spread

equally across our regular season teams to achieve team parity. This serves multiple purposes. First, the stronger players have an opportunity to mentor the weaker players and help them get better. This is an important life lesson that is crucial for all young players to learn early in life. It also allows the more advanced players to develop and fine-tune their leadership skills.

Second, this concept also allows weaker players the opportunity to play with the more talented players, giving them something to aspire to. Just because a player is not an "All-Star" at age 7 or 8 does not mean they can't eventually develop into a great player. Some players simply mature later. We firmly believe that if we totally segregate the better players from the less advanced players at too early of an age, we do both groups a great disservice.

We also firmly believe that the more advanced players do need structured opportunities to play with and against more advanced ballplayers. At ages 12 and below, we accommodate this through our Challenge and All-Star programs. At ages 13 and up, we allow the more advanced players to practice and play as a unit throughout the regular season. As players get older, their bodies mature and they develop a genuine love for the game, we must provide these players with more and more advanced play opportunities.

The following programs are all part of our **AP Baseball** strategy to provide the more skilled ballplayers with advanced play opportunities in a manner and frequency that is age-appropriate. These programs can start with Challenge Baseball at age 7 and then culminate with our College Prep Showcase program for those players with the skill and desire to play college baseball.



ADVANCED PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

Challenge Play: Ages 7-12 Challenge teams for these age groups are assembled early in the season to provide the more advanced players with the opportunity to compete against other select teams in various Challenge, USSSA or Nations Baseball tournaments. Challenge players ages 12 and under play on regular season teams to reinforce the spirit of lifting others up; while having the opportunity to refine their skills against stiffer competition through periodic weekend Challenge tournaments in both the spring and fall seasons. Challenge players are not guaranteed a spot on our All-Star teams formed at the end of the spring season. It is not uncommon for a non-Challenge player to work hard during the regular season, improve their game and beat-out a Challenge player to make the All-Star team.

All-Star Play: Ages 7-18 All-Star teams are selected by the regular season coaches at the end of the spring regular season. These teams, formed at each one-year annual age increments (e.g. 7U, 8U, 9U...all the way up to 18U) will compete in post season Cal Ripken / Babe Ruth Area tournaments. Top seeds from these Area tournaments can advance to State, Regional and National level tournaments; culminating in the Cal Ripken / Babe Ruth World Series. In the summer of 2009, our 8U, 9U, 11U, 12U, 13U, 15U and 16U All-Star teams all advanced to their respective State Tourna-

ments. This is a testimony to what hard working players and coaches can accomplish when they are committed and focused on teaching sound fundamentals in an atmosphere where teaching faith-based life lessons through sports is the #1 priority.



Babe Ruth Elite Play: Ages 13-14 We firmly believe that age 13 is the appropriate time to begin allowing the more advanced ballplayers to practice and play together as a unit all season. At this age, middle school baseball players are faced with the reality of trying-out and making their middle school teams, or being cut. Our Babe Ruth Elite teams will compete against other advanced-level teams in the Charlotte Babe Ruth league. Our Babe Ruth Elite Teams will be selected based on 1-2 week-long tryouts held early in the season. Depending on the number of players, we may field both a 13U Elite team and a 14U Elite team. Players not making these Elite teams will be placed on our Babe Ruth 13/14U recreational teams within Stewards of the Game and compete against other Babe Ruth recreational-level teams comprised of players of comparable talent.