

Ocee Park Select Baseball Program 2008 Program Offering



Program Description: During the 2008 Spring season, Ocee Park Athletic Association will again offer a Select Program in baseball. This program will be geared toward players looking for a more challenging baseball experience but at the same time are not interested in the rigors or expense of a traditional travel team program. The Select Program will offer an opportunity for players in a variety of age groups to be part of a highly competitive team that will practice together throughout the year and participate in a variety of invitational tournaments both locally and, potentially, in other states. Participants in the Select Program will still participate in the Ocee Park recreational program but will be able to advance their skills and test themselves against other select and travel teams at the local, state, and even national level.

Season: Tryouts will be conducted in January of 2008 and the season will conclude in June of 2008 prior to the start of the summer Cal Ripken tournament trail. The January to June calendar will be used for all select teams for the 2008 season and beyond.

Select Program Teams: there will be 4 baseball select teams with one each in the 9-, 10-, 11-, and 12- age groups.

2008 Tryouts: To be determined – tentatively to be conducted between January 15th and 31st, 2008.

Participation Fee: there will be a standard participation fee required of each select team player. This fee is in addition to the fee assessed for the Ocee Park recreational program. The participation fee is collected by OPAA to pay for uniforms, trophies, and miscellaneous expenses associated with each team. If a select team player is also chosen for one of the summer Babe Ruth or Cal Ripken tournament teams, an additional fee for participation on that team will be required. The participation fee for 2008 has not yet been determined by the Board of Directors but will be set prior to the Select team tryouts. Keep in mind that the participation fee is the minimal fee for a team and that the actual fee for a team will depend on the number of games and tournaments that a team enters.

Tournament Fees: each Select team will choose a number of local tournaments in which to participate. Each tournament will have its own team and/or player entry fee in addition to the travel expenses for the team to participate in the tournament. General funds collected for the OPAA recreation program will not be used to fund the Select teams. As a result, participants on the Select teams will be required to contribute or raise the funds necessary for all select team specific functions.

Fundraising: All prospective fundraising events must be approved by the OPAA Board of Directors. Fundraising events may also require city of Johns Creek approval and/or a permit. As an organization, we need to be sensitive to the fact that multiple programs are operating out of the park and these programs are competing with each other for a limited amount of contributions. Any Select team in-park fundraising events will be required to allocate 25% of the event proceeds to the OPAA general fund with the remaining 75% earmarked for the Select Program. All funds raised by a Select team via any kind of fundraising effort be it in-park or out of park are required to be turned over to the OPAA treasurer for appropriate accounting.

Select Program Age Determination: 4/30/2008 (the same date used for the recreational program). The minimum league age of a player must be 9-years old and a maximum of 12-years old in order to tryout for the program.

Playing Up/Down: players are restricted to their own age group based on their league age as determined using the above date. Players will not be permitted to play down or up in age group.

Team Composition: each team will consist of between 11 and 15 players at the discretion of the coach and with approval from the Select program coordinator. Any player that withdraws from a team or is removed from a team may, at the discretion of the team manager, be replaced.

Manager/Coach Selection Process: the managers and coaches for all Select teams will be nominated by the Select Program Coordinator based on a variety of criteria. Board of Director approval for each nomination is required. Each team will have 1 manager and 2 coaches. The following is a list of some of the primary criteria that will be used for manager and coach selection:

- Previous managerial or coaching experience
- Feedback from prior seasons in recreation program and All Stars
- Certification and/or participation in coaching clinics
- Assessment scores for their son (previous seasons)
- Assessment scores from select tryouts (for coaches only)

Managers and coaches will be required to have current volunteer applications on file and will be subjected to and must pass a background check. Further, all managers and coaches will be expected to be certified under the Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken ASEP Coach Certification Process at their own expense. If a manager or coach has received certification under a comparable program, at the recommendation of the Select Program Coordinator, that coach will be considered certified. Select team managers may be identified prior to the tryouts but in most cases will not be selected until following assessments. Coaches may be selected prior to tryouts but in most cases the selection of coaches will not be done until the completion of the tryout process. Interested select team manager and coach candidates should email selectprogramcoordinator@oceepark.com.

Team Selection Process: teams will be selected following an extensive player assessment process. Players will be assessed based on infield and outfield fundamentals such as arm strength, throwing mechanics, range and accuracy, fly balls, ground balls, thrown balls, hitting fundamentals (mechanics, bat speed, power, bunting, contact), and speed/base running skills. Additionally, players will be evaluated for pitching and catching. Each team manager will select players based on their skills to produce the strongest team possible.

Eligible Participants: to be eligible to tryout for a Select team, a player must have registered for, participated in, and completed the prior Spring season at Ocee Park as a member of a team in the recreational program with the following noted exceptions:

- If a player registers as a new player for Spring 2008 and is selected in the registration lottery for an opening, that player is eligible provided they have completed registration for the Spring recreation program prior to the start of Select program tryouts
- If a player is wait listed for the Spring 2008 but is selected to fill an opening, that player is eligible provided they have completed registration for the Spring recreation program prior to the start of Select program tryouts

Players that are chosen for a Select team must continue to play in the Spring as part of the recreational program (see detailed requirements). Players must also meet the age requirement for a Select team based on their league age for the season in which they will play. The league age for the Select team will be the same as the league age for the Spring recreation program season.

Practices, Games, and Tournaments: the Select teams will conduct practices throughout the course of the year as determined by the team manager. Most practices will be on Sundays in an effort to minimize conflicts with the Ocee Park recreation team schedules. It is anticipated that each select team will participate in a minimum of 3 tournaments throughout the season as well as additional games scheduled on Sundays.

Select teams will have field space allocated to them for scheduled practices/games. Conducting practices/games at Ocee Park outside of these allocated dates/times is not allowed without receiving prior approval from the Select Team Coordinator. All events must be scheduled so as not to conflict with recreation league schedules. Select team game/tournament schedules must be approved by the Select Team Coordinator. It should be noted that once the Spring recreation season begins in mid-February through the end of the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth tournaments in July, the recreation program has priority over the Select program.

Each Select team will set its own game schedule and the number of games played will likely vary by team. Given that Select team players also are required to play with their recreation teams, there is a very real concern that the number of games being played by Select players not be allowed to become excessive. To address this concern, the Select team schedules will be established so that between both the recreation and Select programs, no player is participating in more than 40 total games within a single Spring season.

A condition of the Select program is that it not conflict with the recreation league schedule. Each team will be required to submit its proposed schedule to the Select Team Coordinator for review/approval. Since Select team players also are required to play within the OPAA recreation program, select team games/tournaments are to be scheduled in such a way that there is no conflict with the schedules of OPAA recreation league team schedules. Select team schedules that conflict/interfere with recreation league games/practices will not be approved.

OPAA Select teams follow game length rules used by USSSA and local travel/Select programs. These rules differ from OPAA Rec League rules. Select team games are NOT subject to OPAA Rec League rules regarding length of game.

All Select teams will play six inning games with a two hour time limit. The game time starts EXACTLY when the first pitch is delivered to the first batter of the game. Subsequent innings begin exactly when the third out is made in the bottom half of an inning. A ten-run slaughter rule will be in effect after 4 1/2 or 5 innings (3 1/2 or 4 innings for the 11 and under divisions). Any inning started prior to the 2-hour limit will be completed unless the slaughter rule is applicable.

The game clock shall be stopped when unexpected lengthy delays are encountered. Serious injury, light failures, sprinkler systems, bad weather may cause such delays, or an extraordinary amount of time spent to clarify a rule. Use common sense.

It is the manager's responsibility to clearly communicate these game length rules at the pre-game meeting at home plate with the opposing manager and umpires.

Note that OPAA has a defined adverse weather policy that covers situations deemed to be unsuitable for outdoor baseball events. All Select teams are required to adhere to the policy.

Playing Time: The goal of the Select program is to give players the opportunity to enhance their skills and test themselves against other select and travel teams. To do so, players obviously need to receive playing time in game situations. It is expected that all players will receive playing time during each game they participate in with a Select team. However, this does

not imply that all players will necessarily receive **EQUAL** playing time. Playing decisions are made at the discretion of each Select team's coaching staff and are to be based on game situation and the abilities of the players on the team.

Requirements for Participation: participation in the Select program is an honor and a privilege and is not an entitlement. Select team players, managers, coaches or parents that do not adhere to the requirements may be removed from the program at the discretion of the team manager, the Select Program Coordinator, or the Board of Directors. Once a team is selected, the team manager has full authority over the players, coaches and parents on that team, but all Select teams remain under the oversight of the Select Program Coordinator and the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors of OPAA has the ultimate authority over each Select team player, manager, coach and parent and will be the final determining body for any issues pertaining to the Select program. The release/removal of a player or the exclusion of a player from team events prior to the end of the team's defined season requires review and approval of the Select Program Coordinator and the Board of Directors. Players removed from a Select team for cause will not be entitled to a refund.

Each player, once selected to a team, will be required to execute a Letter of Commitment for their team. The letter will detail the expectations and requirements for the player as well as a code of conduct the player and parents are expected to follow. The specific requirements for a player to be eligible and to remain eligible for participation on a Select team include but are not limited to the following:

- The player must have participated as part of the recreation program in the prior Spring season at Ocee Park or meet one of the exceptions noted in the eligibility section (lottery or wait list selection for an opening prior to tryouts) in order to attend Select program tryouts
- The player must register for and participate as part of the recreation program for the current season in which the player participates on a select team (a player must be registered to attend tryouts; players that are wait listed are not eligible)
- A select team player is required to attend a minimum of 80% of all of their recreation team practices and games
- All financial obligations incurred by a select program player must be paid in a timely manner
- Select team managers, players are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times since they are representatives of our program. Failure to maintain the high standards expected by the

Select Program Coordinator and the Board of Directors will be grounds for immediate dismissal

- Select team managers may impose other requirements on select team players that will be addressed in the letter of commitment

Uniforms: Select teams will wear uniforms which reflect the black and orange color scheme of the OPAA program. Each team is responsible for selecting and ordering the uniform package of their choice. Select team uniforms generally are of a higher quality and consist of more pieces than recreation program uniforms. Prior to ordering uniforms, the team manager must submit color examples of the uniform package being used by the team to the Select Program Coordinator for approval.

Uniforms comprise one of the major costs incurred by a Select team. Our Select teams will have access to the same vendor that supplies our recreation program uniforms. It is expected that by all Select teams using the same uniform package and by using the recreation program vendors, considerable savings to the teams will result.

Costs/Team Finance: Players offered a position on a Select team will be required to remit the participation fee within 14 days of their selection to the team. Failure to do so may result in the position being offered to another player.

Select teams will be held to the same financial standards as OPAA All Star teams. All funds collected from families will be deposited within the main OPAA accounts. Reimbursements for team costs will be made via the established OPAA reimbursement policy. Under no circumstances will any team affiliated with OPAA maintain a separate team bank account of any sort. Failure to comply with OPAA financial policies will result in immediate disbandment of the team. OPAA will issue payment/reimbursement for team-related expenses only. Valid team expenses include, but are not limited to, tournament registration fees, umpire fees, team registration fees and indoor facility usage costs. Individual family expenses for travel to/from any team event are not valid team expenses and are the sole responsibility of the family. OPAA will only allocate Select Program funds to cover costs incurred by the team as a whole. The OPAA treasurer will not disperse funds for any Select Program cost unless it is directly attributable to a valid team cost and approved by the Select Program Coordinator and the OPAA Board of Directors. Each team will be provided a detailed account of costs they have incurred on a regular basis.

Relationship to In-Park All Stars: Select program participants are fully eligible to be selected to their In-Park All Star teams at the conclusion of the regular season for the recreational program. Being a member of a Select team does not increase nor decrease the likelihood of selection to the In-Park All Star team.

Relationship to Babe Ruth & Cal Ripken Tournament Teams: Select program participants are fully eligible for selection to the summer Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken tournament teams to represent Ocee Park in district, state, and regional competition. Note that select team players are required to participate in at least 80% of their recreation program team practices and games which exceeds the Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken minimum of 50% for tournament team eligibility. Being a member of a Select team does not increase nor decrease the likelihood of selection to a tournament team. Select team players are not guaranteed a spot on any tournament team nor are any of the Select team managers or coaches given preference during the selection process for tournament team managers/coaches. There are many reasons for maintaining this separation between the Select and tournament teams. Some players may choose not to play in the Select program or fail to make a Select team but they may qualify to represent Ocee Park on one of the tournament teams. Additionally, a player new to the Spring program that was ineligible to tryout for the Select program should be provided an equal chance to qualify for a tournament team.

More Information: email selectprogramcoordinator@oceepark.com