

## DSA House Baseball Policies and Procedures

DSA Baseball is comprised of two related, but essentially separate programs. House baseball offers recreational baseball in the spring and fall as well as fielding Select baseball teams in the spring (teams form in late October), summer (select only--teams form in May), and fall (teams form in August). The key dates and policies for the House program are included in this document, for comparable information for the Select baseball program, check that document.

The primary goal of the House (rec) program is to provide youth of the community with an opportunity to learn about and play the national pastime. Players should be allowed to learn from their mistakes, and be given an equal opportunity to participate, regardless of their skill level. Players, parents, or coaches who seek a more competitive environment should be encouraged to explore travel baseball through the DSA Select Baseball program.

**Policies discussed here for the House program may or may not be relevant for Select program and vice versa.** Parents, coaches, and other program officials should avoid comparing policies for the two programs, as the circumstances and goals of each are very different. For example, while the Commissioner of Baseball or his/her designee make decisions about various aspects of House play (what league, equipment, uniforms, will be used by each division), those decisions are generally made by each Select team's Head Coach. Essentially, Select teams are treated as individual "franchises," operating under the DSA umbrella, with team specific decisions made by the Head Coach in consultation with the Assistant Commissioner for Select Baseball and with the approval of the Commissioner for Baseball.

### January

House (rec) spring baseball registration opens January 1 (be sure to review November and December actions in preparation for spring season). Weekly notices should be distributed via DSA Newsletter, Facebook, and Twitter. School flyers are distributed to elementary school in the Damascus Cluster, and Selected day care providers (check with Tee ball Division Director for suggestions). **Date of distribution and number of flyers vary by school, are [regulated by MCPS](#) and are very strictly enforced.** Effort should be made to coordinate with Softball.

Team rosters are limited to ten players for 4u Tee ball (eight is ideal), and twelve for 6u Coach Pitch and up (teams should have at least 10 players). **Parents should be made aware that roster caps are in place and that early registration is key to ensuring we have space for everyone. Waiting lists will be used unless sufficient players register to form additional teams.**

Field schedules and permits for the spring season should be finalized by the Fields Coordinator and approved by the Commissioner. Historical permits (for fields DSA has held multiple springs since 2016) are generally made available in December. This allows the program to prepare and submit a supplemental request for spring permits, via the DSA Administrator, in mid-January (the earliest date requests can be made varies from year to year).

Division Directors need not be approved by DSA, but should formally agree to carry out responsibilities as assigned by the Commissioner, such as practice field coordination, roster development, and rules interpretations. Experience has shown that the most effective division directors have recently coached or been a team leader in the division they are to help lead, but do not currently have a child

participating in within the division. This policy contributes to greater acceptance of the director's role as an unbiased facilitator and advisor to coaches.

DSA Umpire Coordinator should be contacted and arrangements made for umpiring for all House player pitch games with our partner associations (NOTE: player pitch games involving DSA are not required to use a DSA umpire.)

DSA House supports the development of 8u machine pitch players as they prepare for player pitch baseball at the rec or travel level. **Experience has shown that participation in one or two machine pitch tournaments (which allow exposure to wider pool of talent) is one means to help players prepare for player-pitch baseball.** The House program generally uses two methods to provide access to such tournaments. Since Spring 2017, The House program has formed an 8u machine pitch team to play in a local tournament. The head coaches from these teams are approved by the Commissioner, and are largely responsible for developing a budget, finding sponsors, and working with the Commissioner to develop a mechanism for assembling a roster from players who register and play 8u machine pitch for DSA this spring. Due to the limited number of local tournaments, and the cost associated with each, DSA may host a small machine pitch tournament to be held in Late June (generally the weekend after the regular season has ended). The tournament may be co-hosted by another association (e.g. CSA) or the DSA Select program, at the discretion of the Commissioner. Proceeds from the tournament can be shared, with the DSA share generally used to support upkeep of machine pitch equipment or to offset startup costs of first year select teams.

### February

Continue to monitor and promote spring registration. Coordinate with various interleague partners (e.g., CSA, LOUYAA, Urbana) to arrange and determine competition (interleague play may vary by division and from year to year). Coaching slate should be prepared for DSA BOD approval and submitted no later than February 28.

Picture Day, Coaches Game, equipment distribution, uniform distribution, and coaches meeting (as well as other keep in-season events) should be scheduled. Picture Day and Coaches Game should be scheduled in cooperation with Softball. NOTE: because Picture Day takes place in late March or early April, weather can be unpredictable. A location that can accommodate either indoor or outdoor settings is preferable.

### March

As the final number of teams will not be known until registration closes in mid-March, by the first week of March a good estimate should be available. **NOTE: due to the need to order uniforms well in advance of the season (see December), the sizes needed for teams in each age group are estimated from historical trends.** Coaches and parents should be reminded that uniforms are not custom and may not fit perfectly or to the preference of parents. Jerseys will only be replaced if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, the jersey would inhibit player performance. Coaches or parents with concerns should submit a photo of the player in the uniform within 24 hours of receipt. If approved a replacement jersey (same number), should be provided in 2 to 3 weeks.

Team rosters should be developed by Division Directors and submitted to Commissioner for approval. Directors, coaches, parents, and players should be reminded that this is a rec league and roster

development is a complex process. Personal preference must have a limited role in roster development as moving players from team to team is onerous and ultimately may have an adverse impact on the players involved (making room for a player may mean moving another player. This should be avoided if at all possible). NOTE: Experience has shown that there is an ideal number of players for each team. This reflects both the ability of coaches to provide good instruction and the participation rules negotiated with our various partner associations (without these partnerships, we would not be able to provide a good experience for our players). As mentioned earlier, rosters are limited to ten players for 4u Tee ball (eight is ideal), and twelve for 6u Coach Pitch and up (teams should have at least 10 players). Rosters are formed based on the following criteria: 1) unless a parent or guardian requests in writing during the registration process that a player NOT be assigned his or her previous coach, age eligible players should be assigned to the previous coach (spring not fall, as fall teams are often an amalgamation of spring teams). Players new to DSA or the division should be distributed as needed to complete rosters. Parents may request that a new player be paired with a friend (siblings of the same age division should always be paired, unless the parent or guardian requests (in writing) that they be separated).

Playing outside of your age group. All league assign players based on age. While the birthday cutoff date for rec baseball varies from association to association, most fall sometime in May. Because many DSA players in our younger divisions may eventually choose to play select (or travel) baseball (which observes a nationally recognized birthday cutoff of May 1, we have assigned the house (rec) program a birthday cutoff to May 31. This minimizes the likelihood that a player will not be able to transition to select with his or her teammates while increasing the likelihood that players in the same grade may be together. NOTE: DSA Baseball recognizes that at the rec level, player skills can vary greatly within the same age group. Thus, unlike in select (travel) program, the Commissioner may consider requests to “play up” in an older division. Requests to “play down” in a younger division more complicated, as our interleague partners must approve the participation of players who are older than the agreed to age distributions. All such requests must be approved in writing by the Commissioner.

Practice should begin in the third week of March. All House (rec) teams are guaranteed one practice field a week. Field days and time may change once season begins due to changes in the availability of fields. **All DSA teams must practice on a DSA permitted field at a time and day assigned or approved by the Commissioner.** NOTE: Players may not change teams without written permission of the Commissioner, and only under extreme circumstances. Refunds are not provided after practices begin, may only be approved if a “wait-listed” player is available to fill roster spot.

## **April**

Final roster adjustments to be completed. Games to begin in the first or second week of the month, depending on Spring break. Again, players may not change teams without written permission of the Commissioner, and only under extreme circumstances. Refunds are not provided after practices begin, may only be approved if a “wait-listed” player is available to fill roster spot.

All coaches should be aware of and agree to rain out procedures covered in coaches meeting and coordinated with partner associations. **DSA teams MUST NOT practice on any field closed by the County**, as failing to head closures can result in loss of field permits by DSA (reference MCPP “Rain out” line. NOTE: All team leaders should subscribe to the “Rain Out” line alert system).

## May

Procedures for ending spring season should be begin, including ordering players participation medals or awards (4u through 12u usually receive medals, 13/15 division players may be awarded other items at the discretion of the coach, such as signed baseballs, etc.). Teams should begin to schedule team parties or other events.

Machine pitch tournament team(s) should begin to form and practice.

Preliminary plans for the fall season should begin, including determining which coaches may be interested in coaching in the fall as well as a sense of how many players may be interested. Recall, uniform sets not used for spring will be used for fall teams as appropriate.

## June

Regular spring season concludes, playoffs in player pitch divisions take place as agreed with partner associations. Equipment returns and maintenance should be scheduled and held with the cooperation of the Equipment Manager and Division Directors.

Fall baseball uniforms should be ordered based on inventory on hand at the end of spring season, and with the informal input of division directors. NOTE: for the past several seasons we have generally had no more than two teams in any fall division, most often only one. **Parents should be made aware that roster caps are still in place and that early registration is key to ensuring we have space for everyone. Waiting lists will be used unless sufficient players register to form additional teams.**

House (rec) baseball should finalize changes to SI Play in preparation for fall registration to open on July 15. Steps to advertise via social media and flyers should be made. Coordination with softball for the distribution of printed materials should be considered and pursued as appropriate.

## July

House (rec) fall baseball registration opens July 15. Weekly notices should be distributed via DSA Newsletter, Facebook, and Twitter. Coordinate with various interleague partners (e.g., CSA, LOUYAA, Urbana) to arrange and determine competition (interleague play may vary by division and from year to year). Coaching slate should be prepared for DSA BOD approval and submitted no later than July 15. NOTE: Because the spring season is generally the more demanding of the two, coaches approved for the spring are generally considered approved for the fall, unless significant concerns have been brought to the Commissioner's attention during or after the spring season. This greatly facilitates formation and approval of the fall coaching slate.

## August

As the final number of teams will not be known until registration closes in mid-August, by the first week of August a good estimate should be available. NOTE: due to the need to order uniforms well in advance of the season (see June), the sizes needed for teams in each age group are estimated from historical trends. Coaches and parents should be reminded that uniforms are not custom and may not fit perfectly or to the preference of parents. Jerseys will only be replaced if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, the jersey would inhibit player performance. Coaches or parents with concerns should

submit a photo of the player in the uniform within 24 hours of receipt. If approved a replacement jersey (same number), should be provided in 2 to 3 weeks.

Team rosters should be developed by Division Directors or Assistant Commissioner and submitted to Commissioner for approval. Directors, coaches, parents, and players should be reminded that this a rec program and roster development is a complex process. Personal preference must have a limited role in roster development as moving players from team to team is onerous and ultimately may have an adverse impact on the players involved (making room for a player may mean moving another player-- this should be avoided if at all possible). NOTE: Experience has shown that there is an ideal number of players for each team. This reflects both the ability of coaches to provide good instruction and the participation rules negotiated with our various partner associations (without these partnerships, we would not be able to provide a good experience for our players). Rosters are limited to ten players for 4u Tee ball (eight is ideal), and twelve for 6u Coach Pitch and up (teams should have at least 10 players). Rosters are formed based on the following criteria: 1) unless a parent or guardian requests in writing during the registration process that a player NOT be assigned his or her previous coach, age eligible players should be assigned to the previous coach (spring not fall, as fall teams are often an amalgamation of spring teams). Players new to DSA or the division should be distributed as needed to complete rosters. Parents may request that a new player be paired with a friend (siblings of the same age division should always be paired, unless the parent or guardian requests (in writing) that they be separated.

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Practice should begin in the third week of August. All House (rec) teams are guaranteed one practice field a week. Field days and time may change once season begins due to changes in the availability of fields. **All DSA teams must practice on a DSA permitted field at a time and day assigned or approved by the Commissioner.** NOTE: Players may not change teams without written permission of the Commissioner, and only under extreme circumstances. Refunds are not provided after practices begin, may only be approved if a "wait listed" player is available to fill roster spot.

## September

Regular fall season begins. NOTE: due to limited daylight available in the fall, most games are played on weekends and there are NO playoffs.

## **October**

Preliminary plans for the spring season should begin, including determining which returning coaches may be interested in coaching, as well as a sense of how many players may be interested. Recall, uniform sets not used for spring will be used for fall teams as appropriate.

## **November**

Applications for spring coaching should be solicited per DSA procedures, all program leadership positions should be confirmed or advertised as needed.

## **December**

House baseball should finalize changes to SI Play in preparation for registration to open on January 1. Steps to advertise via social media and flyers should be made. Coordination with softball for the distribution of printed materials should be considered and pursued as appropriate.

Uniform orders for house teams should be placed no later than mid-December.

Field availability and projected need should be finalized in preparation for open registration in January (coordinated with DSA Permit Coordinator).

Select baseball teams should submit final budgets for spring season and all players should have made the "good faith" installment required at the time a spot is accepted on each team's roster. Uniform orders for Select teams should be placed no later than mid-December.