

# Hudson Youth Baseball - Hudson "Hit Dawgs"

## Summer Travel Team Guidelines

Hudson Youth Baseball (HYB) has a long-standing tradition of fielding summer Travel Teams to compete in tournaments throughout New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts after the spring recreation season has concluded.



**Goal:** To provide additional opportunities for selected HYB players beyond the traditional recreation season. Travel baseball allows players to experience a higher caliber of competition and to participate in additional practices and games during the late spring and summer months. Travel baseball is more demanding than the rec season; teams practice and play more often, and competition is greater. That said, baseball is baseball and the goal of HYB and its travel coaches is to provide a fun, rewarding experience for every player. HYB travel teams will value sportsmanship, working on skills, and developing into better players. While it may be more result-driven in terms of wins/losses, player development is a major focus.

**Expectations:** As members of Hudson travel teams, players and their families represent the league and the town at games and practices. When you put on your travel jersey and hat, you are part of the "face" of HYB and the Town of Hudson. In other words, travel teams are expected to play with pride, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. As is true during the rec season - all players, coaches and spectators are expected to abide by the HYB Code of Conduct.

**Travel Team Age Levels:** HYB offers five age levels in its travel program - 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, and 12u. Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken baseball utilizes these designations to ensure that no player over that age level competes in a younger division. This corresponds to the same age levels offered by most other neighboring leagues throughout New Hampshire and New England. HYB does reserve the right to reduce the number of teams offered each year for various reasons, including a lack of interest or low numbers of players trying out.

**Costs to Play Travel Ball:** There are some additional expenses to participate in travel baseball, including uniform costs. HYB typically covers entry tournament fees for up to

three invitational tournaments in addition to the district, area and state tournaments on the "Cal Ripken Tournament Trail" each summer. Your team's head coach may also gauge interest from families regarding indoor practices, extra team apparel, or additional games which may result in further expenses. That said, HYB travel ball is a very inexpensive endeavor in comparison to other travel team opportunities in the area.

**Coaching Spots:** Coaches interested in becoming a Manager or Assistant Coach for a travel team should submit an application with qualifications to the HYB Board of Directors either before or early in the rec spring season. Coach interviews led by an HYB Board Sub-Committee will be conducted. Head coaches will then be offered spots to coach a team. Each year, head coaches are required to re-apply for these positions.



**Playing Time:** Because travel ball is more competitive in nature than the rec season, not every player will play their favorite position(s). However, many tournaments employ playing time rules that coaches must adhere to. For example, some invitational tournaments will require that each team bat its entire roster each game or that every player must play at least 3 innings in the field. The Cal Ripken Districts, States and Regional Tournaments all follow the Official Babe Ruth Playing Rules which includes specific guidelines regarding

substitutions. Playing time, therefore, may be more limited during the Cal Ripken Tournaments. That being said, when competing in tournaments that do not mandate playing time, HYB still strongly encourages its coaches to get every player into every game in some capacity (either as a hitter, fielder or baserunner).

**Player Tryouts:** Players must attend tryouts for consideration of a spot on a summer travel team. Spots are not guaranteed for any player, including those who made it the previous summer. Players unable to attend tryouts due to injury may be granted a waiver from the Head Coach or Board of Directors; however it is strongly encouraged that all players attend tryouts whenever possible.



**Tryout Dates:** Tryout dates for the 8u, 9u, 10u and 11u teams are announced each spring and usually held sometime in April or May. A tryout date for the following summer's 12u team is held in late August or early September as this team must have enough time to fundraise in order to raise money for the annual trip to the Cooperstown Dreams Park Hall of Fame Tournament (see below.) Every HYB family will receive email notifications regarding the schedule for travel tryouts and the dates will be posted on the league web site. Please visit [www.hudsonyouthbaseballnh.org](http://www.hudsonyouthbaseballnh.org) for more information.



**The Cooperstown Dreams Park "Hall of Fame**

**Tournament":** Players on HYB's 12U team typically compete in a special tournament to cap off their HYB careers. In 2014, HYB began the tradition of sending our 12u team to play a week-long tournament at Cooperstown Dreams Park in New York. Through the yearly commitment of the HYB Board of Directors and our travel ball families, this tradition has continued each year since (with the exception of those years interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic).

Team fundraising covers the cost of this memorable experience. Families not interested in this trip or the fundraising can work with the coach on other options. For more information on the Cooperstown Tournament, please visit [www.cooperstowndreamspark.com](http://www.cooperstowndreamspark.com)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

***Which age level should my child try out for?***

While the team is identified with a "U" after the age level to mirror state and district consistency, your child should try out for the team that matches his/her age. Travel teams are required to adhere to the same Cal Ripken Age Requirements as during the spring rec season.

***What does a player's "League Age" mean?***

A player's League Age is determined by his/her age on April 30th of the current year.

For example, a player who turns 9 years old on April 29th of this year would try out for the 9u Travel Team. Conversely, a player who turns 9 years old on May 2nd of the current year would try out for the 8U Travel Team. This is because he/she is still 8 years old on April 30th.

The only exception to the age guidelines is at our youngest age level, the 8U Team. Since there are no age levels below 8U offered, it would be appropriate for younger players to try out for the 8U team (for example, League Age 7-year-olds). It's not uncommon for a few 7-year-olds to make the 8U team each summer.

***My child seems to be better than many of his peers. Should he/she try out for an older team?***

HYB has a longstanding philosophy that players should play with their own age groups. While HYB understands the natural inclination for players/parents to want to play "up" with an older age group, the benefits to playing with players their own age is far greater. The most successful leagues have long-time sustainable success in their travel programs because they build from the bottom up and develop strong teams in every age group. (i.e. 9 year old's staying with 9 year old's, 10's with 10's, etc.) This allows players to grow as a group at their natural pace. For the same reason most leagues won't allow players to move up in age during the rec season, the same holds true for travel ball.

HYB shares the belief of baseball experts across the country that it is far better for a player's development to excel in their age group (to develop leadership skills, build confidence, compete with peers, etc.) rather than playing up and likely being a "middle of the pack player," essentially depriving them of the experience of being a team leader. This is also the rationale as to why HYB doesn't allow 10 year olds to move up to the Majors Division.

***How will I know if my child makes a summer travel team?***

Players and their families will be contacted by the Head Coach typically the following week after tryouts. When contacted, the player must decide to accept or decline a spot on the team immediately - there is no waiting period. Head coaches are strongly encouraged to contact every player who attends a tryout, whether they are offered a roster spot or not.