AAU Travel Ball League Play

Everyone knows that AAU stands for outstanding travel ball tournament play. But did you know that AAU also advocates travel ball league play?

We're not talking sandlot ball, here. This is AAU travel baseball: a league that features the best of the best. AAU league play offers an alternative to travel teams having to pay a large tournament entry fee every weekend. With so many families ranging from financial belt-tightening right now to outright financial hardship, traveling out of town to tournaments every weekend and paying expensive tournament fees just isn't feasible. That doesn't mean though that your most skilled athletes should have to give up travel ball. Instead, with AAU travel ball league play, they can play every weekend in their own "backyards" against other highly talented teams. And, of course, there are never any geographical boundary requirements in AAU within any district.

The best news is that the cost to sanction an entire league, no matter how many teams are playing, is $350 from the date you sanction your league through August 31. Whether there are six or 60 teams in the travel league, the flat rate for sanctioning the entire league is $350. That fee provides $10M in liability coverage for all teams playing in the league on any baseball field. The cost of sanctioning can be split among each of the teams in the league. Each player in the AAU travel league needs to have an AAU membership as does each coach. *We strongly recommend the AB membership.* One of the benefits of AAU membership is that your sports accident and general liability insurance is included. For more information on AAU membership, visit www.aaubaseball.org.

Each league decides for itself what the expense to run the league locally (fields/umpires/baseballs/scheduling, etc.) would be, and the expense would be divided among the teams. AAU does not involve itself in how you choose to run your league or what any fees would be for the league other than the $350 sanctioning fee.

Most leagues choose one of two options for running their league, although each league may come up with their own method if they'd like. Two common approaches are:

1) Form a committee with one representative from each team to help in the management of the league. In this format, you may want to elect a Board of Directors or an Executive Committee for the league. The committees decide on the cost for each team to participate in the league to make sure all the expenses are covered.
2) Choose a league operator to run your league. Each team would pay a fee (usually in the range of $175 to $300 depending on the expenses involved) to the league operator and the league operator does all the work: publishing and updating the schedules, managing the league, planning tournaments, league championships, etc.

Even if the league fee is $300/team, that's less than the entry fee for just one weekend tournament.

AAU recommends "Open Scheduling" where the coaches make their own schedules with the other teams. That way, if a team needs a weekend off to attend a tournament or other event, they just don't schedule themselves for that weekend. Once the league schedule is in place, all teams in the league get to play quality baseball against travel ball teams without the expense of travel. Your league may opt to play only on weekends, or only during the week, or both. You can put league tournaments into your schedule and have a league championship tournament at the end of your schedule.

Say goodbye to entry fee after entry fee after entry fee and hello to affordable travel ball! Form an AAU travel league. For more information, contact:

Debra Horn, Senior Sports Manager
AAU Baseball
407.828.3459
debra@aausports.org

or

Ed Skovron, National Chair
AAU Baseball
401.451.1999
oldpro77@msn.com