



Minnesota American Legion Baseball New Team Formation - Instructions & Information

Thank you for your interest in the American Legion Baseball Program -- the largest, oldest, and most-respected youth baseball program in the United States. Regularly scouted by colleges and pro teams, over half of today's Major League players are graduates of the Legion Baseball Program, with over 60 being members of the MLB Hall of Fame. The Legion Baseball Program is also well-grounded in important values -- emphasizing teamwork (as opposed to athletic ability alone), loyalty, respect, personal growth/maturity, Americanism, and community strength through service/volunteerism.

Although not all-inclusive, the following is a general guide for those wishing to form a new American Legion Baseball team within Minnesota. (The items below are not necessarily all in chronological / priority order.)

1. Contact the District Director who has Responsibility for your Area.

Inform your District Director, as soon as possible, of your intention to form a new team. In addition to providing detailed guidance throughout the new team formation process, your District Director will provide you with needed information about the different "Divisions" (levels) of competition in MN and your area (Division I, Division II, Junior Legion -- also outlined in the Minnesota Rule Book), about joining a league in your area, about any league fees that might apply, and provide you with a copy of the District / League rules. Information will also be provided about Playoffs and the State Championship Tournaments. In Minnesota, teams within all three levels of competition have the opportunity to advance to a Regional Championship Tournament!

For a list of District Directors within Minnesota, as well as their contact information, please see the linked document that is posted on the Minnesota American Legion Baseball web site (in the District/MN Staff Directory Section). (Determine the county in which the high school [at which you intend to base your team] is located. Then refer to the posted document, to determine which Director has responsibility for that county.) The document also contains a VERY brief summary of Legion Baseball age-eligibility and rule terminology.

2. Timeline / Deadline Information.

In forming a new team, there are many tasks to perform and issues to address. For example, uniforms (including sleeve patches) and equipment need to be ordered so as to arrive well before the start of the Legion season -- which begins toward the conclusion of the high school season. Therefore, it is very important that newly forming teams begin the process as early as possible (e.g., by late winter.)

All teams must complete the first step of on-line registration by April 1st. In the case of a new team, this deadline may be extended into early May, but no later than May 15th.

3. Helpful General Information / Resources.

- MN American Legion Baseball home page - www.mnlegion.org (then follow the link for Baseball). Make sure to thoroughly review the following, which are available on the site:
 - Latest available version of Minnesota American Legion Baseball Rule Book, particularly the sections that cover Uniforms & Equipment, Staff & Player Eligibility, Player & Team Registration Requirements, Player Selection, District, League & Playoff Competition, Playing Regulations, Division II Program, Junior Legion Program.
 - Concussion training requirements for all coaches -- a MN State Law.
 - Annual Background Check requirements for all coaches and volunteer staff who have direct contact with players. (Note: background checks can only be performed by the vendor designated by National.)
 - Instructions that pertain to on-line team registration -- and the deadlines for each phase of the registration process.
 - The costs of required Insurance Coverages and National & State Registration Fees. (Note: teams may only purchase accident and liability insurance from the vendor designated by National.)
 - Forms and Administrative Resources.
 - Invitational tournament listings.
- National American Legion Baseball home page - www.legion.org/baseball

4. Determine the Sponsor of your Team.

All teams must have a Sponsor -- who serves as the ultimate authority and responsible party for the team. Most teams are sponsored by a local American Legion Post -- but National permits other organizations to sponsor a team as well (known as "Outside Sponsors.") Under National and State rules, an Outside Sponsor may include a support group, booster club, company, private association or corporation. (Note that a high school may not directly sponsor a team.)

While securing full funding from a Sponsor is, of course, desirable, note that Sponsors are not necessarily required to provide full or partial funding of the team's operation. Each Sponsor/Team partnership has its own unique relationship and terms. Some Sponsors are in name-only. Some provide partial funding to the team -- with the team utilizing player participation fees, fundraising activities, and/or donation solicitation to reach its funding goal. Sponsors often also provide assistance to the team in raising funds, by holding or helping to organize/promote team fundraisers.

5. Decide Upon a Team Name (and a Division of Competition).

Under State and National rules, "team names may identify the Post / Sponsor, City, Town, Township, or Community that the team represents." (Note that a team may not assume the name of the high school at which the team is based.) Appropriateness of the team's name is subject to District and State Director approval. Most teams typically incorporate the Sponsor's name into the team name and/or include sponsor identification on the team's uniforms and/or caps. (For examples of team names, refer to the directory of Minnesota teams, available on the National web site -- via the "Find a Team" link.)

6. Complete / File Your Intent to Form a New Team.

Use the New Team Formation form (available in the Administrative Resources section of the MN Legion Baseball web page) to outline the specifics related to your team (e.g., name, school that your team will use as the basis for its player recruiting boundary, sponsor, how you intend to fund your team, etc.) Your Team Manager -- as well as your Sponsor's representative -- must sign the form. Submit it to your District Director for approval, who will forward it to the State Director.

7. Create A Budget; Order Uniforms & Equipment.

Note that American Legion Baseball rules require that ALL team uniforms properly display the Program's official insignia patch. (See the Uniform & Equipment section of the MN Rule Book.) These sleeve patches must be ordered through National; a direct link is available on the MN Legion Baseball web page.

8. Line Up Your Coaches & Staff.

Again, pay close attention to the fact that ALL coaches (head and assistant) must complete concussion training -- and a certificate of completion must be submitted to your District Director. All staff members who have contact with players must also undergo annual background checks.

9. Make Arrangements for a Home Field; Plan Player Registration & Tryouts; Schedule Games & Enter Tournaments

As noted above, League participation information and any fees will be provided by your District Director. In addition, you may wish to schedule independent (non-league) games. (Some teams opt to not participate in their District league, preferring to play an entirely independent schedule, which is permissible. Participation in a neighboring District's league, as opposed to your own, requires the approval of both District Directors, as well as the State Director.) Umpire expenses need to be factored into your team budget -- which might be paid via a league fee, paid directly to the umpires at the field on game day, or paid through a combination of these means.

Your team might also wish to enter weekend tournaments during the regular season. A list of area tournaments is available on the MN Legion Baseball web page -- and a nation-wide list is available on the National web site. It is highly recommended that you register early, as some tournaments actually fill during the winter months.

10. Register Your Team via the National Registration System.

Please refer the registration instructions (and deadlines!) that are available on the MN Legion Baseball web page. (That information [as well as the MN Rule Book] also outlines forms that must be completed by all players [and their parents] before they may participate on the field.) Steps in the registration process include items such as the following: 1) Submitting your Team Application to participate in the current season, 2) Purchasing Insurance & Paying Fees, 3) Entering and Submitting your Final Team Roster.

11. Play Ball !!

Please direct additional questions that you might have to your District Director. Again, thank you for your interest in forming an American Legion Baseball team.