

KEY INFORMATION FOR THE NYO PONY BASEBALL LEAGUE FALL 2018, WINTER 2018-9, SPRING 2019 AND SUMMER 2019 SEASONS

Greetings from the NYO Pony League! We want to provide information about Pony as we welcome in rising 13U & 14U players from NYO, Buckhead Baseball, Murphey Candler, Sandy Springs and other area programs. For decades, Pony has been an excellent baseball experience for players that love the game and desire to keep playing in a fun and competitive in park baseball league with summer travel team options. We have made several improvements for the 2018-19 season based on feedback, especially in the Winter and Spring season.

Below is a summary of how each season of the program works.

Fall Season (2018)

The Fall League will have one division and will cost \$285 per player. We anticipate keeping standings this fall and expect the level of play to be competitive. Key details are:

- Registrations are online through the website www.nyosports.com. Applications will be accepted through July 27, 2018 or until the league is determined "full".
- 6 to 8 teams of 12 players. A mix of parent and non-parent's coach the teams. There are no tryouts but we will have a modified draft with help from league officials to balance out teams.
- Practices will start around August 25. Teams practice on Saturdays throughout the season or perhaps an occasional Friday night. Games start on Sunday September 9 and will run for 9 consecutive weekends, with a tournament held on the last weekend of the season (November 2-4).
- Players should have high attendance levels for games, and the more practices they attend the more benefit they will get from the season. With this said your player is encouraged to participate in other activities during the fall and should not think of fall baseball as their only sports activity.

Winter Season (2018-9)

As a new point of emphasis, our team of young coaches led by Coach Jeff Woolverton will run a series of on the field clinics and practices with the specific goal of getting our Pony players ready to try out for their school team, typically in late January. Emphasis will be on working with players in their key position(s) as well as a strong focus on hitting (outdoor and indoor sessions). Families will pay as they go and packages will be available through the coaches.

Spring Season (2019)

We will be making several changes in our program next spring to address recent feedback as more and more kids are playing school ball from February to mid-April. We want our kids playing for their schools. We also want them to be part of the NYO program so they have more baseball once the school season ends in mid-April. For kids not on a school team, we certainly want to provide them with a full baseball experience during the early part of the season. In an effort to balance these interests:

- We will now combine Pony into one league of 13U and 14U players. We believe this will maximize the competitive experience for both age groups. We expect 10-12 teams of 12 players each. A mix of parent and non-parent's will coach the teams. Evaluations will be in late January and we will start practices in mid-February. We will draft teams after most school teams have been selected.
- We will start games beginning in late February on Saturdays and Sundays only until school ball wraps up in mid-April (teams will normally play 1 game per weekend, sometimes 2). During this early part of the season, weeknights will be used for skills clinics, team practices, scrimmages etc. The goal will be to get all players as many reps and at bats as possible. Once the school season is over in mid-April, we will shift into high gear with teams typically playing 2-3 games per week through the second week of May.
- Our regular season should wrap up with approximately 18 games per team with an end of season tournament concluding around the third week of May.

- Registrations are online through the website www.nyosports.com beginning in early November. Applications will be accepted until the league is determined “full”. The cost will be approximately \$415 per player.

Note regarding Spring Middle School Sports - A significant number of the players in Pony also play a spring sport for their middle school (mostly baseball, but others as well). This is encouraged by Pony, and our coaches work through these conflicts fully understanding that players will miss Pony events for school sports. However, with our move to weekend only games during the school ball season and practices, scrimmages and clinics during the week, we think most of the conflicts will now be gone. Most families find that Pony is an excellent supplement to school sports and once the school teams wrap up in mid-April, a good part of our season and playoffs lie ahead. **So please don't let school sports be an impediment to playing Pony.**

Summer Season 2019 (Travel Teams)

For the 17th consecutive year, the league will field summer travel teams for both age groups. Our typical season features one or two 14U teams and two or three 13U teams, depending on demand. Key details are:

- The process begins in mid-April by asking every player in the league if they are interested in participating on a Summer Team. For those that respond “yes”, we also ask for the time the player will not be available Memorial Day weekend through late June. **IMPORTANT:** If your player wants to play summer ball, they should keep absences during this period to a minimum (appx. no more than 2 weekend days and 5 weekdays). Also, please be available Memorial Day weekend if possible.
- Next, interested players are chosen based on performance in the spring as voted on by the coaches. While we know many of you have enjoyed the summer experience in the past with the same kids and families, both the kids and their families seem to thoroughly enjoy the experience of playing on our summer teams with new teammates and new opportunities.
- The summer teams start practicing after the playoffs finish. In addition to 2-3 practices per week, the teams play in tournaments in the metro Atlanta area. These tournaments can have some games on a weeknight, but always play on Saturday and Sunday. Teams will play approximately 20-25 games from Memorial Day weekend through late June. Our teams play a mix of all-star events as well as travel events with Grand Slam, Triple Crown and Training Legends. The teams are very competitive and opportunities for player development are tremendous. This experience mirrors what many full-time travel teams will be doing during this same time period and is similar to what many players and their families experienced in their 12 and under years.
- Cost can vary depending on some choices of the team, but \$550 is a good planning estimate for the Summer Season.

A note about travel baseball. We are aware that players of this age have an interest in moving to a travel team program exclusively. That decision is a personal one for each family and lots of factors come into play in that decision, including location and facilities, team roster size, expected playing time, cost, level of play for the team, conflicts during the school year and other activities, etc. One of our goals in this memo is to be sure that those considering such a move have as much direct information as possible about the NYO Pony program and the benefits it offers to all rising 13U and 14U players. In summary, NYO Pony is a strong and competitive community based and cost effective year-round baseball program which we believe meets the exact needs of most of the rising 13U and 14U players in our area.

Thanks for reading! Should you have any questions regarding anything in this memo or need any more info, please contact us any time at baseball@nyosports.com and we will have someone get right back in touch. And if you are unsure of the correct path for your child, we would urge you to first talk to any of the leadership in our Pony program. We hope we see your family at some point during the 2018-2019 fall, spring or summer seasons.