

TYLER SPARTANS GUIDELINES

PLAYING TIME & CONCERNS

- **Communication Protocol:** If you have concerns about the team, they must be sent via email to admin@tylerspartans.com at least **24 hours after the last game of the tournament**.
- **No Direct Contact at Events:** Do not call, text, or approach coaches at games, tournaments, or practices regarding team issues and playing time. Coaches have been instructed to decline these conversations during events. Instead, they will schedule a phone call with you during the week if necessary. Failure to follow this policy may result in removal from the team. We will not tolerate altercations at the ballpark.
- **Player-Driven Conversations:** Players are encouraged to approach coaches anytime with questions about **their playing time or position**. Parents should help their players learn how to communicate effectively with coaches. We will provide clear explanations and can follow up via email if needed.
- **Perspective on Playing Time:** Nearly all parents have a natural bias when evaluating their child's skill level and playing time. While we understand that every parent wants the best for their player, our coaching staff makes lineup decisions based on what is best for the team as a whole.

BEHAVIOR & CONDUCT

- **Supporting Players the Right Way:** We encourage positive support, cheers, and encouragement from parents and fans. We also believe players should get used to competing in tough environments, as this will prepare them for handling jeers and insults from student sections in high school, college, or even from hostile crowds. Learning to perform under pressure is an important part of player development. We just ask that our parents not be the ones tearing our players down.
- **Let the Coaches Coach:** Players consistently looking into the stands for instructions or following parent instructions during the game instead of the coaches may lose playing time. It's important for players to focus on the coaching staff for guidance during the game to ensure consistency and avoid confusion.
- **Respectful Behavior with Umpires & Other Fans:** We also understand the excitement of the game, but please be mindful of how things are said. Do your best to avoid getting into arguments with umpires or opposing fans. We will strive to play with class and sportsmanship at all times. You never know if a college recruiter or scout may be in the stands, and how we carry ourselves reflects not only on our team but also on your child's opportunities.

- **GameChanger Disputes:** We do not tolerate disputes regarding GameChanger stats, such as scoring hits, errors, wild pitches, or passed balls. Our GameChanger scorekeepers are volunteers, and their work should be respected. Please understand that coaching decisions are not based solely on stats, and we do not use them as the only measure of player performance.
- **Leaving the Team:** If you decide to leave, please communicate respectfully via email. We understand that not every organization is the right fit.
 - No refunds will be issued for the current month.
 - Refunds for future months (if paid in advance) will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

- **Tournament Fees:** Tournament fees should be paid before the start of the first game. If the fee has not been paid by that time, the player may be benched until payment is received. Please make sure to log into League Apps to confirm that your tournament invoice is paid before the tournament begins. We understand that sometimes email invoices may be missed, so please reach out to us if you have any issues with payments.
- **Responsibility for Invoice Regardless of Absence:** All rostered players are responsible for the tournament fees and team dues, regardless of absence. We ask that players and families honor their commitment to the team by ensuring payment is made on time, as this helps keep costs down for everyone. In the case of injury, fees may not be invoiced depending on the severity and length of the player's absence; this will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- **Team Dues & Payment Deadlines:** We ask that team dues and tournament fees be paid on time to ensure the smooth operation of the team. If payments are not received within **5 days** after the due date, we kindly ask that you reach out to let us know if you need an extension or are facing any financial challenges. If we have not heard from you and dues or invoices remain unpaid, the player will not be able to play. If payment is not received within **10 days** after the due date, the player may be removed from the roster. We are happy to work with families who communicate with us about their situation.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- **Parent-Coach Communication First:** All non-baseball related communication should go through parents first.
- **Player BAND Groups:** Teams at 14U and up will have BAND groups where coaches will post important information such as schedules. This approach helps prepare players for high school, where they are expected to take responsibility for knowing what to wear, arriving on time, and following coaches' instructions. High school teams may also have a group chat within BAND, but if it is not kept appropriate, the privilege will be revoked.
- **Youth Players (13U & Below):** Players should not text coaches directly unless a parent is included in the text group. Players should not message coaches on social media or add coaches on video or mobile games.

- **High School Players (14U & Up):** High school players should communicate with coaches via BAND as the primary method, text only for urgent matters with parent approval. No adding coaches on video & mobile games.
- **Coaches' Availability:** Our coaches have full-time jobs, college commitments, and other obligations. Please allow them time to respond to texts, calls, and emails. For non-urgent matters, the BAND App or the team admin inbox is the best way to reach out. For private or urgent matters, feel free to text or call directly.

PRACTICE

- **Practice Attendance:** We expect players to attend practices as consistently as possible. If a player is going to miss practice or a game, the player or parent should notify the head coach as soon as possible. Coaches invest significant time in planning practices and games, and missed communication can disrupt these plans, affecting the entire team. Players who consistently miss practice for any reason should expect to sit out a minimum of 1-3 innings in the next tournament (on a case-by-case basis for players with significant distance or logistical challenges).
- **Inclement Weather:** If your area is experiencing inclement weather, please stay home for your safety. We do not want your family risking an accident to attend practice. If schools are closed, we will generally cancel practices as well.
- **Optional Practices:** Optional practices are not a test of commitment. Players are welcome to attend, but there is no need to inform us if they will not be attending.

GAMES

- **Tournament Attendance:** We expect players to be present at all tournaments. If a player must miss a tournament, they must complete the tournament absence form. Players missing a tournament for unexcused reasons should not expect to start in the following tournament. While we understand that some absences are out of a player's control, we place a high value on those who consistently attend practices and tournaments and aim to reward their commitment.
- **In-Game Dugout Visits:** We ask that parents and family members do not visit the dugout during games, except in cases of injury or emergency. Players should have all drinks and snacks before entering the dugout or before the start of a double-header. If a player needs something during the game, they should communicate directly with the coaching staff. **Please stay off the field during practices and games.**
- **Team Huddles/Meetings:** Team huddles before and after games are for players only. Please respect the space and allow the team to meet without interference. Let extended family and friends know as well.
- **Vacations and Exposure:** While it is not our responsibility to dictate when and how you take vacations, we encourage families to consider timing in relation to college recruitment (High School Sophomores & Older). Many parents of players who go on to play in college or professionally recommend prioritizing summer months for tournaments and exposure opportunities. College coaches focus on recruiting during the summer and fall, as they are busy

during the spring season with their own teams.

HOTELS & TRAVEL

- **Hotel Arrangements:** Parents are welcome to coordinate team hotel arrangements among themselves. The coaching staff will typically stay at a separate, central location if multiple teams are competing in the area.
- **Stay-To-Play Tournaments:** If a tournament requires a “Stay-To-Play” policy, we will coordinate with the tournament’s travel agency and provide the booking link for your convenience. If there’s an additional fee to waive the “Stay-To-Play” requirement, we will likely choose this option, so families have the flexibility to drive back and forth or select their preferred accommodations. Please note, any buyout fees to waive this requirement will be added to the tournament invoice.
- **Hotel Behavior:** No horseplay in team hotels, disturbing the peace, or running up and down hallways will be tolerated. Players will be benched if there are complaints made to the hotel front desk regarding disruptive behavior. It’s important to maintain respect for the hotel staff and other guests to avoid any disruptions.
- **Transportation:** Players should not rely on coaches for transportation except in emergency situations. Please coordinate with other team members for rides to and from practices and games whenever possible.
- **No Swimming Before Games (14U & Up):** To ensure optimal performance, no swimming is allowed the night before or the day of games. We attend tournaments to compete at our highest level, and maintaining focus is key.
- **Mental Preparation:** As an organization, we take full responsibility for the preparation and development of the players. However, we need your support in helping them mentally prepare for games.

GUEST PLAYING POLICY

- **Youth Players:** Youth players are not permitted to guest play for another team. If, in rare cases, a guest playing opportunity is considered, it will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- **High School Players:** High school players (15U and up) are allowed to guest play on our off weekends, but only for major events with a national team or a heavily recruited event. These events must be recognized and beneficial for the player’s development.
- **Guest Playing Approval and Loyalty:** In all instances, the head coach must be notified and approve guest playing before a player is allowed to play for another organization. If guest playing is not approved, the player and their family may lose their 5-10% loyalty discount for continuous seasons with our organization or be removed from the roster. Players who miss our scheduled practices and games to play for another team will also be removed from our roster.
- **Loyalty to the Team:** While this may not align with modern trends, we prioritize loyalty to the team and the organization. We aim to cultivate a mindset focused on long-term commitment rather than jumping from team to team each season. Youth baseball players will gain more from

consistent practice, speed training, and weight training than from tournament play during off weekends.

- **Off-Season Flexibility:** Before our first practice of the season and after our last game, players are free to play anywhere they like, with no restrictions.
- **Guest Player Additions:** We generally do not add guest players unless we are expecting low attendance from our rostered team or if we are participating in a multi-day tournament that requires additional players and pitching.

If you need clarification or have any questions reach out to the organization President, Chris McFarland chris@tylerspartans.com

