2027 Select Baseball

Hello Parents,

Welcome to the 2027 Waukesha Firebirds select baseball program tryout. We are excited that you are here and hope that we can provide an opportunity through our select baseball program for young players to continue growing and developing their skills in the sport of baseball. This document provides some additional information related to the Firebirds program.

The Firebirds organization truly hopes your kids will enjoy playing and learning the sport of baseball. Good luck and thank you for participating!

Sincerely,

Kevin Chmielewski, President

Select Teams:

Select baseball is called "Select" because it is just that. Players are selected to create teams where all players have a similar skill level. Placing kids with similar skill levels on the same team and playing against teams at that same skill level ensures players get the most out of their involvement. We have all experienced a game where one team is significantly better than the other. In scenarios like that, there are no winners. The lower team is unable to successfully compete, which can be frustrating and embarrassing, and the upper team is not offered the competition needed for them to hone and develop their skills in a real game format. Although no selection process is 100% accurate, we do our best to fit players into their proper skill level. No residency restrictions apply to Waukesha Firebirds teams.

Generally, the teams are broken down by 2 factors (1) age, and (2) skill level at that age:

Age: Except for the rare situations where players with exceptional skills opt to play on a team with older kids, the kids playing on a particular team (and their opponents) have birthdays that all fall within 1 year of each other. The age cut-off date is May 1. The difference in maturity level and physical athleticism of kids at this young age can be substantial with just one year of separation.

Skill Level: Related to the skill level of players, the leagues that Select Teams play in are generally broken down into 3 or 4 divisions, all having slightly different skill levels. For example, a league might have 40 teams of U9 players. The teams that have established themselves as "premier teams" would play in the "A" division. Those teams with slightly less overall skill level would play in the "B" divisions and so on.

Selection Process:

In general, select teams form at a younger age and continue to play together under the same coach as they progress up through the age groups. Over the years, positions on those teams become available for several reasons. Some players move away, lose interest in the game, opt to focus on other sports, or leave baseball for other reasons. Other times, the skill level of an existing player will be reevaluated and compared against the desired skill level of the team. When that happens, a tryout process is held to fill those roster spots. The number of roster positions varies from year to year and from team to team. All players trying out will have an opportunity to be selected to a team, however, the selection is at the sole discretion of the team coaching staff. **NOTE: Some head coaches do not require existing players to attend tryouts as they have solidified a position on the existing team.**

As there are several age groups and several divisions/skill levels in each age group, it is improbable to have a select team at each possible level. The Firebird organization has at least one team at each age level and has two or more at certain age levels. The divisions in which these teams play in varies from team to team. In addition, the number of roster spots available on these teams varies. Our goal is to fill as many roster spots with players that match the skill level of the team. Those players that are selected will be contacted directly by the head coach to discuss further details regarding that player joining the team.

Unfortunately, we may not be able to provide all tryout participants with a roster spot on a 2027 team. We hope that the players are not disheartened by that and that they continue to pursue a career in baseball. If the player is not selected for a 2027 team, the Firebird organization will contact you directly to inform you of the decision. **Please note that the list of tryout participants, score cards, final rosters, or any other tryout information will not be shared or discussed during any coach/parent correspondence. Parents should also understand that there are other opportunities for their child to play baseball in the 2027 season. Younger players have the option to play with various local park and rec programs and other select organizations in the area. Coaches will typically contact each player within 72 hours of tryouts with further information about placement or additional opportunities within the Firebirds Organization. There may be extended time period due to make up try outs.**

New Teams:

If enough players at a particular age group/ skill level are interested in playing on a team, and, if a parent coach is willing to assume the responsibility as a head coach, then a new Firebirds team can be established. As a coach, you will be given first choice to select your son/daughter for your team. However, priority in the selection process will be given to existing teams. Coaching opportunities are available for interested parents (see the "Coaching Opportunities" section below for more information on coaching). Please inquire if you are interested.

Team Practices and Game Schedules:

One major difference between select teams and recreational teams is the time commitment. A select team will often practice year-round (mid-September to mid-July), or at the very least, January through July. During the winter months, practices are held at an indoor facility where the coaches will work with the players on the fundamentals of the game (hitting, catching, pitching, fielding, etc.). Practices are generally 2 hours per week. The exact practice date and time will be established once the team rosters have been filled. Practice days and times are generally consistent throughout the year.

Most coaches understand that kids are interested in multiple sports and have other interests. Maintaining balance for kids, especially the younger players, is something the Firebird organization promotes. However, during the season, we will ask for a dedicated commitment to the select team. Teams only carry a certain number of roster spots to ensure adequate playing time for all the players. If a player misses several games, it can be difficult for the coaches to plan games and/or field a team.

The game play begins in the middle of April 2025 and will run to the middle of July. During that time, teams will play season games against other teams in the league. Those teams are usually local to the Waukesha area but can range as far as Mequon, Kenosha, Watertown, and Oak Creek. Teams will play one "home" game and one "away" game against each team. There are generally between 14 to 18 league games per season and games are normally played during the weeknights as weekends are kept open for tournaments. Game schedules are usually available in late January or early February after the league has been established and the coaches have completed coordinating their scheduling with other teams.

Tournaments:

Select teams also participate in tournaments. The number and location of the tournaments is usually a mutual decision made by the coaching staff and the parent group. Teams generally like to participate in at least three tournaments per season. Tournaments are held weekends beginning as early as Friday morning and may go as late as Sunday night. Teams are normally guaranteed 3 games but could play up to 5 or 6 if they continue to win. Most teams participate in tournaments local to the area with no overnight stay. However, some of the older teams may opt to participate in one or more out of state tournaments. The general number and location of tournaments should be discussed with the coaches prior to joining the team.

The tournament fees for 2-3 tournaments are included with the player fees. However, if you are on a team that opts to play more tournaments, then additional payments (or team fundraising) may be required.

Player Fees:

All players are required to pay an initial $150 commitment fee. This fee will be due no later than August 15th. The head coach will coordinate this with you.

A second payment (remainder of full amount will be due no later than September 15). For anyone that needs extra time to pay, please contact your head coach. **More than 1 child playing with the Firebirds?** The club also offers a $50/per child sibling discount. Please make a notation on payment if this applies.

2026 TOTAL PLAYER FEES:

U7-U8 = $700 **U9-U12 = $750** **U13-U14 = $850**

*All fees are non-refundable. Payment can be made by **Check** to "Waukesha Firebirds Youth Sports Organization Inc" or through SnapSpend:

Waukesha Firebirds c/o Kevin Chmielewski
S49W25356 Gruettner Dr.
Waukesha WI 53189

The player fees include the cost of our basic uniforms (2 jerseys, pants, belt & hat,) some of the indoor practice facility, league fees, team equipment, field rental and field preparation for outdoor practices and games, tournaments, umpires, and other club expenses.

No salary goes to any Firebirds organization board member or coach for their time. All work by these individuals is done on a 100% volunteer basis.

Required Equipment:

Players are asked to provide their own standard equipment, including:
cleats, batting gloves, bat, glove (s), sliding shorts and protective equipment, helmet, and an equipment bag. Contact your coach if you have questions.

Fundraisers:

The player fees may not cover all of the team's expenses for the season. As such, all players may be asked to participate in one or more fundraising activities for the Firebird organization or team.

Coaching Opportunities:

As mentioned previously, the Firebirds organization does not pay the board members or coaches. Without dedicated parents willing to commit to coaching and volunteering, the Firebirds organization could not exist. With new kids coming into the league every year and new teams forming to accommodate these players, finding coaches for these teams is critical. Coaching opportunities are available for interested parents.

Head Coaches: If enough players try out at an age level, there may be enough interest to start a new team. For new coaches, you will always have the option to select your son/daughter to be on your team. After that, the Firebird organization will help you fill your team's roster. You will also have the freedom to select players from outside the tryout process such as friends, neighbors, cousins, or other players you know. Keep in mind the age restrictions when adding players to your roster.

The existing Firebirds coaches have several years of coaching experience and will help guide the new coaches through the select team process. The Firebirds Board of Directors provides basic equipment, coordinates the indoor facility, develops fundraisers, procures uniforms, rents fields, etc. We will also help new coaches join a league, schedule games, find tournaments, provide insight on practice and game expectations. Most of all, we will be available for questions and guidance over the course of the season.

Assistant Coaches: Assistant coaches are critical to having a successful team. Each of our existing teams has 2 or 3 assistant coaches. Assistant coaches are needed during practices and during games for things like coaching bases, warming up pitchers, warm-up swings with the on-deck batter, etc. Assistant coaches also help head coaches with the team organization and other tasks essential to the team.

If you are interested or would be willing to be a Head Coach or an Assistant Coach of a new team, please let us know so we can work with you to develop a team.

Coaches will typically make contact with prospective players within 72 hours of tryouts. If you have questions about your child's placement or offer, please refrain from making contact with coaches until after that point in time. This is a stressful time for all and coaches want to make the best decisions for all involved.

If you have questions about the organization in general, please feel free to reach out to your coach or a organization official

Thank you for taking the time with us! We hope to be able to make your favorite player a Firebird in 2027!