

# Saskatoon Blue Jays

## Player Evaluation and Team Formation Process

Player evaluation and placement, like player development, is a process. It is one of the most difficult tasks minor sport associations have and forms the foundation from which an association is built. Effective management of the process will make the experience of minor baseball players a more positive one.

### 1. Objectives:

- 1) Communicate the player evaluation and placement process to players and parents so an easy understanding is available, thus making it a less stressful time for all persons involved.
- 2) To provide a fair and impartial assessment of a player's total baseball skills and ensure the integrity of evaluation process at all times.
- 3) To place all players on teams with other players of similar skill level and understanding to ensure they have a fun and rewarding experience. A player placed at an appropriate level will develop his/her skills better than a player who is playing above or below their appropriate level.
- 4) To provide uniform and consistent evaluation process such that player and parent expectations are consistent from year to year.
- 5) To provide guidelines as to how our teams should function.

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 2.1. Player Evaluation and Placement Director

The Saskatoon Blue Jays Vice President serves as the Player Evaluation and Placement Director.

The Player Evaluation and Placement Director has the following responsibilities:

- 1) The integrity and continuity in the application of the items regarding the evaluation and placement process outlined in this document.
- 2) Ensure that any untoward behavior is dealt with immediately, and when necessary, report to the Zone President.
- 3) Participate and be consulted on all player movement and team selections within all divisions. The Player Evaluation and Placement Director will ultimately determine any issues with player movement and team selection.

The Player Evaluation and Placement Director will maintain impartiality at all times and as such will not be directly involved in the evaluation and placement of their own children or any other player for whom they cannot make an impartial assessment. If they are unable to fulfill their role either due to time constraints or in the event of conflict of interest, or the Vice President position is vacant, any member of the zone executive not in conflict may take the place of the Player Evaluation and Placement Director.

## **2.2. Division Coordinators**

The Division Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Communicate to players and parents the particulars of each year's evaluation and placement sessions through e-mail and postings on our website.
- 2) Ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the process at all times.
- 3) Be visible and accessible throughout the process to answer questions from parents and players.

The Division Coordinator will maintain impartiality at all times and as such will not be directly involved in the evaluation and placement of their children or any other player for whom they cannot make an impartial assessment. If they are unable to fulfill their role either by time constraints or in the event of conflict of interest or encounter any other problems beyond the scope of their position, the Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate will take the place of the Division Coordinator.

## **2.3. Evaluation Session Helpers**

Helpers, in cooperation with the Division Coordinator, will strive to understand the practice plans and drills prior to the session so that they have a clear understanding of the evaluation session. They will strive to keep up the pace and the flow of the drills to finish within the allotted time. During the session, helpers are to encourage all players to perform to the best of their ability, and ensure players understand the drills and have equal opportunity to participate and perform the drills correctly. Parent volunteers will not be allowed to participate directly with their child's group at evaluations.

## **3. Player Evaluation Process**

### **3.1. Assessment**

The details of the player evaluation will vary depending on the age division of the player. The goal is to make sure ample time is given to evaluate players and to the best extent possible ensure they are properly ranked prior to the team formation process.

Jr. and Sr. RallyCap players are placed on teams according to the process outlined in section 4.1. *General* (team formation).

For more information, please see the current year Evaluation Procedures.

### **3.2. Evaluation Session Player Grouping**

The division coordinators will ensure fair and impartial evaluation groupings in collaboration with the Evaluation Coordinator.

### **3.3. Player Rankings**

After a session has been completed, the Division Coordinators and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director will review the scoring provided by the evaluators. In addition, the previous year "Player Evaluation" completed by the previous year's head coach may be used as a 'check-and-balance' at the discretion of the Division Coordinators and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director when a player's final ranking cannot be resolved.

## 4. Player Placement and Team Formation Process

### 4.1. General

The Player Placement Process is intended to place all players on teams with other players of similar skill level and understanding of baseball to make sure they have a fun and rewarding season.

The Player Placement Process considers the following:

It is a common and encouraged practice that returning (2<sup>nd</sup> year) players are picked in the same tier that they played in the previous season. Players should be given the benefit of the doubt that if they were a strong enough player to be selected to a certain tier as a first-year player, they should be in that tier as a second-year player. **However, the zone does not 100% guarantee that returning players will be automatically given a spot in the same tier.**

- 1) **At the very least**, second year returning players will be made available as coaches picks during team selection for the tier they played in the previous year, regardless of their evaluation score.
- 2) In the event that the coaches have decided not to draft a returning player and that player will drop down a tier, the President or Vice-President of the zone must be notified immediately. The team selection process cannot conclude until the President/Vice-President is notified and approves of the decision.
- 3) If a player misses the entire evaluation process, the player will be placed according to the ranking and comments from the previous year's Coaches Player Evaluations. For players that have not played baseball and miss the entire evaluation process, they will be placed at the lowest level for the Age Division. If a portion of the evaluation process is missed, the Division Coordinator and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director will use limited evaluation data and previous year's Coaches Player Evaluations to place the player at an appropriate level.
- 4) Any parent that has multiple sons or daughters in a given/same age group may request to have these family members placed together. These players will be allowed to play only in the lowest level that one of the player/family members were placed after evaluations.

Jr. and Sr. RallyCap players are placed on teams to ensure all teams are relatively equal in skill. Player placement will be administered by the Jr. and Sr. RallyCap Coordinators', respectively. Also, players will be placed to ensure each team has coaches. Player assignment will also consider requests to play with friends. The goal of the Saskatoon Blue Jays is to keep all the Jr. and Sr. RallyCap players engaged in a fun and developmental program with their peers and encourage all Jr. and Sr. RallyCap teams to follow the Rally Cap program as a guide for skill development.

11U through 18U players will be placed on teams based on their rankings from the evaluation process and team draft for level within each age division. The number and level of teams formed is governed by Baseball Saskatoon. If needed, the Blue Jay

Executive, from guidance from the Division Coordinator and Player Evaluation and Placement Director, will use their knowledge of the skill level for a particular age division to propose an alternate number of teams per level in each division and request to Baseball Saskatoon for a concession although it may not be granted.

When only one team is to be formed within a level of 11U to 18U, a coach will be assigned to the team. Where two or more teams are to be formed in a single level, a player draft will take place as outlined in section 4.3. *Player Draft*.

## **4.2. Underage Players**

The Saskatoon Blue Jays will follow guidelines as suggested by Baseball Saskatoon for underage players registering age division above their birthdates. Typically for those underage RallyCap players trying out for 11U the player must rank in the top half of all players and be eligible to play in AA 2/3 and possibly AAA at the discretion of the Coordinator and the Player and Placement Evaluation Coordinator. Those that evaluate in the bottom half of players evaluation and would be eligible to play AA 4/5 or A, will be returned to Sr. or Advanced RallyCap.

## **4.3. Player Draft**

The player drafts within a division will begin with AAA teams, then AA teams, and finally A teams within a division.

Where two or more teams are to be formed in a level of an age division, a player draft will take place. Head coaches of the respective teams, the Division Coordinator for that particular age group, and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate will be present at the draft.

The order of selection in the draft will be decided by a toss of a coin or card draw. Players will be grouped to ensure top-ranked players are drafted first and teams formed with an equal amount of talent as possible.

To ensure a consistent process, each team will have a certain amount of “locked” or “must” picks based on the players evaluation score. The number of “locked” picks will be determined by team size and will be 1 more than half the players on the team. For example, a team of 11 or 12 players would have 7 “locked” picks. This would leave 4-5 “coaches picks”.

The “bubble” or “coaches picks” will include as many players as possible in the scoring range. Typically, the “bubble” is expanded to include twice the number of players needed for team selection. For example, if a team is allowed 4 coaches picks, the “bubble” would include 8 players. If a team is allowed 5 coaches picks, then the “bubble” would include 10 players. At the discretion of the coordinator and Player Evaluation and Placement Director the “bubble” will also expand to include any ties in scoring at the bottom of the “bubble” and those that are within the scoring range until there is a clear distinction in scoring. In certain circumstances, a coach may be allowed to select an assistant coach prior to the commencement of the draft with the approval of the zone and in agreement with the other teams drafting. The head coach and assistant coach’s child must be the first pick in his/her box. Any disputes on the fairness of assistant coach selection, or any matter during the draft, shall be resolved by the Division Coordinator and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate. If no agreement can be reached prior to the draft, then the draft may be conducted as an “open” draft upon direction of the Division Coordinator and/or Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate.

In the event that no coach applications have been received for a team(s) prior to the draft, the Division Coordinator and the Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate shall draft the teams in a fair manner. Parents on the team will then be instructed to seek a coach on their own.

The draft will always be held in a “neutral” location and will be at the discretion of the of the Division Coordinator and/or the Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate.

#### **4.4. Commitment Policy**

The Blue Jay Zone does expect an “enhanced level of commitment” from parents and players for our most competitive (AAA) teams. Each player that will possibly be drafted as an AAA player must agree to an enhanced level of commitment with mandatory attendance during league playoffs and provincials.

The AA and A levels in each age division are less competitive and provide a place for children to play baseball and other sports. Therefore, we do not have the same expectations of commitment for AA and A during league play however all players indicating that they are willing to play provincials should be expected to participate during provincials and league playoffs.

### **5. Coach Selection**

#### **5.1. Coaching Selection Committee**

The Blue Jays President, Vice-President and Coach Mentor along with the Division Coordinator as committee chair for their division, will serve as the coach selection committee. The Player Evaluation and Placement Director will serve as the coach selection committee chair when a Division Coordinator has applied to coach in the division and is part of the selection process, or if the Division Coordinator has a conflict of interest. Also, any Blue Jay executive member that has applied to coach must exclude themselves from the committee for the age division they want to coach in.

#### **5.2. Coach Selection Procedures**

A number of criteria need to be met for a coach’s application to be successful:

- 1) A formal coach application must be submitted.
- 2) Also, part of the process will include criteria in terms of player rankings for a coach’s application to be successful. For example, head coaches must be selected from the top 7 players if there is 1 team. If there are 2 teams, head coaches must be selected from the top 14 players, etc. This will prevent situations where a coach’s child would make a team or tier when they do not clearly belong in that group. However, a coach whose player ranks below the preceding criteria may be considered as Head Coach upon review of the coach selection committee.
- 3) Past coach evaluation must not indicate any problems/issues.
- 4) Knowledge of the coach’s abilities and issues in other sports or community organizations.

Coaches will be selected according to available applications and how they meet the preceding criteria. When only 1 coach applicant is available, this application also must be

reviewed to ensure the above criteria are met.

### **5.3. Coach Commitment and Conduct**

Selected coaches must abide the Blue Jay Fair Play Code policy. Formal complaints on other matters such as a coach's unbecoming conduct towards players, parents, and game officials will be handled by a committee formed by the Division Coordinator, Player Evaluation and Placement Director or designate, and Blue Jay President or designate.

## **6. Appeal Process**

An appeal will be heard only if the process or guidelines outlined in this document was contravened, or if the placement of a player or selection of a coach grossly unfair or unreasonable.

The grounds for an appeal are limited. If a parent feels their son/daughter was not properly evaluated, they are encouraged to speak to the Division Coordinator or the Player Evaluation and Placement Director as soon as possible. If a satisfactory resolution is not made between the parents and the Division Coordinator or Player Evaluation and Placement Director, a request for a formal appeal may be made in writing and sent to the Blue Jay Zone President. The Blue Jay Zone President will not accept verbal communication as an acceptable appeal.

The Blue Jay Zone President will expeditiously review the players' evaluation and will rule on the final placement of the player, and a written response will be tendered back to the parents. The merit or substance of the President's decision is not a valid ground for an appeal.

Also, if a parent or player feels the Player Evaluation and Placement Process is unfair or has suggestions to improve the process, they are encouraged to submit the improvements in writing to the Saskatoon Blue Jays Executive. These suggestions will be reviewed by the Saskatoon Blue Jays Executive for possible implementation in future years.