



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What makes the Gamers program different from other programs?**

This simply boils down to 3 things:

**Baseball training** - the Gamers program provides more hours and higher quality instruction than other programs. This starts in the winter, and carries over through the entire summer. Our players practice a lot and work hard.

**Coaching** - All Gamers teams at 15u and above are professionally coached (no dads). And, many of our 11u-14u teams are professionally coached.. All Gamers coaches go through extensive training in the Gamers approach and philosophy. We teach the same fundamentals across all teams in our program.

**Life Lessons** - We understand that the vast majority of our players will never make a living playing professional baseball. We use baseball as a platform to teach lessons that they can apply off the field. We review the report cards of every Gamer player twice per year. Our pyramid of success teaches them how to succeed by focusing on things that are within their control.

### **2. How much baseball training is included in the program?**

Over 100 hours of training from baseball professionals is included in our program -- this includes the 12 week winter program (8 weeks for 10-11u), clinics, mini-camps, 3 day spring training, and weekly day practices during June/July. This training is from high quality instructors who know every kid in the program, and work with them from the first day of winter practice to late July.

Gamers training is just for our players and is not open to the general public.

### **3. Do the Gamers teams win lots of games?**

Some teams win lots of games and are among the top teams in the region and nation (in particular at HS ages). Other teams are solid .500 teams. Everyone in the Gamers program is very competitive. In the heat

of competition, we want to win just as badly as other teams.

But, winning is not the goal of our program. We will not sacrifice our principles, coaching philosophy or players' health to win a game or a tournament. You will never see tons of trophy pictures on our website. We do not accept bad attitudes from "star players". Our pitchers are on strict pitch count limits. At 11u-14u, players play multiple positions and bat at different spots in the order. We do not throw breaking balls until age 15, because they are dangerous if thrown incorrectly and pitchers need to learn to pitch off their fastball to succeed at higher levels.

We would rather lose 10 games per year more than put at risk the health of young pitchers.

We believe that the process of playing baseball at a high level, challenging each player to improve, and doing things the "right way" is more important than wins and trophies.

Over time, if they do things the right way, winning will take care of itself.

#### **4. What is the Gamers coaching philosophy?**

All of our coaches, both professional and volunteer, are required to be certified as Double Goal coaches by the Positive Coaching Alliance. Our philosophy has three elements:

**Redefining Winning** - to focus on the process of competing against yourself instead of the outcome on the scoreboard. We value effort over outcome. We focus on the learning process, and challenging each player to compete against himself. Finally, we value mistakes as learning opportunities. We do not punish physical mistakes.

**Filling Emotional Tanks** - we recognize the players perform and practice better if they are enthusiastic and positive. We are demanding and challenging. But, we do it in way that is positive and fun.

**Respect** - we demand that our players are respectful to opponents, umpires, teammates and themselves.

## **5. How much time do the players really get with Matt Whiteside, Scott Cooper and Dave Pregon?**

Our lead instructional staff has over 30 years of professional baseball experience, with 18 years in MLB. These lead instructors know every player in the program. They work with them directly for 12 weeks in the winter, 8 hours at mini-camps, 12 hours at Spring Training and 20 hours at day practice sessions in June and July. There is no other program in the region that offers this amount of high quality, direct instruction as a part of the program.

## **6. What is the cost of the program? What are fundraising opportunities?**

The program cost for 2014 is as follows. 10-11u- \$2100 12u - \$2355 (excludes the cost of Cooperstown) 13u - - \$2475 14u - \$2525 15u/16u - \$2675 17u- \$2975

The fees for 2015 will probably be higher because of the increasing costs of tournaments and some opportunities that we see to add even higher quality baseball instruction into the program.

We have payment options also.

Note Fall Baseball is optional, and is in addition to the fees shown above.

This cost covers everything except travel costs, team bus trip costs and admission/gate fees at the tournament sites. For 12u, it does not include the cost of Cooperstown.

Fees are subject to change.

As a program fundraiser, we allow parents to sell ads for our Media Guide. 80% of the ad sales are credited directly back to the players accounts. Parents who participate in ad sales are able to offset the program costs by an average of \$400.

Teams also do fundraising on their own. We encourage and support these activities across the teams. In the past, active teams have been able to offset their program costs by an additional \$400.

The costs show above are BEFORE any fundraising. If you choose not to do fundraising, then you will simply pay the amounts listed above.

## **7. What do you get for the fees?**

Program clinics - in the past these have included arm health, current Cardinal players, nutrition, college recruiting, weightlifting and mental skills.

12 week winter program – 2.5 hours of baseball + 60 minutes of sports training on Saturday, plus 2 1/2 hour rep session on weeknights. This is 6 hours of intense baseball per week for 12 weeks.

Note – the 10-11u program does not include Athletes Edge training and is a combination of 8 weeks directors practices plus 8 weeks of cage time.

4-8 hours of mini-camp at beginning of season

Weekly practice sessions run by team coach in March/April/May (11u-14u teams)

Team access to All-Star cages and mounds during off-peak hours

3 day, 12 hour Spring Training Camp in early June

2 1/2 hour day practice sessions with Gamers lead instructors in June and July

Weekly team practices in June and July

10-13 tournaments and/or league fees, depending on age

All uniform items, including bat bag and helmet

Winter workout shirt and shorts

Gamers College Baseball process for 16u-17u players

Please note that Travel costs, team bus trips and admissions/gate fees at tournament locations are NOT included in the fees. These fees will need to be paid separately.

## **8. Is financial assistance available?**

We have great corporate and individual sponsorships that that make it possible for need-based or "at risk" players to participate in our program. Please contact Mark Gallion for more information.

## **9. Why is the Gamers program more expensive than some other alternatives?**

If our program is more expensive than other alternatives you have for this level of baseball, it is due to one of the following reasons:

- We have professional coaches (no "dad" head coaches) for all teams above 14u and several of the 10u-13u teams. There is tremendous value to having a non-parent baseball professional in the dugout. It costs extra to do this. In our view, it is worth the extra costs to eliminate the unavoidable issues that come with "dad" coaches. At high school ages, we have 2 dedicated coaches per team.
- We have A LOT more training and player development built into the cost of the program. Training is not optional in our program. There is no comparison with other local programs regarding the amount and quality of training.
- All of our cost are included in the players fees (except for travel costs). We do not keep adding costs as the season progresses. There are no hidden costs.
- Our rosters are smaller (some of the other programs won't commit to a max roster size and keep adding players as the season nears).

The Gamers program is not a "business". 100% of the player fees go to cover the costs of the program. The instructors and coaches are compensated based on market rates. The only people that receive compensation from the Gamers program are coaches and instructors. There is no compensation for administrators or profit left over for a "business".

All of the money goes into the baseball experience for the players.

## **10. Do the Gamers cut kids from the program?**

Our program goal is to retain 67-80% of the players as they move from one age group to another. At the end of the season, we go through a rigorous evaluation of each player. We look at Baseball Skills and at Gamer Qualities. Players that cannot compete at high levels of baseball are not invited back. Young players need to experience individual success in baseball (or they will quit). Players that do not have Gamer Qualities are not a good fit for the program and are not asked back.

## **11. How many games do your teams play? How much out of town travel should be expected?**

For 10u-14u, our teams will play in tournaments 2-3 weekends per month for April, May, June and July. So they will play in approximately 8-12 tournaments. Some teams play in weekday leagues also. This is usually 40-60 games. Keep in mind that we practice 1-2 days per week in April/May and 2 times per week once school is out.

The 10u-14u teams typically play in 2-4 out of town tournaments each summer.

For 15u-17u, our teams play every weekend from Memorial Day through August 1st. This is usually 9-10 tournaments and approximately 45-50 games. Some weekday games are also included. The 15u-17u teams practice 2 times per week once school is out. So, they play baseball six days per week.

**Compare this to other HS age programs, who practice at most 1x per week and limit their season to 7-8 weekends of baseball. It costs money to practice and play games. That is why other programs collect money upfront then cut their seasons and practices in mid-July.**

Unfortunately, the 15u-17u teams have to travel to play top competition. We are trying to work with people to get more elite tournaments in the St. Louis area, but it has been challenging.

Here is what to expect regarding out of town travel:

15u => 4-6 trips

16u => 6-7 trips

17u => 6-8 trips

## **12. Do you have a Fall Baseball Program?**

We have one team at each age group for Fall baseball. 14u-18u teams are professionally coached.

We strongly encourage Gamers players to play Fall baseball unless they have a direct conflict with soccer or football. Midwest players need the extra reps and game experience that Fall baseball offers. Also, it gives new players an opportunity to learn the Gamers system before the winter workouts start.

For 10u-13u Gamers, fall teams will practice on two weekends and play approximately 5 tournaments. The cost was \$250 last fall.

For 14-15u Gamers, fall teams will practice on two weekends and play 6 local tournaments at the 16-18u age group. Last Fall, the cost was \$500.

For 16u Gamers, fall teams will practice on two weekends and play 6 tournaments, a combination of local tournaments and college showcase tournaments. Last Fall, the cost was \$600.

For 17u and 18u Gamers, fall teams will practice on one weekend and play in 6-8 college showcase tournaments. Last Fall, the cost was \$750 for position players and \$500 for primary pitchers.

## **13. Will the Gamers program get my son a college scholarship or get him drafted by professional baseball like other programs advertise?**

We can help. But, at the end of the day, your son will get an opportunity to play baseball in college (or pro ball) because he is a talented baseball player, knows how to play the game the right way and is a good student. It all starts with those three things.

Talent might open up the doors to college and professional baseball. But, playing the game right and being a good student will ensure success once your son gets there.

We are never going to "make promises" or "sell the dream" of playing college baseball. We will do everything we can to prepare your son for

success. The Gamers leaders are very knowledgeable, well connected and respected -- coaches and scouts return our phone calls.

We are willing to help, but it all starts with your son -- to play at the next level, he needs to be:

Talented

Play the game right

A good student

We will help him focus on those 3 things. We cannot and will not make promises that we cannot keep.

**14. What are the motivations of the leaders in the Gamers program -- why are you doing this?**

The Gamers leadership group has experienced a high level of success in professional baseball and business. We are not doing this for money. We are not doing this for pride. We are doing this because we believe that we can make a difference, through baseball, with a 200 young men every year.

It is our way of giving back, not of taking. When you make difference in a young man's life, it is a great reward. In our first 8 years of the program, we feel we have a made difference in the lives of significant number of young men. It is very rewarding.