



# BVN BASEBALL 2016 PLAYER/PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parents and Athletes,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 2016 Blue Valley North Baseball Team. It is our hope that this will be a year filled with successes at all levels of our program. We have been working hard to prepare our players to perform at the highest possible level. The coaching staff is dedicated to providing a quality program in which your son can learn the mechanics, fundamentals, and strategies of baseball along with attitudes and habits that will benefit him in all aspects of his life. Your support in our program is greatly appreciated. Please read the following pages to get familiar with our program. If additional information is needed, please let us know. Again, the coaching staff welcomes you to another successful baseball season at Blue Valley North. Enjoy the season.

### **Coaching Staff**

**Head Coach:** Jon Pittenger -- [jpittenger@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:jpittenger@bluevalleyk12.org)

**Varsity Assistant:** Jason Smajda -- [jsmajda@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:jsmajda@bluevalleyk12.org)

**Junior Varsity Head Coach:** Mark Kenney – [Mvkenney@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:Mvkenney@bluevalleyk12.org)

**Sophomore C-team Coach:** Casey Curran

**Freshmen D-team Coach:** J.D. Wood

### **Philosophy**

The coaching staff believes in providing a program in which each athlete has an opportunity to grow as an individual while understanding the importance of the team concept. We believe that athletics provides us one more opportunity to teach young men habits and life skills that will lead to success on and off the field. We believe competition is a good thing and learning how to compete can be a valuable part of the high school athletic experience.

## Team Structure

Blue Valley North has the ability to run four different teams in any given year.

- 1) Varsity – The varsity team consists of the top players in the program. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are eligible to play on the varsity team. Seniors are only eligible to play on the varsity team.
- 2) Junior Varsity – The junior varsity team consists of underclassmen not having won a varsity position. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are eligible to play on the junior varsity team. Junior varsity players may be used in situational roles on the varsity team. The junior varsity is considered a competitive team where playing time is earned, not given.
- 3) C-team – The C-team consists of the best freshmen and sophomore players who have not won a position on the junior varsity or the varsity teams. We consider this level to be competitive and developmental at the same time. The C-team coach is encouraged to find playing time for each member of the team but the majority of playing time will be earned.
- 4) D-team – If a D-team is necessary, it will consist of freshmen players who have shown some potential during tryouts, but currently do not show the ability to earn a position on the C-team. The D-team is considered to be a developmental team where each player will receive playing time during the season. The game schedule for the D-team is usually limited due to facility restrictions as well as shortages of D-teams in other schools.

## Selection Process

One of the toughest jobs we have each year is providing a selection process that gives the players a chance to show all of their baseball abilities. A typical spring tryout consists of cold, wet days in which tryouts will take place inside using the main and auxiliary gyms. We have batting cages inside to get a good look at the offensive ability of the players. We have developed drills that let us observe the fundamental skills required for a player to be successful at this level. We are interested in the following skills in our baseball players.

- I. Arm Strength
- II. Throwing accuracy
- III. Quickness in exchanges from glove to hand (catchers, infielders, and outfielders)
- IV. Tracking and catching (outfielders)
- V. Receiving and Framing (catchers)
- VI. Pop time (catchers)
- VII. Blocking (catchers)
- VIII. Ability to move feet into a good position (infielders and outfielders)
- IX. Soft, quiet hands (infielders)
- X. Bat Speed
- XI. Power
- XII. Hitting Mechanics
- XIII. Eye hand coordination
- XIV. Ability to hit line drives and hard ground balls.

## Skills Test

If time and weather conditions allow, each player trying out for the team will complete a skills test. This skills test is not used to make final decisions about who will win a position; however, it is weighed heavily when trying to separate kids of similar abilities. We expect players to be physically ready for the tryout process. If your arm is not in shape or you are too tired to complete drills, you may not be able to show your true ability. This is a responsibility that you as a player take. We have offered the opportunity during the off-season to help prepare physically for the season as well as give the coaching staff an indication of how serious a player is about wanting to be part of the program. It's difficult to reconcile how some players may be upset about not being selected when they have not put in the preparation time in the off-season.

At the end of the tryout process, a list will be posted for those who have earned a position on one of the teams, or a personal contact will be made in an attempt to explain why a certain decision was made. The number of kids trying out in any given year determines the selection process and how kids may be notified.

If a player is injured and cannot participate in the tryout process at the designated time, an alternate tryout will be provided after the athlete has been cleared by a doctor.

## Player Conduct:

Your overall conduct is expected to be exemplary. Your appearance and attitude should reflect favorably on Blue Valley North Baseball. Any misconduct or actions that reflect unfavorably on you, the baseball program, or Blue Valley North High School will be considered evidence that participation is not a high priority.

On the field your best effort is expected at all times. Your primary goal is to help the **team** succeed. You are to carry yourself and act in the highest standards in high school baseball and pride in the Blue Valley North baseball tradition.

You have the responsibility for your actions and reputation on and off the field.

During games, our players will not talk to the umpires about any questionable calls. Our players will show nothing but respect towards the umpires, opponents, and fans. I would expect our fans to do the same.

## **Practices**

Practice sessions are extremely valuable to a successful season. We will develop practices that are purposeful and structured. We will focus on developing baseball fundamentals and team strategies necessary to provide us with an optimal chance for success. We feel that winning is nothing more than an outcome of good preparation. We understand that you cannot always control winning, but you can control the preparation to win.

Players are expected to attend all practice sessions. Players are expected to be on time to all practices and meetings. We feel that arriving 10 minutes before you are expected is a good habit to develop.

Players are expected to dress like baseball players while at practice. Players will be issued practice pants. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we will wear navy blue t-shirts. On Tuesday and Thursday we will wear grey t-shirts. Pitchers should always wear long sleeve shirts and have a jacket during practice. Players are also expected to wear navy blue baseball socks and a navy blue belt during practice. You should always bring two pair of shoes to practice, a pair of baseball shoes for the field and a pair of turf shoes to wear in the batting cages. A baseball hat will be worn at all times. A baseball hat will never be worn backwards for any reason.

## **Spring Break Practices**

While we understand the Blue Valley North Community values the spring break period for family time and vacation plans, we also feel we cannot run a successful baseball program if we cannot practice. We will run practices through the Thursday preceding spring break and start again the following Friday. Please try to form your spring break plans around these times in the future.

## **Academic Expectations**

We expect the players in our program to show a high level of commitment to their academic performance. We expect that teachers in our building will speak highly of our baseball players and that our players will always put academics before athletics. Participation in games will be limited or denied if a player is failing a class at any given time due to lack of effort. A player may be eligible if he shows that he is making progress towards improving his failing grade. This verification must come from the teacher.

## **Equipment:**

Each player is responsible for providing the following baseball equipment.

- (A) Navy blue NOCSAE approved baseball helmet.
- (B) Glove
- (C) Shoes
- (D) Navy blue baseball socks
- (E) Navy blue belt
- (F) Team baseball hat
- (G) Legal bat (BBCOR certified)
- (H) Catchers equipment – A hockey style catcher’s mask with the NOCSAE seal is the only legal mask allowed.
- (I) One pair of Game Pants (White with single navy blue piping down leg)

We will provide each player with a game uniform top that is to be turned back in at the conclusion of the season. Please wash and take of our game uniforms. Uniforms are an expensive part of the financial picture and replacing a uniform can be extremely costly.

## **Playing Time**

Playing time is not something that is given to you. Playing time is something you earn.

Show us in practice that you are the best at your position.

Show is in practice that you fully understand our system of offensive and defensive strategies and procedures for implementing them.

Show is in practice you have the desire to get better every day.

Show is in practice and in school that you have respect for the coaching staff and are willing to let them help you.

## **Lettering Requirements**

A varsity letter will be awarded to any player who appears in 10% of the innings played at the varsity level.

## **The Coach/Player/Parent Relationship**

We feel that our coaching staff is extremely qualified to run a successful program. Our staff has many years of experience including work at the high school, college, and the professional level. One of our philosophies is that coaching is an extension of our jobs as classroom teachers and provides us with another opportunity to teach our players the life skills necessary to make the best decisions. We also recognize that a parent's job may be the toughest and most important job in life. We understand that parents love their kids and want nothing but the best for them. We try to make our decisions based on what is best for the team and not any one individual. It is improbable that all 50 to 60 players and their parents in our program will be happy with every decision we make in a season. If a player isn't happy with or doesn't understand his role, we ask that he discuss it with his coach first. We believe it is important for our players to develop communication skills and the ability to be a self-advocate. If this doesn't help the situation, then communication with the parents may be necessary.

We truly want this experience to be positive for the coaches, players, and parents. We're not perfect. We will make some mistakes. But we do promise to work hard, run an ethical program, and give the players an opportunity to mature both physically and mentally.

## **Fundraising**

This can be an ugly phrase for coaches, players, and parents. The reality, however, is that it takes money to run this program. We all want to continually improve our program. Our list of improvements is long and expensive. Our basic necessities each year can be expensive. Items such as baseballs, nets, and uniforms far exceed our school budget for the baseball program. Our current fund raiser involves selling ticket vouchers for the Kansas City Royals. Thanks to the amazing efforts of both players and parents, this fundraiser has been very successful. This not only helps raise necessary funds for the program, but also allows our varsity players the opportunity to play a game at Kauffman Stadium. This has only been possible due to the commitment of our parents to help sell the necessary vouchers required by the Kansas City Royals. We greatly appreciate all who have contributed. In addition to the money raised through the sale of the vouchers, the Blue Valley North Booster Club continues to support our program by purchasing "big ticket" items that exceed our school activity budget. We encourage each of you to join and participate in the Blue Valley North Booster Club.

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

The baseball program will follow the school policy for which each individual athlete has read and signed. Our 1<sup>st</sup> offense consequence is a loss of 25% of games played. We understand that young men make mistakes from time to time. We also believe that learning lessons sometimes involves consequences. We are committed to working with our athletes to help them mature and make good decisions when it comes to their choices about drugs and alcohol. However, they must understand that making bad decisions, many times, comes with an unfavorable consequence. We ask that you support us in applying the policies that are in place.

## **Trainer**

Our athletic program provides a trainer to help with injuries that may occur during the season. Our trainer is fully qualified and does an excellent job in handling sports related injuries and rehabilitation. If an athlete is injured, we ask that he first seek treatment from our trainer. He is the most qualified person to diagnose the problem and will give the best advice if a medical doctor is needed to treat the injury.

## **Social Media Policy**

The Blue Valley North Athletic Department recognizes and supports the student-athletes' right to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. However, participating in the Blue Valley North Baseball Program is seen as a privilege. As a student-athlete, you represent the Blue Valley North community and must portray yourself in a positive manner at all times.

- Remember, what you post may affect your future. Many employers and college admissions officers review social networking sites as part of their overall evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information.
- The following actions will not be tolerated and will show evidence that participation in our program is not a high priority.
  - Derogatory language or remarks that may harm a teammate or coach; other student athletes, teachers, or coaches; and student-athletes, coaches, or representatives of other schools, including comments that may disrespect our opponents.
  - Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; hazing; sexual harassment; inappropriate gestures; vandalism; stalking; underage drinking, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors.
  - Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
  - Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation – regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional.

We must understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. The on-line social network sites are NOT a place where you can say and do whatever you want without repercussions. The information you post on a social networking site is considered public information. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image of which you can be proud for years to come.

## Hazing Policy

- Hazing is defined as any activity expected of a member of a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, endangers, or risks physical or emotional harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Often, a high-status member of a group orders other members to engage in, or suggests that they engage in, activity that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist because he/she wants to gain admission or acceptance into a group.
- Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to, embarrassing appearance or acts, wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste, engaging in public stunts and/or attention-drawing behaviors, morally degrading or humiliating games or activities and any other activities which are not consistent with the educational environment.
- Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times. Any student or group of students involved in these activities will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school.
- No administrator, faculty member, or other employee of the school district shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing activities.
- No students or student leaders of organizations shall plan, organize or engage in any hazing activities.

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What are the traits that make one man a winner and another man a loser? The big difference is in how a man thinks. His attitude will govern his actions.

For instance .....

- 1.) A winner is always ready to tackle something new .... while a loser is prone to believe it can't be done.
- 2.) A winner isn't afraid of competition .... a loser excuses himself with the idea that the competition beat him out.
- 3.) A winner knows he's sometimes wrong and is willing to admit his mistakes .... a loser can usually find someone else to blame.
- 4.) A winner is challenged by a new problem .... a loser doesn't want to face it.
- 5.) A winner is decisive .... a loser frustrates himself with indecision.
- 6.) A winner realizes there is no time like the present to get a job done .... a loser is prone to procrastinate with the hopes that things will be better tomorrow.
- 7.) A winner thinks positively .... acts positively .... and lives positively .... a loser usually has a negative attitude and a negative approach to everything.
- 8.) So, if you want to be a winner, think like a winner .... act like a winner .... and sooner that you think, you will be a winner.

- Desire makes winners in every walk of life.
- The degree of success you achieve depends on the amount of sincere desire you have.
- Desire arms you with courage to say to yourself, "I'm good, but not as good as I ought to be." Lesser people say, "I'm not as bad as a lot of other people."
- Desire develops and engenders respect for those in authority; a lack of desire breeds resentment.
- Desire fosters the sense of job responsibility. Lack of desire is expressed in, "I only work here."
- Desire is the dynamic motivation behind every worthwhile purpose; it is the inspiration that keeps the flame of progress burning.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALIFICATION  
TO BE A CHAMPION IN ANY SPORT  
IS AN INTENSE, BURNING DESIRE