



VBA Handbook

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Introduction: The VBA Way

The Vista Baseball Academy (VBA) was created to establish strong baseball knowledge and foundation for youth players looking to advance their skills.

Along with the Taipans travel baseball programs, VBA prioritizes player development and provides an outlet for all young aspiring athletes to obtain the skills needed to be successful at any level of play. Players learn the baseball basics to develop proper fundamentals for catching, throwing, hitting, base running, and infield and outfield training. VBA's program accelerates development to offer a path for each player to participate in competitive baseball.



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We focus on our values of:

- Upholding our first class organization
- Organization
- Good communication
- Teaching young athletes the right way to play the game
- Playing hard
- Having fun
- Reflecting at the end of the season on the huge strides made by every child

Schedule

- VBA operates from August – May and breaks for June and July of every year.
- Most major holidays will be off, though many tournaments do fall on the following weekends: MLK, President's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, 1st or 2nd weekend of Thanksgiving break, and Columbus Day.
- Players will practice once during Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks.

Our program consists of the following components:

- Professionally coached field training sessions, typically 1 time per week
- Professionally coached batting sessions, typically 1 time per week
- One scrimmage most weekends, weather permitting
- Tournament play
- Most VBA coaches also offer individual team practices or private lessons (for an additional fee)

Tryouts & Length of Commitment

Tryouts will occur in early July of every year for new players. Current players do not have to attend. All teams have the potential to be evaluated in July and December. If players are performing at a different level than their assigned team, there is the possibility of being



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reassigned in December or July. 90% of players tend to stay where they were originally assigned, but it is possible to shuffle to other teams.

While we expect that each player will commit throughout the length of the regular season, if for any reason expectations cannot be met by either the player or VBA, families can leave their roster spot at the end of any month. However, there is no guarantee that the spot will be available in the event that a player would like to return.

Communication

Each team will use some sort of scheduling application to manage their events and availability. The team administrator will manage this and act as the main source of communication around team events and general notices. This person will also collect tournament dues and coordinate team availability.

For line-up or playing time concerns, the best and first course of action is to encourage players to discuss directly with their head coach. This is a good opportunity for young athletes to familiarize themselves with the process of asking for constructive feedback and ways to improve their game. It also builds self-confidence and communication skills.

- Ages 8u-10u: Parents please contact Adrian Burnside to express concerns.
- Ages 11u-13u: Players are encouraged to discuss a plan with coaches and be open to more opportunities. If no better opportunities come about, then parents can contact Adrian Burnside.
- This is competitive baseball and there is no set guaranteed amount of playing time. Our coaches have a few VBA policies they need to follow and we will keep an eye on fair playing time the best we can.
- Parents, please do not contact a coach about playing time until at least 48 hours after any game.
- If playing time becomes a continued concern, a player could be recommended to another VBA team or organization.



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For all other concerns and after these options have been exhausted, please contact VBA owner Adrian Burnside.

VBA Fees

VBA fees have historically been some of the lowest fees in North County, but as the world continues to get more expensive, we may periodically increase our rates. They will always stay comparable to other organizations of our size and offerings. In the past several years, we have seen a huge increase in the cost of travel and hotels, tournament entry fees and utilities, among other things. We will always strive to be fair and continue to provide quality services for the money spent.

Our fees cover: coaches' fees and travel costs, field costs, equipment costs, maintenance and everything else that goes into running a quality travel program.

We are expecting an increase going into the 2024/2025 season; please contact Adrian Burnside if you would like to discuss the anticipated changes.

Refund Policy

If you commit to VBA, registration has been completed and a payment plan has started, there are no refunds should you choose to quit. However, if your child is injured, we will work with you to be fair.

Game Philosophy

VBA will never cancel games or tournaments that have been committed to by our organization. It is a value that we feel very strongly about; in fact, we will find players if we are short, we will shift locations if needed, but we will not cancel. That being said, tournaments and games do get canceled outside of our control. We will always do our best to replace the scrimmages or tournaments, but on occasion, things happen.



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Expectations

In order for our teams to be successful, it is important that all players and parents be aware of the expectations that VBA has set for teams at all playing levels.

VBA players are expected to hustle on and off the field, respect their coaches and practice good sportsmanship before, during and after games. They will work hard and treat practices seriously to become the best players that they can be. They will encourage teammates, be helpful and courteous, set a good example for others and represent the organization with class. Players will respect the facilities provided for practices and games, will not damage equipment and will clean up after themselves.

Practices

Practice days and times can change at any time depending on field availability. VBA coaches do their best to keep a regular schedule, but some things are out of our control. All teams will practice twice per week, weather permitting. If there is rain, the goal will be to ensure that teams get at least one practice during the week.

Our practice plans are made up of a variety of proven drills and exercises designed to offer players proper instruction and demonstration of key skills, the maximum number of repetitions learning those skills and to keep players moving.

VBA parents take a vested interest in the success of their baseball player and Taipans baseball. Progress comes with practice and VBA coaches highly encourage young athletes to make an effort to practice individual skills outside of assigned team practices. Parents or caregivers who need help with drills that can be conducted at home are welcomed to ask for suggestions from the coaching staff.

Attire/Equipment

Parents shall be solely responsible for ensuring the player has the equipment necessary to play for the team, including gloves, bats, cleats, catcher's gear (for catchers), and other protective gear. Players are expected to attend practice in their practice uniforms, which include their gray



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hat, tucked in practice uniform shirt, gray pants, blue socks, blue belt and cleats. Players should arrive in the correct clean uniform for all games.

Age Divisions

Teams take time to develop and at VBA, we recognize that this is a process that we must commit to in order to see success. Every year, expectations and team offerings will slightly change.

8u-10u

8u: VBA prioritizes development and basic skill-building. Young athletes typically have played all-stars and want to continue playing or are recreational players looking for further baseball instruction. Teams can include an array of skill levels and ages, from D1 - D3 and as young as 5. Usually one team is formed at this age group, but all players are welcome. Youth that do not turn 8 during the season will likely remain at this age group until appropriate to advance. Tournaments may come up depending on skill level and availability.

9u: There is still a focus on development and basic skill-building with a small emphasis on competing. Teams can include an array of skill levels, from D1 - D3, but continued instruction throughout the season improves competitiveness. One to two teams may be formed at this age group and coaches are focusing on building up and within. Youth that do not turn 9 during the season will potentially remain at this age group until appropriate to advance. Tournaments may come up depending on skill level and availability.

10u: At this point, depending on players and competition level, the structure transitions to a 2-team system. The Blue team will place a higher emphasis on competing, while the Black team will continue to work on refining baseball skills. Less roster availability on the Blue team, but players can almost always be added to the Black team.

11u-12u

11u: The Blue team will have a set roster of committed and polished travel baseball players that have a high level of experience. Will have advanced level execution of first and third plays, bunt plays and cut-offs. Little to no roster availability. Typically playing division 1 tournaments. The Black team will have a standard level of execution of plays. Some roster availability depending



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on time of year. Team will be competitive in any open division tournament. At this age, an 11u/12u combo team is offered as an alternative for beginner level players looking strictly for development and scrimmages.

12u: The Blue team will have a set roster of committed and polished travel baseball players that have a high level of experience. The team is baseball savvy, polished, physical and typically plays division 1 tournaments. Expected to compete. Little to no roster availability. Will have advanced level execution of first and third plays, bunt plays and cut-offs. The Black team will be competitive in any open division tournament with a standard level of execution of plays.

13u-14u

13u: The Blue team at this age will be very physical, with expert level execution of all plays. Both teams should be competitive at this point.

14u: Both teams should know exactly what to do in any given situation, with talent, speed and pitching fairly similar. Blue team is likely playing more competition but not significantly different.

Coaching Staff

VBA teams are mentored and coached by former professional players and coaches. Coaches participate in various aspects of practices for all teams and young athletes will be exposed to a variety of coaching styles throughout the season during scrimmages. That being said, generally, teams will have the same coach for tournaments. You can find the current coaching staff [here](#).

Each team will be asked to have one parent volunteer their time during games and tournaments. This parent supports the coach by running first base during offense, keeping the players in correct batting order and engaged (particularly for younger groups), warming up pitchers, moving players on defense as directed by the head coach and other needs as they arise. This person does not contribute to the line-up order, roster, pitching, playing time or other advanced baseball instruction.



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Attendance

Each player's presence is critical to the team and it is expected that players make every effort to attend practices, games and tournaments. Excessive or unexcused absences may result in reduced playing time or, in prolonged or extreme cases, removal from the roster if it becomes detrimental to the team. Please update planned absences on the team's scheduling app or make the team administrator aware as soon as possible.

If a player plans to play or has committed to an additional competitive or recreational sport, this should be communicated well in advance to the team's primary coach. In the event that other sports consistently conflict with the player's ability to attend team events, playing time or position will be impacted, or the player's team assignment may be re-evaluated.

Athletes' Dugout & Field Behavior

Players should always remember that practices and games are not the appropriate time to visit with friends or family outside the field of play. No eating in the dugout. Exceptions to this rule would include diabetics or other health-related needs that have been flagged with the coach, or in cases where back to back games are occurring and there is no time to eat. Players should try to conclude their eating before the next game starts.

VBA has a zero-tolerance policy for behavior that could compromise the safety and/or well-being of other players or coaches. This includes, but is not limited to, wildly throwing balls, bats or other equipment, whether in anger or poor self-control, or any other aggressive, unsafe behavior. Offenders may be rostered to another team or asked to leave the organization entirely.

Parent Behavior & Expectations

You are welcome to cheer or be supportive of the team, but please refrain from coaching your child on the sidelines. Be courteous to the coaching staff and allow coaches to do their jobs. Outbursts and disruptive behavior from the parents, fans and players will not be tolerated and any such actions may result in removal from the field or team. Parents that are not part of the coaching staff are asked to stay off the field unless asked to help by the coach.



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We know that tough calls can be frustrating, but parents are not permitted to yell at or taunt umpires. Let the coaches navigate these challenges. VBA has maintained a good reputation as a classy organization at all ballparks with tournament directors and most umpires, and we want to keep it that way.

Only coaches and players are allowed in the dugout. Parents are encouraged to support and cheer for their children, however, during practices and games, they should refrain from approaching the dugout to coach, counsel or otherwise critique their child. Players should not leave the dugout during games unless it is to use the restroom. If you are concerned about your child's health, you may approach, or if a coach has a concern, they may ask you to come into the dugout.

We also want to reiterate the point that we request all parents to wait a minimum of 48 hours after any game or tournament before bringing complaints to coaches around playing time or other game scenarios. It's always best to take a cooling off period so we can have productive conversations.

Guest Playing for Other Teams

Players on Blue teams shall not play or practice with other organizations during the regular season, unless express permission is given by the head coach. Players on all teams are expected to prioritize VBA over recreational baseball commitments. Not only does this ensure that teams are fully rostered and ready to play throughout the season, but it also allows coaches to monitor and manage appropriate arm care for pitchers.

Tournaments

Tournaments are utilized to gain competitive team experience, live reps and to define player needs, and are offered to teams on a case-by-case basis throughout the season. Development and early age (8u-9u) teams can expect to participate in local tournaments as appropriate and at least 1-2 events in the fall and spring. Competitive teams can expect to participate monthly in



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local, regional and national tournaments.

If a player cannot participate in all days of a tournament, it is the coach's discretion to replace the player for the weekend or request that the player not attend. There is no guarantee that a player will play if they can only partially commit to a tournament. If a player is allowed to participate in only part of a tournament, they will still be expected to pay the full tournament fee, regardless of how many days or games they participate in.

Inclement Weather Tournament Refund Policy:

No Games Played = Full Refund

1 Game played = 50% Refund

2 Games Played = No Refund

In the event that an out-of-state (outside of California) tournament is canceled due to inclement weather, VBA will refund players 50% of their tournament fee or can apply the refunded portion to the next tournament. Examples include trips to Las Vegas, Lake Havasu and Phoenix.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather as defined in this handbook can include fog, heat, rain, lightning or any other weather act outside of our control.

This policy is effective as of January 1, 2023 and is subject to periodic updates.

Updated: Monday, October 7, 2024