



Dear Prospective Team Parent:

You are receiving this letter because coach Kirk Honeycutt is recruiting your son to play for the 2020 Livingston County Blue Sox, 12Year-Old Travel baseball team. While we will be holding open tryouts, we feel that your son has an excellent chance to make the team based on his ability and our knowledge of the local talent. This team is a newly formed and sponsored team. This letter will outline the team plans for the 2020 season as well as outline team goals and objectives. We realize there is a lot of information to sort through and that you will have questions. We will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Team Goals:

1. Focus on player development (multi-year process) and teaching kids the “right” way to play the game.
2. To be as competitive as possible.
3. Have fun and create a positive atmosphere for the players and parents. This is not going to be a high-pressure environment. Kids will make mistakes and it’s our job to help them learn from them.
4. Install discipline, structure, respect for teammates/ coaches and individual accountability.

Coaching Philosophy/Objectives:

Player and team development through positive reinforcement using a dedicated and knowledgeable coaching staff. Will use a team first approach with the emphasis on teamwork and how individuals can make the team better. Some of the highlights:

1. Pitching coaches: Players will work in private practice sessions.
2. Batting cage practice and instruction in small group sessions and/or individually.
3. Some of the pitching goals for 2020 include developing off-speed pitches (change-up, curve, circle change, cutter), pitch location (pitching to the inside and outside of the plate) and an emphasis on throwing strikes. Perfecting pick-off moves and developing a slide step will also be a priority.
4. Batting goals include having an aggressive attitude at the plate, hitting the ball where it is pitched, situational hitting (advancing runners, sacrifices, etc.) and adjusting to off-speed pitches.
5. Defense – perfection through repetition.

These are just some of the coaching points for next year, obviously there are too many to list but we want to give you an idea of the kinds of things the players will be exposed to. We will begin cage sessions and pitching practice this fall/winter depending on when tryouts are. We also will

have an occasional team practice.

The type of team we are trying to build starts with being fundamentally sound. A lot of coaches preach it but few spend the time necessary to achieve it. We are both big on hustle, team speed, defense, being a “tough out” and throwing strikes. These, we believe, are the keys to being successful on the baseball diamond. We prefer athletic players with versatility and a “cando” attitude. Players must also be mentally tough.

Tournaments:

The key is the quality of players we are able to secure. Based on our knowledge of the talent level of the players trying out, we should be competitive very quickly. In fact, if recruiting goes well, we have a chance to be one of the top teams in the State. All players that we are recruiting now are playing travel baseball and in some cases, are the top players on their respective teams. I expect that after the group learns to play together (probably 3-6 games) we'll be solid. The level of play in these travel tournaments is the best in the area and our goal is to be competitive at all tournaments. We are trying to be the one of the best teams in the state or even the Midwest. We do however expect our team to be in the top tier of area teams within our age group and want a team that can play with anybody and wins when they play well.

Tournaments – There are many quality local tournaments and we will most likely enter tournaments with the following thought process:

- a. Tournament where we are the clear favorite
- b. Tournaments where we will be pushed and see top area/regional/national competition
- c. Tournaments that we are capable of winning but will have to play well and push ourselves.

We don't like to lose or win games big, although we will take the latter. We will schedule games and tournaments where the kids will be able to get better by playing good/ comparable competition but at the same time have a good chance of realizing some success. We will win some tournaments.

Team Costs:

We believe fees will be \$1000-\$1800 per player. This covers field costs, team insurance and umpires. We will be responsible for uniforms and other costs including USSA, tournament fees, indoor cage time and other miscellaneous expenses. (Cooperstown will be an extra cost to each player of 1300.00) The uniforms will consist of baseball bags, pants (3), Home, Alternate, and Away Jersey, fitted hat (3), socks (2) and individual helmets. Items such as team banner, jackets and other uniform items will be discussed once the team is selected. Our color scheme will be White, Navy Blue, Graphite and Red.

We will need to raise funds, as most travel teams do. We do have some leads from corporate sponsors and have some funds already committed. All budget and fundraising items will be discussed at the first team meeting. I don't anticipate raising funds to present a problem or be all consuming.

Games/practice schedule:

Team Meetings - One of the advantages of playing with the Blue Sox is that we will have a set schedule. We plan on having two practices per week and play tournaments on weekends. This will be different during tournament weeks.

Number of Games: We'll play only travel tournaments. Our guess is we'll play in 12 tournaments, with 5 of those involving out of town travel. Total number of games will probably be between 50-60.

Ripken: This is the premier tournament in the country and is an experience the whole family will remember. The decision on whether or not to go will be made as a team. I will support it and would like to do it but it is too big of a commitment in many ways for me to make that decision without input. We most likely will discuss and then vote.

Blue Sox Affiliation:

The team is the Tri County Blue Sox and is affiliated with Livingston County. We will try and put as many kids from the Livingston County school district as possible on the team. However, we are not subject to roster restrictions and will select the best 11 kids in an effort to field the most competitive team possible. We know several of the kids that are being asked or invited to tryout belong to Genesee or Oakland County and therefore the affiliation to Livingston is irrelevant.

Tryouts:

Tryouts will be in July 12th through July 14th. We will know more as we get through this season. They will most likely consist of 2-3 days of tryouts. This is an open tryout and we are obligated to take the best 11 players. We feel your son has the ability to make the team but we will not guarantee spots prior to tryouts.

Statistics/Report Cards/Web Site: bluesoxsbaseball.com/Game Changer

Players will be given report cards early in the season and at mid-season telling them what they are doing well and what they need to improve on. In addition, we will keep detailed stats throughout the year and will distribute when appropriate. The team will also have a web site that will have all scheduling, upcoming events and stats.

Team Leads:

1. Treasurer- Kirk Honeycutt
2. Travel coordinator – Nicole Honeycutt
3. Fundraising coordinator – Honeycutt/Weaver
4. Web administrator – Kirk Honeycutt

Where kids play/ coaches decisions:

Our philosophy is to put the team first. We will field a team and a line-up that gives the team the best opportunity to win. In league games or late in close games, the best defensive 9 players will be on the field. Everyone will hit in almost every game and there will be plenty of opportunities to compete for spots. Everyone will play a lot of defense but some kids will play more. We won't have 11 infielders. We highly recommend that wherever your son plays, you focus on him being the best at that position. That is the attitude we will take. We really believe that the players need to be in one or two positions. We will start with open competition and I encourage you to speak with us about what our plans are for your son. We will give you an honest assessment after tryouts of where your son stands and what our plans are for him. Everyone on this team will be a contributor. We are far from being right all the time and will ask other coaches' opinions and listen to your thoughts as well. We have an open-door policy. We are open to almost anything but will always put the team first. If there is ever any concern we ask that you take a 24-hour period from the day that you have a concern and email us, we will then take into consideration and get back with you. We understand the concerns but also do not want emotions to get in the way of facts.

In closing, from our coaching experience and from all the travel coaches we've talked to, getting a good group of people and kids together is really the key and most difficult ingredient to a successful team. That will factor into the selections. If your goal is to teach your son about teamwork, hustle, teammates, respect, how to be a better player and hard work, that's a big part of what we're teaching. If your son wants to play in high school or beyond, this is a staff with a lot of experience as players and coaches, not to mention guys that can connect with kids. References on the coaching staff are available if needed.

Feel free to contact us with any questions. Thanks.

Coach/Manager – Kirk Honeycutt

10 Commandments of Blue Sox Baseball

1. Hustle. Nobody ever became a ballplayer by walking after a ball.
2. You will never become a .300 hitter unless you take the bat off your shoulder.
3. An outfielder that throws in back of a runner is locking the barn after the horse is stolen.
4. Win as a team, lose as a team. Respect your teammates.
5. When you start to slide, slide. Hesitation is the opponent's teammate.
6. Do not make excuses on bad hops. Anybody can field the good ones.
7. Always run them out. You never can tell.
8. Do not quit.
9. A pitcher who hasn't control hasn't anything.
10. Hustle. Play every play like it's your last. Someday it will be.