

LEGION SELECT 2023

Our purpose- To enhance Legion baseball by providing additional playing options to higher level players that are committed to advancing.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Can Legion baseball save itself from the growth of club baseball? Can the community baseball model succeed? That is an open question. It has been an athletic given that you get better when you play with and play against better players. Better competition forces you to improve and meet the challenges to achieve higher level goals. If you don't believe those statements, stop here.

Club baseball is nothing more than multi-community baseball with age and ability-based tiers. Legion in Minnesota has, until now, rigidly restricted team composition to largely fit into a single school district model. The argument is now the belief: If you want to play with better players or you want to play against better competition, you play on a club team. It may be more costly. You may drive more. But its better.

“A little change can bring big results.”

Can Legion programs enhance their offering to provide an accelerated level for the areas most committed and better players? Sure. It's kind of easy. Could enhanced programming potentially keep more kids in community baseball or attract more kids to at least dual roster with their community teams? Why not? The concept is simple: Legion Select and the Future Stars League.

- Form multi-community “all-star” teams based on coach selection and direction. How many communities to create one team? Anywhere from 2 to 5 seems most likely. It's based on how many kids from one program the coach wants to advance to Legion Select.
- Play at least a 5 game “Futures Stars League” schedule (one game a week). Play one midseason tourney within the league teams. Play a post season tourney for all the marbles (Moundsvew is possibly a site). 12 total games should be targeted, but not mandated.

- Cost per play is estimated at \$110 but suggested player fee may be \$150 to possibly include a cool tee shirt or DryFit jersey.

What prevents such an experimental effort? Nothing that we know of. The concept is in addition to and is not a replace of any community program. Enhancement not replacement. The national Legion expanded the enrollment team level to a maximum to 7,500 in 2022. Minnesota limits total enrollment for teams to 3,600. We have no reason that any all-star or multi-community team would have any maximum enrollment limits rather the team forming should be determined by coaches determining what communities they wish to join with and how many players should represent each individual program.

Attached is more detailed information.

Legion Select - Future Stars

Multi- Community Teams:

- Legion Select is a level designed for the upcoming stars that happen to be younger and are better off playing within the junior level. Or are junior age eligible.
- These are local all-star types of teams that are formed by you coaches. You pull together one squad created from several teams and fill out your squad with what you know to be your best players – those players that want and deserve the accelerated baseball experience.
- Recommended: Setting aside Tuesdays(?) as all-star Tuesdays. You play against other Select teams (Future Stars teams). Do you have to play in a Tuesday League? No. But club teams are playing games during the week now and so should we.
- Can you play double headers on league nights? Yes. Can you schedule a couple of teams to play a 'crossover' on a weekend? Each playing two games? Sure.
- Recommended: A year end tournament played on the same weekend as the State All-Star Tournament and located as close as possible to our state site. Why? To provide accessibility to college coaches that are coming to see the state event and likely would want to see even more players that want to go to college.

Some Thoughts and Initial Guidelines for Legion Select – Future Stars

- 1) Forming a Team of 15 Players (example) 18 Players is maximum for insurance.**

- a. Example – Combine five teams. Each team has three player slots. Four teams might have four slots per team or 16 total. It's flexible. What teams do you want to combine with? Maybe you don't want to participate. Up to you.
- b. Coaches work together to fill player and field coaching positions. Coaches best know their players.
- c. Coaches may rotate players from their base teams during the season. Season play rosters need not be fixed until you submit your roster and insurance by June 20.
- d. Consider some maximum enrollment levels if necessary. That may encourage more teams to form and allows more players from each community to participate.
- e. To be eligible for the Future Stars, a player must meet the junior Legion birthdate requirement. The player must be rostered on a Legion team (junior or senior team). A VFW player must be rostered on a Legion team. Otherwise, Legion insurance would not attach.
- f. Coaches must be registered with the Legion and all requirements must be completed.

2) Regular Season – 5 Game Example

- a. Play in All-Star Tuesdays by setting aside that day/night (or some other night)
- b. Coaches schedule games, fields and umpires as they do now
- c. Costs for each of the 5 base teams (comprising one hypothetical Legion or Future Star squad)
 - i. ½ umpire for one game (umps are split between both game teams)
 - ii. 2 or 3 new baseballs for one game out of the five Tuesday games
 - iii. If that cost was \$75 for the league games – that equates to a cost of \$25 a player for 5 league all-star games.
 - iv. Could a participating base team cover the \$75? Or would the participating team charge their players \$25? Decision: Up to that base team.
 - v. Costs are clearly minimal
 - vi. Players compete in the own uniforms and caps.
- d. Pitching thoughts
 - i. Legion pitch count rules apply
 - ii. In the five game / five base team example, each base team would potentially need to supply pitching for just one game.

3) Mid-Season Tournaments

- a. An in-season Legion or Future Star tournament certainly should be developed
 - i. Existing communities and organizations could develop such an event just as they already put on tournaments of single community teams.
 - ii. Cost sharing, entry fees and other factors are determined at the local level
 - iii. Each team can decide whether to fund its share of the cost or to charge each player a fee
 - iv. Flexibility in rosters allows team coaches to have pitching as well as accommodate rostered players that might have other commitments
 - v. In season tournaments reduce the argument that Legion does not provide enough top competition
- b. Outside Tournaments
 - i. There would be nothing to preclude one of the Rising Stars teams to play in other tournaments. The choice would be up to the coaches, players and parents of that team
 - ii. Two or more Rising Star teams could combine to play in an outside tournament (remember – Legion insurance attaches to the Legion PLAYER – you are covered)

- iii. Showcase tournaments are scheduled throughout the summer. If you want to really compete with clubs, you eventually incorporate the showcase tournament in the schedule. Frankly, the competition at those tournaments is typically stronger than at Legion only tournaments.
- iv. Costs associated with such tournaments are the responsibility of each team or combination team
- v. We do NOT think this would be advisable for the 2023 pilot year.

4) Year End Tournament

- a. Some form of post season playoff or tournament should be developed.
- b. The tournament location should coordinate with the State All-Star event. There are synergies to plug into.
 - i. The state All-star event features a PBR/Legion showcase
 - ii. The state event features the College Bound Breakfast and Coaches Panel
 - iii. The state event markets to college coaches that can leverage coincident events
- c. What might a year end tournament look like?
 - i. How many teams might be in a playoff? No idea! We hope to start small and see what happens.
 - ii. One can establish an initial tournament with 4 to maybe 8 possible teams
 - 1. The yearend tournament could be first come first served.
 - 2. The yearend tournament could be seeded according to Tuesday League game results.
 - 3. Better yet – draw teams out of a hat. A clean hat preferred
 - 4. Or if there are many stars teams one could develop a playoff structure.
- Example
 - a. Schedule games on home fields as convenient
 - b. Have a “Final Four” at a final site
 - c. Final site is a one-day Mini Bracket – Round One - two games to qualify. Round Two - winner vs. winner for the championship and second place, loser vs. loser plays for third and fourth place.
 - d. The goal would be to start and finish in the week following the Legion state tournaments – Monday to final Sunday
- d. Ultimately you can’t pre-determine the year end playoff or tournament without a sense of how many Stars teams are ultimately formed. We think that a yearend tournament is essential.
 - a. Source a host site
 - b. Develop the playing structure.

These are just thoughts and idea. But it is the beginning of a framework that we can develop.

We need to know : 1) Is your community in or are they out? 2) How many players would you want to play in Select? 3) Do you have any preferred partner programs to combine with? 4) Would you help manage this program 5) can you host a tournament – state or midseason?

Email us with any ideas or questions or just let Mike Perry know.