



We are super excited about our announcement of the merger of the Vipers and STING organizations! We want each of you to know that our combined leadership group is not only highly motivated but also diligently working on a daily basis to create something really exciting for the travel baseball players in Louisville and surrounding areas that has never been done before. In 2021, our newly formed organization will provide the best travel baseball experience in the region for nearly 35 teams, 400+ athletes and 100+ coaches. We thought it would be prudent to share a list of frequently asked questions and answers that will help you understand the who, what, where, when, why and how as it relates to our new, unified travel baseball organization!

Q: How did this come about and when will the merger of the Vipers and STING officially take place?

A: Our leadership groups have been actively working on the idea of “the merger” since early 2020. It became evident quickly that our morals, ethics and values aligned perfectly and that we were much more alike than we were different. The general agreement of how and when to merge was in place as of March 2020. We would have announced it sooner, but Covid-19 obviously forced us all to pause and redirect our time and energy for a bit to focus on the safety, health and wellness of our own families as well as our athletes and their families. Since planning for the 2021 season is now upon us, we have chosen September 1 as the official date that we will begin legally and structurally merging the organizations into one. But, we assure you that we have been (behind the scenes) playing on the same team already!

Q: Why are the Vipers and STING merging their organizations?

A: While both organizations have existed separately, we have done so in the past with very similar, if not the exact same vision and mission. The leadership teams of both organizations have the same passion to provide the best youth and high school travel baseball experience in our region. We strongly believe that we can do so much more for our athletes and their families together than we can apart. There are so many potential short and long term benefits including sharing existing facilities to exploring new and/or expanded facilities, to having greater buying power together for uniforms/gear, equipment, tournaments and more.

Q: Will the STING become part of the Vipers or vice versa?

A: NO. It is plain and simple. Neither group is going to be forced to become the other post merger. The intent of coming together is to do just that...create and be one common, larger and more influential organization. Structurally, it is a universal benefit for the new group to use the Vipers current 501-c-3 non-profit legal status, which will be an added benefit to the STING teams and their families from a fundraising standpoint.

Q: Will the two existing brands go away? Will we rebrand and use a new team name?

A: No and Yes. We do expect to keep both Vipers and STING brands in tact through the fall of 2020 at a minimum. There is a chance that the two brands, Vipers and STING will also continue to exist but all under one umbrella for the 2021 spring and summer as well. Long term, however, the expectation is that we will eventually rebrand all of our teams and our unified organization will get a new name. When the time is right, we will be properly vetting any new directions, names, brands, colors, etc. with our athletes, coaches and parents!

Q: Who will be the leaders of the newly merged organization?

A: The current directors of both organizations, Aaron Beard from the Vipers and Aaron Flaker from the STING, will remain heavily involved in co-leading the new organization. Beard will be primarily focused on facilities and team operations, while Flaker will lead the way on branding, marketing and organizational development. The newly formed board of directors will also include multiple existing members from both the Vipers and STING organizations. We are also excited to announce that Chris Burke, a former MLB player and college baseball commentator for ESPN, will be joining our board and leading the charge for us on player development. More to come soon on our joint leadership team and organizational structure!

Q: How does the merger help my athlete?

A: Both organizations have similar visions but unique benefits and assets as well. This merger allows us to field deeper and more competitive teams at both the youth and high school levels, gain more prominent recruiting recognition to our high school age athletes, provide advancements in coaching and fundamentals and to continue to provide our young athletes education both inside and outside the lines of the ball field. We want your child to succeed in both life and baseball!

Q: How will teams be formed for 2021? Will teams be combined at all or at certain age levels?

A: Obviously, we are quickly entering into the team build-out and planning phases for the 2021 season. We don't see any major overhaul of our current or existing teams as it pertains to 2021. Our goal is first and foremost that our athletes and their families are playing on a team and in an environment that they are not only comfortable with but one that also provides the most positive, educational and developmental baseball experience possible. We are meeting currently with the coaches at each age level to determine the best course of action for the teams and the players within that age group. Each age group will need to be looked at individually before finalizing any specific plans for 2021. Again, creating as many positive baseball experiences and fielding competitive teams will lead the way in our decision making.

Q: Is there going to be a limit to how many Vipers/STING teams an age level can have?

A: Simple answer is NO LIMIT. Our goal is to accomplish two things with our teams at all age levels...1) all teams, first and foremost, should represent the organization with respect, dignity and class on and off the field as well as be relatively competitive on the field and 2) field at least one team at each level that can compete on a high level at a regional and national level each season. Our overall goal as an organization is to be as INCLUSIVE as possible.

Q: How will tryouts for the Vipers and STING 2021 teams work?

A: Given that we are still in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, we are going to handle our 2021 team tryouts a little differently. In an effort to be a good community partner, we WILL NOT be holding a large public, all team, entire organization type of tryout. Instead, each team will be using the existing facilities, practices, scrimmages and/or games to vet current and future potential players for their teams. There will also be an online team tryout interest form available for our coaches and athletes to share with others who may be interested in joining one of our teams and newly merged organization!

Q: Will the Vipers and STING coaches remain the same?

A: Obviously, this is impossible to answer with one common answer for all ages and teams. In general terms, our plan is keep our existing Vipers and STING coaches in place when and where possible. Both organizations have spent years vetting the best coaches possible and are proud of the guys and teams we have assembled. It is a shared goal of our organization to push for high school age teams to hire the best and most experienced and qualified coaches we can find. We are committed to educating our future teams and coaches like no other organization has done before.

Q: With the two organizations having multiple locations, will the STING teams have to go to Springdale to practice or Vipers teams to Cedar Creek to practice?

A: “Have to”, NO. But that option will definitely exist for all of our teams! The Vipers currently have a 7,000 sq. ft. indoor turf facility with 4 hitting/pitching tunnels that can accommodate multiple teams at once as well as a larger outdoor field, which is suitable for practices for both youth and high school age travel teams. The STING has a youth size outdoor field and an outdoor batting/pitching area that will accommodate multiple youth teams at one time. We will share and collectively operate all current facilities until we can find something that has the capacity for all teams within the organization. All teams and athletes will have access to all of our existing shared facilities.

Q: Will my team fees for 2021 increase?

A: It is a priority to our Vipers/STING leadership to provide the best value possible to our athletes and their families. In the future, if we were get new/additional/bigger/better facilities, the overall fees could increase slightly, but our athletes will HAVE to get access to more for us to approve any type of increase in fees. We can assure you that our leadership is committed to keeping our non-profit status in place and thus giving our families the best experience and training possible for the lowest cost possible. We don't foresee any major increases for the 2021 season.

Q: What new and exciting things are on the radar of the new organization?

A: WOW! So much to say and do, but we will do our best to give you a oof sneak peek of some of our goals and vision. Our main priority is that we are 100% dedicated to finding expanded indoor facilities so that our athletes and coaches have the best facilities in the area to train and develop as players and teams. We will also likely align ourselves in the near future with one major, national apparel/equipment company so we can leverage the best possible deals for our athletes. We also have mid to long term goal to also find and/or develop improved or expanded outdoor fields/facilities for our teams and athletes. Lastly, and most importantly, we want to act as a good partner to the community and have some big ideas on how to offer and teach the game of baseball to more underprivileged and minority families in our area. Bottom line, some really exciting and big things will be now be possible given that we are much stronger together!

Here's to an exciting partnership and 2021 season for the Vipers and STING!

