

Post 8 Baseball Mission and Philosophy (Adopted February 25th, 2014)

Mission: To provide an opportunity for players aged 13-18 to develop baseball skills and achieve team success in an environment that promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect.

Philosophy: Pierre Post 8 American Legion Baseball for high school aged players has been in existence since the 1930s, and VFW Teener baseball, originally a program for players aged 13-15, has been in existence in Pierre since the 1950s. Although the makeup and structure of the Legion and Teener programs have changed over the years, Pierre's Teener and Legion programs have provided a quality baseball experience for players and fans for decades.

Pierre Post 8 Legion and Teener Baseball provides players aged 13 to 18 an opportunity to play competitive baseball. Post 8 Baseball represents a significant change from players' earlier experiences, providing the opportunity to practice every day, to play for paid coaches with significant baseball experience, including many with college baseball experience, and to play competitive teams from around the state.

The Post 8 program strives to provide players with ample practice time and game experience. We recognize that players develop at different rates and we have tried to structure our program accordingly. The Post 8 program provides players with the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the rules and concepts of the game of baseball, to acquire basic baseball skills, and to play baseball in an atmosphere that promotes good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, game officials, and for the game itself.

Philosophies and opinions vary as to how youth baseball programs should be structured, and those discussions have occurred frequently within the Post 8 baseball program and the Post 8 Baseball Board. Our program structure represents a compromise between two schools of thought relating to player development and player selection. Players at the high school level (age 15-18) must earn their spots, and the best players will play on the highest level team. However, middle school players (age 13-14) vary widely in physical and emotional development and in terms of baseball experience, making it difficult to predict the player's eventual ability level. Our 13-14 players are divided and assigned to teams based on age so that they can develop at their own pace and so that more players can be retained in the program.

Post 8 Varsity. The Varsity consists of the best players in the Post 8 program aged 15-18 as selected by the coaching staff. The goal of the Varsity team is to win within the parameters of good sportsmanship and respect for the game. Coaches determine playing time, positions, lineups, and strategy.

Junior Legion. The Junior Legion level was introduced in South Dakota in 2013 for players aged 17 and under. The Junior Legion team consists of the best Post 8 players aged 17 and under who are not members of the Varsity team. South Dakota American Legion Baseball holds a separate state tournament for the Junior Legion level. The Junior Legion team is intended to develop younger players for possible Varsity play in subsequent seasons and to enable players to participate at a competitive level of baseball as Junior Legion players.

VFW Teener Green Sox. The Teener Green Sox team is designed for Teener players aged 16 and under who are not members of the Varsity or Junior Legion teams. The South Dakota VFW holds a state tournament for this level as well as other levels of Teener baseball.

13-14 VFW Teeners. The 13-14 Teener teams consist of one team of 14-year-olds and two equal 13-year old-teams, depending on the number of players of each age who are participating in the program. State tournament competition is available for all 13-14 teams.

White Sox (Age 14). The White Sox team is made up of 14-year-olds with an emphasis on playing to win but also on player development through significant, but not necessarily equal, playing time for team members.

Gray Sox and Black Sox (Age 13). The Gray Sox and Black Sox are 13-year-old teams selected by the coaches so that the two teams are approximately equal in ability. If necessary because of the number of 13 or 14 year olds participating in the Post 8 program, some 14-year-olds may play for the Gray Sox or Black Sox. Coaches will provide substantial, but not necessarily equal, playing time for players at this level, with an emphasis on player development and retention while playing a competitive brand of baseball.

Dual Rostering. Although American Legion and VFW baseball rules allow dual rostering in certain circumstances, the Post 8 baseball program discourages dual rostering. In particular, we do not support the practice of having a talented younger player playing frequently for two different teams. This practice disrupts team chemistry on both teams and discounts the abilities of teammates on both teams. If a player is good enough to play at a higher level and the makeup of the higher level team is such that the player will receive significant playing time, the player should be a permanent part of that team. Significant playing time does not necessarily mean that the player will be a full-time starter. It is possible in extenuating circumstances for a player to be moved up or down during the season in cases of injury or absence or in cases where it becomes clear that a player could be more fully developed at another level. These decisions will be made by the coaching staff. The basic principle is that players will be assigned to teams early in the season and will be full-time members of that team for the season so that the team can gel and function as a team.

Playing Time. Playing time is determined by the coaches. There is no guarantee of playing time. Post 8's philosophy is that playing time is earned by productive practice, hard work, dedication, and ability. The coaches determine playing time and position assignments.

Player Absence Policy. If a player misses practice or a game for an activity camp, family activities, or other reasons, the player will sit with the team in uniform but will not play in at least one game. The game in which the player will sit will be the game immediately after or immediately before the missed game or practice. The coaches have discretion to determine whether the player will sit for the preceding or following game and whether the player will sit for more than one game. Exceptions will be made at the coach's discretion for family emergencies or special occasions such as weddings and funerals, but not for family vacations. It is the player's responsibility to notify the coach of absences, and the coach may extend the penalty if no notification was given.

Grievances. Grievances should be brought to the Post 8 Baseball Board. The grievance will be considered by the board or the board's executive committee not later than the next board meeting. The board will consider the issue and prescribe a course of action. Grievances may be filed by players, parents, or coaches and should be stated in writing using the grievance form on the Post 8 website.