



| Rebels

Youth instructs
league

YiLB

PROBLEM--Participation

Participation in youth baseball is waning participation levels ebb and flow but have been on a downward trajectory since 2008.



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PROBLEM—Early retirement

Length of Participation Even more troubling is the average age at which kids are retiring from playing baseball (10.5 Avg participation 3.3 years) long before they even hit puberty.

AGE CHILDREN QUIT REGULARLY PLAYING A SPORT (AGES 3-18)

SPORT	AVG. AGE OF LAST REGULAR PARTICIPATION	AVG. LENGTH IN YEARS OF PARTICIPATION
Baseball	10.5	3.3
Basketball	11.2	3.2
Bicycling	9.5	2.5
Cross Country	12.7	1.7*
Field Hockey	11.4	5.1
Flag Football	10.4	4.1
Tackle Football	11.9	2.8
Golf	11.8	2.8
Gymnastics	8.7	3.0
Ice Hockey	10.9	3.1
Lacrosse	11.2	2.2
Martial Arts	9.2	2.6
Skateboarding	12.0	2.8
Skiing/Snowboarding	12.1	4.3
Soccer	9.1	3.0
Softball	10.4	2.8
Swimming	10.2	3.2
Tennis	10.9	1.9
Track and Field	13.0	2.0*
Volleyball	12.3	2.0*
Wrestling	9.8	1.6
All Sports	10.5	2.9

* These sports have low average lengths of participation due to kids starting these sports later.
Source: Aspen Institute/Utah State University 2019 National Youth Sport Survey (1,032 youth sports parents).

No more league play

- One of the reasons for lower participation has to do with the move away from local leagues and the growth of travel and for-profit club teams. These programs and associated tournaments often come with high costs for travel, training, equipment, dues and fees that price out many families.
- The pressure to win tournaments also creates a cycle where teams take the most developed athletes leaving late bloomers and casual athletes behind to become frustrated and quit.

Game is suffering - Business is booming

- What is labeled as competitive baseball or real baseball is anything but. The predominate format for competition for the travel/club experience is the weekend tournament circuit. Tournament formats differ but mostly involve several games jammed into a couple of days.
- Pitchsmart guidelines are violated by 90% of youth teams in tournament settings and by half of all pitchers according to a recent journal article studying the subject.
- For the tournament organizers and club team owners' youth baseball is treated as a business so there is pressure to play in more tournaments and create more teams. To attract players the pressure to win at all cost turns many of the games at the lower levels into track meets and snowball fights.

Travelball does not = Bad

- It is important to note that it is a mistake to label all travel and for-profit club teams as bad. Many families choose this route because they are looking for a more competitive and instructional offering than what they are getting from local volunteer-based leagues.
- Parents must be given a reason not to flee early for travel teams, through programming that develops their child's skills and provides opportunities for advancement, with fewer impacts on family time.

Our Solution—Youth Instructs League

- The idea for the Youth Instructs League Baseball is to create a true development first product that is part camp and part instructional league.
- We borrowed the concept from the MLB where "instructs" is considered a teaching camp and the goal is to refine the baseball skills of young players and prospects under the close watch of an organization's coaching, scouting and training staff.

Format

- Yilb will run for a 6-week period spanning September and October
- Players will progress through a series of skill building sessions focused on the fundamentals of catch play, fielding, hitting and base running, then move on to a series of more position specific training sessions.
- Players will then be placed on teams according to skill level and participate in a series of controlled scrimmages. The idea of these scrimmages is to help solidify skill development and teach situational awareness. The final weeks of the season is dedicated to competitive play.