

British Baseball Federation

Youth Season – 2026

VERSION 2nd APRIL 2026



Important

Please be sure all of your athletes are registered on Sport:80.

Please note BSUK DBS and safeguarding requirements for coaches and other staff in youth programmes: <https://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/safeguarding>

Please also note BSUK require DBS and safeguarding for umpires for youth games – guidelines to be published soon.

Please be sure all players are wearing all appropriate safety equipment. No metal cleats at U12 or younger.

Please also check your club's details on our website (<https://britishbaseball.org.uk/youth-baseball/>) and let me know if anything needs to be changed.

Introduction

Welcome to the BBF 2026 Youth season!

We have several new youth sections this year – welcome to all of you!

A few changes in structure and naming for this season.

First, we have dropped the name Super League and renamed our league the **Youth National Baseball League** (“YNBL”). The name Super League seemed to carry a particular connotation among clubs and players of being inaccessibly elite, so we have renamed it. Going forward, we won't use Super League but will rather refer to the Youth National Baseball League, YNBL, or simply “the league.”

Second, we have eliminated Mix & Match as a format (with particular specific exceptions for new youth sections). Mix & Match served its purpose, providing game play opportunities for players at clubs that might not be ready to field a full external team in an age division. As clubs have grown, they have outgrown the need for Mix & Match. And in fact, if anything, it risked being an unnecessary crutch.

So, whereas in the past we offered two formats – Mix & Match as an entry point, followed by the leap all the way to the “Super League,” we have created the YNBL to normalise more regular, accessible league game play. This should also provide a much stronger sense for players of representing their clubs than Mix & Match did.

Finally, there are two important points to make around structure.

Regions

We have established a regional structure. This helps manage governance as clubs, and the number of clubs, grow. It allows differences in regional development, or frankly just logistics, and gives clubs in a region ownership of their own league's development.

The four regions are:

- North
- Central
- Southwest
- Southeast

The Central and Southeast regions are league regions, i.e. have entered teams into and are managing a regional league in the Youth National Baseball League.

The North and Southwest regions have not entered league teams this year but have a busy calendar of baseball activity planned.

Each region is entitled to 1 representative on the Youth National Committee.

YNBL structure

The YNBL will run across 4 age brackets: U10, U12, U14, and U16.

U10, U12, and U14 are running a typical schedule of club vs. club fixtures in the Central and Southeast regions from April through July.

U16 is being run as a centralised draft league under U16 Commissioner Larry Peters. This league is a joint endeavour between BBF Youth and National Teams. Registered players will be drafted into equal teams and play a four-day schedule through the spring, with a post-season in September. The rationale for the draft league, simply, is that we have great numbers of keen U16 players, but they are generally spread across clubs, making the formation of individual club teams difficult. We have developed this league in consultation with all of the clubs who played in our U16 league last year. And it has been scheduled around the adult league schedule and other key dates in the calendar, so we believe it is genuinely only additive to the baseball opportunities for these athletes.

As always, our aim is to create a positive environment for development and baseball experiences for our youth players of all ages and abilities, and to help our youth clubs grow and thrive.

The Margaret Borley Youth National Baseball Championships (YNBCs)

In 2024 and 2025, we ran the YNBCs effectively as open-entry. That served its intended purpose – of getting more players and clubs out for a great youth baseball experience to cap off the season. A national championship shouldn't be fully open entry, and that structure is very difficult to manage logistically as well.

From 2026, YNBCs are no longer open entry but designed still to be accessible.

For the Central and Southeast regions, YNBC entry requires completion of the agreed league schedule as approved by the Youth National Committee (with reasonable exceptions for rainouts). We envisage accepting all YNBL participants into the YNBCs, with seedings determined by league standings.

For the North and Southwest regions, a wildcard YNBC entry is potentially available to a club or a regional team based on completion of a certain minimum level of baseball activity, again as approved by the Youth National Committee. Based on discussions, a maximum of four wild card places will be allocated to the two regions across all age divisions in 2026.

Many clubs ask for the YNBC schedule as early as possible, as families want to make plans. The current schedule is listed below. This assumes maximum wild card entries and no other changes. The schedule listed below works and is what we are aiming for – but please understand, and communicate to families, that we will need to ask for flexibility if circumstances change, as they inevitably always do.

Division	Event	Date	Location
U10	Entire	Sat 26 Sep	Farnham Park
U12	Quarterfinals	Sat 19 Sep OR Sun 20 Sep	Farnham Park
U12	Semis & final (top 4 only)	Sat 26 Sep	Farnham Park
U14	Play-in (seeds 4-7 only) Seeds 1-3 bye	Sun 20 Sep	Farnham Park
U14	Semis & final (top 4 only)	Sun 27 Sep	Farnham Park

All teams expected to play 2 games on each date. (U10 3 games if in final)

U16 details will be communicated separately.

Youth National Committee

The Youth National Committee, approved by the BBF Board, sits above the regional governance discussed above and manages rules, governance, and administration issues relevant at a national level.

Committee composition is:

- BBF Youth Commissioner, Chair: Glenn Taylor
- BBF Development Official: Lee Manning
- BBF Youth Umpire Director: Ellie Page
- North Representative: Ben Ramsour (Manchester Alderley Edge)
- Central Representative: Clay Bartolo (Birmingham)
- Southwest Representative: James Pollard (Plymouth Outlaws, SWWBL)
- Southeast Representative: Darin Caudle (Croydon), Matt Locke (Brighton) – 1 vote only
- U16 League Commissioner: Larry Peters

Further Events

Some clubs have talked about arranging additional events (e.g. an August tournament). Please get in touch if this is of interest.

Approaching other clubs' players

Clubs seeking to recruit players for European tournaments or other purposes must communicate exclusively with the players' head coaches. Direct contact with players or their families is prohibited. It is essential to maintain professionalism and respect the existing club structures. In the event of player inquiries, clubs are encouraged to communicate between coaches to ensure transparency and mutual understanding.

YNBL Operations

The section below details operations as they relate to YNBL operations (fixtures, standings, etc.) only.

Please note this relates to U10, U12, and U14 only. U16 will be operated differently given it is a centralised draft league, and those logistics will be communicated directly by the Commissioner.

Rules have been provided separately in the YNBL Rules Sheet.

General guidelines:

- First pitch recommended 11am
- Second game to commence within 30 minutes of end of first game
- Host / home team provides field arrangements
- Host / home team provides game balls
- Host / home team pays umpires; fee and travel reimbursement schedule has been published by BBF
- All clubs to bring their own team equipment including catchers' gear, batting helmets, bats, baseballs for warmup, etc.

Rainouts and similar issues

Teams should make best endeavours to reschedule rained out games.

Games become official (i.e. equivalent of MLB 5th inning) in:

- U10, U12: 3rd inning
- U14, U16: 4th inning

Forfeits

A forfeit will be scored as 6-0 or 7-0 against the forfeiting team (based on number of innings in a complete game).

Umpires

BBF will endeavour to assign umpires for games where requested by clubs. This requires early and open communication among the clubs and the Youth Umpire Director.

Where an umpire cannot be assigned, it is the responsibility of the home team to source an umpire.

Scoring and standings

- Each team should score the game if possible. Teams may use the scoring method they prefer. If scoring digitally, please be mindful of GDPR and general player privacy concerns
- If each team provides an official scorer, they should sit together to score the game if possible
- Each region to designate a method for collecting game results and maintaining league standings
- Standings will not be published publicly but should be transparent within the regional committee

Tiebreakers in standings

- Fewer(est) runs allowed per game played
- Higher(est) run differential per game played
- Higher(est) number of games played (rainouts added back)
- Coin toss / randomised

In the event that multiple teams are tied in the standings, each of the above tests will be assessed. At each stage, any team that wins a tiebreaker will be placed ahead of the remaining teams and removed from the tiebreaker. The tiebreaker will then continue with the remaining teams.