

By: Keith Crawford, Baseball Commissioner

Hi everyone. I hope you are all looking forward to another exciting season of baseball. I have been approached on many occasions and asked about the differences between the American and National leagues so I decided to post this quick blurb.

Before I start I want people to understand that one league is not better or superior than the other. Many many high school level players have come from the American League.

As most people know, players tryout and then are drafted to teams by the managers. The National draft comes first and this season will consist of the first 88 eligible players drafted (8 teams of 11 in most leagues). Notice that I did not say the top 88 players, as many players prefer playing in the American League.

After the National draft the remaining players are drafted by the American League managers (12 players per team). Players that do not tryout are placed on teams via hat pick unless they have been voted into the draft by a majority of the managers. There are no tryouts in the Filly or Shetland leagues and we only have one league in Shetland.

National League Player Expectations - Expectations will be HIGH. The assumption is made that if you didn't specify "American Only" then your child has the desire to live and breathe baseball full time. Most national teams will practice 2-3 times a week with an additional batting cage. Managers will expect the players to be disciplined and focused with short tolerances for horseplay and fooling around. One of the biggest differences between the leagues for a bubble player will be playing positions. A late pick in the National League could easily sit out two innings and play only the outfield. Although most managers attempt to rotate the players it must be understood that there is nothing in our rules that prevent a manager from having a player play left field all season. This same player could catch, pitch, or play shortstop in the American League and therefore many players prefer playing in the American League.

American League Player Expectations - I want to be very careful here as ALL Hart teams traditionally play a higher level of baseball than I typically see at most leagues. Philosophies here will vary from American managers with ideas similar to those listed above to those that prefer to keep things light with 1-2 practices a week and an additional batting cage occasionally.

In all cases I want to stress that our mission is to teach the game of baseball so the players develop a true love of the game. It is our goal to always choose managers who do not put a wins ahead of player development.

I will close with this. If your child has any reservations about playing National please let the Auxiliary board members know at tryouts that your player is trying out "American Only". If you have any other questions please feel free to email me.