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CHAPTER 2: STARTING A TEAM AT YOUR SCHOOL

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WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Contact the NCBA

The first thing you need to do when starting a club baseball team at your school is contact the NCBA Vice President of Team Development, Christian Smith (Christian.Smith@CollClubSports.com; 412-321-8400 x104), and let him know that you are interested in starting a team. He can guide you through the process and can help get your team up and running quickly and efficiently. It is important to start off in the right direction in order to avoid obstacles that you may not be aware of but Christian can forecast ahead of time.

Talk to Your Director of Rec/Club Sports

Your Director of Rec/Club Sports will be very helpful to you throughout this process. They will likely be able to tell you if anyone else is currently (or was recently) working on starting a team at your school. They should also be familiar with what the process of starting a team entails. Be prepared to write a constitution, get signatures from interested students, put on presentation, and provide a sample budget. These are just a few items that you may be asked to provide. All schools are different, but your specific Director of Club Sports will be able to give you a list of what you will need to do.

You'll first need to become a recognized student organization or club sport through your college or university. This is a requirement in order to join the NCBA.

It is important that you realize that playing baseball is several steps down the road at this point. When starting a team, the paperwork and administrative tasks are an unavoidable first few steps in becoming recognized by the school.

Another important issue to discuss with the Rec/Club Sports Director is your intention to join the NCBA. The fact that you are looking to join an established and reputable league should add validity to your organization as the Director knows you will be competing against other schools and that you will be competing for something. All of this will help you in the process of becoming an organization and a sport club at your school.

Find a Field

Once you've figured out the administrative aspects of starting a team, it is important to begin planning the logistical aspects. Discuss field options with your Rec/Club Sports Director. Find out if you will be allowed to use the varsity field, if the school has recreational fields you can use, or if you will need to find off-campus fields to use. A good place to go for off-campus fields is local high schools and the local cities parks and recreation department. Be sure to contact the Athletic Director of the high school, not the coach, since the A.D. will have the authority to allow you to use the field. If you are unsuccessful there, the town or county's Sports and Recreation Department should be able to help you out.



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If your Rec/Club Sports Director does not have contact information for your local Sports and Recreation Department, you can usually find a link to their website on the town or county's website or by doing a quick internet search. An important thing to remember when trying to find a field is that your team is covered by the NCBA's \$2 million general liability insurance policy. Most organizations will require that the field be added to the insurance policy as an "Additional Insured." This can be done very easily by submitting the name and address of the field, the person to contact about the field, and his/her phone and fax numbers to the NCBA along with a check for \$75.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Talk to Director of Rec/Club Sports

The NCBA V.P. of Team Development, Christian Smith, can speak with your Director of Rec/Club Sports. He can explain the league to him/her, answer any questions or concerns he/she might have, and work in conjunction with him/her to help you get your team started. By putting your Rec/Club Sports Director in contact with the NCBA shows him/her that you are serious about starting the team and that you are working towards the goal of joining an established league.

Write a Letter of Support

The NCBA can write a Letter of Support for you to use when attempting to become an organization and a club sport at your school. This letter will show the Student Government that you are intending to join an established and successful league and that the NCBA staff will be there to guide and advise you both in the creation of your team as well as the running of your team within the league.

Help You Create a Constitution

Student Organizations are required to create a constitution outlining their organization including its purpose, membership requirements, officer responsibilities, and by-laws. The NCBA can help you create such a constitution.

Help You Create a Budget

It is important to plan the financial aspect of running the team. You need to take into account how much you will be spending on league dues, uniforms, equipment, fields, umpires, tournament fees, and traveling expenses as well as how much money you will be receiving from your school. This will help you to estimate how much money you will need to raise through fundraisers, sponsors, and player dues. The NCBA can help you create a budget.

Guide You Through the Process

The NCBA will be there to guide you through the entire process of becoming a sport club at your school and then becoming a member of the NCBA. The staff will answer any questions you have along the way and make sure that you are on the right track. By



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working with the NCBA, you will always have someone that you can go to for help and support as you get your team started.

GENERATE INTEREST

Get Guys to Help

Your Director of Rec/Club Sports may know of some other students who have tried to start a team or inquired about a club baseball team at the school. These are the guys you should contact right away to find out if they are interested in playing and perhaps helping you with the process of starting the team. If they are, you should delegate some responsibilities to these guys so you don't have to do everything yourself. Having a good foundation of officers will help you tremendously.

Talk to the Varsity Coach

You should also contact the varsity coach and let him know that you are starting a team. The coach might know of some players that were previously cut from the varsity team who may be interested in getting involved as a player or organizer.

Schedule an Interest Meeting

Next, you should pick a place and time to hold an interest meeting. Your Rec/Club Sports Director can help you reserve a room on campus to hold the meeting. This will be for all the guys you already know are interested in playing as well as all the guys you may not have met yet who are interested in playing. Thus, it is important for you to schedule this meeting well in advance so you have time to publicize it.

Spread the Word

Once you've locked down a time and place for your interest meeting, start spreading the word. Sign up for a spot at your school's Activities Fair. Have information about the team and the meeting to hand out to people and also have a signup sheet to get contact information for the guys you talk to. Create flyers and post them around the campus in the dorms, academic buildings, gyms, dining centers, and especially in the Athletic or Rec/Club Sports office. Ask the Rec/Club Sports Director if he/she can post the information on their website. You should also contact the varsity coach with the meeting information so he can pass it along to guys who don't make varsity. Contact the other club sport teams at your school and ask them to forward the information along to their teams and anyone else that might be interested. Guys who get cut from other teams might be interested in playing baseball. Players on other teams (even the girls' teams) may know of guys who are interested in playing. Make announcements in classes. The more people hear about your team, the better.

One way to make sure a lot of people find out about your team is through the internet. Create a Facebook group for your team and an "Event" for your meeting. Search for guys who list "baseball" in their profiles and send them messages about the team and an invite them to the meeting.



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HOLD AN INTEREST MEETING

Plan Your Presentation

You'll want to plan your meeting as if you are planning for a class presentation. Prepare what you want to discuss ahead of time and create an outline for you to follow during your meeting. You'll want to discuss what the team is about, who is in charge, and where you are in your stage of development. Most schools require that Student Organizations have officers who are responsible for running the organization. If you already have officers, introduce them and briefly explain what each of their roles are. If you do not have officers, explain the positions that need to be filled and what responsibilities each person will have. It may be helpful to have a handout with a brief description of each position to distribute to interested guys.

You should also discuss the NCBA. Explain what the organization is, what conference you will be joining, the teams you will be playing, and all the benefits that come with being in the league. Talk about the opportunity to attend Spring Training and the chance to earn a bid to the World Series. Make sure the guys have the website address (www.clubbasketball.org and www.clubbasketball.org/div2) so they can explore it themselves.

Prepare Handouts

You may want to prepare handouts to distribute to the guys at the meeting. These handouts should include important information about the team, information about the NCBA (including the website), and descriptions of officer roles.

Have a signup sheet to pass around at the meeting with sections for each guy to write his name, email address, phone number, and what position(s) he plays. Use the email addresses to create a list so you can send out mass emails about tryout or practice dates and other information about the team.

Set the Tone for Your Team

You get one chance to make a first impression with these guys. The way you conduct yourself during this meeting will set the tone for the entire year and will determine how these guys view you as an authority figure. If you command their respect during this meeting, you will have it for the rest of the year. If you are unorganized or lackadaisical, this attitude will be reflected in the guys when they show up for tryouts.

It is important to be organized, professional, and confident during this meeting. You want to show the guys that you are serious and dedicated and that you are looking for players with these same characteristics.



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OFFICERS AND COACHES

Elect Officers

If you have a group of guys that you've been working with and whom you trust, you can all decide to assume those roles for the first year. Alternatively, you can hold elections in which interested guys run for the office of their choice. If you hold elections, be sure to create a brief description of the responsibilities of each office so that the guys are aware of what they are running for and what duties they will assume if elected. It is important to have quality officers because they hold a large amount of responsibility. There have been teams in the past that had a lot of talent but were unsuccessful because of a lack of leadership and accountability among the officers.

There are many responsibilities that come with being an officer and it is important to divide up the duties so that each officer knows what he is responsible for. Duties that you will want to delegate include things such as scheduling, fundraising, equipment purchasing, uniform/apparel purchasing, public relations, and travel arrangements.

Find a Coach

When starting a team, it may be very difficult to find a coach, especially in a short amount of time. If there is someone who is qualified and capable, you may want to ask this person to be your coach. However, a player can also act as a coach. You can have multiple players assuming the roles of "Assistant Coaches" in order to help out with practice and coaching the bases. However, it is important to designate someone as the "Head Coach," even if that person is also a player, so there is someone making the final decisions on the field.

You should define the duties of the assistant coaches clearly so that each understands their roles. For example, you can have a pitching coach, a hitting coach, and a defensive coach. This way, you can break the team up into groups during practice and each coach knows what his responsibilities are and all the players know who is in charge. Remember though, you should have one head coach who oversees the other coaches and makes final decisions.