Dear Legion player/family,

I guess this is what it feels like to have a “normal winter” again. The type where its cold and the snow never stops. Almost makes a person miss the days of snow forts and snowball fights with the neighbors (or siblings).

The new rules for the coming year that are very important are as follows; new pitch count rules and the growing age limits. According to the age limits no player can be born before January 1, 2001. There is a committee meeting to discuss pitch counts, though I do not see them changing too much compared to last season. We also can see some possible shuffling of the leagues in our sub-state. As of now, our league within our substate will consist of us, Plato, Norwood, and Holy Family with Rockford joining us this year. They seemed a more natural fit as they play with most of us in the school season.

As of right now we are projecting a solid 12-13 players with set spots on the Senior legion team. This means we will have room for 5-6 younger players to earn spots on the senior legion. Should we have more than 18 players sign up we will have try-outs in early April. Please return the enclosed paper work (see checklist) to us by March 31st. No matter where you sit in regards to other programs, we promise you a fair chance. With us you earn your place with your abilities. We are open to all players from high school freshmen through college freshmen for our senior legion. Knowing how grueling the back to back baseball seasons can be we strive to keep things fun and loose in the dugouts. For the first time this year, if paperwork is not turned in (or postmarked) by March 31st we will be charging a $20 late fee. This is due to having to push things back makes it harder for getting into tournaments and doing try-outs.

New last year was our first junior legion season. It was a hybrid to get things started as the team was made up of kids from both Watertown-Mayer and Mayer Lutheran. This year the team will be made up of ONLY players from Watertown. We have also opened up the junior legion to 8th graders who want to get a jump on the challenge of adjusting to high school baseball. We are projecting around 10-12 freshman signing up so there is plenty of room for younger players to get a taste and a chance at playing time. There is a maximum roster of 18 players for this team also and will be handled as said for the senior legion in regards to try outs. Now here comes something we are happy to work with. The senior legion roster does not have to be finalized until June 15th. This means, that even if a player signs up for the junior legion and does not sign up to try out for senior legion they can earn a spot on the senior legion roster. We already have games scheduled for the junior legion before June 14th so the kids will have ample chances to impress and possibly get bumped up. So, if players don’t do well in a try-out before they are warmed up for the season they can show their mettle when they are warmed up during the season.
Now to announce our coaching staff for the coming season. I will be returning (obviously) for my 5th summer as the head coach of the senior legion team. Zach Itten, a senior pitcher at St. Cloud State, will also be returning as our pitching coach. He took over last summer as the pitching coach after Michael Herd’s job pulled him away and did an incredible job with our pitching staff. Despite the staff’s youth they were able to make immense progress and even set records for strike outs with 109 strike outs in just 120 innings (previous mark was 102k in 144ip). Next, we have Andrew Thibault returning to help with the teams. Drew grew into a larger and large role last year and will continue to be a great asset to the team.

The junior legion will be helmed by a familiar face. Nolan Anderson will be taking over the program as the head coach. Nolan is a sophomore at Bemidji State University and is pursuing teaching and coaching and is very excited to come back and lend his knowledge and experiences to the team. He will be assisted by Judah Wall who is also a familiar face to many. Its is amazing to see guys whom I’ve coached over the years who are so excited and passionate about helping out our program and doing everything they can to help us improve. All of our coaches are volunteers who are very passionate about helping your kids grow both on the field and off.

As of right now we are looking at a very interesting summer for both programs. Both teams are set to travel a bit. The junior legion will be heading to a tournament in Luverne, MN over the weekend of June 7-9. Once sign ups are complete I will reserve a block of rooms for players/parents as needed. The senior legion will once again be playing in the Andyman Tournament in Cologne, MN over the weekend of June 28-30. Also, the senior legion will be traveling to North Dakota over the weekend of June 21-23 in a bit of a barnstorming tour. We will be playing a number of small town teams in the Red River Valley and will also add in a bigger program or two to get out and see different competition. We have also been working with other programs in our area to build a new league for our junior legion. Last season the team got thrown in with a lot of much larger schools further into the cities. This summer the new league will include a lot less traveling a much more reasonable group of teams. The league is tentatively going to include; Watertown, Delano, Holy Family, Rockford, Belle Plaine, Jordan, Hutchinson, Le Sueur-Henderson, Sibley East and possibly a few more to round it out.

That brings us to the other important pieces for the coming season. We will also be having concessions at all of the games that will take place at Highland Park this summer. We will need the help of parents to run the concession stand during games. Once the schedules are finished I will have a sign up put together on a google document to make signing up easy. We are asking for two people per game to help with the stand. With starting concessions we are hoping it can build up enough to help us keep costs down and in a pipe dream be able to eliminate sign up fees. It is a lofty goal, but a good one. This year with all the traveling and extra costs of getting everything rolling we will be charging $200 for the season. For players who are in the 8th grade group and will also be splitting time on the 14u program the cost will be halved. There
will also be a family cap for signing up ($400 max). We understand sports are expensive and are working to keep our costs down.

In this packet you will find a handy checklist to see what you need to get done by March 31st. Once you have completed everything in the checklist you are set for the season. Feel free to check in on our website www.watertownlegionbaseball12.com or find us on Facebook, Watertown Legion Baseball @watlegion121. Any questions feel free to contact us through Facebook, email at korybender84@gmail.com, or you can reach myself at 952-367-6716 and Nolan at 612-655-4915. This season I believe we have the ability to once again achieve above a .500 record, double digit wins and also a run in the sub-state tournament. While we always aim for more, that is the baseline goal every year.

Here’s to The Coming Season

Kory Bender

“If my uniform doesn’t get dirty, I haven’t done anything in the baseball game.”
~Rickey Henderson

“Or you are (Jadrien) Keavy.”
~Ed Iten
Watertown Post 121
Team-Player Agreement

With the Watertown Legion program we promise you will be given every chance afforded by your talent level and our needs. That said, different years we may need different pieces. We do not care who your family was in the past, all we care about is your ability. We promise a fair and unbiased try-out for the program conducted by our coaching staff with outside help. It does not matter what level you play for the school program at, C-team, B-team, Varsity, we have our own view as to how to build our program for the long term and short term. We can promise that you will receive playing time throughout the season as we usually end up playing over 20 games in two months and it is summer and people have vacations and such so we need reliable players to take up the roles.

Now for what we expect from our players. We expect you to push yourself to improve your level of play. You will receive help from the staff and older players any time you need. All you have to do is let us know. We are very willing to stay after games and practices or arrive early (if possible) to help you improve. We expect you to honor our veterans with us, there will be NO kneeling or sitting during national anthems (this is not only our rule but a national one). You WILL stand, remove cover and face the flag during the national anthem. Also, should you be caught with any substance illegal for your age you will be suspended on a 3-strike program. First offense, you will be suspended for 2-weeks. 2nd offense will be one month and the 3rd offense will be removal from the program. Now for those of you who will be 18 during the season, there is no tobacco use allowed on the fields during games or practices, this means chew, cigarettes, cigars etc. Also there will be NO vaping or e-cigarettes allowed in the dugouts. A new rule for this year is that if you are not present for any of the sub-state tournament you will not be allowed to participate should we make it to the state tournament again.

A quick note, refunds for players who wish to remove themselves from the team are available until May 31st (player must inform us they are quitting by said date). Essentially, once our playing season begins all of the money is tied up in umpires, gear, tournaments etc.

Lastly, we are coaches. All coaches have favorites. You can do that math. What we do promise all of you is our favorites with the legion program are the ones who display the “hot hand.” Those who are playing the best. We will ride the best guys when we get down to the end of the season. We have never had a player see the plate less than a dozen times a season or make fewer than a dozen appearances in games (for those full time players). You will get a chance to earn yourself a spot you desire. If you prove you are better than another player, you will get the playing time your ability deserves.

I ___________________________ agree to play for Watertown USA Baseball for the 2018 season and abide by all rules set forth by the coaching staff.
Try Out Form

___ Senior Legion  _____ Junior Legion

Place an “X” for position(s) you wish to try out for.

___ Catcher
___ 1st Base
___ 2nd Base
___ Shortstop
___ 3rd Base
___ Corner Outfield
___ Centerfield
___ Pitcher
___ Designated Hitter

Please Note Any Injuries Previously Sustained:

Please Note Highest Level of School/Summer Ball Completed:
Deferred Payment Form

I, ____________________ request to set up a deferred payment program.

Some options include:
Delayed payment (must be made by May 31st)

Pay in increments, $50/month or another idea agreed to with manager.

Please let us know why you will not be able to pay on time (will be kept confidential, between you and the head coach only):

______________________________ Coach Signature
Legion Checklist
2019 Pre-Season

___ Read Information Sheets

___ Fill Out Form-2 (Player Profile Sheet, can be found at https://www.legion.org/baseball/resources)

___ Make $200 Check Payable to Watertown USA Baseball

___ Sign Team Player Agreement (You Should Probably Read it Too)

___ Follow Watertown Legion Baseball on Facebook For Updates

___ Fill Out Deferred Payment Form (If Required)

___ Turn in BY March 31st!
  
  Can Be Mailed to:
  Kory Bender
  401 Territorial St W
  Watertown, MN 55388