2026 OC Heat Program Outline

1. Introduction

- **Program Overview:**
  Welcome to the OC Heat Baseball Club! Our primary goal is to provide young athletes with a positive and supportive environment where they can develop their baseball skills, build confidence, and grow as individuals both on and off the field. We emphasize teamwork, dedication, hustle, and sportsmanship, ensuring that each player has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential while developing a lasting love for the game.

- **Program Mission Statement:**
  Our mission is to create a positive and competitive environment where athletes develop not only as baseball players but also as individuals. We believe in fostering a passion for the game, building lasting relationships, and instilling life skills such as teamwork, perseverance, respect, accountability and responsibility.

2. Program Objectives

- **Team First:**
  Being a great teammate is one of the most important expectations of the OC Heat program. Our players prepare, practice, hustle and compete not only for themselves, but for one another. We want every player to understand that individual success and team success are connected, and that each player has a responsibility to do his part to put the team in the best possible position to succeed.

  Putting the team first means showing up prepared, giving consistent effort, accepting your role, communicating positively and making decisions based on what the team needs in that moment. It means celebrating a teammate's success as enthusiastically as your own, picking teammates up when they make mistakes, and bringing energy and encouragement to the dugout regardless of whether you are hitting, playing the field, pitching, sitting between innings or waiting for your next opportunity.

  Team First does not mean that individual goals or development are unimportant. We want every player to improve, compete for opportunities and become the best baseball player he can be. However, we also want players to learn that baseball is a team game and that personal statistics, batting-order position, defensive position or individual recognition should never become more important than the success and culture of the group.

  We expect our players to hold themselves and one another accountable while treating teammates with respect. Great teams are built when players trust each other, communicate, work through adversity together and understand that every player contributes in different ways.

Our goal is to develop players who instinctively ask, “What can I do to help my team?” Whether that means making the extra effort in practice, backing up a base, moving a runner, encouraging a struggling teammate, accepting coaching, taking responsibility for a mistake or simply bringing positive energy to the field, we want putting the team first to become a habit that extends well beyond baseball.

- **Skill Development:**
  At the 9U-11U level, we will continue to refine fundamental baseball skills, including hitting, fielding, base running, catching, and pitching. Players will also enhance their understanding of game strategy before, during, and after each play, resulting in an overall improvement in baseball IQ.

  Our coaching staff is dedicated to providing individualized instruction that helps each player improve their technical abilities and baseball knowledge while also building confidence.

- **Physical Conditioning:**
  Physical fitness plays a vital role in the development of young athletes. We have incorporated an optional weekly speed, agility and conditioning program with Mankind. These sessions will teach exercises, movements and stretches that can benefit our players across all sports.

  In addition to the Mankind sessions, we encourage players to participate in activities that improve speed, agility and endurance. Our practices will include warm-ups and conditioning drills designed to develop overall athleticism and ensure players are physically prepared for the demands of the game.

- **Mental and Emotional Growth:**
  Developing mental toughness is just as important as developing physical skills. Our coaches will focus on helping players remain focused, give their best effort and maintain a positive attitude through challenges.

  The ability to “turn the page” and move forward after a mistake is an underlying principle of this program. A player who is still thinking about the previous play, swing, pitch, or mistake cannot be fully present for their teammates on the next play. Although this is easier said than done, it will be a key area of development for every player.

- **Competitiveness:**
  Our objective is to prepare every player to confidently answer “yes” when asked, “Are you ready to compete?”

  Being ready to compete means showing up prepared, focused and willing to give your best effort. It means embracing challenges, responding positively to mistakes, supporting your teammates and continuing to play with energy and determination regardless of the score.

Competitiveness is not defined by winning alone. It is demonstrated through preparation, effort, resilience, teamwork and the confidence to step onto the field ready to meet the moment. Throughout the season, our coaches will help players develop the physical preparation, mental focus, and positive mindset needed to compete with confidence.

- **Sportsmanship:**
  We hold our players to the highest standards of sportsmanship. Respect for teammates, coaches, opponents and officials is expected at all times. We encourage positive behavior and will address poor sportsmanship immediately.

  Our goal is to foster an environment in which sportsmanship is valued by everyone, including players, coaches, families, and fans.

3. Program Structure

- **Team Selection Process:**
  Our team will be selected through direct recruitment based on the coaching staff's prior experience with players and families, as well as a series of open workouts/tryouts when needed. Tryouts will be designed to evaluate skill level, attitude, and potential.

  We are looking for players who demonstrate a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, a willingness to learn, and a commitment to teamwork. Tryouts may include drills assessing hitting, fielding, pitching and other baseball skills. Before final selections are made, the coaching staff may also conduct informal or formal conversations with the guardians of finalists.

- **Coaching Philosophy:**
  Our coaching staff believes in a balanced approach to player development. We aim to provide each player with the guidance and support needed to improve at their own pace. Coaches will work closely with players both individually and as part of the team, building fundamental skills while instilling a love for the game.

  We recognize that mistakes, especially physical mistakes, are part of the learning process. More direct coaching moments will generally be reserved for avoidable issues such as a lack of focus, effort or preparation. Addressing these areas is important for growth both in sports and in life.

  In addition to developing each player's individual, there will be a considerable amount time spent on helping each player develop as a great teammate and the importance of team over the individual player.

- **Role of Parents:**
  Parents play an essential role in the success of our program. We ask that parents provide positive support for their children, respect the coaching staff and refrain from coaching from the sidelines during practices and games.

  We also encourage parents to participate in volunteer opportunities that help the program run smoothly and contribute to its overall success.

- **Commitment:**
  We expect each player to prioritize this team as their sole baseball commitment throughout the season. Participation on another roster is not permitted during our active seasons.

  If a player is invited to guest play for another team, parents must consult with the OC Heat Manager before accepting. Consistent player availability is essential because every athlete will have opportunities to pitch and absences resulting from outside team involvement can place the rest of the team at a disadvantage.

  Above all, we are mindful of the physical well-being of our young players. Avoiding overuse, especially of throwing arms, is a top priority. During our breaks, it is highly encouraged to take a break from throwing.

4. Practice Schedule

- **Frequency:**
  Practices will generally be held three times per week during the spring and fall seasons before games begin. Spring practices will begin in January and fall practices will begin in August.

  Once games begin, we will aim to schedule three to four baseball activities per week. Competitive scrimmages may occasionally be scheduled in place of a practice. Player attendance is expected unless prior notice of an absence is provided to the coaching staff.

- **Location:**
  Practices will be primarily held at the Great Park in Irvine or Coach Joe's house (North Tustin) unless otherwise communicated.

- **Attendance Expectations:**
  This program is expected to take priority over other sporting commitments, including practices, scrimmages, and games. Consistent attendance is essential to both individual and team success.

  Any exception to this policy must be communicated to and approved by the manager before the beginning of the season. We encourage our players to participate in other sports; however, club baseball requires a greater commitment than most recreational leagues.

  Approval of an exception will be based on roster size, roster composition and the potential impact of the other prioritized sport on the team.

5. Game Schedule

- **Regular Season Games:**
  Our team will compete in the Irvine Select League A Flight against local teams. Games will take place on weekdays and weekends during the spring season and typically on Sundays during the fall. Schedules will be provided once they are published by Irvine Select.

- **Tournament Play:**
  As a travel team, some travel will be required to participate in tournaments. Parents will be responsible for transportation to and from events. Carpooling options may be available for longer-distance travel.

- **Travel Expectations:**
  Our players are still young and we are fortunate to be located in Southern California, where there is no shortage of high-level baseball competition. At this stage of their development, we do not believe there is a need to regularly travel long distances or fly to tournaments simply to find quality opponents. When we reach a point where we are consistently winning at a very high rate against strong local competition, we can reevaluate whether additional destination tournaments would provide meaningful developmental value.

  As a travel baseball team, some regional travel will still be required for tournaments and other competitive opportunities. Families will be responsible for transportation to and from events, with carpooling encouraged when practical.

  Our one planned destination tournament will take place during Spring Training in February, when the team will travel to Arizona to participate in a USSSA tournament and attend at least one Major League Baseball Spring Training game together. We view this trip as both a competitive opportunity and a memorable team experience.

  At this time, Arizona is the only overnight travel tournament on the schedule. Additional travel opportunities may be considered in future seasons as the team grows, develops and demonstrates that competing outside Southern California would provide meaningful value. The kids love it!

- **Scrimmages:**
  Competitive scrimmages will make up the remainder of our game play. These will generally be scheduled well in advance and may take the place of a regular practice.

  Scrimmages provide players with additional live at-bats, situational learning opportunities, pitching repetitions and game experience without the pressure of an official result.

- **Game Day Protocol:**
  Players are expected to arrive 45 to 60 minutes before the scheduled game time. This arrival time will be referred to as the “call time.”

  Call times will be communicated through the Spond app and may vary based on the schedule. At call time, players should be in the dugout, dressed in their complete uniform and ready to begin warm-ups.

  Parents should ensure that their child has all necessary equipment, including protective gear, a baseball glove, bat and a water bottle.

6. Player Development Plan

- **Skill Development Areas:**
  Players will work on developing core skills such as proper throwing and pitching mechanics, swing speed and angle, base running and defensive positioning.

  Pitchers will continue developing their mechanics and may begin learning secondary pitches such as a changeup, different types of fastballs and other off-speed pitches. Breaking pitches will be severely limited, if not avoided altogether.

  Pitch counts and rest periods will be closely monitored to help protect players' arm health. If your player participates in any outside throwing program, pitching lesson or other overhand throwing sport/activity, please inform the coaching staff. This will allow us to coordinate schedules, manage workloads, and help prevent overuse.

- **Evaluation and Feedback:**
  Coaches will assess players through formal evaluations during games and informal observations during practices. Regular feedback will be provided to help players understand their strengths and identify areas for improvement.

  Feedback will be constructive, encouraging and designed to support each player's development.

  If players have questions or concerns about their defensive position or place in the batting order, they should speak directly with Coach Joe after a game or before or after practice. Players should not ask questions about the lineup during a game.

- **Guest Professional Coaches:**
  Our coaching staff is well connected within the baseball community and may occasionally invite guest professional coaches to provide additional instruction, fresh perspectives and new insights.

  We believe in fostering a continuous learning environment for both players and coaches.

7. Code of Conduct and Expectations

- **Player Behavior:**
  Players are expected to demonstrate respect for teammates, coaches, opponents and umpires at all times.

  Unsportsmanlike behavior, including damaging equipment, arguing with umpires, using inappropriate language or body language or demonstrating a lack of effort will not be tolerated.

- **Teamwork and Sportsmanship:**
  Teamwork is essential. Players must support one another, communicate positively and always strive to be the best teammates they can be.

  When a teammate is struggling, players should lift that teammate up with encouragement. Integrity and respect for the game are paramount.

- **Parent Expectations:**
  Parents are expected to respect the coaching staff and team decisions. They should refrain from coaching their child during practices and games and should support all players equally, not only their own child.

  During games, parents should also refrain from approaching the dugout to deliver snacks, drinks or advice. Please do your best to ensure that siblings, relatives and other guests follow this expectation as well.

- **Food, Candy and Gum**
  Meals and gum are not permitted in the dugout or on the field. Energy bars and other light snacks are acceptable.

  Food consumed between games should be eaten outside the dugout and either before call time or after the game has concluded.

- **Consequences:**
  Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in a warning, suspension from practices or games or removal from the team in extreme cases.

8. Player and Team Development

- **Individual Player Goals:**
  Each player will have an individualized development plan addressing their strengths and areas for growth. Clear and measurable goals will be established for both team practices and at-home development.

- **Team Goals:**
  Our team objectives include improving pitching accuracy and, where appropriate, velocity, increasing fielding percentage, strengthening offensive performance and playing disciplined baseball.

  During playoff and tournament play, our focus will shift from development toward winning as many elimination games as possible. We aim to foster a winning culture while maintaining a supportive and enjoyable environment.

  Most importantly, we want our players to compete at all times while growing their love for the game and having fun.

9. Equipment and Uniforms

- **Required Gear:**
  Each player must have a baseball glove, cleats, helmet, USSSA-approved bat, protective cup and water bottle.

  If a player does not have access to a USSSA-approved bat during a practice or game, team bats will be available for temporary use.

- **Uniforms:**
  The team uniform package will include home and away jerseys, practice shorts, baseball

pants, team socks and hats. The cost of the uniform package is included in the program fees.

Players are expected to maintain their uniforms throughout the season. Please check Spond for the uniform requirements for each baseball event.

10. Budget and Financial Information

- **Program Fees:**
  The total cost for the season is $600. This fee covers regular-season expenses, field rentals, uniforms, umpire fees and potential guest coaching expenses.

  Payment is expected within seven days of the request.

  Tournament fees and travel to such tournaments are not included.

11. Communication Plan

- **Communication Channels:**
  Important team information will be communicated through email, text and the Spond app. We ask that players and parents check these channels regularly for updates regarding practice times, game schedules and other important announcements.

  Please confirm attendance for each event as early as possible and no later than 48 hours before the event.

- **Contact Information:**
  For questions regarding administrative matters, practices, or games, please contact Coach Joe at jrovirosa@scalenorth.com, (714) 260-8717, or through the Spond app.

12. Conclusion

- **Commitment to Excellence**:
  We are excited to build a team committed to excellence, hard work and fun. Together, we will strive for success on the field while also developing life skills that will benefit our players long after the season is over. GO HEAT!