



4 Top Concerns for Baseball and Softball Organizers



Every season comes with new and exciting challenges—yet sometimes they can leave you feeling anxious or uneasy. You may be asking:

Will we get enough players and coaches to sign up?

How many returning players will we have?

Are our registration forms set up correctly?

Will our coaches align with our mission?

We're here to tell you that you're not alone. Many other baseball and softball organizers have the same concerns and have been in your shoes.

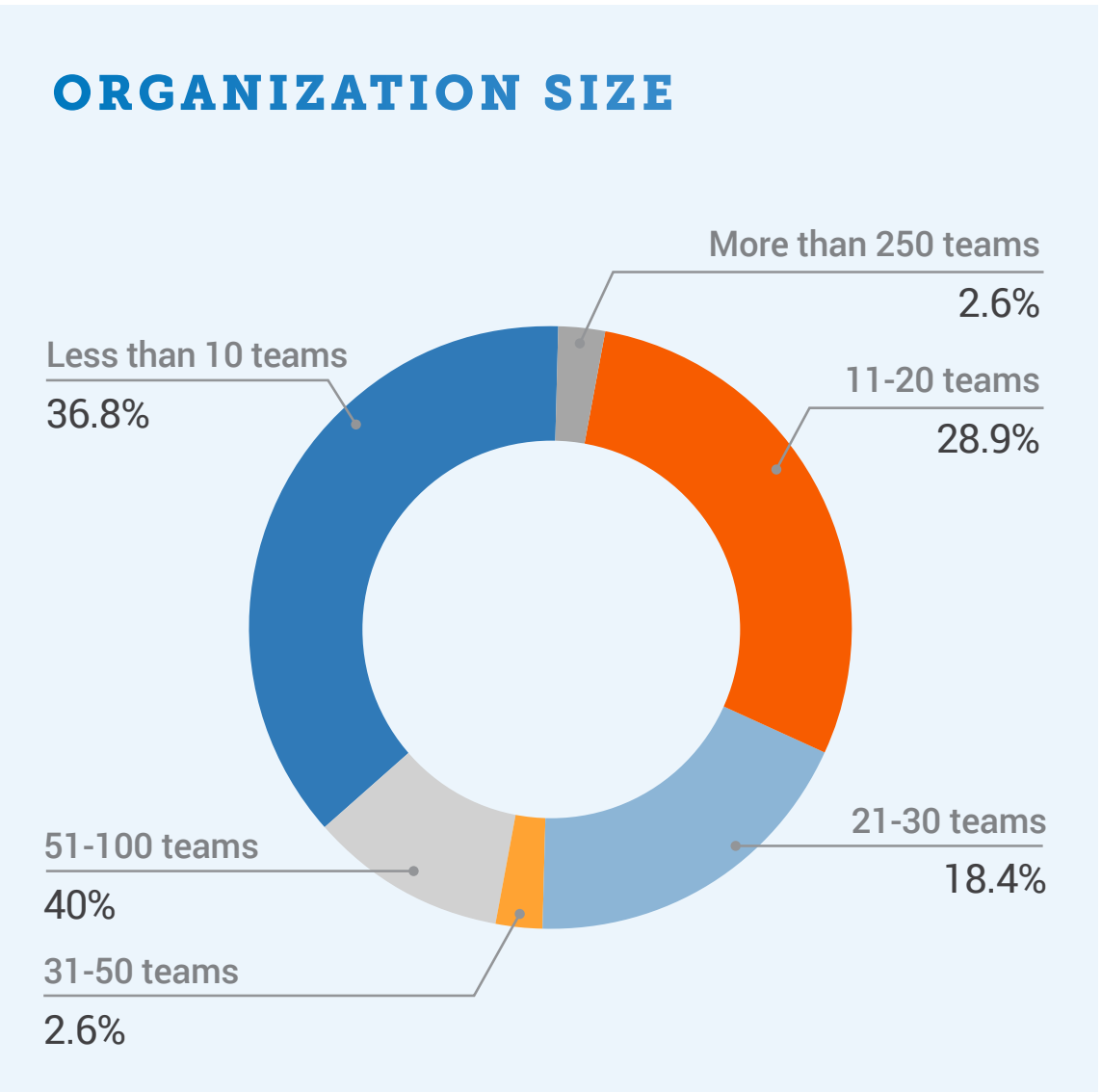
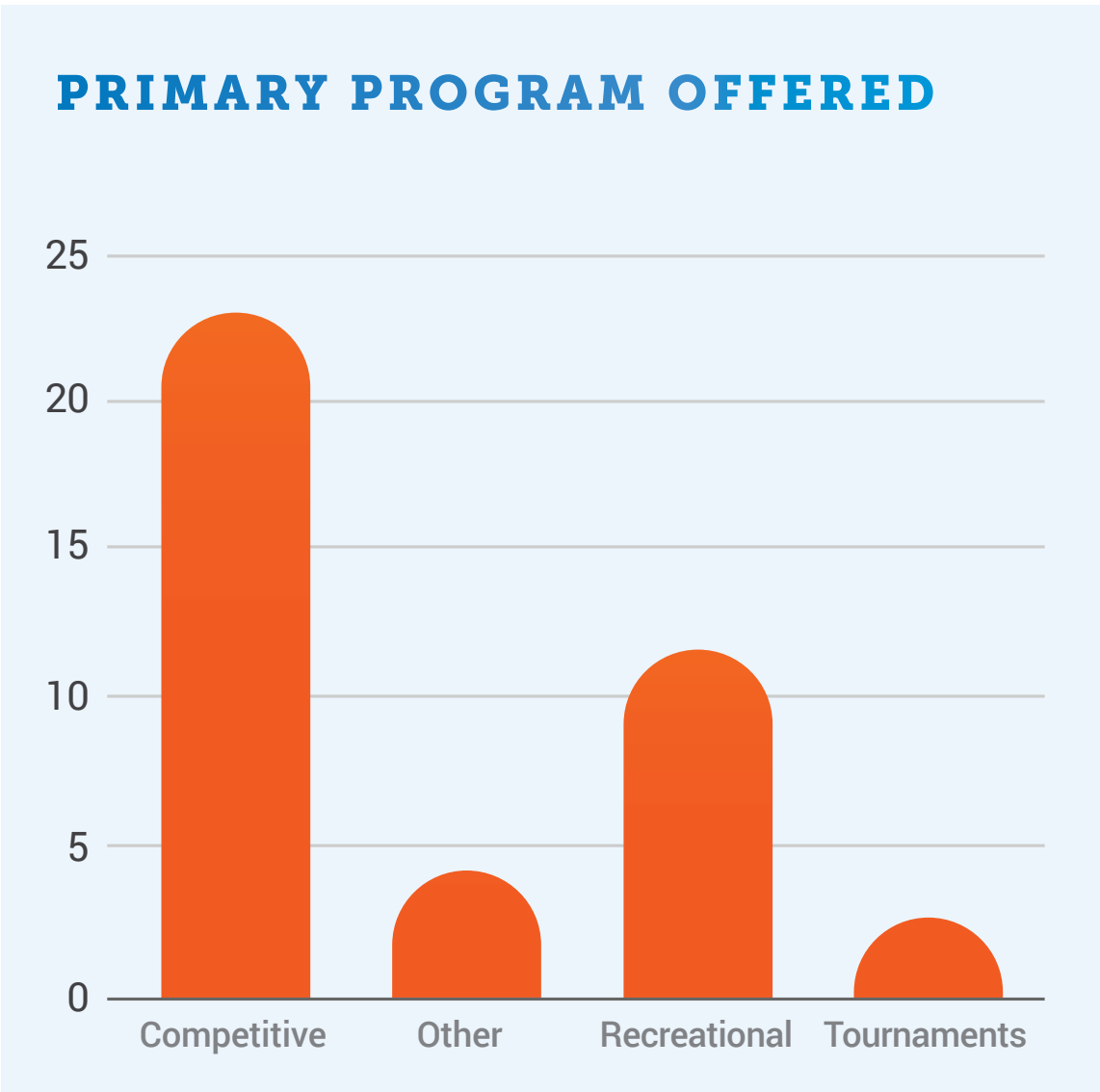
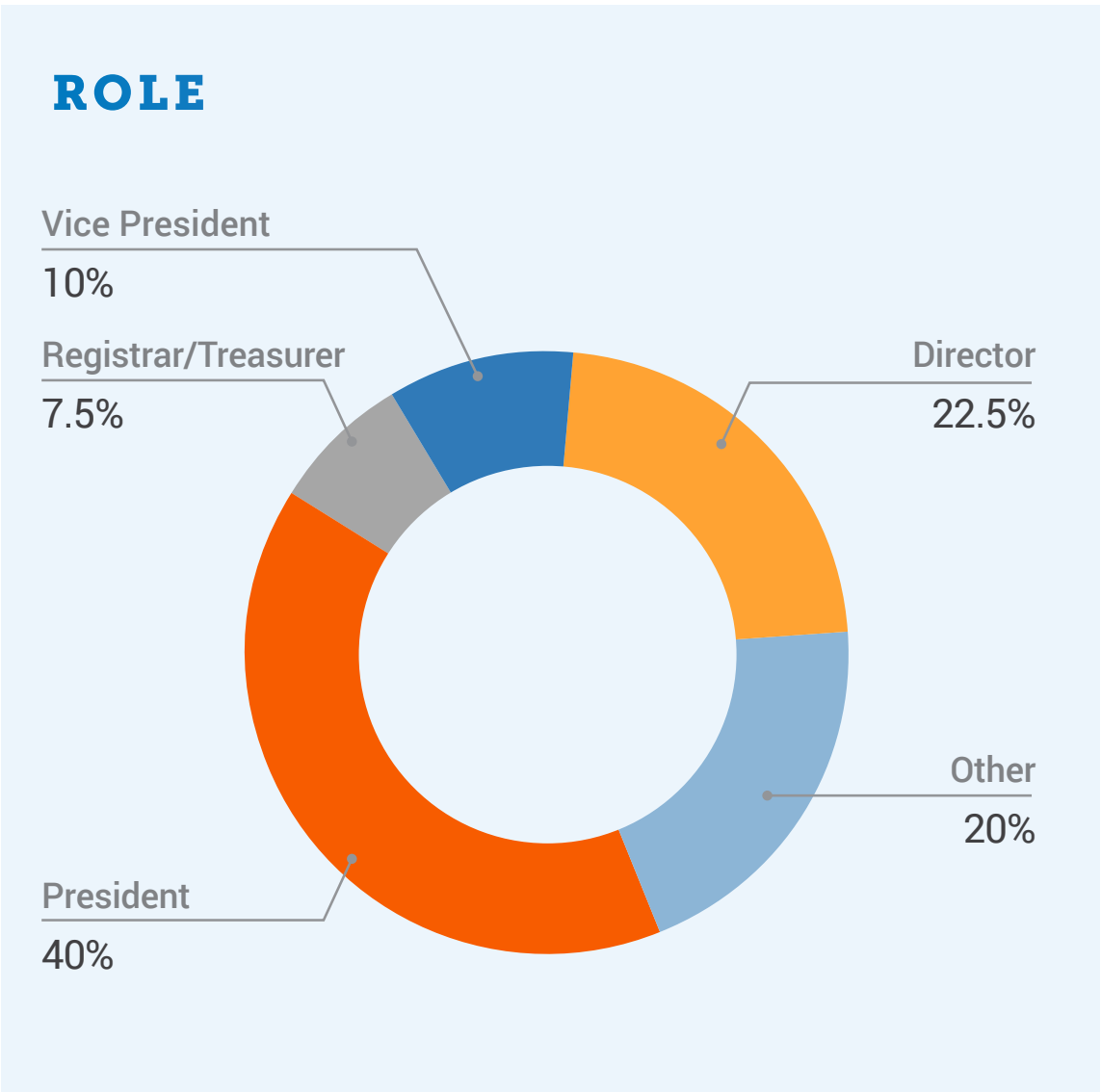
We spoke with 40 baseball and softball organizers to understand their biggest concerns going into a season, and asked for their number-one piece of advice for others in similar situations.

Here's what we found.



Organizers Like You

It's human nature to gravitate toward others who understand your situation. These are people who have been where you are and for that reason, can provide the best guidance. That's why we asked 40 savvy baseball and softball organizers for insight.



Shared Concerns

Regardless of size or makeup, when it comes to baseball and softball organizations, there are four core concerns that resonate across the board: member recruitment, player development, fee collection, and planning and organization.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Teams, clubs and sports organizations are nothing without the players that help drive their success; it's why player recruitment and development can make or break a season.

One of the primary goals of almost every sports organization is to continue growing its member base, and on the flip side, one of the biggest fears is not having enough players to fill each team.

Baseball interest continues to decrease year after year, with attendance and viewership dropping, and America's youth make up only [7% of the baseball audience](#). This decline in interest creates a challenge for organizers hoping to attract new, enthusiastic baseball and softball players.

In order to build awareness and attract new participants, baseball and softball admins use multiple channels and strategies. To start, many suggest opening up registration earlier to allow more time to promote and recruit players. It's unrealistic to open registration and expect sign-ups to immediately roll in. You need to give yourself time to implement all the activities that go into driving awareness, and that could mean giving yourself a runway of one to three months.

For best results, maximize the channels you have readily available to get your message out. For example, ask your existing players, parents and volunteers to help spread the word. (Baseball and softball organizers rank ongoing communication with members high in importance, and coordinate meetings and events through clear communication channels.)

Clubs and leagues can also get the word out through local community events and institutions, such as schools, community centers and libraries. These easily accessible channels can end up being your best referral sources, especially in tightly-knit communities.

Finally, baseball and softball admins recommend getting creative and using events and clinics to generate interest. Offering multi-day camps or free half-day clinics for example provides parents with a way to keep their kids occupied—something all parents seek during school vacations. Think of these shorter-term offerings as a gateway for parents to learn more about your organization and the ongoing programs you can offer.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

As with running a business, the easiest win is retaining customers—or in this case players—you already have. These are not only individuals who already know your system and processes, but more importantly, it's easier for you to communicate with them. Losing players is unfortunately a common concern for organizers, especially with declining interest in baseball and softball—not to mention everything else that can distract players or require their attention.

This is where player development and experience play a vital role. Athletes want reassurance that an organization has the capabilities needed for a seamless experience—whether with registration, tryouts, practices and games.

Club admins also note the importance of people when it comes to member retention. Participants want to be around others they enjoy playing with. They want coaches they can trust. They want to know that the people helping them truly have their best interest at heart. This is why finding and

hiring the right coaches can be one of the biggest concerns for baseball and softball organizers. They want to make sure there is synergy and that the coaches believe in the overall mission. It's also important for coaches to be able to develop players in accordance with any plans set in place.

So how do admins go about finding solid coaches? First and foremost, they make sure to thoroughly interview each coach in order to determine whether there is alignment related to culture and approach. Making sure returning coaches are still aligned is just as important—especially if there have been philosophical changes or feedback.

Here is another key point: feedback. Some organizers set up opportunities for parents and even players to provide feedback. Understanding concerns and suggestions from those you're serving allows your organization to continue improving. You'll also be better able to meet the developmental needs of your players.





FEE COLLECTION

Registration provides sports organizations the funds needed to manage and operate each season—and that’s why baseball and softball organizations want to make sure they can easily collect and manage money.

To overcome these concerns, admins use software that provides easy online registration and payment options. It’s a win all around: Players and parents can benefit from installment payment options, for example, and admins can more easily manage finances and reporting. Automated technology options allow organizations to decrease the amount of manual work that goes into collecting payments from each member—which means more saved time.

At the end of the day, running an organization requires support and staff. That is why baseball and softball organizers—no matter the size of their organizations—recommend having key positions like a treasurer, for example.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

It’s impossible to have a successful season if you’re not prepared. Many baseball and softball organizers strongly suggest starting organizational groundwork as early as possible. Much like registration, planning a season takes time, and giving yourself enough of a window to plan allows you to make sure you cover each question and concern.

Be sure to review registration forms to confirm you’re collecting the right information, and that everything is working as expected. Take the time to run through every potential scenario for team formations, travel arrangements, and tournament schedulings. Confirm that you’re correctly resourced for the season, including having umpires and field arrangements. And finally, make sure coaches and other admins are aligned with the plans, so everyone can be on the same page.

Being well prepared and organized will allow you to provide a much better experience for all involved—including yourself.

Sage Advice

There will definitely be challenges that come with running your sports organization, but always remember you're not alone; there are others experiencing the same hurdles.

On that note, here's some sage advice from other baseball and softball organizers who work tirelessly to champion their sports.

"Tap into existing parents and families for resources; you never know who can help!"

"Put player development and teamwork ahead of winning at all costs because if done right, winning will be the result."

"Structure drives behavior. Being organized is crucial. Parent behavior and coach conduct can make or break your program, so choose wisely."

"Communicate early and often."

"Start early...and test, test, test before going live."

"Take one emergency at a time and do all you can within your league rules to fix it and move on to the next thing."

"You won't please everyone. But be clear when communicating, and control the things you can control."

"Use your resources and the technology offered. Don't be afraid of it; it will make life easier."

"Make sure you continuously over-communicate details of the season commitment, your program, expectations and the financial obligation involved."

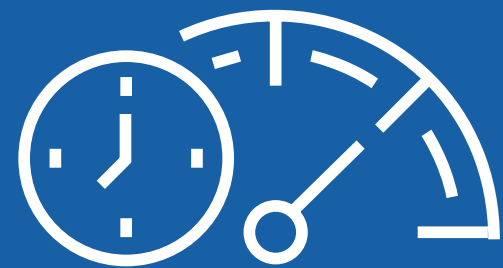
"The legwork happens before the season starts."

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