



TOP TIER WEST

2026 – 2027 COMPLETE PROGRAM GUIDE

A Tradition of Baseball Excellence

WHAT'S INSIDE

*Welcome · Age Groups · Season Calendar · Training Program · Competition
What's Included by Age · Partners · Coaching · High-School Prep · How to Join*

Welcome to Top Tier West

Top Tier West is a competitive youth travel baseball organization fielding teams across 10 age groups, from 8U through 17U. We are a member of the Top Tier Baseball national network and operate as the local home of Top Tier programming in the Fox Valley.

Our mission is straightforward: develop baseball players who love the game, train at a high level, and compete with the best — in an environment that respects families' time, money, and trust.

This document outlines our 2026 – 2027 program in detail: what we offer, how training is structured, what competition looks like at each age group, and what's included with a roster spot. If after reading this you have questions, reach out before tryouts. We'd rather have a conversation than have a family guess.

How Top Tier West Is Different

PROFESSIONALLY LED DEVELOPMENT	Indoor training runs November through March. Specialty programming, athletic development, and full-team practices stack across the winter.
ALL-INCLUSIVE STRUCTURE	Uniform, tournament fees, league entry where applicable, training, and athletic development are covered in registration.
NATIONAL NETWORK	Top Tier HQ Opportunities. Organizational events and a path for players to be seen across Top Tier programs nationally.
INSTRUCTOR DEPTH	Coaching and instruction staff includes a Former Pro Player, a Former Pro Scout, a Current College Head Coach, Current College Players, and a Baseball Academy Director.

Why Top Tier West

Travel baseball families have options. Here's what separates Top Tier West from the orgs across town — the things you'll feel from the first week of indoor training in November through the last tournament in summer.

Premier Facility & Technology

Our primary indoor home at Level Up Athletics is built for development, not just throwing reps:

HITTRAX	Real-time hitting analytics — exit velocity, launch angle, spray charts, contact data.
RAPSODO	Pitching and hitting tracking — spin rate, axis, release point, ball flight.
MOTION-CAPTURE CAMERA	Slow-motion swing and pitch analysis. Video review is part of the program.
FULL-LENGTH TUNNELS	Full length tunnels with a dedicated pitching machine in every one. Real-rep training, not just front-toss.

Instructor Depth

Our coaching and instruction roster pulls from across the baseball world — not just travel-ball lifers.

- Former Pro Player
- Former Pro Scout
- Current College Head Coach
- Current College Players
- Baseball Academy Director

Why Top Tier West (continued)

Top Tier HQ Benefits

Top Tier West players are members of the Top Tier Baseball national network — which provides access well beyond what a single local organization can deliver:

HIGH SCHOOL SHOWCASES	Network-led showcase events at the high-school level. Exposure beyond local tournaments.
NATIONAL SELECT TEAM	Opportunities to compete on Top Tier National Select teams against the best peer programs in the country.
MIZUNO SPONSORSHIP	Top Tier Baseball is sponsored by Mizuno — equipment, apparel, and gear partnerships flow through to Top Tier West players.
HQ DEVELOPMENT ACCESS	Camps, throwing programs, and position-specific training led by Top Tier HQ staff and visiting instructors.

One of the Most Comprehensive Training Programs in the Area

Top Tier West players get 13–17 weeks of structured training every winter — including hitting, throwing (with arm care), defense, and SSA — starting November.

8U	13 weeks (~26 sessions)
9U – 11U	15 weeks (~35 sessions)
12U – 14U	17 weeks (~50 sessions)
High School	13 weeks (~45 sessions)

Field Partnerships

Multiple game and practice fields across the western suburbs — including turfed surfaces — through partnerships with McCaslin Park, Elgin Sports Complex, and Bartlett Park District. More venues = more scheduling flexibility, weather options, and consistent practice access.

Level Up Athletics Membership

Every Top Tier West player receives **50% off a Level Up Athletics Membership** — including 24/7 facility access via personal access code. Players can train on their own schedule with HitTrax, pitching machines, and all available equipment. Players also receive **10% off all Level Up private lesson packages** for one-on-one instruction outside of team programming.

Age Groups & Team Structure

Top Tier West fields teams from 8U through High School. The program is organized into three tiers, each with its own development focus and competition format. Players grow up *through* the program — younger groups focus on fundamentals and exposure, middle groups bridge into high-school preparation, and older groups train and travel at a level designed for college recruitment.

8U – 14U Youth Travel

Foundation through bridge tier. Players develop core skills, play real travel-ball schedules, and grow into the demands of high-school baseball. 8U–11U plays a full league schedule; 12U–14U league participation is decided at the team level. Tournament intensity scales with age. Pitchers begin building serious arm strength under structured supervision as they move toward the older ages.

High School High School Prep

Showcase tier. Tournament-only competition format — no regular league play. Schedule is built around college exposure, high-school prep, and structured exposure to elite tournament events. Coaching emphasis shifts toward recruitment, video, and metrics.

Programs by Age Group

Every team plays a full season of league and/or tournament competition. Counts below are program targets — actual game count depends on weather, tournament outcomes, and team-level scheduling.

AGE GROUP	TOURNAMENTS	LEAGUE PLAY	PLAYER FEE
8U	Spring & Summer	Yes	\$1,850
9U	Spring & Summer	Yes	\$2,300
10U	Spring & Summer	Yes	\$2,500
11U	Spring & Summer	Yes	\$2,700
12U	Spring & Summer	Optional	\$2,900
13U	Spring & Summer	Optional	\$3,200
14U	Spring & Summer	Optional	\$3,200
High School	Spring & Summer	Tournament-only	\$3,100*

Tournament & League Structure Notes

Tournament series. Top Tier West teams compete in respected regional and national tournament series — Game Day USA, GMB, Seminole Sports, Prep Baseball, Bullpen Tournaments, Perfect Game, and select Ripken events. Specific tournament selections are made by head coaches in consultation with families.

Overnight tournaments. Overnight events are available at all age groups, scheduled at coach discretion. Travel costs (lodging, food, mileage) are family responsibility. Week-long tournament fees are not included in the registration fee.

League play. 8U–11U teams play a full league schedule. 12U–14U participation is decided at the team level. High School is tournament-only — no regular-season league play at the older tier.

Player fees. The fee above is the full registration cost per player for the 2026–2027 season. Uniform, tournament fees, league entry (where applicable), training, athletic development, and defensive practices are all included.

***High School fee.** If a professional coach is chosen for the team, an additional fee will apply.

Payment plans available. A \$500 non-refundable deposit is due upon accepting your roster spot. The remaining balance can be split into monthly installments through our payment-plan option.

The Top Tier West Season

Top Tier West runs a structured annual cycle. From tryouts in June/July through the spring/summer season ending in July, players get a clear calendar of training, competition, and rest.

JUNE – JULY	TRYOUTS & TEAM FORMATION	Open tryouts across all age groups (8U–17U). Players are evaluated across hitting, fielding, throwing, and (where applicable) pitching and catching. Rosters are set within a week of final tryout sessions. Parent meetings held, players outfitted in Top Tier West gear.
OCT – NOV	KICK-OFF FACTORY	Official season launch event at Level Up Athletics. Gear distribution, full-roster meet, and the Kick-off Factory training session. Sets the tone for the year.
NOV – DEC	EARLY WINTER	Small-group skill development begins at Level Up. Defensive Practice sessions. Strength, Speed & Agility programming begins for 12U+. Volume scales with age.
JAN – MAR	WINTER TRAINING	Full-team indoor practices ramp up significantly. Higher-volume training for older age groups in preparation for spring. Pitchers begin building arm strength under structured supervision. Team identity is built here.
APR – JUL	LEAGUE & TOURNAMENTS	League play for 8U–11U, optional for 12U–14U. Regional and overnight tournaments depending on age group. High School plays the full tournament slate. Home games at local facilities. Season builds toward summer competition.

Indoor Training Program

Indoor training begins in November and runs through March — five full months of structured development inside, before a single spring game is played. The training calendar combines small-group skill work, full-team practices, Defensive Practice, and (for 12U+) Strength, Speed & Agility programming.

Training Volume by Age

Every age group receives a comprehensive winter training package — multiple weeks of structured programming that includes hitting, throwing (with arm care), defensive work, and Strength / Speed / Agility (SSA). Training volume scales with age tier.

AGE GROUP	TRAINING WEEKS	EACH WEEK INCLUDES	DEFENSIVE PRACTICE	SSA (12U+)
8U	13 weeks	Hitting · Throwing & Arm Care · Defense	12 sessions	—
9U – 11U	15 weeks	Hitting · Throwing & Arm Care · Defense	15 sessions	—
12U – 14U	17 weeks	Hitting · Throwing & Arm Care · Defense	15 sessions	8 sessions
High School	13 weeks	Hitting · Throwing & Arm Care · Defense	12 sessions	8 sessions

Athletic Development & Defensive Practice

Strength, Speed & Agility — through Level Up Athletics

Top Tier West partners with **Level Up Athletics** for all Strength, Speed & Agility (SSA) programming. Level Up is a baseball-specific athletic-development partner with a focus on age-appropriate movement, arm care, and injury prevention.

SSA programming is built into the weekly training calendar for every age group. Programming covers **strength, speed, agility, mobility, and arm-care work** built around the demands of youth baseball.

8U – 11U

SSA programming is not included at this age. Athletic development at these younger ages happens through baseball-specific skill work, throwing programs, and movement fundamentals within team practice.

12U – High School

Comprehensive SSA programming through Level Up Athletics — 8 sessions per year covering strength, speed, agility, mobility, and arm care.

Defensive Practice

Defensive Practice sessions are combined-age, slot-based defensive skill sessions held at our indoor facility during the winter months. Sessions group players by skill and age rather than team, giving athletes concentrated reps on specific positional skills with specialty instruction.

8U

12 sessions per season

9U – 14U

15 sessions per season

High School

12 sessions per season

Arm Care

Top Tier West emphasizes the importance of arm care across every age group. Arm-care programming is built into the weekly training calendar and runs alongside throwing development from winter through spring.

What's Included by Age Tier

Top Tier West registration is structured as a complete package — uniform, training, league entry, tournament fees, and athletic development are covered. There are no à la carte add-ons or surprise in-season fees. The two age tiers receive different bundles based on competition format.

8U – 14U · Youth Travel

PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION	Instruction staff includes a Former Pro Player, Former Pro Scout, Current College Head Coach, Current College Players, and a Baseball Academy Director.
TRAINING (BEGINS NOV)	13–17 weeks of structured training (Nov–Mar) covering hitting, throwing & arm care, defense, and SSA at Level Up Athletics.
FULL UNIFORM PACKAGE	Game jerseys and pants included.
LEAGUE ENTRY	Covered for 8U–11U. Optional for 12U–14U at team discretion.
TOURNAMENT FEES	Entry fees covered for the season's tournament slate. Up to 5 (8U), 6 (9U), 8 (10U), and 10 (11U–14U) tournaments depending on age.
FIELD & FACILITY ACCESS	Indoor facility rentals during the winter and home-game field rentals during spring/summer.
EQUIPMENT	Team equipment: game balls, catcher's gear, etc.
UMPIRES	Umpire fees covered for all home league games.
STRENGTH, SPEED & AGILITY	SSA programming via Level Up Athletics for 12U and up — 8 sessions covering strength, speed, agility, mobility, and arm care.
DEFENSIVE PRACTICE	Combined-age defensive practice sessions at our indoor facility. 12 sessions for 8U; 15 sessions for 9U–14U.
LEVEL UP MEMBERSHIP	50% discount on a Level Up Athletics Membership with 24/7 facility access via personal code. Includes HitTrax, pitching machines, and all available equipment.
LEVEL UP PRIVATE LESSONS	10% off all Level Up Athletics private lesson packages — for in-season tune-ups, off-season skill work, or one-on-one instruction beyond team programming.

High School · High School Prep

High School inclusions match the Youth Travel package above with these tier-specific items:

UP TO 8 TOURNAMENTS PER SEASON	Tournament-only schedule structured for college exposure and high-school preparation.
COLLEGE EXPOSURE FRAMEWORK	Tournament schedule is built around showcase events where players can be evaluated. Coaching emphasis includes video, metrics, and recruitment positioning.

Partners & Network

Top Tier West operates with a network of vetted training, athletic development, and organizational partners. Every facility and partnership is selected for safety, quality, and developmental fit. In addition to our primary indoor home, players have access to an additional indoor space dedicated to defensive practice and full-team practices throughout the winter.

LEVEL UP ATHLETICS

Primary indoor home. Full-length tunnels, pitching machines in every tunnel, HitTrax, Rapsodo, and motion-capture camera technology. Used for small-group skill work and Kick-off Factory programming Nov–April. Players receive 50% off a Level Up membership (24/7 facility access via personal code) plus 10% off Level Up private lesson packages.

FIELD PARTNERSHIPS

Multiple game and practice fields across the western suburbs, including turfed playing surfaces: McCaslin Park, Elgin Sports Complex, and Bartlett Park District fields.

TOP TIER BASEBALL

National organizational network. Provides organizational events and a pathway for players to be evaluated across Top Tier programs nationwide. Mizuno sponsorship, HQ-led development camps, throwing programs, position-specific training, and high-school showcases all included.

Coaching & Player Development

Instructor Depth

Top Tier West head coaches bring travel-ball and high-school backgrounds, supported by specialty instructors for hitting, pitching, and defense. We coach hard, but we coach correctly — meaning we respect the player development arc, the long season ahead, and the family that's trusting us with their athlete's growth.

Players are evaluated continuously — not just at tryouts. Playing time decisions, pitching rotations, and lineup construction are made with explicit attention to fairness, development, and performance.

Arm Care

Top Tier West emphasizes the importance of arm care across every age group. Arm-care programming is built into the weekly training calendar and the in-season throwing schedule.

Pitchers begin structured arm-strength work in the winter through Level Up Athletics' arm-care programming and progressive throwing volume into spring. Velocity is a downstream outcome — health is the priority.

Player Development Pathway

Top Tier West is designed to keep players in the program from first travel team through high-school prep. The tier-to-tier transition (8U–11U → 12U–14U → High School) is intentional — players don't have to leave the organization to find more demanding development as they grow. Each tier picks up the player at the level the previous tier prepared them for.

Communication

Each team has its own communication channels (typically email + team-app). Organizational updates flow. Head coaches are the primary point of contact for game-day and roster matters; front-office matters route through the program director.

Path to High School Baseball

Top Tier West's High School tier is structured around one goal: preparing players for the next level — high-school competition, and for many, college recruitment. The program at this tier looks different from the younger groups for a reason.

Why High School Is Tournament-Only

By high-school age, most competitive baseball happens at exposure tournaments — Perfect Game, PBR, Top Tier National events, and similar. League play loses relevance at this tier; tournament events are where college coaches evaluate and where players test themselves against peer programs nationally. Our High School calendar is built around 8 tournaments per season, chosen for their level of competition and their exposure value.

College Recruitment Positioning

Coaching at this tier shifts to include video capture, performance metrics, and active recruitment positioning. Players have profiles within the Top Tier Baseball national network — which provides national-level visibility beyond what a single travel organization can produce.

This does not mean every High School player is on a Division I path. It means the program is structured so that players who want to play in college have the development, exposure, and tools to do so — whether the destination is D1, D2, D3, NAIA, or junior college.

Strength & Conditioning at This Tier

Strength & Conditioning programming through Level Up Athletics continues at High School with 8 sessions per year. At this age, the work is more demanding and more closely aligned with what players encounter in college strength programs — building toward sustainable mature athletic development.

How to Join Top Tier West

Tryouts for the 2026 – 2027 season are open across all age groups. We welcome new families and returning players alike. Whether your player has been in travel ball for years or is making their first move from rec ball, we encourage them to come compete for a spot.

1**Register for tryouts**

Sign up online at toptier-west.com. You'll receive confirmation, location details, and what to bring.

2**Attend tryouts**

Players are evaluated across hitting, fielding, throwing, and (where applicable) pitching and catching. Multi-day tryouts give players more than one chance to show their best.

3**Receive a roster offer**

Coaches make roster decisions within a week of final tryout sessions. Families receive a written offer including age group, team placement, and next steps.

4**Confirm & onboard**

Accept the roster offer, complete registration, and join your team's communication channels. Welcome to Top Tier West.

2026 – 2027 Tryout Details

When: Announced Soon

Where: Location announced with date

Who: All age groups 8U through 17U — new families and returning players welcome

Register: toptier-west.com

Questions? Reach Out Before Tryouts.

We'd rather have a 10-minute conversation with a family before tryouts than have anyone show up unsure of what they're walking into. If you have any questions about training, competition, fit, cost structure, or how Top Tier West compares to other options — email, message us on social, or come introduce yourself at a tryout session.

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SOCIAL	@toptierwest	HASHTAGS	#RollTier #ExpectGreatness

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