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I wanted to share some information comparing baseball between CWBC and SWOL and how St Jude fits into everything. I have been asked by parents for my thoughts and I know of multiple teams that are recruiting kids from our program to play SWOL. So I wanted to put this out there for those thinking about going to SWOL either through the recruiting process or if you are thinking about it for your kid on your own.

SWOL stands for Southwest Ohio League. This league is considered a select/travel league of baseball. They promote that they offer more competitive baseball than CWBC. Some of the organizations that you might have heard of in this league are WestStars, J.B. Yeager, Haubner Hornets, etc. They offer teams at each age level (7U, 9U, 10U, 11U, etc.). They offer different divisions (National, American Gold, American Silver, American Bronze, and Continental).

CWBC stands for Cincinnati Western Baseball Conference. This is the current league that St. Jude teams participate. It includes all of the Catholic schools on the Westside of Cincinnati and Oak Hills Youth Athletic program. It is a recreational/instructional league. This is where kids can come to learn the game of baseball and develop their skills. They offer National and American levels.

My philosophy and how I see how St Jude fits into these 2 leagues is that CWBC is a great league to play in as you are learning the game. We offer up to 25 games per year for your team. You get to play with your friends and classmates while building the sense of community that makes St Jude so special and why we choose to send our kids here.

SWOL's National, American Gold and some American Silver baseball is pretty good and very competitive. These are teams requiring you to try out. They are truly selective when it comes to who plays on these teams. You cannot just grab kids and tell the organization that you want to play at this level. If your son wants to try out for teams at these levels then I have no issue with it. If he makes it then this might be a possibility for you to move him along.

But if you are "trying out" for teams below this level or if you are being recruited to join a team that plays in lower leagues then I think you need to talk to baseball people before making a decision. The first issue I have is cost. We offer good baseball for \$70 or so. These teams are looking at over \$500 before factoring in travel costs. The SWOL has become watered down with teams combining and jumping thinking they will find better competition. This is why the league expanded to all of the other levels. My opinion as well as others is that you really will not get much better competition at these levels than you would if your son is able to make the National level inside CWBC.

After talking to parents who have gone through the process; coaches in both SWOL and CWBC; coaches in high school; and instructors at camps I have come to this opinion and this is how I try to run the St Jude Baseball Program. Kids should stay in the CWBC through 11U (5th grade). It is about development and not wins/losses. Our program gives them 2 practices a week for almost 3 months with up to 25 games. Then if the kid really likes baseball and is good enough, they can move onto SWOL. St. Jude is a great place to play baseball. If you push a kid to play more than 25 games before the 5th grade, they will get burnt out before they get to high school. St Jude over the past 2 years has been the winningest organization in our league based on the combination of regular season league championships and tournament championships. We offer the best fields on the Westside of Cincinnati. The facilities have impressed the Reds Community Fund to the point that they want to continue our relationship and to expand it for the next 5 years.

So with that all being said, the decision is still yours and it has to be what is best for your child, your family, and yourself. But I wanted to take the time to explain how the St Jude Baseball Program looks at the relationship between SWOL and CWBC and the role that we play in the baseball life of your child. The St Jude community is special and the baseball program is here to introduce, instruct and develop your child.