



COME AND TRY GUIDE

Checklist and Guidebook

Always be aware that impressions matter.

Some of the items in this document might feel insignificant, but while you might see your club in it's off-season state every year, that doesn't mean a potential member should.

This page is a high-level overview of questions and items you need to consider, read on for more information.

General

- Will you need to put up shade?
- Do you have appropriate signage? Will people know where to go when they arrive?
- Are main access paths or entry ways clear and clean?
- Do you have a wet weather plan?

Diamond

- Are the skinned areas of your diamonds edged and free of weeds?
- All grass areas mowed and tidy?
If this is a council responsibility, organise this to occur **before** your come and try day.
- Do dugouts (or anything inside) need any repairs or repainting?
Make sure dugouts are clean!
- Does any fencing require replacement or repair?
- Have you updated any sponsor signage around the diamond?

Activities and Services

- Do you have plans for what people are going to do?
Baseball5, Social Baseball, T-Ball, Skill Drills?
- Will your canteen be open or will you contract a food/drink/catering organisation?
- Will you have any extra activities?
- Externals - bouncing castles, basic carnival games, muck around activities?
This isn't necessary, but is definitely an option, maybe as a fundraising tool!

Amenities

- Are any facilities you will have open clean?
Clubhouse, Canteen, Toilets, Scorers Huts, Batting Cages, Bullpens, etc.
- If toilets are maintained by council, are there any issues you need to report?
- Do any of your facilities require any maintenance, repair or repainting?

Communication

- Do you have registration info on hand?
Season info and dates
Division and Age Information
Registration how-to
All costs to the member
Equipment lists (what club does and doesn't provide)
Who will their coach be?
- Do you have uniforms available for try-on and order?
Sizing information
Costings and how to pay
When and how they will receive their uniforms
- Do you have representatives from a variety of different teams? (Age, gender, etc.)
Make sure they're all in club uniforms
- Do you have somewhere to send them if they have further questions or need more information?
Social media pages
Website
Representative contact details

Equipment and Goodies

- Do you need to replace or purchase any new equipment?
- Will you have any information packs or goody bags to provide participants?
Sponsors might provide goodies, club signup flyer, free baseball or club cap, etc.



WHY AND HOW

The importance of a Come and Try day

Build atmosphere. **Make your club look and feel appealing.**

If a family arrives, you should assume they all want to play and then work back from there.

Your Come and Try days matter. Be friendly, be welcoming, present what you want your club to be. This could be a families **first impression** of the sport and they'll decide very quickly if the club is suitable for them or not. You never know, you could be welcoming your next club president, consistent volunteer or an entire family that'll stick around for generations!

Why host a Come and Try day?

Try before you buy.

Baseball equipment is not a cheap investment, with the current state of the economy, it's also a luxury item.

Giving prospective families the chance to visit the facilities and meet the people they'll be playing with/under, them being able to show themselves that they can hit, throw and catch can be incredibly convincing.

It's about awareness but it can also double as one of your first opportunities of the season to showcase your sponsors.

When to host a Come and Try day?

You should **hold multiple in the lead up to the season**. Intensively around a month before the season starts. This is just a guide, be aware of when your competition requires team nominations to be submitted and plan around that!

The most effective Come and Try programs are being fed by a number of different recruitment measures. Intensive school clinics, paid social media marketing, community engagement events (news articles, radio engagement, shopping centre stands, etc.)

Where should it be held?

At your club!

This brings members to you, gets them **familiar** with the facilities they'd be attending for trainings and home games.

Alternatively, you could run Come and Try days at local school grounds, for after school programs or other local parks. This should be in addition to a day at your club!

How long should a Come and Try day be?

Give people a 4-5 hour window to attend.

Run quick activities, 30 minutes per activity at a maximum, aim for 10-15 minutes.

If you're looking to hold a scrimmage game, provide that information upfront, including the time commitment required. Consider running short format games, Aussie T-Ball or Baseball5.



PLANNING THE DAY(S)

Important things to consider

NOTE: The following pages are some more in-depth tips and ideas for planning and execution.

Make sure to **plan** out your Come and Try's **beforehand**. Never throw things together last minute.

Identify your deadlines and work backwards to define when things need to be locked in.

Key deadlines to consider:

- Start of the season
- Competition Team Nomination deadline

Other factors to consider:

- Local school clinic deliveries

Don't do everything by yourself! Work with other volunteers to allocate jobs and set deadlines for tasks to be completed. If you have the capacity, consider setting up a **sub-committee or planning group** to take responsibility for the event.

Create a shared document between anyone that is contributing to the event, ensure that there is a timeline that can be referred to regularly.

Consider inviting your sponsors and local politicians (council, state and federal). Reach out to the Bandits or invite a local state or national player to attend.

Promoting your Come and Try day

Utilise the Recruitment Planner and Support Resources available on Club Hub

<https://baseballqueensland.com.au/club-hub-recruitment/>

Information on Newspapers, Radio, Television, Banners, Signs, Posters can be found at:

<https://baseballqueensland.com.au/club-hub-traditional-media/>

Information on Social Media Marketing can be found at:

<https://baseballqueensland.com.au/club-hub-social-media/>

As mentioned, utilising a variety of promotional methods sets you up for the best chance of success. School clinics, shopping centre stands, community events, media stories and social media marketing should all combine to lead directly into your Come and Try program.

Preparing your Facility

All maintenance jobs need to be done **before the event**.

You don't want someones first impression of the club to be one of neglect or negligence.

Ensure your toilets are clean, toilet paper, soap, paper towels are available.

Repaint, repair, restock.



PLANNING [CONTINUED]

Facility Signage

Is the entrance to your club clearly signed?

Will it be obvious to someone who has never been there before where your club is and how to get to it?

If you can get a clear sign that sits roadside, this is not only a good year-round advertising tool but makes it incredibly clear to everyone where you are located.

Acquiring a sign like this will require talks with council, depending on the road, may also require state government permission.

Food and Beverage

Stock your canteen or BBQ area in preparation.

You may want to offer food and drinks on the day, even a free sausage sizzle.

If you don't have the volunteers, consider having a food truck present or approach a local sponsor to provide food and drinks.

Make sure that all of your volunteers are provided with food and drinks.

The cost of the food and drinks will be recovered through registration fees. Don't be scared of an expense that will make you money.

Equipment

Make sure you have enough equipment readily available to undertake your planned activities.

Baseball QLD offer **equipment kits** and an **MLB inflatable** for hire to clubs **for free!** Make sure to book in early using the following link to ensure your club can take advantage of this: <https://bit.ly/bqbookings>

Make sure to provide an appropriate amount of shade and sunscreen. Flags, bunting and balloons all make for a festive atmosphere.

Any information packs or goody bags should be organised and put together before the event. Make sure you have enough!

Volunteers

Organise volunteers early. Roster them and give them clear and defined responsibilities.

Allocate jobs on the roster for each according to their skills and available time.

Coaches and players should be running on-field activities whilst administrators take care of the paperwork. Don't assume everyone will be there early and stay all day.

People are far more likely to volunteer again if they are given a specific job, time and place. When their time is up and their replacement arrives, thank them and let them go.

Keep a record of anyone that helps out in any capacity and send out personal thank-you's afterwards. (Alternatively provide a discount to their fees or source sponsor provided gifts)



SET-UP AND DELIVERY

Set-up

Volunteers need to arrive at least an hour and a half before the start of the event as **people will arrive earlier than you have advertised.**

Erect all marquees, promotional banners, flags and other temporary structures.

Complete an active risk assessment to ensure that everything is as safe as possible.

Are marquees weighed down, is anything at risk of falling onto people properly secured, are flammable items clear of heat and cooking areas, etc.

Attendee Register

Setup an online or physical form that you can have all attendees fill out.

You'll want to capture contact details for everyone that attends, even if they don't register.

A Microsoft form has been created which you can duplicate and customise to your club:

[Click here for the template](#)

The link above allows you to click through the form without entering any details. Users will only be showed fields dependant on whether they click "add another participant" or not.

Registration Process

Have a laptop or iPads setup to take registrations on the spot.

Whoever is assisting with registrations need to be welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable! They should be able to take the time needed with each person, you don't want people feeling rushed or unimportant.

If you're offering a discount for people who register at your Come and Try day make that super duper clear. Game Day allows you to setup discount codes, so if you're using one, plaster it everywhere on the day!

If your club offers a volunteer levy, where volunteers get a portion of their registration fee returned to them for service, make sure you advertise this.

Have a table set up for your volunteer co-ordinator with job descriptions, task sheets and nomination forms at the ready.

Uniforms and Equipment Sales

Have uniforms available for try on. (and a private place for guests to change)

If you'll be offering second hand items for a discount, have them on hand. (You might be able to get existing members to donate old equipment)

You might also want to invite a local baseball shop to your Come and Try event.

Taking Payments

Make sure all cash is secure and cleared regularly.

Offer electronic payments either by direct bank deposits, credit cards or EFTPOS.



ACTIVITIES, OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW

Activities

If you'd like drill ideas, visit the Aussie T-Ball or Baseball5 manuals on the Club Hub resources page: <https://baseballqueensland.com.au/club-hub-alternatives/>

Otherwise, here are some ideas;

- Supervised hitting off tees
- Balloons tied to the fence to see who can throw and bust one
- Longest throw competition with prizes for everyone
- Longest hitter/home run derby
- Speed gun in the cages or bullpen for the older kids
- Fly ball catching with a Zooka machine
- MLB inflatable
- Celebrity or novelty tee-ball game
- Continuous T-Ball / Rookie Ball game with new children filtering in and out.
- Pitching practice at a target.



Assets shown are from Baseball Association Townsville's 2023 Come and Try 'Baseball Festival'

Objectives

You want to show all potential new members and their families that:

- your club is well organised, fun, safe, friendly and welcoming.
- they will get value for the fees that they pay and that they have a choice of paying less if they opt to volunteer in some capacity.
- everyone is enthusiastic and well looked after. (and fun to volunteer for!)

You want to leave a **positive impression on the entire family**, if they're not convinced on the day, encourage them to attend another come and try or a pre-season training. **Maximise opportunity and make them feel wanted!**

Reviewing and Evaluating

Have a meeting of your sub-committee/exec committee after the event for a "debrief."

Record how many people attended the event and how many new members actually joined on the day.

Discuss (and record) what worked and what didn't and any new ideas for next year. Which activities did really well and which activities had little interest.

Record everything - how much did your canteen sell? (drinks, food items), how many uniforms did you sell? (hats, shirts, socks, belts, etc.), if certain things broke or if there weren't enough volunteers, etc.

The more data, the easier it is for whoever takes on the job next year. It allows you to create your own club specific manual for Come and Try days.