

Irish Baseball Academy

2026-27



Agenda

- Introduction
- Review of 2025/26 Programme
- Overview of 2026/27 Programme
- Introduction to Coach Luis Unzueta
- Q&A



Introduction

- Academy was set up in 2021 following creation of Strike Zone
- Focused on developing all ages of players in all aspects of the game of baseball



Irish Baseball Academy

2025-26 Review

Survey Summary

- Facilities (4.0/5)
- Communication (3.3/5)
- Coaches (3.7/5)
- Volunteers

Conclusions

Plans 2026-27

Player focused development

1. New **Coaching Programme** for each academy group
2. More focus on **outdoors/games/tournaments**
3. Running **Coach-the-Coach sessions** to upskill and support all coaches.
4. Improving **administration and support team** to take on non-baseball-specific tasks.

1. Academy Resources

- **Academy Director**
 - Overall responsibility for programme strategy and delivery (John Dillon)
- **Academy Head Coach**
 - Provides coaching direction, programme and drills for Academy (Luis Unzueta)
- **Volunteer Coaches / Parents**
 - Working with the Academy Director and Academy head coach, providing the majority of weekly training sessions and game support
- **Youth Coaches**
 - U18 player coaches supporting younger age groups
- **Strength and Conditioning**
 - TBC

Coaching Plan

- Weekly Structure

Session	Primary focus	Baseball
1	Strength + hitting	Cages + hitting development
2	Speed + fielding	Defensive skills + throwing
3	Power + game play	Competitive baseball

- Breakdown

Age	Primary focus
U12	Teach technique, coordination, movement and fun competition
U15	Teach technique, progressive strength, speed and baseball intensity
U18/ Senior	Teach technique, higher-intensity athletic development and position-specific work

Coaching Plan

• Monthly Structure

November - LEARN Movement quality	December - BUILD Unilateral strength	January - DEVELOP Strength + power	February - PERFORM Baseball-specific power
• Squat • Lunge • Push-up progression • Plank • Glute bridge • Crawling • Balance • Landing mechanics	• Split squat • Reverse lunge • Single-leg bridge • Lateral lunge • Single-leg balance • Push-up variations • Side plank	• Broad jumps • Lateral bounds • Split-stance jumps • Single-leg hops • Explosive push-ups where appropriate • More advanced bodyweight movements	• Sprint → stop → change direction • Jump → field → throw • Lateral bound → sprint • Reaction → acceleration • Base-running movements

New to Academy Programme

Open Day

- Saturday 31st October, 10 to 2pm

Academy Assessment

- Saturday 7th November, 10 to 3pm

Pitcher & Catcher Sessions*

- Sundays Nov-Mar, 9 to 12noon

*Initial Trial period Nov & Dec

NEW !

Open Day

Saturday 31st October

- U12/U15 10 to 12noon
- U18/Senior 12 to 2pm

- Talk to coaches
- Try equipment
- Do some drills

NEW !

Academy Assessment

First Session - Saturday 7th November

- U12/U15 10 to 12noon
- U18/Senior 1 to 3pm

- Test your skills
- Measure your performance
- Set your goals

NEW !

Pitcher & Catcher Sessions

Every Sunday November & December, Starting Sunday 8th November

- U12/U15 9 to 10.30am
- U18/Senior 10.30 to 12noon

NEW !

- Get expert guidance
- Learn specialist drills
- Set your goals

Regular Practise

Weekly training times (Nov to Mar)

- U12 Saturday 10 to 12noon
- U15 Saturday 12 to 2pm, Wednesday 7 to 9pm
- U18/Senior Saturday 2 to 4pm, Tuesday & Thursday 7 to 9pm

*All times on a trial period for Nov & Dec

Academy Programme Details - Phase 1

Weekly training times (Nov to Mar)

- U12 Saturday 10 to 12noon
- U15 Saturday 12 to 2pm, Wednesday 7 to 9pm
- U18/Senior Saturday 2 to 4pm, Tuesday & Thursday 7 to 9pm

Specialist Catcher & Pitcher sessions

- U12/U15 Sunday 9 to 10.30pm
- U18/Senior Sunday 10.30 to 12noon

***All times on a trial period for Nov & Dec**

Plans 2026-27

Player focused development

1. New **Coaching Programme** for each academy group
2. More focus on **outdoors/games/tournaments**
3. Running **Coach-the-Coach sessions** to upskill and support all coaches.
4. Improving **administration and support team** to take on non-baseball-specific tasks.

2. Outdoor plans - Programme Details - Phase 2

Phase 2 weekly training times (Apr to Sept)

- Scrimmage games / league games
- Visiting teams / tournaments
- More detailed plans to be finalised during the year
- Times of training may vary, subject to outdoor training and game plans
- Groups may take time off for holidays and down time between July and August

3. Coaches Certification Course

**COACHES
CERTIFICATION
COURSE**

**10 AND
17 OCTOBER**
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**@STRIKE
ZONE**

COST €25
(€15 for U18)

**No Experience
Necessary!**

 IRISH BASEBALL
ACADEMY



- 10am to 3pm, Saturday, 17th October in Strike Zone
- Coach Luis Unzueta will cover all the aspects of basic coaching from BI's Level 1 course.
- No prior experience is required
- Covering the basics of all skill aspects, game management, how to design and run trainings, and lots of drills for all age groups.
- A perfect course to get some confidence for beginning coaches and some good reminders for those with experience.
- Online booking
 - <https://hub.klubfunder.com/BaseballIreland/payit/ticketsale/coaches-clinic/detail>

4. Support Roles

- **Player Registration & Payments** - Manage online sign-ups and payment tracking.
- **Parent Liaison** - Act as primary contact point with parents, sharing weekly updates, training times and upcoming events.
- **Coach Training & Vetting** - Work with Child Safety Officer to ensure all coaches trained and vetted to appropriate level
- **Facilities** - Monitor and maintain cleanliness and maintenance requirements of facility
- **Uniform & Equipment Coordination** - Manage inventory, place orders and coordinate distribution.
- **Fundraising & Sponsorship** - Manage Academy specific fundraising campaigns.
- **Social Media & Communications** - Maintain central updates on Academy events, tournament results and key announcements.
- **Tournament & Travel Logistics** - Support and advise specific groups on flights, hotels, transport, etc..
- **Central Calendar** - Maintain the master schedule of events for the year sharing with all coaches and parents as needed.

Programme Details - Costs

The cost for the 2026-27 academy programme in Strike Zone is as follows.

- U12 - €400
- U15 - €600
- U18/Senior - €800 (includes access to gym)
- Online Payment
 - <https://hub.klubfunder.com/BaseballIreland/membership/membership-payment>
- Note 1: Additional costs will be required for tournaments and travel, *[details TBC]*
- Note 2: Applications for funding support are available through the Baseball Ireland scholarship scheme. For more information, contact the Academy Director, John Dillon.
- Note 3: One-off or monthly payment option available.

Programme Details - Eligibility

For European and other tournaments each player must be aged 12, 15, 18 respectively, or under, for the year of the tournament. The following age ranges apply for the 2026-27 Academy groups.*

- U12 - Birth year 2015, 2016, 2017 (i.e. turning 10, 11 or 12 in 2027)
- U15 - Birth year 2012, 2013, 2014 (i.e. turning 13, 14 or 15 in 2027)
- U18 - Birth year 2009, 2010, 2011 (i.e. turning 16, 17 or 18 in 2027)

* In exceptional circumstances, a player younger than the age category may participate based on playing ability. The head coach, in consultation with other coaches, will have the final decision on player selection.

Planning Calendar

Month	Activity	
September	Final month of the 2025/26 Academy	DONE
	Survey & Review Programme (Programme / Coaches / Fees)	DONE
	Coaches meetings	DONE
	Finalise plans for 2026/27 Academy	DONE
October	Parents meeting	NOW
	Registration for 2026/27 opens	NOW
	‘Coach-the-Coach’ training in Strike Zone	
November - April	Phase 1 of 2026/27 Academy in Strike – Open Day, Assessment, Regular Training	
	ISG Clinic for players and coaches	
May - September	Phase 2 of 2026/27 Academy including outdoor training, games and use of Strike Zone	
	Academy Review	

Planning Calendar

Month	Date	Time	Activity
October	Saturday, 17 th	10am to 3pm	'Coach-the-Coach' training in Strike Zone
	Saturday, 31 st	10am to 2pm	Open Day
November	Saturday, 7 th	10am to 3pm	Academy Assessment
	Sunday, 8 th	9.30am to 12noon	First pitcher & catcher session
	Tuesday, 10 th	7pm to 9pm	First evening practise
	Friday 13 th	6pm to 10pm	ISG Clinic for players and coaches
	Sat & Sun, 14,15 th	10am to 6pm	

Q&A

