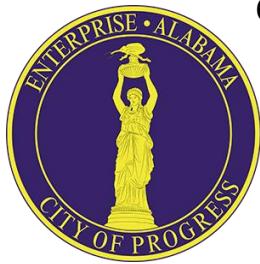


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Contact:

Kay Kirkland  
Special Projects Coordinator  
City of Enterprise  
(334) 348-2310, (334) 406-1394  
[kkirkland@enterpriseal.gov](mailto:kkirkland@enterpriseal.gov)

## Ozone baseball action coming to Enterprise this weekend

Local baseball fans looking for some great competition to watch in person won't have far to go this weekend when 12 teams from cities across the state converge in Enterprise for the Dixie Youth Baseball Ozone 12 and Under State Tournament.

Enterprise's own 12U Ozone team will be among those that will make the fields at the Enterprise Softball/Baseball Complex come alive beginning Friday with opening ceremonies at 1 p.m. Play will continue Saturday through Monday, when the best two of three championship games will be played.

"We are looking forward to hosting this tournament," said Blake Moore, Enterprise Parks and Recreation Superintendent.

"We welcome the players, coaches and all the family members and friends who will be here to support their teams."

Baseball is America's pastime, and Moore said the competition promises to be exciting. Ozone is a category of Dixie Youth baseball for 11-12-year olds.

"Attending events like this tournament and filling the stands is a great way our community can show support. I'm sure the players, coaches and parents would appreciate the community members coming out and cheering on these teams."

The home team, Enterprise, has worked hard to prevail throughout the regular season and is happy to be a part of this tourney, Moore added.

"The Enterprise Parks and Recreation Department has served local young people and adults through programs, events and athletics for years," he said. "And I know that many of our local residents, business owners and community leaders grew up playing sports in leagues like this, and participating in tournaments like this."

Through these types of sports, Moore said, youth learn character-building attributes that can help them be successful throughout life.

He invited everyone to come and be a positive influence on the young people on all of the participating teams. "This is all-American fun."

Community Services and Recreation Director Billy Powell asked community residents and business leaders to welcome visitors to the city during the weekend. Signs in store windows, digital signs or a tournament player discount are among the ways local businesses can greet visitors, he said.

"Tournaments like this give us the opportunity to show off our city, our hospitality and the things we have to offer," Powell said. "Often it's helpful when we can share tips about favorite dining spots and shopping stops."

Powell said out-of-towners often relay to city employees their thanks for making their visit and the experience at the ball fields a good one.

"We strive to be as accommodating, welcoming and helpful as possible because we want to uphold our reputation as a strong, friendly city," Powell said. "It's important to realize that our visitors to these tournaments are valued guests, and they have an economic impact on our city."

Visitors spend money at restaurants, convenience stores, local shops, and local chain stores. Studies in some cities indicate the economic benefit can be \$1 million to \$2 million and above depending on the number of tournaments and teams.

"Hosting tournaments takes a lot of pre-planning and preparation, a lot of hard work," Powell said. "But it's worth it for everyone when the play goes well and everyone has a good time," Powell said.

The opening ceremonies where all 12U Ozone teams are introduced will begin at 1 p.m. at the complex at Johnny Henderson Park. Competition begins at 3 p.m. with three games: Andalusia vs. Dothan National, Municipal National vs. AUM, and Opelika vs. Troy. At 5 p.m., Rogersville takes on Auburn Orange, Southeastern takes on Dothan American and Enterprise will battle it out with East Tuscaloosa.

The winners will advance to the winners' bracket on Saturday at 11 a.m., and the losers will compete at 9 a.m. for a chance to get back in the hunt for the championship. The advancing eight teams will play at 4 and 6 p.m. Saturday. The six remaining teams will play at 2 p.m. Sunday, with the semi-finals at 6 p.m. featuring the top two teams from the winners' bracket and the losers' bracket. The championship games will begin at 9 a.m. Monday with an 11 a.m. game if necessary.