



MBL / MBT

October
2021



Forward

Play Ball. Make Memories.

Dear Reader,

MBL/MBT (Metro Baseball League and Minnesota Baseball Tournaments) is a non-profit organization created and existing solely to serve youth baseball in MN. Founded in 1992, MBL/MBT prepares kids to play baseball at different levels and is a community-based program serving the Twin Cities metro, western Wisconsin, and southern MN. The goal of MBL/MBT is to grow the game of baseball while always focusing the programming, education, training, and resources back to the youth baseball organizations in each community.

With our communities in mind, we hired an experienced outside research firm, Diedrich RPM, to conduct an independent blind study to help us capture an objective view of youth baseball as a whole. We wanted to understand how to effectively position and communicate MBL and MBT's benefits to parents, communities, directors, coaches, umpires and influencers in order to elevate the brand. We wanted to understand how Covid impacted our youth, we wanted to hear what we could do better, and do differently in the future. In the pages that follow you will see one word repeated over and over, FUN! That is what the game of baseball has meant to so many. You will also see our new tagline, or brand promise, "Play Ball. Make Memories". That was the highest rated concept presented in this study.

We want to thank all the respondents who participated in this blind study. We appreciate their candid feedback, and we hope that the research uncovered in this study is as valuable and insightful as we think it is.

We know that the needs of all involved in youth baseball are evolving and it is our job to continue to develop and improve our products and services to meet those needs..

Thank you,

Bob Lilledahl

Executive Director & MBL / MBT Management Team

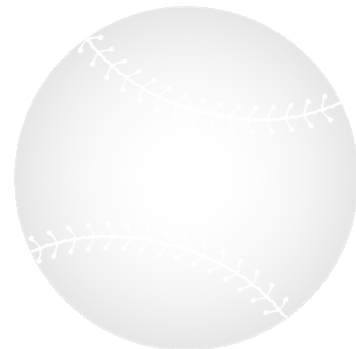


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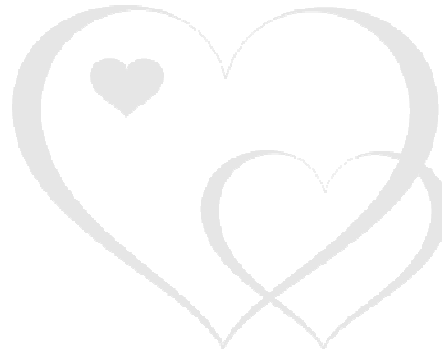


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Background

History & Overview



Founded in 1992 MBL / 2002 MBT (Metro Baseball League and Minnesota Baseball Tournaments) is a non-profit organization created and existing solely to serve youth baseball in MN. MBL/MBT prepares kids to play baseball at different levels and is a community-based program serving the Twin Cities metro, western Wisconsin, and southern MN. MBL/MBT is one of the largest independent leagues and baseball organizations in the country, with over 700 league teams and 600 tournament teams



Research Goal

The overall goal of this research is to understand the opportunities that exist within the market based on feedback from parents, communities, directors, coaches, umpires and influencers in order to elevate the brand. This includes satisfaction and importance ratings to gain further understanding of competitors, ultimately helping strategy, messaging, and lead generation to help drive future awareness and growth.

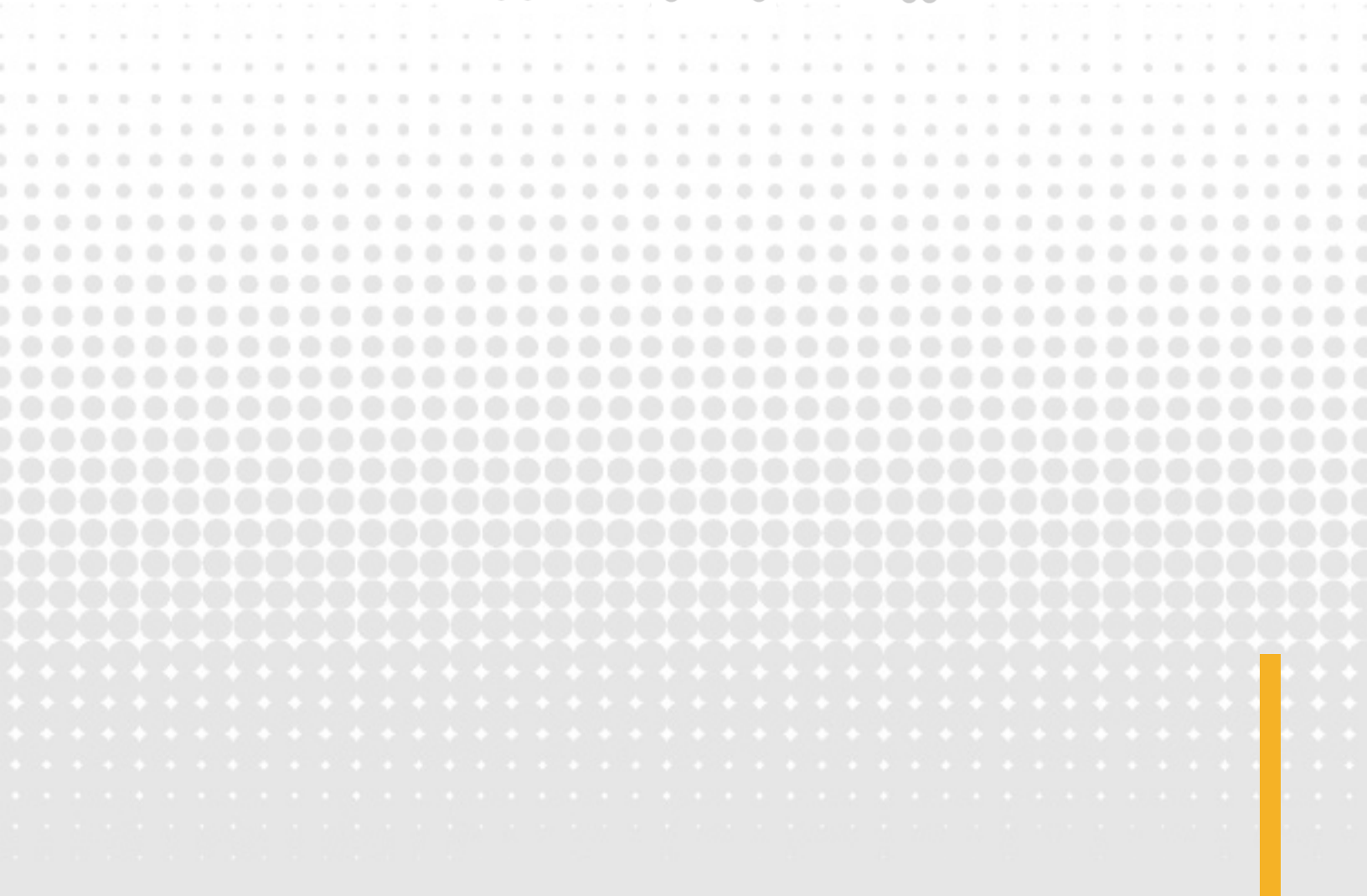
Background

Respondent Qualifications



In order to participate, survey respondents were pre-screened to ensure they qualified by meeting the following criteria:

- ✓ **Role** (Parent, Player, Coach, Association Travel Director, Travel Program Director, Tournament Director)
- ✓ **Geographic Location** (City/State or Region)
 - Twin Cities Metro Area
 - Southern Minnesota
 - Western Wisconsin
- ✓ **League vs Tournament Involvement**
- ✓ **Age 18+**



Methodology



Recruitment & Data Collection

Survey participation was solicited using a mixed-method approach, including multiple email campaigns and telephone interviews conducted via DRPM's in-house call center. Data was collected through a series of email campaigns using MBL/MBTs database of approximately 17,600 contacts. This number serves as the studies population. Statistical testing and segmented differences were conducted and identified where applicable (minimum 30 samples per segment). Segments tested include; geographic region, role, gender and other demographic characteristics.

A total of 830 respondents completed the survey in its entirety, achieving a Margin of Error (MOE) of +/- 3. Data collection opened on 5/12/21 and closed 5/25/21.

All statistical tests were conducted at a 95% confidence level.

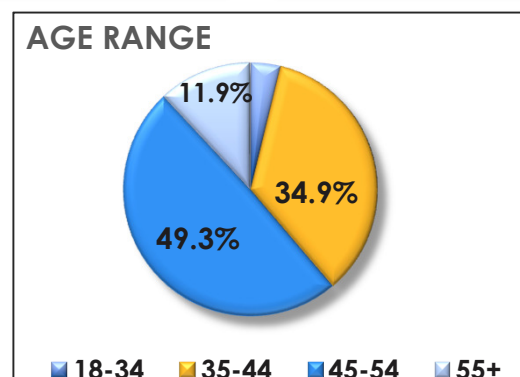
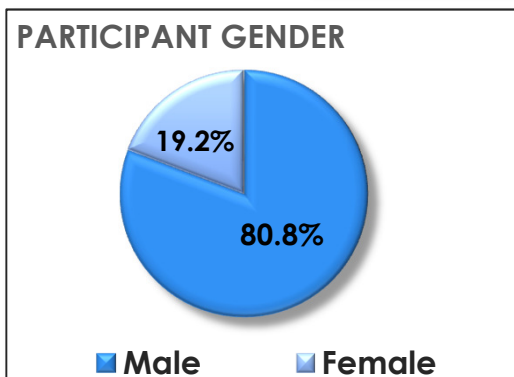
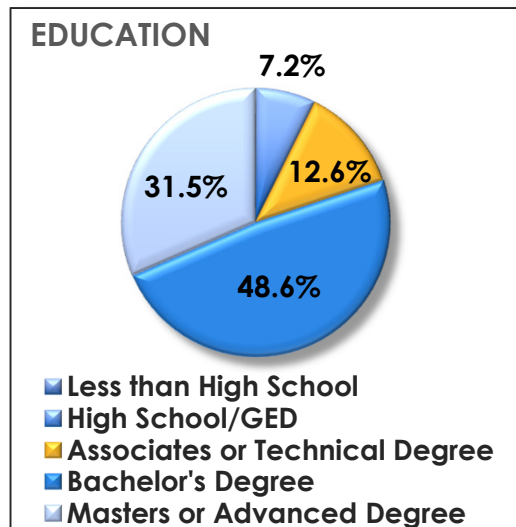
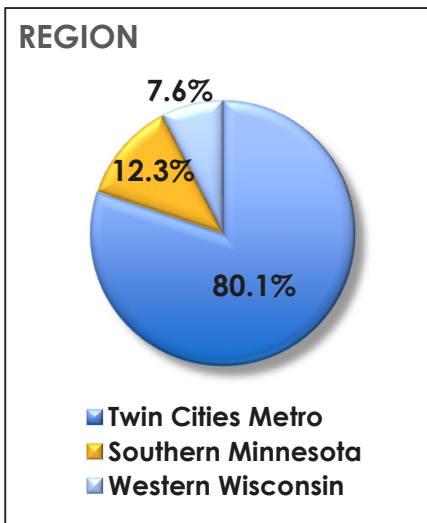
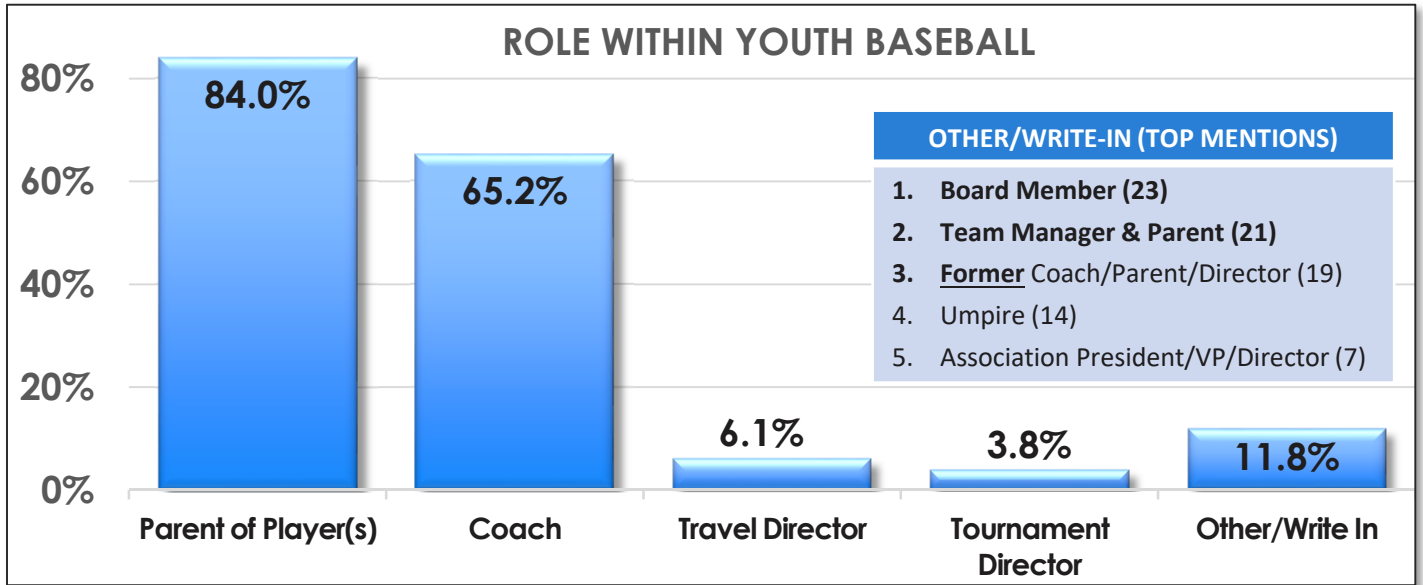
Survey participation was optional and administered blindly (respondents did not know who the sponsor was until the end).

Respondent Profile



Who participated?

Research respondents were from the Twin Cities, western Wisconsin, northern Iowa, and from the north metro. The majority of respondents were the parent of a player. Resided in the Twin Cities were male and 80.1% had either a masters or bachelors degree.



Survey Results

Executive Summary

- 430 respondents used the word “**fun**” when describing which **factor(s) are essential to keeping the players active in the sport**. “**Coach**” was also mentioned by almost half (327), stressing the importance of good leadership.
- The **most important attributes** among survey respondents are ‘**Accurate and Fair Skill Level Classification of Players**’ and ‘**Player Experience**’. Both have **Top Two Box Scores** of **93.6%**.
 - Approximately 200 respondents elected to provide additional feedback (beyond the attributes which were preselected) regarding what they consider to be important about the leagues, teams and organization which they belong to. Of those, **103** referenced/emphasized the **importance of coaching**. Other **top mentions include** the **ability for kids to play with friends, equal playing time** and various areas related to **traveling programs**.
- **Metro Baseball League (MBL)** is the **most recognized** organization among survey respondents (**92%**), followed closely by **Gopher State (87%)** and **Minnesota Baseball Tournaments (84%)**.
 - Over the past two years, **more than 75%** of survey respondents have been involved with the **Metro Baseball League (MBL)**.
- **50% of respondents** selected **MBL** as the organization which they were most familiar; no other single organization/club received greater than 12%.
- **Parents Only** respondents felt that **Communications, Website** and **Exposure to Recruiters** were **more important** than respondents who were **Parents AND Coaches**.
- **Top-rated Satisfaction Attributes** among all respondents is ‘**Player Experience**’ and ‘**Ability to Travel**’ with **Top Two Box Scores** over **80%**.
 - **Standardization of Rules/Eligibility Guidelines** and **Access to Compete in State Qualifying Tournaments** were the only others to score high than **70% in top two box**.
- **More than 70%** of survey respondents are **likely** or **very likely** to **continue supporting** their primary organization in the future (this may be due to children aging out).
- **Nearly 80%** would **recommend** their primary organization to other parents or members of the youth baseball community.
- **Parent Only** and **Coach Only** respondents are **more satisfied** with **Access to Training Facilities** more favorably than **Parent/Coaches**.

Survey Results

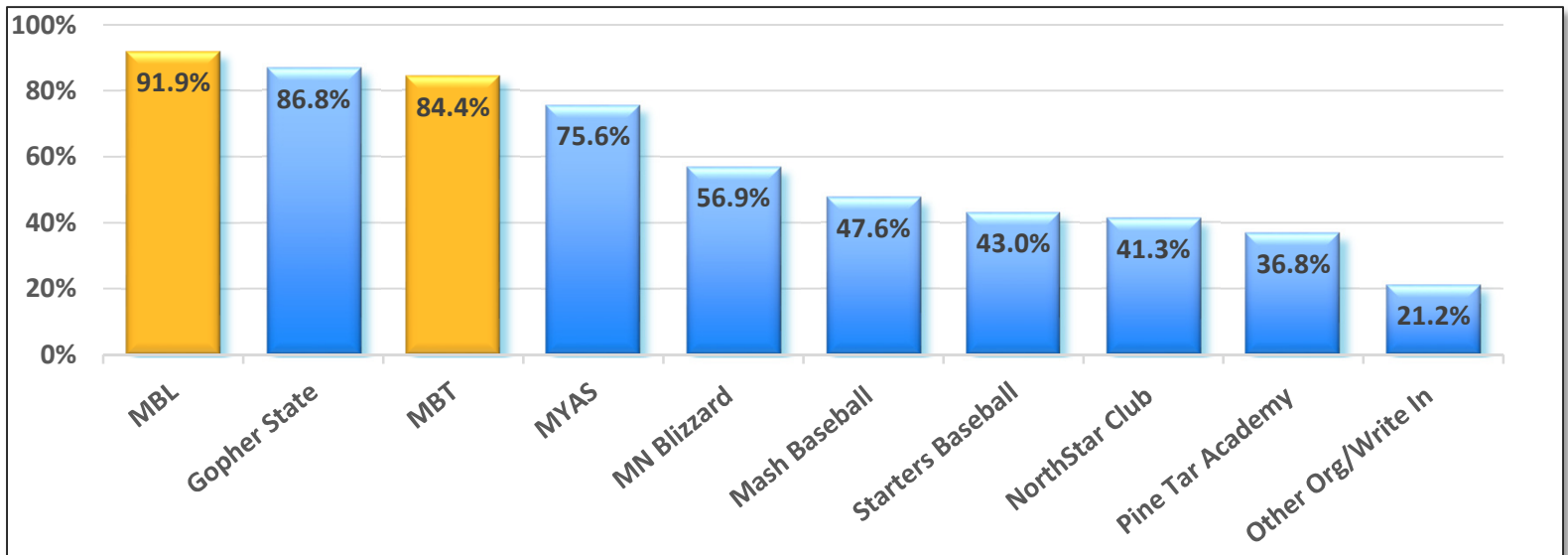


Executive Summary

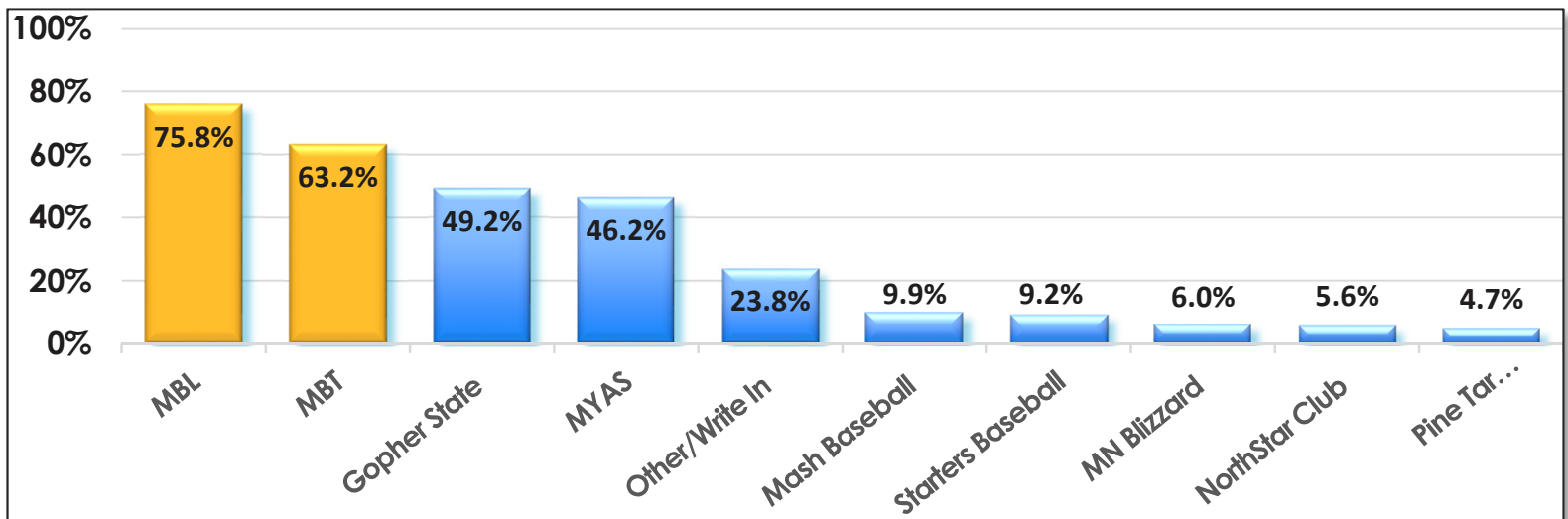
We are pleased to report that MBL was the most recognized youth baseball organization with nearly 92% recognition.

Over the past two years, **more than 75 percent** of survey respondents have been involved with the **Metro Baseball League (MBL)**.

Provider/Organization Recognition

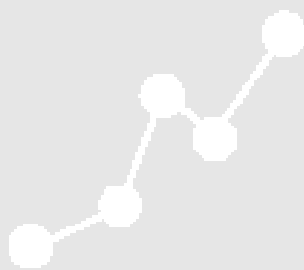


Provider/Organization Participation



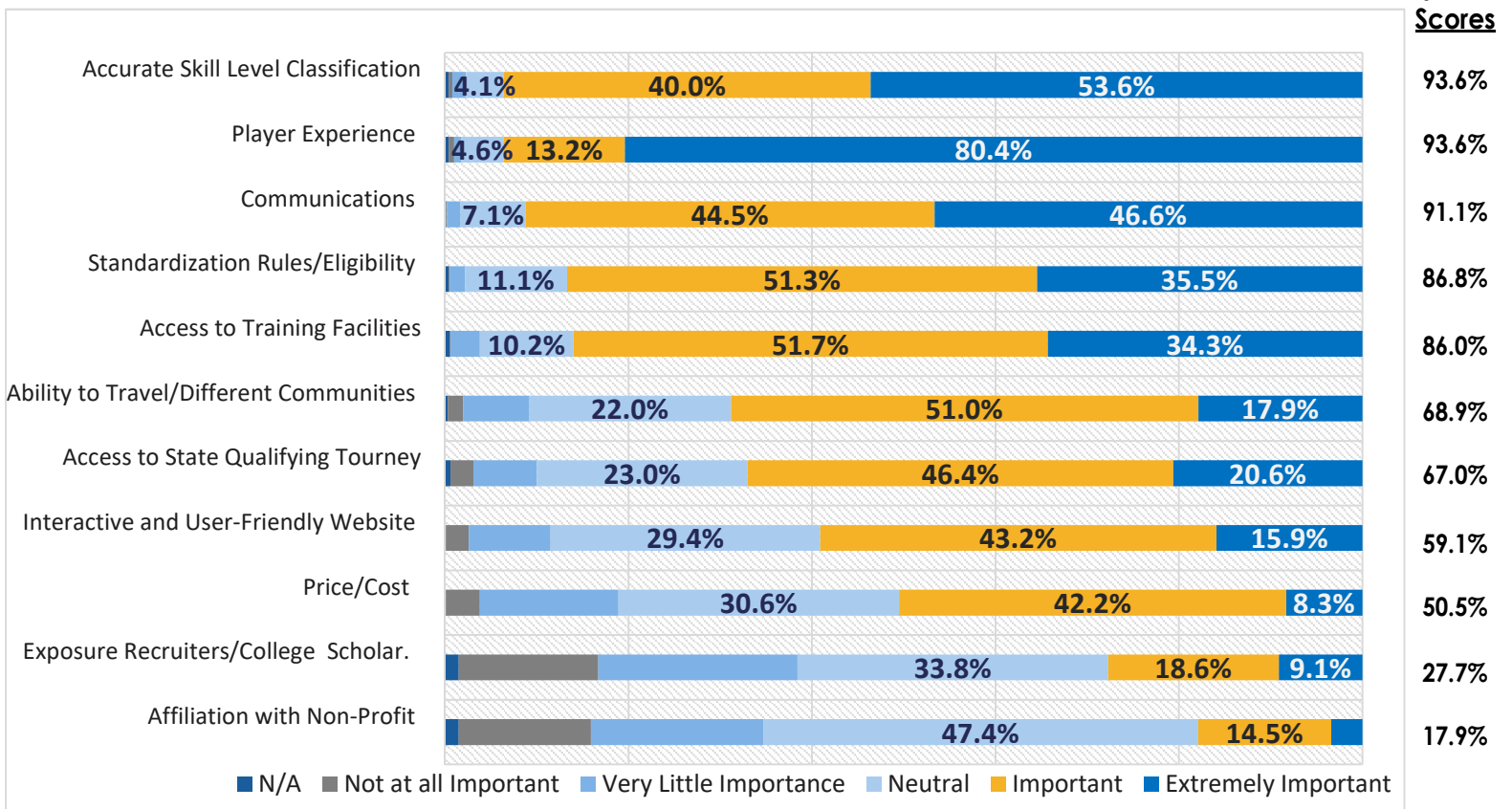
Survey Results

Executive Summary



There are opportunities to enhance the satisfactions of our organization when looking at the aggregate in terms of what is important - **Communications, Player Experience, Accurate Skill Level Classification** and **Access to Training Facilities** are reported as the most underserved. There are differences by geographic area as well.

Top 2 Box Scores



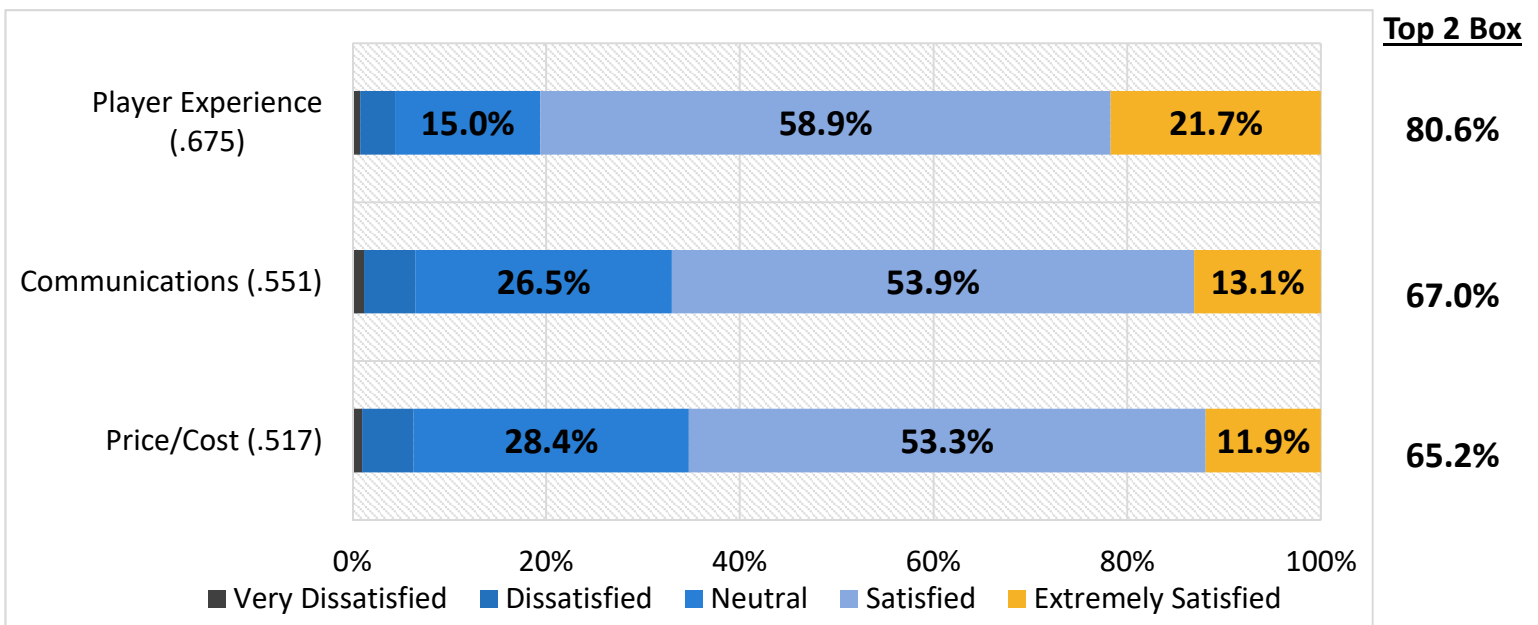
Survey Results

Importance (Aggregate)

The top three attributes in terms of importance were reported to be Player Experience, Communications, followed by Price Cost.



The **most important attributes** among survey respondents, **Player Experience, Communications** and **Price/Cost** have the most effect on **Overall Satisfaction**.



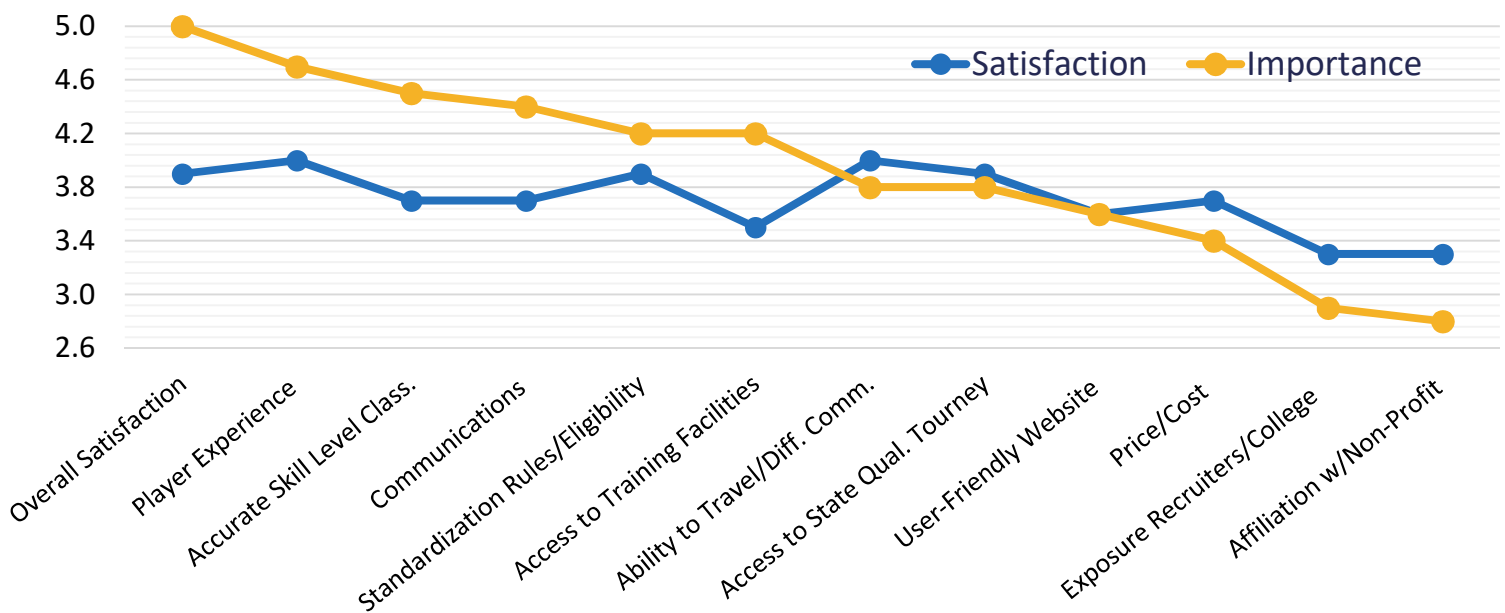
Survey Results

Executive Summary



OVERALL SATISFACTION

- **Twin Cities respondents** are more satisfied with **Player Experience** and the **Ability to Travel** as compared to southern MN respondents. **western Wisconsin respondents** are more satisfied in general than Twin Cities and southern Minnesota respondents. However, **Twin Cities respondents** are more likely to **continue supporting** their organization than western Wisconsin respondents.
- **WOMI** scores for all orgs/club are **92-97%**.
- **Communications, Player Experience, Accurate Skill Level Classification** and **Access to Training Facilities** are the most underserved areas when satisfaction is compared to importance, and thus, have the greatest opportunity.



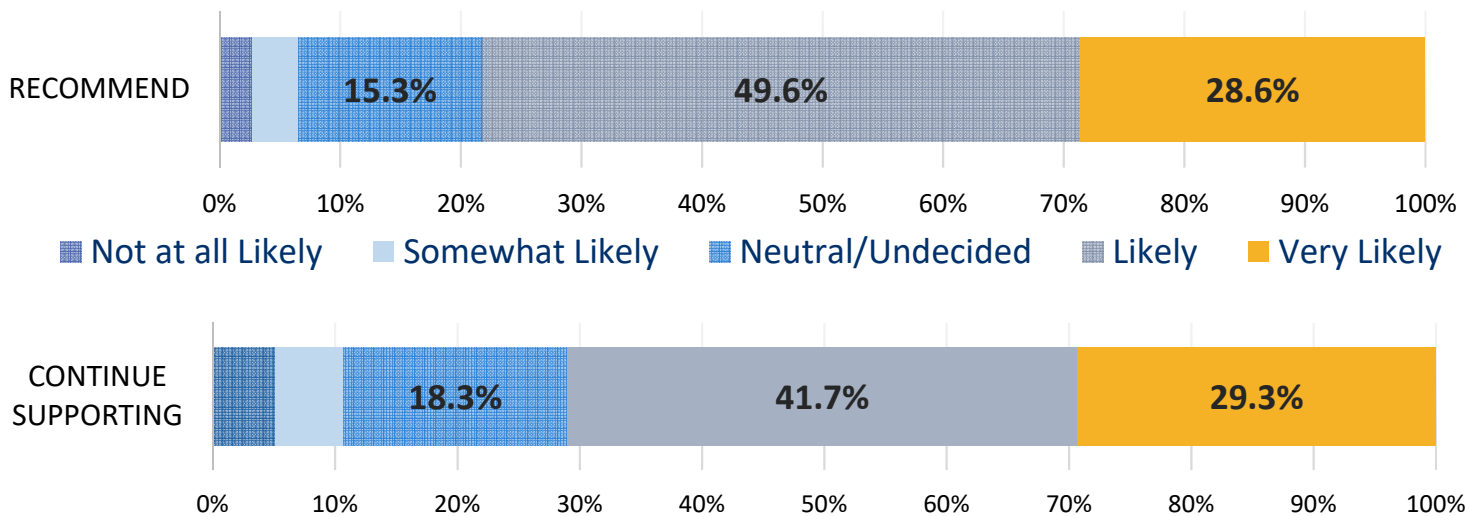
Key Drivers: Among all survey respondents, **Player Experience, Communications** and **Price/Cost** have the most effect on Overall Satisfaction.

Survey Results

Executive Summary

80%
RECOMMEND

More than 70 percent of survey respondents are likely or very likely to **continue supporting** their primary organization in the future. Nearly 80 percent would **recommend** their primary organization/club to other parents or members of the youth baseball community.



Survey Results

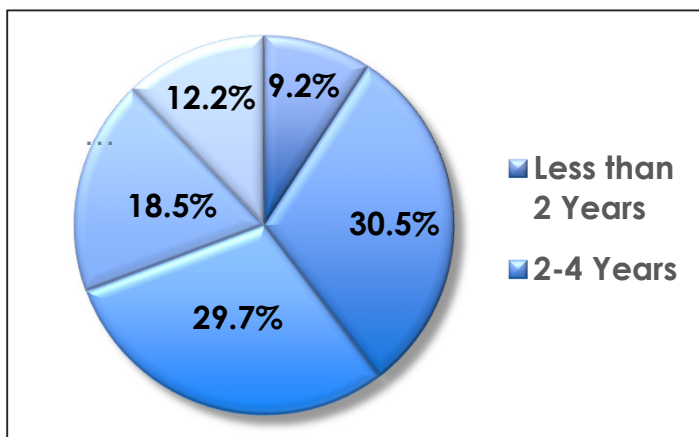
Executive Summary

1/3
INVOLVED 5-7 YRS

The only statistical difference identified amongst organizations/clubs was **Access & Ability to Compete in State Qualifying Tournaments** as more important to **MBT** respondents when compared with **MBL** and **All Other Clubs/Organizations** (as a whole).

GROUP	ACCESS & ABILITY TO COMPETE IN STATE QUALIFYING TOURNAMENTS
METRO BASEBALL LEAGUE (MBL)	3.68 ▼
MINNESOTA BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS (MBT)	4.09 ▲
MN YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (MYAS)	3.90
GOPHER STATE	3.74
ALL OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	3.75 ▼

LENGTH OF INVOLVMENT WITH MBL/MBT AVEARAGED 2-4 YEARS

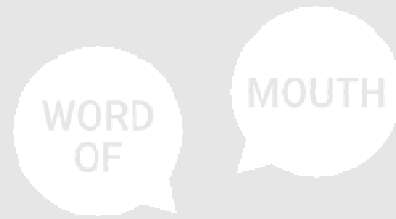


Nearly one-third of respondents (30.5 percent) have been involved with MBL or MBT for between **2-4 years**.

Another nearly one-third of respondents (29.7 percent) have been involved for between **5-7 years**.

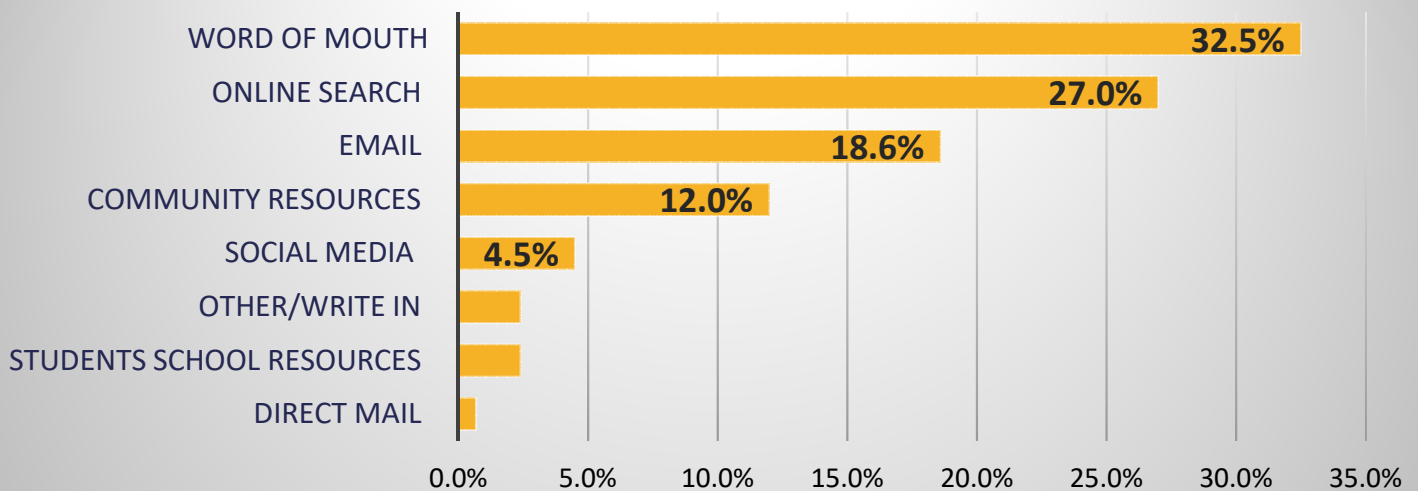
Survey Results

Executive Summary

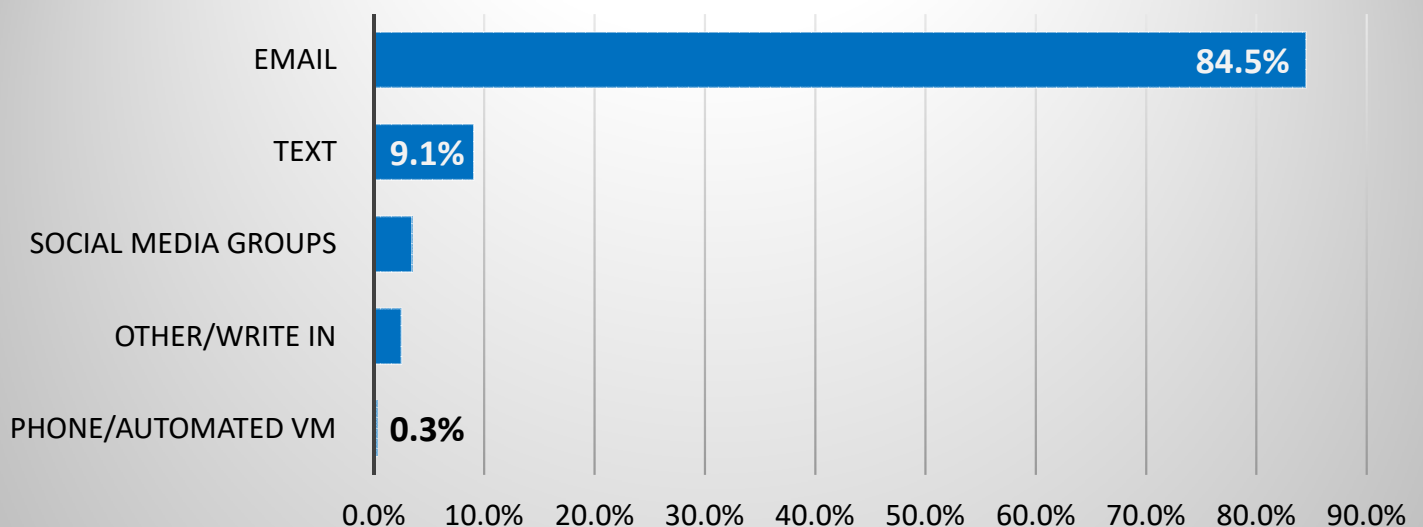


- **Nearly one-third** of all respondents learn about youth baseball organizations, leagues, tournaments and club teams via **Word-of-Mouth**. Online Search was the second highest (27%) source reported.
- **Nearly 85%** of respondents prefer **email communication** when being contacted about their child/player's baseball activities.

HOW DO YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUTH BASEBALL?



PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION



Survey Results

“Kids play sports to have fun”

Executive Summary

430 respondents used the word “fun” when describing which factor(s) are essential to keeping the players active in the sport. “Coach” was also mentioned by almost half (327), stressing the importance of good leadership.

“Positive coaching, teaching the fundamentals and providing an environment for fun and age-appropriate expectations”

“Creating a positive experience and ensuring that they are having fun”

“Dedicated and knowledgeable coaches”

“Coaches with a good combination of baseball knowledge and a kid friendly approach”



COVID-19 IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION

Many respondents agree that 2020 was a lost season, but most remain positive that the impact should be minimal looking to 2021 and beyond. A large portion also feel that COVID is not a concern, and the affect was minimal, because the sport is played outdoors. Another common subject mentioned was masks (101 respondents), with the consensus being that they were an unnecessary precaution.

“It has made things very frustrating for my son. Wearing a mask on the field was not enjoyable and limited his vision which once led to him taking a ball off his glove and hitting him in the side of the head. If this continues, he does not want to play. He also has sports asthma and having to run with a mask on was very challenging.”

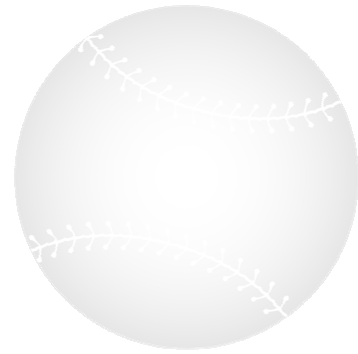
“It has driven home the idea that the kids need this competitive experience. The kids are thriving, and it is good to see after a long pandemic.”

“Some kids stopped playing as a result and have not yet come back.”



Conclusion

Play Ball. Make Memories.



Dear Reader,

I hope you have found this white paper as valuable as we have. As a result of this study, we are adding to our sponsorship packages creating a win-win for our players, families and sponsors. We are working with our communities to improve our Communications, continue to enhance the Player Experience, provide Accurate Skill Level Classification and working on partnerships to provide Access to Training Facilities.

We are committed to helping our communities have fun. We believe that a child being a part of a baseball team helps set them up for success in other areas of their lives. Good coaching and being a part of a team provides kids with a skill set that includes accountability, teamwork, determination, and the ability to set and accomplish goals.

MBL and MBT remain committed to providing the best leagues and tournaments we possibly can to help aid in each child's growth— not only in athletics, but as good human beings and citizens.

Once again, thank you for your time and participation in our study.

Respectfully,

Bob Lilledahl

Executive Director & MBL MBT Management Team





Thank You

