

It's time for the Boys of Summer to play a little hardball, Virginia Commonwealth Games style. The baseball tournaments will bring 96 teams to the diamonds in Lynchburg, the Roanoke and New River Valley's.

With caps on the number of entries, the "Games" is one of the most coveted entries of the year.

Entry into the Commonwealth Games baseball tournament is a coveted spot.

"I was taking entries in January," said Mark Sisson of Southwest Virginia Elite Baseball, the company that organizes the baseball portion of the Games. "People know that if they want to get in, they better get in early. If they're not in by April, we'll fill up."

The 36 teams that will make up the 14U-18U tournaments have registered and claimed their spots. The tournament is for organized travel ball teams and space from the showcase tournament where participants register as individual players and are parsed out to one of four teams built for its own competition.

Southwest Virginia Elite Baseball runs tournaments all over western Virginia from spring through fall. Now in their fifth year partnering with Virginia Amateur Sports to administer the baseball tournaments, Sisson said he can cross promote by letting teams that participate in the Games see the other tournaments and spreading the word about the competition in the Commonwealth Games.

Plus, handing out the coveted medals to the top three teams is an added bonus.

The 36 high school aged teams will play in Lynchburg at fields at Liberty University, Lynchburg University, Liberty Christian Academy, Heritage and E.C. Glass high schools and Lynchburg City Stadium.

On June 12 and 13, about 60 teams ranging from 8U to 13U will compete at Moyer Sports Complex in Salem, the field at Arnold R. Burton Technology Center, Harkrader Sports Complex in Christiansburg, Kiwanis Field in Salem and Radford University.

Sisson said teams from outside the state are attracted to the tournaments.

“We get teams from West Virginia and North Carolina. This year we’ll have a team from Pennsylvania,” he said.

Sisson, along with business partner Rusty Lambert, founded Southwest Virginia Elite Baseball as an LLC eight years ago. The partnership with the Commonwealth Games, Sisson said, has been a true win-win.

To learn more about the company’s events, visit swvaelitebaseball.com and for the complete sport listing for the Virginia Commonwealth Games and events, visit www.commonwealthgames.org.