



Vipers and STING...Two of Louisville's Heavyweight Travel Baseball Orgs Announce "The Merger"

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Vipers Baseball Club and The Louisville STING are officially announcing their plan for "The Merger," which will bring these two longtime, Louisville-area heavyweight travel baseball organizations together as one. This merger will create a combined group of nearly 35 teams, 100+ coaches and 400+ athletes and their families, thus supplanting it as the biggest and most preeminent travel baseball org in the state and solidifying it as one of the premier programs in the entire Midwest region.

The Vipers and STING leadership groups have been actively working on the idea of "The Merger" since early 2020, but the rise of Covid-19 and its effects on youth sports and its families forced the announcement to be delayed by approximately three months. While the two orgs have been actively working "off the field" together for months, September 1 is the official date for the orgs to begin legally and structurally merging into one. The Vipers' legal structure of a 501-c-3 non-profit will be used for the combined org. The existing STING's signature black-and-yellow and the Vipers' signature red-and-black brands will live on "as is" for at least the fall of 2020 and possibly the entire 2021 season. The group will soon be exploring and is likely to develop a full rebrand to provide full unity in brand, name, colors, etc. no later than the 2021-2022 season.

The primary missions of the new org will be to provide the most inclusive and best youth and high school travel baseball experience through an intense training regimen for team and individual player development as well as community based programs that will strive to increase participation amongst local youth athletes wanting to play travel baseball. That focus will include increased opportunities for underprivileged and minority players.

The group will benefit from not only sharing existing facilities, but will also immediately begin exploring large-scale enhancements by developing additional, new or expanded indoor and outdoor facilities for its athletes and their families. The merger will also assist the org with being able to field deeper and more competitive teams at all age levels, gain more prominent recruiting recognition to its high school age athletes, provide advancements in coaching and fundamentals and continue to provide these athletes education both inside and outside the lines of the ball field.

The current directors of both organizations, Aaron Beard from the Vipers and Aaron Flaker from the STING, will remain heavily involved in co-leading the new organization. Beard will be primarily focused on facilities and team operations, while Flaker will lead the way on branding, marketing and organizational development.

"While both organizations have existed separately, we have done so in the past with very similar, if not the exact same vision and mission. It became evident quickly that our morals, ethics and values aligned perfectly and that we were much more alike than different," says Aaron Flaker. "While we had uber competitive and brand loyal guys on both sides of the table, we were able to drop all of that to focus on the 'greater good' and the opportunities that could be provided by being stronger together. Because of that, we believe this to be an UNSELFISH, SUPER BOLD and COLLABORATIVE move for the local and regional travel baseball scene!"

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Aaron Beard adds, “The merger will have such a lasting and positive impact on all of our existing and new players, parents and coaches. The vision for future facility growth is amazing, but I can assure you that we have this primary goal in mind... CREATE LEADERS and TEACH LIFE LESSONS through the game of baseball. We will do this while offering access to the best baseball facilities, development and instruction in Louisville. We intend to be the organization where the most talented players choose to play. We WILL compete nationally for the player dreaming to play beyond high school as well as continue to offer the best youth experience around.”

The newly-formed Vipers/STING Board of Directors will also include multiple existing members from both orgs as well as Chris Burke, a former MLB player and current college baseball commentator for ESPN, who will lead the charge on player development. “Bringing two powerhouse organizations like the Vipers and STING together is going to give players in Louisville a chance to really play the game at a high level from the youngest ages all the way through high school. Both of my boys have had outstanding experiences playing for the Vipers. The men that coach their teams are outstanding baseball guys who love our kids. Combining that with the dudes that run both clubs is really exciting news for baseball families in Louisville and this entire region.” says Burke. “Having this many players in the same organization enables us to do a ton of fun and creative things from a player development perspective. It’ll be awesome!”

Tryout information for the 2021 Vipers/STING teams will be posted this week via social media and the organizations’ websites. 2021 teams will be formed from ages 6u up to 18u with multiple teams and skill levels available within each age group. For more info, please visit www.stingvipers.org.

ABOUT VIPERS BASEBALL CLUB:

Vipers Baseball Club was founded in the Spring of 2009 with one team of players from South Oldham Little League, located in a suburb of Louisville, KY. It grew into a multiple team non-profit organization four years later when the Vipers opened their first indoor training facility in Louisville, the Vipers PIT. In 2018, the Vipers grew again and opened a bigger 7,000 sq. ft. indoor facility on the campus at Springdale Community Church. This new facility also came with the Vipers first outdoor field, Vipers Field. The club has grown into the largest youth travel baseball organization in the state of Kentucky with 23 travel teams for ages 7u up to 18u and over 250 athletes and their families in the program currently.

ABOUT LOUISVILLE STING:

The Louisville STING was founded in early 2010 with one 7u travel baseball team made up of kids from a few local Catholic schools. This non-profit program quickly expanded to four teams in 2012, nine teams in 2016, and by 2019, the STING had reached 11 teams for ages 6u to 13u and over 125 athletes and their families. The STING’s home is located at Cedar Creek Baptist Church in the Fern Creek area and includes an outdoor youth field, STING Field, as well as an outdoor batting cage and pitching area. The STING was founded by Aaron Flaker, current co-owner of Athletx Sports Group, a national travel baseball and softball tournament provider.

TWO BRANDS. ONE ORGANIZATION. STRONGER TOGETHER.

