

# Westport Little League Baseball Parents Handbook

Version 4.4 – 4/6/18

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## **List of Revisions**

3/31/09 (v 1.3) – Added paragraphs to the baseball section to clarify what equipment the league provides and what parents should provide. Added a section about how to sponsor a team.

1/27/10 (v 1.4) – Updated Board of Directors

3/5/10 (v1.5) – Updated Board of Directors; Changed contact for sponsorships; Added info on wood bats for Majors/Minors; added info on lost and found.

4/19/12 (v2.0) – Deleted Board of Directors (now located on the web site). Moved softball to its own handbook. Deleted all references to American and National league distinctions. Reordered the sections.

4/22/13 (v3.0) – Updated Majors info to reflect continuous batting. Added sections on 50/70, Youth Travel, and Challenger teams. Updated ASMI Position Statement.

1/10/2018 (v4.0) – Replaced GNHBL with East Shore. Deleted mandatory concession stand duty and related accompanying section. Updated PK/K to reflect T-ball and grade 2 to reflect the use of pitching machines. Changed AA/AAA/Minors to A/AA/AAA. Updated A to reflect the part time use of pitching machines. Updated Challenger.

3/20/2018 (v 4.1) – Updated the AA stealing rules.

3/30/2018 (v 4.3) – Added player rules comparison.

4/6/2018 (v4.4) – Added reference to Coaches Handbook for more detailed District and post-season team selection criteria

## **About Westport Baseball and Softball, Inc.**

The town of Westport offers a variety of baseball and softball programs for children under the auspices of Westport Baseball and Softball, Inc. aka the Westport Little League (“WLL”). The WLL is a charter member of Little League Baseball Inc. and has been for over 50 years. WLL is also a member of the Babe Ruth League, Inc., American Legion Baseball, and the East Shore Travel League (AAU).

For more information about WBS, Inc., including a list of our Directors and Officers, please visit our corporate web site at <http://www.westportbaseballandsoftball.com>.

## Westport Baseball and Softball Conduct Policy

There have been a disturbing number of reported incidents throughout the country involving acts of violence, abuse and inappropriate behavior by parents, spectators, managers and coaches in youth sports leagues. In an effort to avoid any such incident, Westport Baseball and Softball has and does hereby adopt a policy of zero tolerance with respect to ANY conduct that is deemed to be inappropriate or abusive in connection with League activities. Accordingly, all Westport Baseball and Softball coaches, players, family members and spectators are hereby expected to comply with and conform to the following guidelines:

1. At no time whatsoever will any abusive or inappropriate conduct, including profane language, be tolerated.
2. Rooting and cheering for teams and players in a positive manner is highly encouraged; rooting against a team or player is not acceptable.
3. At all times proper respect and courtesy is to be shown toward all players, managers, coaches, umpires and other spectators.
4. At any time that a person's conduct fails to conform to these guidelines, a game umpire or league official may request and direct such a person to immediately cease such conduct. If such conduct continues, the umpire or a league official may direct that person to immediately leave the premises. Upon review, the league may impose additional sanctions.

Over the years, Westport Baseball and Softball has been a highly successful program, and has provided many moments of fun and joy for all players, their parents, relatives, managers and coaches. We fully expect this to continue in the future, and will very much appreciate that these simple guidelines be followed. This will allow everyone to continue enjoying the game for the benefit of all participants.

**Important Notice:** All coaches for all levels of baseball and softball must hold current coaching certification with the National Association of Youth Sports. The NYSCA volunteer coach training program is designed to sensitize volunteer coaches to their responsibilities and hold them accountable to a strict Code of Conduct defined by the NYSCA Coaches'. It is the intent of the Westport Parks and Recreation Department in coordination with Westport Baseball, to develop community standards for youth sports activities aimed at providing a safe and positive youth sports experience for the young people of the Town of Westport. Coaches can become certified by going to <http://www.nays.org> (National Alliance for Youth Sports) and clicking on the NYSCA program. Once a coach takes the online course, he/she is able to coach in any youth sports league in Town and then is required to keep their certification current by renewing their membership in the NYSCA each year.

## Parent and Coach Expectations

All Little League coaches are volunteers selected by the commissioners of each league (contacts are posted on website under ABOUT.) Interested parents can sign up when they register their children or by contacting the commissioner.

We ask that parents become familiar with the basic rules and etiquette of Little League baseball. Our website <http://www.westportlittleleaguebaseball.com> provides a good deal of information and links that should be valuable. For the younger age players, we typically have youth umpires. **Among the “zero tolerance” rules, there is no arguing in Little League by parents, players or coaches at any time, and there should be no distraction of players, negative cheering or comments made by any player, fan or coaches.**

The National Little League website provides another excellent source <http://www.littleleague.org/parents/parentorientation.htm> of rules, guidelines and advice. We ask that all parents read and abide by the “Code of Conduct” posted on our website. Coaches are encouraged to learn new teaching and coaching techniques through various resources locally and via web which we update on our website.

It is important that coaches and parents communicate well on schedules, expectations and issues that may arise. The program intent is to be educational, fun and along with it to teach player responsibilities at both the skill and personal levels. Teamwork, fairness and respect are key elements and as the players increase in age, appropriate levels of competition become a part of the experience as the Little League Player Pledge states “I will play fair and strive to win, but win or lose, I will always do my best.”

## The Rules of Little League

The rules of Little League are discussed at great length in the separate WLL Coaches Handbook. In general, Westport adheres to the official rules as set forth by National Little League in what is commonly referred to as the Green Book. Of note:

- Coaching in Little League is volunteer only. All coaches must pass certain tests and be approved. Paid coaches are not allowed on the field. Coaches are expected to understand all rules and behave in appropriate manner. All coaches are required to be members of The National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) <http://www.nays.org/>.
- In 2007 and 2008, new rules regarding pitching limits on players were implemented after years of study. These are intended to protect players from arm injury due to overuse, which has been an increasing result of broader programs and longer seasons for many players. Limits vary by age. Little League requests us to hold each player to these limits not just for Little League games but for any other supplemental organized baseball the player plays in. As a result, we request that parents and coaches in Westport Baseball understand and track any use outside of our programs and factor those into required limits.
- The process of selecting teams for both regular season and District Tournaments is strictly regulated by rules of the National governing body. The details may vary from year to year, but the aim is to ensure fair treatment and balance within the town and consistency across the country and world of Little League.
- We can play under more restrictive rules, but not under looser rules. For example, we generally require that players play more minimum time per game in the field than the National LL rules or other leagues require.

## **Youth / Little League - Spring**

As a member of Little League, Inc., Westport has agreed to follow the set of national guidelines established and governed by the organization. For more information about Little League, Inc., please see: <http://www.littleleague.org>. **Westport is proud to be the third largest Little League program in the world!**

To play under an organized WLL baseball program, a child must be between “Little League age” 5 and 12. A child’s “Little League age” for baseball is determined by their chronological age on August 31 of that season (April 30 for 12s, grandfathered in for 2018). Accordingly, for the 2018 season, a child born on August 31, 2007 would be considered 11 years old while a child born on September 1, 2007 would be considered still 10. Note: There are no exceptions for the upper age cutoff. However, as Little League technically allows for four year olds to play (specifically t-ball), some exceptions may be made on a case by case basis on the lower age cutoff.

WLL’s teams are largely grouped by grade, not talent. To accommodate those looking for a higher level of play, Westport also offers a host of travel team options. Kid pitching is first allowed in third grade. It is also at this age when children are eligible to play on post season teams, which are always grouped by age, not grade. As an example, a team where the maximum allowable age is 10 years old is referred to as “10U” (10 and under). While girls are encouraged to play softball, they may play baseball if approved individually by WLL.

For a complete set of rule modifications and skills emphasized at each grade level, please consult the WLL Coaches Handbook.

### **Grades PK/K - 2**

Our youngest league is designed for children in pre-kindergarten (PK) and kindergarten (K) who are at least Little League age 5. For grades 1 and 2, children are grouped with those only in their grade.

At the PK-1 levels we encourage parents to list their child’s close friends and we try our best to accommodate accordingly. However, as children move to the older age groups, the goal is to mix schools and expose players to a variety of coaches. Teams are organized by each league’s commissioner. There is no draft. Teams are intentionally kept to only 10 or 11 players to maximize personal attention.

The emphasis in grades PK-2 is to introduce the sport of baseball, to teach basic skills, and encourage good sportsmanship. At the PK/K level, games are “T-ball” (balls are hit off of a tee) with some “coach-pitch” (where one coach pitches and another catches). Grade 1 is all coach-pitch, typically done well in front of the pitching mound. In Grade 2, we switch over to spring-loading pitching machines that sit on the mound itself.

While outs are recorded and enforced, no scores or standings are kept and there are no playoffs.

The season begins in late April, immediately following the public school April Break, and ends in mid June. Games are typically an hour long and scheduled for Saturdays. The complete schedule is always posted on the Westport Little League web site as are any cancellations or delays. Practices are also

typically one hour long once a week at a set day and time selected by the coach. Note: because fields are assigned to the older grades first, practice times are typically not set for younger grades until just prior to the start of the season and thus it is mostly impractical to consider time conflicts when comprising teams.

The league will provide each child with a matching jersey, cap, and socks. Parents should provide white baseball pants, a belt if necessary, sneakers or rubber soled baseball cleats, a glove and a batting helmet (Exception: All PK/K players are given new batting helmets, so parents need not provide one). A bat is suggested (metal is recommended because of the lesser weight), although normally one can be borrowed. All teams are given at least one metal bat and one helmet. All shirts are emblazoned on the back with the name of the team sponsor. Coaches have first choice of sponsoring teams. If you wish to sponsor a team, please contact the Sponsorship Coordinator.

### **Grades 3 (“A”) – 4 (“AA”)**

Players in grades 3 and 4 are grouped by their grade, not age. However, for post-season play (e.g. tournaments or all-stars), team eligibility is based on Little League age. Requests to “play up” or “play down” are discouraged and will only be granted by the WBS under special circumstances if an appeal is made.

Starting with grade 3, kids pitch and play catcher. For grade 3 only, to speed the game up, we use a spring-loaded pitching machine for innings 3-5. The number of pitches kids throw is recorded, and their pitching eligibility is based on a pitch-count formula mandated by the national Little League. We have special minimum play rules that vary per grade. Limited stealing is permitted in grade 4, but limited to just second and third base. Scores are recorded and standings are kept to determine the seeding for playoffs at the conclusion of the regular season.

Team size will generally be between 11-13 players depending on the availability of qualified coaches. Selection of players will be done by the coaches via a draft. In order to as best as possible create teams of equal ability, we hold a mandatory evaluation session for each league, typically in early March. The draft itself takes place immediately after that, and teams begin practicing shortly thereafter.

Games commence in late March or early April depending on the weather. All teams typically play two six inning games a week: one on a Saturday and another during the week (Monday-Thursday). The complete schedule is always posted on the Westport Little League web site as are any cancellations or delays. Practices are also typically 1.5-2 hours long (depending on daylight) once a week at a set day and time selected by the coach. Note: while there are no restrictions on children playing more than one sport per season, please inform your league commissioner ASAP on any such potential conflicts.

The league will provide each child with a matching jersey, cap, and socks. Parents should provide dark blue/black pinstriped white baseball pants, a belt if necessary, rubber soled baseball cleats, a glove, and a batting helmet (Exception: All A players are given new batting helmets, so parents need not provide one). Sliding shorts and a cup are also recommended. All teams are given at least one bat and one helmet, as well as catcher’s gear including a mitt. A Little League approved bat (wood or metal) is suggested, although normally one can be borrowed. All shirts are emblazoned on the back with the name of the team sponsor. Coaches have first choice of sponsoring teams. If you wish to sponsor a team, please contact the Sponsorship Coordinator.



## **Grades 5 – 7 (Majors/AAA)**

As a result of the initiation of numerous travel programs for those wishing to play a higher level of baseball, Westport now organizes its Majors and AAA leagues to be recreational (by grade) as opposed to competitive (by talent). Therefore, the Majors is comprised almost exclusively of sixth and eligible seventh graders, while AAA is almost exclusively fifth graders. However, when the Majors teams may need players to assure they all have the same roster size, some fifth graders may be allowed to “play up”. Also, for post-season play (e.g. tournaments or all-stars), team eligibility is based on Little League age and thus teams may be comprised of a mixture of players from both leagues.

As with the “AA” and “AAA” leagues, pitching eligibility is based on a pitch-count formula mandated by the national Little League. Scores are recorded and standings are kept to determine the seeding for playoffs at the conclusion of the regular season.

Team size will generally be between 11-13 players for AAA and exactly 12 for the Majors. Selection of players will be done by the coaches via a draft. In order to as best as possible create teams of equal ability, we hold a mandatory evaluation session for each league, typically in early March. The draft itself takes place immediately after that, and teams begin practicing shortly thereafter.

Games commence in late March or early April depending on the weather. All teams typically play two six inning games a week: one on a Saturday and another during the week (Monday-Thursday). The complete schedule is always posted on the Westport Little League web site as are any cancellations or delays. Practices are also typically 1.5-2 hours long (depending on daylight) once a week at a set day and time selected by the coach. Note: while there are no restrictions on children playing more than one sport per season, please inform your league commissioner ASAP on any such potential conflicts.

The league will provide each child with a matching jersey, cap, and socks. Parents should provide dark blue/black pinstriped white baseball pants, a belt if necessary, rubber soled baseball cleats, a glove, and a batting helmet. Sliding shorts and a cup are also recommended. All teams are given catcher’s gear including a mitt, so parents need not provide these. In 2010, WLL switched to using only wood bats in the Majors and AAA. All teams will be provided wood bats, although players may opt to bring their own. All shirts are emblazoned on the back with the name of the team sponsor. Coaches have first choice of sponsoring teams. If you wish to sponsor a team, please contact the Sponsorship Coordinator.

## **Grades 6 – 8 (50/70)**

The 50/70 Division is open to all players who are Little League aged 11, 12 or 13. Unlike traditional Little League where the pitching rubber is 46 feet from home plate and the base paths are 60 feet long, for 50/70, the pitching rubber is 50 feet from home and the base paths are 70 feet long. These increased dimensions allow for leading and stealing, just like in “real” baseball, except on a slightly smaller field—a full size field having the rubber 60.5 feet from home and 90 foot base paths.

50/70 clinics and games are in addition to the normal 46/60 regular Little League season. As such, it is designed for those who want to play additional baseball each week and want to start transitioning to the full size diamond. The 50/70 season spans 8 weeks, consisting of two games a week played on Sundays at 4 and 6pm. There will be optional clinic practices included in this program.

As the program is under the auspices of Little League, to protect pitchers' arms, all pitch counts between traditional Little League and the 50/70 program will be taken into account. Westport will also field a 50/70 district team in addition to a Majors district team. The only requirement is that a player participate in 60% of his scheduled regular season 50/70 games. As with the Majors team, the 50/70 team will have a chance to compete for a state championship, regional championship, and a spot in the 50/70 World Series.

For more information, please reference the following link to review the National Power Point Presentation: [http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms\\_pubs/Intermediate-5070-Overview.pdf](http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/Intermediate-5070-Overview.pdf)

### **Youth Travel**

Westport Baseball and Softball, in conjunction with the Staples Diamond Club, Westport Youth Travel Baseball, and Westport Little League, have developed a travel program from 8u to 18U. The program that has been formulated to allow players to reach their highest potential while participating on teams with their friends and classmates in a competitive and positive environment. Unlike traditional Little League where competition is intra-town, travel teams play inter-town.

For more specific information regarding the coaches, game, clinic, and practice times, etc. please consult the Youth Travel Baseball web site: <http://www.westportyouthtravelbaseball.com/>

### **Challenger Division**

The Challenger Division was established in 1989 as a separate division of Little League to enable boys and girls with physical and mental challenges, ages 5-18, to enjoy the game of baseball. **This division is sponsored by Westport Little League and there is no cost to participate. A personalized jersey and a cap are included.**

The spring season starts after April break and continues to the end of the school year in June. Games are held on Saturdays and/or Sundays. The games will be against neighboring towns and played in Westport and other Fairfield County towns such as Norwalk, Darien, Fairfield, Wilton, Stamford, Ridgefield and Redding. We also offer a 6-week (one weeknight) summer clinic that focuses on skills and fun. During the fall, we have an 8-week season on Sunday mornings during which Fairfield and Norwalk teams come to Westport to play games against us.

Teams are set up according to abilities, rather than age, and can include as many as 15 players. Boys and girls age 5-18 are eligible. Each player gets a chance to bat. The side is retired when the offense has batted through the roster, when a pre-determined number of runs have been scored, or when three outs are recorded. Little League recommends that no score be kept during Challenger games.

One of the benefits of having a Challenger Division is that it encourages the use of "buddies" for the Challenger players. The buddies assist the Challenger players on the field, but whenever possible, encourage the players to bat and make plays themselves. However, the buddy is always nearby to help when needed.

Since we started in April, 2013, we have had the luxury of having the best coaches imaginable: Mike Connors, Scott Stagg and Todd Ehrlich.

## Comparison of Playing Rules

Little League itself lays out the official playing rules in what is commonly referred to as the “Green Book”. The rules of Little League are almost identical to the rules of “real” baseball, the most noticeable differences being that runners must stay on their base until the pitched ball reaches home plate, and that balks (illegal moves) are not called on pitchers. Westport modifies these Green Book rules to accommodate the younger leagues. Our specific modifications are discussed in depth in our Coaches Handbook (in the “For Coaches” section of our website), and summarized below:

	Majors (gr 6-7)	AAA (gr 5)	AA (gr 4)	A (gr 3)	CAP 2 (gr 2)	CAP 1 (gr 1)	CAP K (gr PK/K)
Pitching	Kid-pitch	Kid-pitch	Kid-pitch	Kid-pitch inn 1/2/6; machine inn 3-5	Spring loaded pitching machine	Coach pitch	T-Ball w/ optional coach pitch
Hitting	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous	Everyone hits; continuous
Bat Type	USABat-Standard Metal	USABat-Standard Metal	USABat-Standard Metal	USABat-Standard Metal	USABat-Standard Metal 26"/14oz	USABat-Standard Metal 25"/13oz	USABat-Standard Metal 25"/13oz
Ball Type	Rawlings RLLB1	Rawlings RLLB1	Rawlings RLLB1	Rawlings RLLB1	Wilson A1228 FS Level 5	Wilson A1217 FS Level 1	Wilson A1217 FS Level 1
Run Limit	6	5	5	4	4	4	4
Infield Play	N/A	1 inn per player min	1 of first 4 inn per player min; although 2 recommended	2 of first 4 inn per player; 3 inn max per position	Rotate	Rotate	Rotate
Outfield Position	Standard	Standard	3 outfielders; 15' beyond dirt until ball crosses plate	4 outfielders; 15' beyond dirt until ball crosses plate	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overthrows	Per Green Book	Per Green Book	Base pursuing at time of pitch +1 (+1 may not be home)	Base pursuing at time of pitch +1 (+1 may not be home)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stealing	Unlimited	Unlimited	3 team tries per inning; no stealing home	none	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hit Advancement	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	One base infield or in glove of fielder <=15' past infield	One base infield; two bases outfield on fly	One base infield; two bases outfield on fly	One base infield; two bases outfield on fly
Infield Fly	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Dropped 3rd Strike	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Coaches	1st & 3rd	1st & 3rd	1st & 3rd	1st, 3rd, behind & side of catcher	1st, 3rd, behind & side of catcher	1st & 3rd; two on-field	1st & 3rd; two on-field
Forfeits	8 players to start; 7 at all times	7 at all times	7 players to start; 6 at all times	6 at all times	N/A	N/A	N/A
Time Limit	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 hrs	1.5 hrs	1.5 hrs	1.25 hrs
Complete Game	4 inn / 3.5 if home team ahead	4 inn / 3.5 if home team ahead	4 inn / 3.5 if home team ahead	3 inn / 2.5 if home team ahead	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Little League - Summer

Westport Little League participates in sending teams in each age group (9U – 12U) to numerous summer tournaments. In general, there are two tracks: District (organized by National Little League) and Non-District (organized by entities other than National Little League).

Westport is allowed to enter one “all-star” team for each of the 10U, 11U, and 12U District 2 (our district) tournaments. All district winners advance to the Sectionals, with the top two of each age group playing for the State Championship. For the 12U age group, the State Champion continues to the New England Championship, and, if they win that, advance to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. In 2013, our New England Championship team was the National Finalist.

For the District teams, many rules must be followed to be consistent with the Little League rules. These *nationally mandated* rules of LL District team summer formations are rather strict— you may not agree with them, but that is a requirement of being part of Little League. Among them are that coaches must be selected from among those who participated in the regular season. Players must be selected in a fair manner, via a combination of voting based on regular season play and periodic clinics and tryouts. Via LL rules, no team may be named before mid-June. Any violation will result in teams being suspended by the district body and a flagrant violation can result in all Westport teams being banned. Coaches are typically selected by early June, although we solicit interest months in advance.

For the 3rd grade 9 year-olds there are several local, invitational tourneys for which Westport Baseball may sponsor one or two teams, depending on interest and acceptance into LL endorsed tourneys. These teams are for the most part competitive players, selected by spring coaches and formal tryouts and subject to acceptance of rosters and coaches in compliance with LL and Westport Little League. Many of these teams will practice or play 5-7 days a week from approximately mid June through mid July or even to July 31, with players, if selected, expected to be nearly 100% available. Westport Baseball typically also supports and helps organize a few non-district teams that play in local LL endorsed tournaments, with tourneys in Easton having been attended frequently.

Summer travel plans of coaches and players do change in Westport and that has caused gaps to arise that we fill in June. Travel plans have left some District teams short of players in recent years. All Westport spring LL coaches are well informed of the processes required and expected to help in the process in an appropriate manner. No other teams may be formed by, or involving, spring WLL coaches until after the District teams are selected. In all cases Westport Baseball encourages evaluations to pick fair and balanced teams. Spring coaches are expected to assist in selecting and supporting the District teams. The exact selection criteria are discussed in more detail in our companion Coaches Handbook. WLL encourages and supports post season play, it will only sponsor a team if it is determined there is an appropriate level of support from players and coaches and that a reasonably competitive team can be fielded.

Over the past several years, parents and coaches in Westport of players not selected to these teams have assembled other Non-District teams that play against other similar teams from local towns in tourneys or summer leagues. There are various tourneys and “friendship” leagues that have arisen within 40 miles of Westport each year for such events. These typically play from early July into August, and there is adequate time to form teams and enter these venues once District Teams are selected. These teams are formed independent of Westport Baseball and Little League, but have consisted of parents and players who have been active in Westport spring Little League. The intent is

to play against teams at an appropriate level and in fun travel settings, i.e., below “District Championship” levels and time commitments. Given the various requirements of Little League and the nature of field availability in June and early July being consumed by the sponsored Westport District tourney teams, these independent teams must manage and coordinate several items themselves such as scheduling, insurance and monitoring the safety of the leagues-venues in which they play.

Each venue has its own rules and procedures for games and for teams. These may vary from official LL rules and standards, as well as from Westport Baseball guidelines and rules. Westport Baseball does not track all of these since none are procedurally associated with Little League. Parents with an interest are encouraged to explore these directly, but to not co-opt, impede or disrupt the WLL District team formation process. Each venue will have its own acceptance procedures for players, coaches and teams. Some allow teams composed of multiple towns. There is no guarantee that such venues will be able to, if desired, enforce player or coach eligibility rules consistent with LL standards of only using players in the proper age groups or from its own town and that coaches are authorized per LL standards. In addition, in the past, teams in some of these programs have on occasion been unable to field a team for a scheduled game, meet travel commitments or arrange fields. As a result of these considerations, Westport Baseball, as a chartered Little League member, is not able to sponsor or organize teams to compete in these venues.

Parents and players forming or participating in these independent teams should recognize that these teams, coaches, tourneys or leagues are not associated with Westport Baseball or Little League and as a result Westport Baseball and Little League are not responsible or liable for any injuries, financial obligations, complaints or oversight. Westport Baseball makes no recommendations and has no direct involvement with any of the above organizations.

In addition, many baseball specific camps, both local and sleep away, exist that might be good fits for many players. There is a wealth of baseball opportunities for all children during the summer. By participating in WLL we hope all players and parents have adequate opportunities, understand the rules in which WLL operates team formations and abides by them even as they look for supplemental experiences.

## **Little League – Fall**

Fall baseball is organized by grade and open to anyone Little League age 12 or under as of the upcoming spring season. Available grades are 3, 4, 5, and 6/7 combined. The focus of this league is recreational and instructional as there are no standings and no playoffs. Playing time is equal. There is one two-hour Saturday game and one practice per week. There are no evaluation/tryouts required.

# Advanced Baseball

## Season

For Boys 13-19 we organize and support teams to play under several different organizational rules including Babe Ruth, American Legion, and the East Shore Travel League (AAU). All these teams play on full-size diamonds and depending on level we offer a combination of recreational or travel teams in the fall, spring and summer. The following is a description of these programs.

## Travel Teams

The **Sandy Koufax, Mickey Mantle, Connie Mack and American Legion** teams are competitive travel programs for skilled players who are willing to make a 100% commitment to the team (in other words, the player must be at all games and practices unless prior arrangements have been made with the coach for the player to miss something). The teams are coached by professional coaches who are usually affiliated with IST Baseball Headquarters. Parents are not involved with any on-field issues although one or more parents may coordinate administrative aspects of the team. Travel can be to towns up to 1.5 hours away although most games are either in Westport or within a 30 minute drive. Below are some of the specifics of the program.

- Teams:
  - 13U Sandy Koufax-these teams play a fall schedule of approximately 24 games between early September and late October and a spring/summer schedule of approximately 40 games between early April and mid-July. Players try out separately for the fall and spring/summer seasons. Rosters typically are held at 13 players.
  - 14U Sandy Koufax-these teams play a fall schedule of approximately 24 games between early September and late October and a spring/summer schedule of approximately 40 games between early May and late July. Players try out separately for the fall and spring/summer seasons. Rosters typically are held at 13 players.
  - 16U Mickey Mantle-these teams play a fall schedule of approximately 24 games between early September and late October and a spring/summer schedule of approximately 40 games between mid-May and late July. Players try out separately for the fall and spring/summer seasons. Rosters typically are held at 13 players.
  - 18U Connie Mack-these teams play a fall schedule of approximately 24 games between early September and late October. Players try out in early September for the roster. Rosters typically are held at 13-15 players.
  - Junior and Senior American Legion- these teams play a spring/summer schedule of approximately 27 games between mid-June and late July. Players try out in early June for the roster. Rosters typically are held at 15-18 players given the high concentration of games in a short period of time. At least 5 of these players tend to focus on pitching.

- Playing time is at the discretion of the coaches, although coaches are discouraged from selecting players not expected to be playing a reasonable amount of time.

## **Recreational Teams**

The Babe Ruth program is a recreational program for players who either can't or don't want to commit to a travel team (usually due to a religious or other sport commitment) or are not selected onto one of the travel teams for any reason). The teams are coached by volunteer parents. The competition in the Babe Ruth program is still very good, but the players participating tend to have a broader level of skill. Below are some of the specifics of the Babe Ruth program.

- Teams: There are two levels of Babe Ruth team, Prep Babe Ruth and Junior Babe Ruth.
  - The Prep Babe Ruth teams (13U) are composed of players that are either playing their first season on the 90 ft. diamond or have played one season on the full-sized diamond. These players are primarily players in the 7th and 8th grades. In the fall, eligibility is based on age during the previous spring season.
  - The Junior Babe Ruth teams (15U) are composed of players in the 8th, 9th or 10th grades. In the fall, eligibility is based on age during the previous spring season.
- Schedule: In spring and fall, teams play approximately a 14-16 game league schedule against other Babe Ruth teams from Westport, Norwalk, Weston, Wilton, Darien, Stamford and New Canaan. There is also generally one practice per week.
- Travel can be as much as a half hour away, but at least half of the games will be played on Westport Fields and the away games tend to be within a 15-20 minute drive.
- Tryouts and Rosters: We typically do not have tryouts. Westport Baseball tries to find a place on a team for every player who wants to play. A draft of registered players is held before the season with an eye toward making teams as equal as possible. During the draft, we also try to accommodate parent requests for putting friends together on a team. There are typically 13-15 players on a team.
- Playing time: Depending on the age group, all players are guaranteed to play 2-3 consecutive innings in the field and get at least one at bat per game. Only 9 players can play the field at a time.

## **Clinics**

Westport Baseball offers a series of winter, spring and fall clinics focused on hitting, fielding, pitching and catching. These clinics are in addition to any leagues a player may be playing in during the spring and fall seasons. All clinics are run by professional coaches. Registration for these clinics is separate from the league registrations. All clinics are voluntary and are filled on a first come-first served basis. Prior to each season a schedule of clinics will be distributed.

Please contact any league officials with questions or concerns.

## **Little League Baseball Clinics in Westport**

Westport Little League has adopted a baseball curriculum to teach skills to each player at each age level. All Little League coaches are trained in the curriculum before the season starts and they emphasize these skills during team practices. However, Westport Little League also sponsors clinics by professional instructors in the spring and the fall as a supplement to team practices. Players register for these clinics separately from team registrations. All clinics are voluntary and are filled on a first come-first served basis. Prior to each season a schedule of clinics will be distributed.

Westport Little League also offers a winter advanced skills development program (ASDP) for players at all age levels. This is typically a 10 week program beginning in January and going through the end of March. Pitching, catching, fielding and hitting skills are emphasized during these clinics. All sessions are run by a professional coach, often with assistance from members of the Staples High School Baseball program.

## **Lost and Found**

Most coaches take home things they find on the fields and write a note on the Lost and Found section of the web site. If the article in question is not there, call your coach to ask him to create a new entry for you.



## **Burr Farms Safety and General Tips on Assuring a Successful Season**

The following is based on a combination of national and local Little League rules, safety issues and years of observations and experience:

- At Burr Farms fields, there are designated safe areas to sit. At Burr West (field closest to the road), please sit on the bleachers or put your chair at a safe distance beyond left field. DO NOT sit or stand along the 1st base line--it is not safe. At Burr East, put your chairs on the hill in right field. DO NOT sit anywhere else as the possibility of injury is real if you are sitting in the wrong place. Also, while the game is going on, please don't have a catch with your kids in the outfield.
- At any field, you are not allowed to sit with the players. At Burr Farms fields, there are no dugouts so parents sometimes decide to hang around the players--this is not allowed. At the fields where there are dugouts, this is not allowed either. Only approved coaches are allowed in the dugout or field, so please do not ask to coach a base or hang in the dugout if you are not one of the three approved coaches. If only two coaches are present, a player will coach 1st base rather than a parent who is not certified. Siblings and friends are not allowed in the dugout or players' bench either.
- Please do not criticize an umpire's call or blurt out one before they do. These umpires are often 11/12 year olds and doing their best--they don't need to be intimidated by anyone in the stands.
- It's okay to cheer for your team but rooting against a player or team is not appropriate. The following is frowned upon. To your pitcher about the batter: "Strike him out!"; "He can't hit!"; "He's not swinging!" To your batter about the pitcher: "He's throwing balls!"; "He can't throw strikes!" To the opposing fielder, "Drop it!" You're not at a Yankee game, these are little kids and they don't need to be razzed by adults.
- Please tell your coach if your son is going to be late or cannot make a game. It really creates havoc for a coach when a kid is a no-show or is late. If you can let the coach know the night before, that would be great. If not, please contact him as soon as possible. By the way, the kids are often asked to show up 1/2 hour before the game so please comply.
- Please instruct your kids to remove their garbage after the games and practices.
- Please do not stand behind the screen at home plate--it is very distracting to a pitcher, batter and umpire.
- Please be careful in the parking lot before and after the game. It gets pretty hectic and between all the cars and the little kids, we need to be really careful.
- Please pick up your child promptly after games and practices. It's not fair to the coach to make him wait 20 minutes for you after a long practice. If you're going to be late, instruct your child to tell the coach that he is still waiting so that the coach won't leave him alone. There have been instances where parents have been late and the coach is unaware and the child is left unattended at the field. So try to be prompt!

We hope you understand that all these rules and warnings are meant to result in a safe, good experience for your boys. If you have any questions, please discuss with your coach.

## ASMI Position Statement for Youth Baseball Pitchers



***Updated April 2013***

With the rise in elbow and shoulder injuries in youth baseball pitchers, the adult community needs to take steps to prevent these injuries. Research points to overuse as the principle risk factor. Poor pitching mechanics also contribute to injury risk. Another suggested risk factor is poor physical fitness.

Throwing curveballs has been suggested as a risk factor, but the existing research does not support this concern. However, a youth pitcher may not have enough physical development, neuromuscular control, and proper coaching instruction to throw a curveball with good mechanics. Throwing curveballs too early may be counter-productive, leading to arm fatigue as well as limiting the youth's ability to master fastball mechanics.

Thus, the recommendations for preventing injuries in youth baseball pitchers are:

1. Watch and respond to signs of fatigue (such as decreased ball velocity, decreased accuracy, upright trunk during pitching, dropped elbow during pitching, or increased time between pitches). If a youth pitcher complains of fatigue or looks fatigued, let him rest from pitching and other throwing.
2. No overhead throwing of any kind for at least 2-3 months per year (4 months is preferred). No competitive baseball pitching for at least 4 months per year.
3. Do not pitch more than 100 innings in games in any calendar year.
4. Follow limits for pitch counts and days rest.
5. Avoid pitching on multiple teams with overlapping seasons.
6. Learn good throwing mechanics as soon as possible. The first steps should be to learn, in order: 1) basic throwing, 2) fastball pitching, 3) change-up pitching.
7. Avoid using radar guns.
8. A pitcher should not also be a catcher for his team. The pitcher-catcher combination results in many throws and may increase the risk of injury.
9. If a pitcher complains of pain in his elbow or shoulder, discontinue pitching until evaluated by a sports medicine physician. Inspire youth pitchers to have fun playing baseball and other sports. Participation and enjoyment of various physical activities will increase the youth's athleticism and interest in sports.

## Example limits for number of pitches thrown in games

Age	2006 USA Baseball Guidelines	2010 Little League Baseball Regulations
<i>Daily Limits</i>		
17 - 18	N/A	105 / day
15 - 16	N/A	95 / day
13 - 14	75 / game	95 / day
11 - 12	75 / game	85 / day
9 - 10	50 / game	75 / day
7 - 8	N/A	50 / day
<i>Weekly Limits</i>		
13 - 14	125 / week; 1000 / season; 3000 / year	
11 - 12	100 / week; 1000 / season; 3000 / year	
9 - 10	75 / week; 1000 / season; 2000 / year	
7 - 8		21 - 35 pitches = 1 day rest 36 - 50 pitches = 2 days rest 51 - 65 pitches = 3 days rest 66 + pitches = 4 days rest

Example high school limits (not verified by ASMI) shown [here](#).  
For further discussion on this topic, visit the [ASMI Forum](#).

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