

Needham Baseball

Managers and Coaches Code of Conduct

Goals

The overriding goals of Needham Baseball are to develop our youth players and to establish a lifelong passion for and understanding of the great sport of baseball. This document will help you achieve these goals and provide guidelines for conduct and resolution should issues arise. Please remember that your actions, behavior, and demeanor sets the tone for players, parents, umpires, fans, and other coaches.

To accomplish these goals, the Needham Baseball Board of Directors has adopted this Code of Conduct policy statement for all managers and coaches. All such managers and coaches are expected to follow these guidelines:

Work specifically on player skills development. This means teaching the fundamentals of baseball at a level appropriate for the age group (obviously, Majors players learn a different level of skills than Single A players). You are expected to be a teacher and advisor, not just a practice administrator. Needham Baseball will provide you with the tools needed to accomplish this teaching role, including coaching clinics and training sessions, online videos, coach's decks containing practice drills, and other tools.

In Spring baseball, all teams make the playoffs in their respective division. For this reason, win-loss records are secondary to player development. Coaches and Managers are expected to give players exposure to and training in the largest range of positions possible.

Build every player's confidence. A confident player is a better player. Try to give 5 positive comments for every criticism that is necessary. When you have to give criticism, give it at the right time - right after an error may not be best. And in private is usually better than in front of the team.

Reward effort, commitment, and dedication. Players cannot control how big they are, their level of coordination, or how fast they mature. But they can control the effort they put out in practices and games. Reward your players, and give them positive feedback, based on their effort. The better players will avoid becoming complacent with their skills and the developing players will feel fully supported.

Teach players to rebound from mistakes. All baseball players make errors. Recovering from these errors can be the key to a successful, confident baseball player. Along these lines, never tolerate a teammate making fun of another teammate's skills. This is a form of bullying and cannot be permitted.

Teach how to be a good teammate. Teammates can lift each other, or bring each other down. Teach your players how to support each other. Try team-building drills in practice. Do non-baseball activities as a team from time to time. Most importantly, make sure teammates show each other respect.

Teach good sportsmanship. This is about respecting good competition. Good competition makes us better. Never permit your team to cheer the other team's mistakes. Focus your cheers on your team, not on the other team.

Have fun and let your players have fun. They are kids. They will work hard but you have to keep it interesting. Focus on mixing in activities that they really like so they are energetic and engaged learners.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. Players and parents need to know what's going on. In this age of e-mail, texting, and tweeting, there is really no excuse for not keeping these important players in the loop. Everything from practice schedules to individual player development is facilitated through proper communications.

Teach and show respect for the umpires. In an effort to make youth baseball in Needham the most positive experience it can be for everyone, the Board has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy (for all games sanctioned or hosted by Needham Baseball) which governs interactions among players, managers/coaches, parents/spectators, and umpires. The policy is designed to maintain a positive atmosphere of sportsmanship, to encourage respectful and professional interactions with umpires, and to ensure that our teenage umpires will be treated the same way we would want our own sons or daughters to be treated.

In sum, the Zero Tolerance Policy requires that all managers and coaches shall not, and shall strive to ensure that their players and their players' parents shall not:

Openly dispute or question any call or decision by an umpire.

Visually or verbally display any sign of dissatisfaction with an umpire's call or decision, even if the manager or coach thought the call or decision was clearly wrong. Umpires are taught to call time and to confer with each other if there are issues with a call, decision, or rules interpretation. A manager or coach may call time and ask an umpire for clarification, or may seek clarification at the end of a half-inning, but may not do so by yelling from the dugout or coaches' box and may not make such a request simply as a means to express dissatisfaction with a judgment call -- you know what we mean.

Agree with an opposing manager or coach to change a rule or instruct an umpire how to interpret a rule or call a game.

Use obscene or vulgar language to an umpire, opposing manager or coach, a player, or parent-spectator.

Taunt umpires, opposing managers or coaches, a player, or a parent-spectator by means of baiting, ridiculing, or making negative comments.

Umpires will make mistakes but the manner in which you react and respond to such situations will make an impression on your players.

In order to avoid a situation in which a teenage umpire would be openly arguing with, or ejecting, an adult manager or coach, the umpires are taught not to confront managers or coaches but rather to report violations to the Director of Umpires immediately after a game. The Director of Umpires will review and/or investigate the report and will report the matter to the Needham Baseball President, as necessary, for further action. Managers and coaches are encouraged to provide positive or negative feedback about umpires to the Director of Umpires.

The Zero Tolerance Policy is not meant to discourage managers or coaches from helping our umpires become better at their jobs but is intended to encourage managers or coaches to discuss the game and rules with umpires in a positive and respectful manner consistent with the principles summarized above.

Submit to a background check. All managers, coaches, and other parent-volunteers must complete and submit to Needham Baseball a Volunteer Application form and must consent to Needham Baseball conducting a national background check, including pertinent criminal history records and sex offender registries. Managers must submit to Needham Baseball a list of all coaches and parent-volunteers who will be assisting at practices, team events, and games and must ensure that such persons have submitted the Volunteer Application form to Needham Baseball.

Make player safety and security a priority. It is a fundamental obligation of every manager and coach to make the safety and security of each player a priority. You are responsible for ensuring that your players can practice and play games in a safe and secure environment. This responsibility is manifested in a number of different ways. For example, all players must wear batting helmets during hitting and base running drills in practices and at any time when they are hitting or on base in games. Players may not take practice swings with bats while waiting to hit in games except in the designated on-deck cages at Mills and Small Fields.

Managers and coaches must ensure that the field and weather conditions are such that players can practice or play games in a safe manner. During the week, the Needham Park and Recreation Department monitors all fields and makes decisions by 3:00 p.m. whether or not to close the fields. These decisions are communicated to the League and are available to you on the websites of the League and the Park and Recreation Department and via the Department's Field Status telephone number. If the Park and Recreation Department has closed a field, then a manager or coach must not conduct a practice or game on that field. On weekends, field closure decisions are made by the Division Directors of Needham Baseball. Similarly, if your Division

Director has made the decision to close a field on a Saturday or Sunday, then a manager or coach must not conduct a practice or game on that field.

In order to protect all participants from the very real dangers posed by thunder and lightning, the Board of Directors of Needham Baseball has adopted a Thunder and Lightning policy statement. In sum, if a manager, coach, player, or umpire hears thunder or sees lightning at any point during a practice or game, then the practice or game must be suspended for at least 20 minutes and all participants must wait in approved shelters (primarily automobiles). It is your responsibility to ensure that all players and umpires are in an approved shelter during this waiting period. If a manager, coach, player, or umpire hears thunder or sees lightning again during this waiting period, then the practice or game must be terminated at that time.

Finally, managers and coaches should never transport a player to or from a practice or game unless expressly asked to do so by the player's parent and then only with another adult or player, such as the manager's or coach's child, in the car. Similarly, a manager or coach should never leave a practice or game until all players have left the field. In other words, no player should be left behind at the field by himself.

Teach and show respect for the fields. All managers and coaches have a shared responsibility to maintain the town fields. While the town has the primary responsibility for maintaining the fields, managers and coaches must assist in raking and grooming the fields before and after practices and games, using the metal rakes and other tools that have been placed inside the green equipment bins by the League. After rain, managers and coaches must use the tools inside the equipment bins to pump out standing water and to fill in wet areas with Speedy Dry mix. This is an important player-safety requirement that must be met BEFORE a practice or game can be conducted on a field.

Players must be taught to respect the fields. This means that they should not be eating food, including sunflower seeds, during practices and games. Managers and coaches must ensure that all equipment -- bases, bats, catcher's equipment, etc. -- is placed inside the equipment bins and that all water bottles, juice bottles, or other debris is taken away or thrown away. **PLAYERS SHOULD BE DOING THIS AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE A FIELD UNTIL THESE TASKS ARE FINISHED. THE TOWN OF NEEDHAM HAS INFORMED ALL LEAGUES THAT PERMITS MAY BE REVOKED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.**

Discipline. At no time is physical discipline of a player acceptable. This would include any unwanted physical contact between a player and a manager/coach. At the beginning of the season, managers and coaches are encouraged to establish and communicate rules of acceptable behavior to players and parents, and the consequences if not followed. Managers and coaches have a variety of discipline measures at their disposal including restriction to the dugout, dismissal from practice or games, and, with approval of the Needham Baseball Board of

Directors, dismissal from the team. Managers and coaches are responsible for supervision of the player until the practice or game is over and the player's parent arrives at the field. If a manager or coach wishes to discipline his own child, he is expected to pull the player aside for corrective action.

Parents/Fans. Managers and coaches are expected to interact with parents and other spectators in a respectful and professional manner. Appropriate language and behavior is expected at all times. At no time should a manager or coach respond to comments from spectators during a game.

Other Managers/Coaches. Managers and coaches are expected to interact with opposing coaches in a respectful and professional manner. At no time should a manager/coach yell from one dugout to another at an opposing manager/coach. Managers and coaches who need to communicate with each other during games regarding players, rules, or other issues are to do so in a respectful and non-disruptive manner between innings. If the need arises to address an opposing manager/coach before the end of the half-inning, the manager/coach should ask the umpire to call time and should speak to the opposing manager/coach in a respectful and non-disruptive manner at home plate with the umpire present.

Substance Abuse. A manager or coach determined to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave the field immediately. An infraction of this type will (with approval from the Board of Directors) result in a termination of coaching privileges. In addition, the use of tobacco (in any form) while coaching is strictly prohibited.

Parking and Drop Off. Managers and coaches must make sure that all player, parents, coaches follow specific Needham parking guidelines where required and common sense guidelines elsewhere. Specific areas are Defazio, Cusick, and Memorial. Defazio-parking and/or dropping off are prohibited on Route 135 or any of the adjacent streets. Cusick-parking and/or dropping off are prohibited on High Rock street. Memorial-no parking on the dead end of Pickering Street. This has become both a safety issue and an issue with neighbors. **THE TOWN OF NEEDHAM HAS INFORMED ALL LEAGUES THAT PERMITS MAY BE REVOKED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.**

In the event a complaint is received by the Board of Directors of a coach failing to comply with the above listed code of conduct, the Board may decide to 1) dismiss the case, 2) draft a warning letter or 3) revoke all or part of the coach's privileges.