

## **COMPETITION**

### **General**

#### **Q) What are the goals of the Fall Season?**

A) Our Fall Season is intended to be the instructional league, where children are given the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming Spring League, which is more competitive. Coaches are encouraged to give all players the opportunity to pursue different positions as their opportunity to see what a different position "looks like".

#### **Q) What are the goals of the Spring Season?**

A) Our Spring Season is intended to "kick it up a notch" (Sorry Emeril!). The Spring Season is intentionally set up to provide each recreation team at least 12 games to work at individual skills while coalescing as a team, all in pursuit of our end of season "In Park Tournament Championship".

#### **Q) What are the goals of the Summer Season?**

A) The summer season is our All Star Season. This level of play is for selected recreation league ball players to participate in an enhanced level of play against All-Star Teams from other baseball programs in our area. If the individual team is successful, they can go on to play games against other All-Star teams in numerous other All-Star caliber tournaments in the Southeast.

**Q) We were under the impression that the fall league was not a competitive league. He did not receive the opportunity to play like I had hoped. His coach, although always very positive, was obviously out to win all games. There were a lot of boys that did not get the experiences that the "5" chosen boys received. This frustrated me.**

A) The Fall League is supposed to be an instructional league, giving all players an opportunity to learn different positions. The reality is that in a 6 week season, it is not possible to teach every child every position. Therefore a coach has to make assessments on each child's skill level and what they can be taught in this compressed timeframe. The best help you can give your coach is to talk to him in an open and honest manner and tell him what your goals are for your child each season. The coach has the obligation to meet the parents' requests, but he also has the responsibility to look out for the safety of all children on the playing field. No child should be put in a position to be hurt, embarrassed or humiliated by asking them to perform at a position for which they are unprepared. However, playing the same 5 boys at the same position goes against the grain of the established goals and methodology of Hopewell. If you feel that your coach is not giving your child a chance and a conversation with the coach has not changed the situation, you are encouraged to report this to the Commissioner of Baseball or any Board Member as quickly as possible. This fall, our coaches received a satisfactory rating from 95% of our survey respondents. While this is a good number, there are a few situations where there is an occasional "bad apple in the barrel". Nearly all of our coaches WANT to do the right thing with their players.

#### **Q) Please clarify the age groups.**

A) We support recreation league baseball in 7 age groups; 4/5yr old, 6yr old, 7yr old, 8yr old, 9/10yr old, 11/12yr old, and 13/14/15yr old. Our goal is to take a child from Pre-School to the start of High School. We separate the child based upon their age as of the upcoming May 1, which is the date specified by our sanctioning body.

**Q) I wish the age went beyond 15 so my child could play recreational baseball throughout high school.**

A) We wish we could too! Our current space constraints limit us to a field of 277 feet, which is too small for high-school age baseball.

**Q) Can we allow an underdeveloped 10 year old to play in 9/10, even if his birthday says he should play 11-12?**

A) Unfortunately, the answer is no. We adhere to a set of regulations from our sanctioning body. Failure to abide by these rules will result in our park not being sanctioned or allowed to participate in all-star play. It is for this reason that we do not permit any child to play down below his or her proper age group, regardless of the reason.

**Q) Can a child play up an age group from he or she is supposed to be in?**

A) Yes, a child can move up without penalty to the player or to the park. Careful consideration should be given before moving a child up to make sure that it is the right decision for that individual.

## **Scheduling**

**Q) Can we play more games?**

A) Unfortunately, no. Our schedule is jam packed from the first day of practice until the end of the season. Our tight field space and incredible growth means that our fields are being used 7 days a week. There are limitations based upon the realities of how early a game can start and how late a game can end. In the Coach Pitch age groups, baseball is not played on a Sunday, except for Select and AllStar teams. In all kid pitch divisions, the fields are scheduled for usage every realistic time slot, every day, for every season.

**Q) Why do we have 5:45 starts during the week? They are a killer.**

A) Game times are scheduled to start at 5:45 because we need them to end at a specific time such that we can get the second game in at a reasonable time. That second game runs very late if the first game does not start on time. This impacts the children for the next day in school. We try to be conscious game times on school nights.

**Q) Why are games and practices scheduled on religious holidays? Last year there was a problem with Easter and Passover!**

A) Our schedule is very tight due to the sheer numbers of player at Hopewell. It is very difficult to schedule around religious holidays and activities. Therefore, we leave it up to each family to make the decision to not participate in a baseball activity in favor of religious activities.

## **Rules**

### **Q) Is stealing allowed?**

A) It depends upon which division you are talking about. In 4/5u, 6u, 7u, and 8u, there is no stealing allowed. In 9/10u, a base can be stolen after the pitched ball has crossed the front of the plate and at any time that the ball is considered in play. In 11/12u, 13/15u and all travel teams, a steal may occur at any time that the ball is in play.

### **Q) Is leading off allowed?**

A) It depends upon which division you are talking about. In 4/5u, 6u, 7u, 8u, and 9/10u a runner may not leadoff but the runner can leave when the pitched ball crosses the front of the plate. In all other age groups, leading off is legal.

## **Travel Baseball**

### **Q) Why do the programs seem to be tilted too far to the travel teams?**

A) Hopewell primarily is a recreation baseball program. In a normal Spring season, we have approximately 60 teams of about 12 players each in the various age groups for recreation ball. This represents about 720 children playing at our recreation level. The Travel program exists to provide older children an opportunity to play at a higher level of competition and further develop their skills. This program supports 6 teams of about 12 players each, or approximately 10% of our organization.

## ***PARK FACILITIES***

### **General**

**Q) We need the lights to be available to children and parents who are part of the association and need to practice batting at odd times or when games and practices are not taking place. How is that accomplished?**

A) The lights on Field 1 and 2 are controlled by both a key and a timer. The key is in the blue wood shed behind Field 1. The timer restricts when the lights can be turned on and when they must go off. This is done as a courtesy to our neighbors who own homes on Bell Memorial Drive. The lights on Field 3 are controlled by a key switch on the electric box behind Field 3. They are also on a timer. The lights on Field 4 are controlled by a key switch on the electric box behind Field 4. They, too, are on a timer.

### **Concessions**

**Q) Can we hire teens to work in the concession stand?**

A) Several years ago, that was how we staffed the concession stand. Unfortunately, we ran into many problems with that arrangement, among them were significant safety concerns. Since then, we have adopted a policy of 18 and over for admittance to the concession stand.

**Q) Will we be using the volunteer system for concession stand duty?**

A) Yes, we will again be assigning timeslots to each team to staff the concession stand. We will assure your team will NOT have concession duty the night of your games.

**Q) The prices at the concession stand are too expensive with limited choices. Our concession stand needs improvements and lower prices.**

A) Our Concession Director, Paula Makrides, has done a great job expanding the menu, and lowering prices. If you have any suggestions, please contact Paula, or any Board member.

### **Park Improvements/Expansion**

**Q) Why don't we have a community bulletin board to help publish news and information?**

A) Several years ago, we had a bulletin board that was destroyed by vandalism. Perhaps the time has come for us to rebuild it. Our website is also a source for news and information and we make the effort to keep it current.

**Q) Is there going to be a Pavilion built at field 4?**

A) There are no immediate plans to build a Pavilion at Field 4. To do so, we must first identify an area that would provide a safe location, free from the likelihood of foul balls harming anyone. We do not have an area identified that meets that requirement.

**Q) We need more practice fields, and a bigger field for the older kids. What about the land behind field 2?**

A) There is a 4 acre parcel of land that was purchased by Bob Fulton a few years ago for attachment to Bell Memorial Park. The original hope was that we would be able to build Field 5. We have had two independent studies done on the land topography and have determined that it would be cost prohibitive to build a baseball field there. Our current hope is that it may turned into warm-up areas. Beyond that, Bell Memorial Park is landlocked, with no room for expansion at the present location.

**Q) Can we get additional batting cages with pitching machines?**

A) Six years ago, Bell Memorial Park had a total of two batting cages. In 2003, our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> cages were built. Volunteers built them, with money raised through our Capital Campaign. Pitching machines however are not currently planned, so we will have to keep relying on coaches' arms.

**Q) Can we get more restroom facilities?**

A) The city of Milton is currently planning to upgrade the restrooms. Unfortunately there are no plans to build additional restroom facilities.

**Q) Can we get speed bumps installed?**

A) This is an issue for the city of Milton. There are already several speed bumps installed in the parking area.

**Q) Can we get someone out there to get rid of all the bees?**

A) Bell Memorial Park is located in a rural area with trees all around us. The bees are attracted to the sugar of candy, sodas and snacks.

**Q) Can we get more lights along the road leading to the park?**

A) That is an issue for the Fulton County Roads Department.

**Q) Can we get an area for the kids to warm up prior to the games?**

A) Physical space is the problem. Bell Memorial Park is very cramped and our growth continues to make this a difficult problem with no resolution currently available.

## **GENERAL HYA QUESTIONS**

### **General**

**Q) Is there a family discount for registering more than one child from the same family?**

A) No, we do not offer a family discount. The reason is that our registration fee covers the cost of running the program. The registration fee is not a fundraiser, nor is it intended to be a money loser. Every year, we study the costs of putting on the baseball season and spread out those costs on the registration fee. Your registration fee includes the costs of: the uniforms, umpires, field maintenance, sanctioning body fees, trophies, utilities not covered by the city of Milton, insurance and administrative costs affiliated with running HYA.

**Q) Can we have better communications in regards to game status? For example, information on rainouts and game reschedule information.**

A) When a decision is made to rainout a game, that information is posted within minutes on the Hopewell Hotline at 770-777-1500 and HYA website ([www.HopewellBaseball.org](http://www.HopewellBaseball.org)). Also, an effort is made to contact the umpires and managers of affected games. Beyond that it is the responsibility of the manager to communicate the news of the rainout to his team. Calling Post is utilized by most coaches at Hopewell...this is the best way to get updates.

**Q) Can rainout messages be texted to cell phones?**

A) It's a great idea. There are currently technology vendors that provide that service, and we are looking into the costs involved.

### **Coaching/Volunteering**

**Q) How do I become a head coach?**

A) The term "head coach" refers to a manager. The first part of this answer is to TELL US! On the registration form for your child, we always ask the question, 'Do you want to be a manager or coach?' Our goal is to always have more candidates than openings for managers, thus giving us the opportunity to select the best managers for our children.

**Q) How do I get involved as a volunteer at Hopewell?**

A) Contact any board member. Leave a message on the Hotline. Tell your team manager. Go to the "Contact Us" section of this website and send us an email. We would love to have you involved! There is always a need for committee members, project leaders or just volunteer for a day. Any time you can give helps about 800 children in the community where you live!

**Q) There seems to be a trend towards individual coaches/teams levying additional costs for bringing in extra professional coaching. This seems to be on a team by team basis. This should be a league wide offering and built into the initial costs or offer it as optional clinics outside the regular team practices.**

A) We now provide professional instruction to all recreational teams at no additional cost.