Welcome to the Star!

This is the inaugural issue of the Sedgwick Star, a publication of La Grange Little League. This newsletter will aim to keep LGLL families updated on the latest happenings in the league, and to give you some insight into the people who make it what it is. This newsletter will be sent out via email to all current LGLL families. Past issues will also be available online.

We welcome contributions, so whether you would like to share a photo from the latest game, a story idea, or just a notice about a lost glove, please shoot us an email!

Contact us
Do you have something you would like to share in the next issue? Please email us at: TheSedgwickStar@gmail.com.
Player Development Update

Our Little League is consistently one of the strongest programs in the western suburbs thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of our managers, varied player development offerings, and incredible participation by parents. Our goal is to create a fun environment where each player can’t wait to get to the ballpark, whether for practices or games. The following is a snapshot of 2019 player development offerings, which are all included at no extra charge as part of registration in the league:

Big Al Baseball: It is critical that coaches understand how to connect and develop a positive relationship with every player. To that end, we have expanded our agreement with Big Al so that not only will every manager and coach have access to this program, but every family will as well. There is more info to come, but for now check out http://bigalbaseball.com/index.php/big-al-way.

White Sox Academy: For our younger leagues, each team has once again been invited to a group clinic held at the Park District gym/White Sox facility. These clinics are led by former major league player Dan Pasqua and his staff of professional instructors. Our older leagues will receive two custom individual team practices at the White Sox facility run by professional instructors.

Diamond Edge: Thanks to our partnership with this indoor facility, every team will receive one hour of practice time on an indoor field as well as two hour-long cage rentals. These will be scheduled by your team’s manager. In addition, all LGLL players can get a discount to use Diamond Edge cages at any time ($25/hour). Just be sure to call ahead to reserve a spot and mention La Grange Little League at the front desk!

Practices: 2019 will be our second year of "Combined Practices" for our younger leagues. Combining teams for at least one practice per week helps increase the number of reps per player and keeps our development philosophy consistent across teams.

Future Offerings: Pending field availability during and after the season, the Player Development team will host specialized 1-hour skills clinics. After each clinic, there will be a friendly “Sandlot”-style game. These sessions will be split up by ages and skill level to ensure safety. Sandlot games will be a chance for kids to simply play ball on their own with minimal parental involvement.

From the President...

Welcome to another year of America’s favorite pastime! The big news as we head into a new season is that the Chicago White Sox will be providing uniforms and hats for our ballplayers this year. Each level will sport a White Sox jersey in varying colors and styles, and teams now will be identified in the standings by their team sponsor! The next page of this newsletter has more details on this exciting partnership.

As a little league board, we are committed to two key goals for the year: 1) providing increased opportunities for our kids to learn baseball and softball fundamentals; and 2) establishing a plan to improve Sedgwick and Spring Avenue ball fields.

In the fundamentals area, we have ramped up the number of clinics we are offering both players and coaches and, for our upper divisions, we are providing more individual professional instruction. We are confident that these additional opportunities will help our players’ skill development and deepen their love of the game.

Secondly, we are acutely aware that ball field maintenance must be a priority so that we can offer our softball and baseball players the best experience possible. We are currently analyzing options for bathroom facilities at Sedgwick and better field equipment at Spring Avenue to properly maintain the infields and improve play, and we are excited to share our vision with you in the months ahead.

I welcome your feedback on how we can improve the experience for our players. Please do not hesitate to contact me at lagrangelittleleague@gmail.com if you have questions or suggestions. Thanks so much for your support!

-LGLL President Jeff Nowak
White Sox Partnership
The LGLL Board is excited to announce that we have entered into a new partnership with the Chicago White Sox! The Sox will pay for all jerseys and hats this year, which will all have a Sox logo. This will allow us to devote additional dollars to other areas of need, such as player development and facilities. We were one of only 12 Chicagoland/Northwest Indiana little leagues to be selected to participate in this program. For more info, please visit http://www.mlb.com/whitesox/fans/kids/jersey-program

Sponsor Spotlight
Thank you to our friends at Mosquito Shield of West Suburban Chicago (https://moshield.com/franchisee/mosquito-shield-of-west-suburban-chicago/) for sponsoring La Grange Little League in 2019 (and thanks for keeping those pesky bugs away this summer)!

Attention Umps: Make the Call!
LGLL is currently hiring umpires for the 2019 season. If you are 13 or older, have a working knowledge of the game, and want to make some money this spring, we would love to hear from you.

Our umpires are compensated from $24 – $32 per game, depending on the level. Like last year, feedback will be provided throughout the season. To register, please complete the requested information at http://assn.la/Reg/?r=3;181366. Registration will remain open through April 7. If you have any questions, please shoot an email to LGLLUmpires@gmail.com.
Who said you can’t practice baseball and softball in the Chicago winter?!
Tips of the Issue

Players ages 5-8

1. If you’re throwing batting practice to your kid, try using tennis balls. Kids can pick up the brighter color more easily, and the balls go further for added fun!

2. **Play some pepper!** Stand about 8-10 feet away from the hitter and toss pitches. Instruct the hitter to do a "half swing" where they are just trying to hit grounders back to you. The swing should be halfway between a full swing and a bunt. This helps them learn to make good contact with the ball from a short distance.

3. When pitching batting practice to your player, **get on one knee** and throw darts! If you are standing up while pitching to your child, it can be like you trying to hit against Shaquille O’Neil throwing 98 MPH pitches. Make sure to get down to their level. Also, try to throw reasonably flat pitches that have some velocity. They’ll figure out how to time it up. If you throw “rainbows,” you’ll cause them to swing wildly with an uppercut.

Players ages 9-12

1. **Lock that front knee!** Many players stride towards the ball (which is good), but when they finish their swing (post stride) their front knee should be locked. If their front knee is bent, they have no power, and it will look like they are lunging at the ball. The result will many times be a weak grounder or a pop-up.

2. **Play some pepper!** Yep, just like the tip for the younger players...there’s a reason you still see major league players doing pepper before games. It gets your eyes ready to lock in on the ball, improves contact, and reinforces the idea of a "quick bat." If the hitter pops one up or misses the ball entirely, he/she loses their turn and it’s next batter up! This is a great drill for multiple kids to do on their own.

3. Practice their **"two strike swing."** Check out the Cubs’ Anthony Rizzo’s swing with two strikes once the season starts: he chokes up and shortens his swing. With two strikes, you "gotta protect." During batting practice, get in the habit of saying to your hitter "two strikes," which should mean to them that they need to choke up and swing quicker!
**Game Recaps**

Coming April 2019!

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**Cubs Summer Camps Offer**

The Chicago Cubs are offering a discount to LGLL players for their baseball summer camps. To learn more, go to https://www.mlb.com/cubs/fans/kids/summer-camps/. Use discount code “LGLL19” by May 15, 2019 to save 10% on enrollment.

**Bat Standard Reminder**

Just a reminder: As of 2018, all Little League baseball bats must adhere to the new USABat standard. So if you’re buying a new baseball bat, make sure it has the logo pictured here (and note that this does not apply to softball bats). For more info: https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/bat-information/

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**Blast from the Past…**

….LGLL 1966 Champs!

La Grange Little League
LaGrangeLittleLeague.com