

# **METUCHEN BASEBALL & SOFTBALL**

## **Manager & Coaches Manual**

### **Amended February 19, 2018**

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## **SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

This document contains the general rules and policies that govern how Metuchen Baseball and Softball, ("MBS") manage its baseball and softball programs. It will assist Managers, Coaches and Parents/Guardians and will cover various topics that should be of interest to all adults who volunteer their time and efforts to the youth of our league. Included are rules of conduct that must be adhered to always. These rules are being documented in this fashion to avoid conflict should problems arise.

This document is one of several documents are available to all Managers and Coaches and includes;

- The Official Babe Ruth Rules and Regulations,
- the MBS By-Laws, and
- Safety Plan.

We as Managers, Coaches, Parents/Guardians and Spectators must always remember that children and young adults are extremely impressionable. They will learn from the examples that adults set for them through actions and words. If we can provide a quality experience for all involved, our goals would be achieved.

The rules and procedures contained herein, take precedence over the Rules and Regulations published by Babe Ruth Baseball, Inc. This document may be amended by a majority vote of a quorum of the MBS Board in accordance with the League By-Laws.

This document will be reviewed annually, prior to the start of the regular baseball and softball season. It will be published on our website and available distributed to all Board Members, Managers, Coaches and Umpires.

If a situation arises that is not covered or stipulated herein, and which requires action prior to a regular meeting of the Board, an interim rule may be adopted and implemented by the majority vote of the Board.

## **SECTION 2 - MBS OVERVIEW**

The objective of MBS shall be to implant in the children of our community, the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and respect, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger and happier children and will grow to be good, decent, healthy and trustworthy citizens. MBS is devoted to giving all of our children the opportunity to grow and learn in a positive and team-oriented environment.

The MBS program, using regulation competitive baseball and softball rules, teaches skills, mental and physical development, a respect for the rules of the game, and basic ideals of sportsmanship and fair play. In all aspects, MBS is committed to providing our participants the very best educational sports experience possible. It is our fundamental belief that every child with a desire to play baseball or softball be afforded that opportunity.

To achieve this objective, MBS will provide a supervised program under the Rules and Regulations of Babe Ruth League. All volunteers shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or the winning of games is secondary, and the molding of future citizens is of prime importance.

### SECTION 3 – CODE OF CONDUCT

Managers, Coaches, Players, Parents or Spectators should set an example of sportsmanship for children to follow. Team play should be emphasized. Parents will make sure their children show respect for all players, coaches, officials and spectators.

Parents and spectators will comply with the decisions of league officials and observe all league rules, policy and procedures. Abusive language, profanity, discourtesy or rudeness, verbal, physical or visual harassment, bullying or taking unfair advantage of anyone at any league function is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate ejection from the game area by the Umpire or League Official. Violators are subject to review by the Board.

Managers, Coaches, Players, Parents or Spectators *WILL NOT* criticize the umpire and *WILL NOT* call plays before the umpire makes their call. Parents and Spectators will not question an umpire's call. Umpires are instructed to give one warning. Subsequent violations will result in immediate ejection from the game area (i.e., at a minimum, the ejected individual must sit in their car).

Players shall display good sportsmanship and team play always. Players will be respectful and courteous to coaches, umpires, players, parents and spectators. The throwing of a bat, helmet, or any other piece of equipment is strictly prohibited. During practice or games, players may not wear jewelry or other items judged dangerous by the Umpire, Manager or Coach. Refusal to remove such items will result in the player being removed from the field.

Every spectator at a game or practice must take personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their children. Foul balls or errant balls thrown may go into the spectator area. Fencing prevents some balls from leaving the playing area but not all. Pay close attention for foul balls and keep children away from the dugouts and from behind home plate. No climbing on fences are allowed. MBS is not responsible for parked vehicles or other real or personal property being hit by foul or home run balls.

When attending any MBS sponsored event, Parents are expected to:

1. Be a positive role model for your child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.
2. Refrain from any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing, taunting or using profane language or gestures, etc.
3. Refrain from any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
4. Teach your child to play by the spirit of the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.

5. Demand that my child treats other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, sex, or ability.
6. Never ridicule or yell at my child or other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
7. Respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches or referees at the game field, and take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
8. Refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
9. Inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.

Parents who fail to abide by the rules and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

1. Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or member of league organization
2. Written warning
3. Game suspension with written documentation of incident
4. Season suspension

### **ZERO Tolerance Policy**

MBS Officers has elected to enact a zero-tolerance policy with respect to the conduct of players, managers, coaches, parents and fans.

### **Fighting**

If any player engages in a fight, that player will automatically be suspended for 2 games. If the player engages in a 2<sup>nd</sup> fight, he or she will automatically be suspended for the remainder of the season. There are no appeals and no extenuating circumstances.

If a manager or coach engages in a fight, he or she will automatically be suspended from managing or coaching for the remainder of the season. The Board may consider permanent expulsion for violence. Managers and Coaches are expected to set a proper example and act as adults. There will be no second chance, no appeals and no extenuating circumstances.

### **Abuse, Taunting and Lack of Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship is the goal. Abusive behavior by players, coaches, managers, parents and fans will not be tolerated. Abusive behavior includes, but is not limited to, foul language, arguing unreasonably with MBS youth umpires, arguing with, taunting or cursing at players, managers, coaches, or fans. It also includes throwing helmets and equipment. MBS Umpires have direction to warn any person who engages in such behavior. If the behavior persists, the offending person will be ejected. There will be no appeals of the umpire's action. Any ejection of a player, manager

or coach by the umpire for abusive or unsportsmanlike conduct will result in an automatic one game suspension. A 2nd ejection will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season.

**Fans and Parents**

The manager is responsible to maintain control over parents and fans affiliated with his or her team. If the manager cannot or will not control abusive behavior by team's parents or fans, a forfeit will be declared, and the game terminated.

## **SECTION 4 – LEAGUE STRUCTURE**

### **Charting Organization**

The MBS Board may be chartered by a national or local organization, at its discretion.

The Official Playing Rules and Regulation of the Charting Organization shall be binding on MBS. Local Rules of MBS may be adopted, providing that such Local Rules do not conflict with the Official Playing Rules and Regulations of the Charting Organization.

MBS has chosen Babe Ruth as our Charting Organization.

### **Board Meetings**

Regular meetings of the membership shall be held one evening per month in at least eleven of the twelve months of a year [presently, the first Wednesday of each month]. These meetings shall conduct the on-going business of MBS. Meetings are open to all MBS Members and guests; however, voting shall be limited to Board Members with voting privileges, as provided by the By-Laws.

### **Players**

Any boy or girl, meeting the requirements as set forth in the official regulations and rules of the charting organization, and who resides or attends school with the geographical boundaries of Metuchen, as recognized by the charting organization, shall be eligible for participation.

### **Baseball Division Structure**

Subject to the registration of enough players to form a sufficient number of teams to form a league or to join a league offered by other towns, MBS will sponsor as many recreational teams as necessary to accommodate every eligible player.

The League shall be composed of the following baseball divisions to accommodate all registered players to the extent possible based upon registration totals. A player's age is determined by how old he/she is on April 30 of that year.

### **Senior Division (Babe Ruth Baseball League)**

The Senior Division is played on a regulation size field. Official Baseball Rules are observed. Players broaden their skills and prepare to play at a scholastic team level. This Division does not conflict with school teams, allowing players to participate on both teams. Players will try out and be drafted to teams. Players should be developing skills in a few selected positions. Records are maintained, and playoffs are scheduled at the end of the regular season. *The main objective of this Division is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- Generally, 16-17-year-old Players.
- Approximately 11-15 players per team
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- 60 feet Pitching with 90 feet base paths.

- MBS does not often field a Senior Division Recreation League team due to High School play.

### **Junior Division (Babe Ruth Baseball League)**

The Junior Division is played on a regulation size field. Official Baseball Rules are observed. Players broaden their skills and prepare to play at a scholastic team level. This Division does not conflict with school teams, allowing players to participate on both teams. Players will try out and be drafted to teams. Players should be developing skills in a few selected positions. Records are maintained, and playoffs are scheduled at the end of the regular season. *The main objective of this Division is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- Generally, 13-15-year-old Players.
- Approximately 11-15 players per team.
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- 60 feet Pitching with 90 feet base paths.
- Uses Myrtle Field and plays away games with interleague play.
- MBS occasionally does not field a Junior Division League team due to Middle School play.

### **Intermediate 50/70 Division (Cal Ripken “Major 70”)**

The Intermediate Division is a competitive league. Players will be drafted. Some rotation of positions occurs. Records are maintained, and playoffs are scheduled at the end of the regular season. *The main objective of this league is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- Generally, 11 and 12-year-old Players
- Approximately 10-12 players per team
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- 50 feet Pitching with 70 feet base paths.
- Fater Field is primary playing location. Mondays will be played at Johnson Field.

### **Majors Division (Cal Ripken “Major 60”)**

The Majors Division is a competitive league. Players will be drafted. Rotation of positions occurs. Records are maintained, and playoffs are scheduled at the end of the regular season. *The main objective of this league is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- Generally, 9 and 10-year-old Players
- Approximately 10-12 players per team.
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- 46 feet Pitching with 60 feet base paths.
- Johnson Field is primary playing location. Mondays will be played at Fater Field.

### **Minors Division (Cal Ripken “Minor”)**

Minors is an instruction division. The Manager/Coach will pitch at the beginning of the season and then players will be introduced as pitchers. Pitchers will then pitch as well as Managers and Coaches. Teams are drafted for fairness. Players are rotated throughout the various positions during the game. Games are scored yet league standings are kept. The main objective of this league is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.

- Generally, 8-year-old Players.
- Approximately 10-12 players per team.
- 40 & 46 feet Pitching with 60 feet base paths.
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- Barr Field is primary playing location.

### **Farm Division (Cal Ripken “Rookie”)**

The Farm Division is an instruction league. The Manager/Coach will pitch at knee level. Catchers can be introduced later in the season preferably keeping balls at backstop area to maintain speed of play. Teams are assigned by commissioner. Players are rotated throughout the various positions during the game. Game scores and league standings are not kept. *The main objective of this league is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- Generally, 7-year-olds and 6-year-olds who have played at least one year of T-ball.
- Will attempt to have no more than 10 players per team.
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- Presbyterian Field is primary playing location. Barr Field is secondary playing location.

### **T-Ball (Cal Ripken “T-Ball”) - COED**

The T-Ball League is designed to provide the basics of baseball. The fundamentals of the game (hitting, rules, fielding, etc.) are taught. Games are instructional in nature. No score will be kept and no league standings maintained. By the end of the season, a player will be familiar with hitting, play rules and all defensive positions, except pitcher and catcher. *The main objective of this league is to show our youth how to have fun playing baseball.*

- All 5-year-olds, and 6-year-olds who have not played T-ball before or who did not request to play in the Farm division, and 4-year-olds (boys and girls) who are entering Kindergarten in year of play.
- Will attempt to have no more than 10 players per team,
- Number of teams based on registration totals.
- Moss School is primary playing location. Teams will have a Fater Field Sunday game during the season.

### **U12 Softball**

Standard Babe Ruth League rules except as noted below. Game scores and standings will be maintained. This division will use Umpires. Year-end single elimination tournament will determine division champion. Teams will be seeded based on standings from only games played against other Metuchen teams, interleague games are not used in determining playoff seeds. The VP Softball, Division Commissioner, along with each division Manager, and the league Player Agent will have the ability to establish local game rules in order to ensure fair competition and proper player development throughout the season. These rules must be agreed upon by all division managers and used throughout both the regular and playoff games.

- 10-13 Players Per Team
- 11 and 12-year old’s (as of December 31)

- Manager drafts teams based upon showcase results. Final discretion on manager selection based on commissioner recommendation with board approval.
- Play 1 weekday game and 1 Saturday game per week. Additional practices per manager's discretion. Teams will also play inter-league games with other Girls U12 Softball leagues.

### **U10 Softball**

Standard Babe Ruth League rules except as noted below. Game scores and standings will be maintained. This division will use Umpires. Year-end single elimination tournament will determine division champion. Teams will be seeded based on standings from only games played against other Metuchen teams, interleague games are not used in determining playoff seeds. The VP Softball, Division Commissioner, along with each division Manager, and the league Player Agent will have the ability to establish local game rules in order to ensure fair competition and proper player development throughout the season. These rules must be agreed upon by all division managers and used throughout both the regular and playoff games.

- 10-13 Players Per Team
- 10 and 11-year old's (as of December 31)
- Manager drafts teams based upon showcase results. Final discretion on manager selection based on commissioner recommendation with board approval.
- Play 1 weekday game and 1 Saturday game per week. Additional practices per manager's discretion. Teams will also play inter-league games with other Girls U10 Softball leagues.

### **U8 Softball**

Standings will not be kept. Standardized drills to be emphasized along with game play.

- 9-11 Players Per Team
- 8 and 9-year old's (as of December 31)
- Manager drafts teams based upon showcase results. Final discretion on manager selection based on commissioner recommendation with board approval. Players should pitch at showcase and care should be taken to have pitchers on all teams.
- Play 1 weekday game and 1 Saturday game per week. Additional practices per manager's discretion. Teams will also play inter-league games with other Girls U8 Softball leagues.

### **U6 Softball (Pony Division)**

Players to have equal opportunity at all positions. Minimum of 2 innings for each game. Time slots for games are limited to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Players will play entire game. All players at the game will bat in every inning. Add a double 1st base for safety. Coach pitch, with Tee option. Batters will have three swinging strikes after which a Tee will be brought out for the batter. Coaches will pitch and catch for games. Pitching distance will be based on batter's ability and skill. The game can be started with a minimum of four players. Players cannot steal bases. Runners cannot advance on an overthrow. This division will use an 11-inch "incrediball" softball.

No jewelry of any kind may be worn on the field. Composite barrel bats may not be used on Metuchen fields.

- 8-10 players per team.
- Five and 6-year old's, (as of December 31). Four-year-old's entering Kindergarten will be placed in T-ball.
- No showcase or draft. The Commissioner and managers will make team assignments, with focus on balancing talent, ages, and schools within each team. Some requests will be honored.
- Games will consist of a 30-minute practice followed by a 2-3 inning game. Game scores and standings will not be kept. This division will not use Umpires. Standardized drills to be emphasized along with game play.

## **SECTION 5 – COMMISSIONER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**By-Laws / Rules:** Read, understand and enforce the by-laws and League rules for your division. Ensure that managers and coaches are aware of the rules and following them. Provide dispute resolution if there are any differences in interpretation between managers/coaches.

**Attend All Monthly league meetings:** provide updates for your division. Provide suggestions on how to

improve the league and its impact on players.

**Managers:** Identify managers and possibly coaches for the teams in your division.

**Showcase:** help organize and run the showcase sessions for your division.

**Communication:** maintain an accurate e-mail communication list for your division. Communicate regularly with your managers about all league business (i.e. Opening Day, Photo Night, Somerset Patriots Night, Snack Bar duties, Picnic, Trophies, End of Year Parties). Identify any areas of improvement for your division and communicate/discuss any needed changes with your managers.

**Games:** update the division's standings based on the game results provided by your managers.

**Tournament Team:** Communicate the Tournament team selection process to Managers within your division.

**Draft:** oversee the drafting of teams. Assist managers in balancing team talent.

**Field Maintenance:** participate in field maintenance before and after games and on Saturday mornings. This would include raking the field, dragging the field, lining the field etc. Actively solicit and enforce ongoing field maintenance support from managers, coaches and parents. Make managers and coaches aware and accountable for groomed and lined fields.

**Issue Resolution:** address any issues brought to you by managers, coaches or parents and resolve them as needed.

**Ambassador:** be a goodwill ambassador for your division and support the league. Be visible at games and league events. Address questions or concerns from parents.

**Re-Scheduling Games:** For Minors Division and higher, report any game cancellation to Umpire Scheduler.

**Playoff Game Schedules:** For Majors & Intermediate Divisions, create playoff game schedule that is agreed upon by Managers in respective division.

**Reporting:** Report any concerns or issues with League Vice President

**Safety:** Distribute Safety Plan to all managers and ensure they know and adhere to the rules and requirements regarding player safety. Ensure all managers and coaches required to participate in the CPR and First Aid training attend. Periodically walk the field and facility to ensure there are no unsafe conditions and require managers to report any issues immediately. Ensure field box is stocked with first aid kits and ice packs and that all catchers and umpire equipment is in safe, working order – report to the Safety Director when materials are running low/out.

## **SECTION 6 – EQUIPMENT & FIELD MANAGER**

### **EQUIPMENT MANAGER**

#### **ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide Vice President with recommendation for purchase of new and replacement equipment
- Responsible for maintaining, inventory and control and managing leakage of equipment. Inspect all equipment at the start and completion of each season and remove equipment from inventory that is damaged
- Manage and operate within the budget as authorized by the Board.
- Ensure the safe operation of batting cages at each location
- Ensure sheds and lockboxes are in proper working condition
- Ensure equipment is issued only to authorized users and is returned to stock at end of season

#### **EQUIPMENT RULES**

- No player may use a full composite bat in recreational play. Full composite bats are allowed in travel and tournament play subject to the rules of the league.
- Every player must have a full-face mask on his/her batting helmet. Exception is Juniors and Seniors Divisions.
- For all softball divisions, fielders at pitcher and first base must wear face masks.
- All male pitchers and catchers must wear an athletic protective cup.
- All catchers must wear full catcher's gear including a full helmet (no mask and skull caps).
- Safety balls to be used in T-Ball and Farm Divisions.
- Safety bases to be used in T-Ball, Farm, U6 and U8 Divisions.

### **FIELD MANAGER**

#### **ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Manage volunteers and service providers to maintain and improve our fields
- Work with Borough or School District officials on maintenance and to explore improvements in fields
- Ensure documentation is up to date and available on web site and on locations for field preparation techniques
- Train Managers on field prep and cleaning
- Purchase materials needed for field upkeep within budget.
- Manage and operate within the Budget as authorized by the Board
- See field maintenance and equipment and materials checklists at end of this guide

## **SECTION 7 – MANAGERS & COACHES ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **External Perspective**

The youth baseball/softball manager must be a leader. All managers must recognize that they hold a position of trust and responsibility in a program that deals with a sensitive and formative period of a youngster's development. It is required that the manager has understanding, patience and capacity to work with youngsters. The manager should be able to inspire respect. Above all else, *managers must realize that they are helping to shape the physical, mental and emotional development of young people.*

The youth baseball/softball manager must be something more than a coach. Knowledge of the game is secondary. While an adult with training and background in the game is a desirable candidate for manager or coach, League screening committees should look for other important qualities in an individual.

The late Dr. Arthur A. Esslinger, who was Dean of the School of Health and Physical Education, University of Oregon and a member of The Board of Little League Baseball, is the author of an outstanding article, *"Little League's Greatest Challenge."*

According to Dr. Esslinger, the heart of Little League is what happens between the manager and the player. It is the manager, more than any other individual, who controls the situation in which the players may be benefited. Improving the level of leadership in this vital area must be a continuing effort. Youngsters of youth baseball and softball age are strongly influenced by adults whose ideals and aspirations are similar to their own. The Manager and player share a common interest in the game, a desire to excel and determination to win. *Youngsters often idolize their managers, not because the adult is the most successful coach or mentor, but because the manager is a source of inspiration.*

Managers must be adults who are sensitive to the mental and physical limitations of children of youth baseball and softball age and who recognize that the game is a vehicle of training and enjoyment, not an end in itself. It has been stated many times that the program of youth baseball can only be as good as the quality of leadership in the managing personnel.

## **Manager Responsibilities**

**By-Laws / Rules:** Read, understand and follow the by-laws for your division. Ensure that you comply with all rules in how you manage your team. Keep a copy of the by-laws and rule book with you during games.

**Practices:** Schedule practices (at your discretion). In advance of practices, develop a structure and plan the drills you expect to run based on the skill level of the players on your team. Teach the fundamentals of baseball/softball to the players by providing verbal instruction, demonstrations and positive feedback/guidance. Ensure the safety of the players during all practices.

**Games:** set line-ups for each game and positions for each inning. Ensure that you comply with your division's rules with respect to infield/outfield rotations, pitch counts, innings pitched, sitting out innings etc. Warm-up your team ahead of each game (drills/stretching). Follow the rules for utilization of call ups. Make pitching changes as needed. Coach bases. Ensure the dugout is clean and litter free for the next team.

**Scorebook:** ensure that a scorebook is maintained for each game (Minors through Seniors) and that you report the outcome to the commissioner (for division's that maintain standings).

**Attend league meetings:** Attend minimum of 6 scheduled monthly meetings. Bring your ideas for improving MBS. Provide suggestions on how to improve the league and its impact on players.

**Draft:** select players for your team via the draft process, with a focus on balancing abilities across all teams in the division.

**Field Maintenance:** direct the field maintenance preparation before and after games and on Saturday mornings. This would include raking the field, dragging the field, lining the field etc. Solicit help from your team's parents in all these efforts.

**Communication:** maintain an accurate e-mail and phone communication list for your team. Communicate regularly about games, practices and other league business. Work closely with your Team Parent to ensure he/she is performing his/her respective duties.

**Report Issues:** alert your league commissioner of any problems or concerns as soon as possible (including but not limited to injuries, rule violations, manager/coach/player/fan behavior...)

**Player Development:** focus on player development. Ensure sure kids of all abilities are getting chances to learn and improve their skills. The goal should be that each player exits the season with a better understanding of the game and an improvement in their abilities. Consider holding clinic style practices across the division.

**Tournament team:** support the tournament team selection process as described in the league's by-laws.

**Ambassador:** be a goodwill ambassador for your division and support the league. Be visible at games and league events. Address questions or concerns from parents.

**Managing Coaches:** Select only those coaches who will be active participants in practices and games, in field maintenance and player development. Set expectations early, hold coaches accountable for those responsibilities and provide them the opportunity to contribute to tasks that reinforce teamwork, camaraderie, sportsmanship, skills development and game knowledge.

**Safety:** Review and adhere to the rules and requirements as outlined in the safety plan. Ensure all coaches required to participate in the CPR and First Aid training attend. Ensure all equipment (e.g. bats, helmets, spikes, catchers gear, safety equipment) used by players is in compliance with rules as outlined in the safety plan –check this each game. For each game, walk the field and facility to ensure there are no unsafe conditions and report any issues immediately to the Commissioner and Safety Officer. Ensure field box is stocked with first aid kits and ice packs and that all catchers and umpire equipment is in safe, working order – report to the Safety Director when materials are running low/out. Prior to starting every practice and every game, lead (or have a coach lead) drills to stretch the legs and throwing arms of all players to improve their flexibility and prevent injury. On hot days (80 degrees and above) bring water for your players and ensure they take water breaks between innings.

**Uniforms:** Uniforms will be picked up by each Manager at prior to the start of the season. Dates and times for distribution will be at the discretion of The League. If a player's family has failed to complete their registration, that player will not receive their uniform or play on Opening Day.

**Foster Sportsmanship and Teamwork. Teach life lessons.**

**Provide Support and Encouragement for Cadet umpires.**

**Be the kind of manager the players will remember decades from now (for good reasons).**

**Adhere to the Zero Tolerance Policy**

## **Coach/Assistant Coach Responsibilities**

**By-Laws / Rules:** Read, understand and follow the by-laws for your division. Ensure that you comply with all rules in how you manage your team.

**Practices:** assist your manager in running practices. Teach the fundamentals of baseball/softball to the players by providing verbal instruction, demonstrations and positive feedback/guidance. Ensure the safety of the players during all practices.

**Games:** assist your manager in warming-up your team ahead of and during each game (drills/stretching). Coach bases. Ensure the dugout is clean and litter free for the next team. Be responsible for the Scorebook if needed.

**Field Maintenance:** participate in field maintenance before and after games and on Saturday mornings. This would include raking the field, dragging the field, lining the field etc.

**Player Development:** focus on player development. Ensure sure kids of all abilities are getting chances to learn and improve their skills. The goal should be that each player exits the season with a better understanding of the game and an improvement in their abilities.

**Report Issues:** alert your manager of any problems or concerns as soon as possible (including but not limited to injuries, rule violations, manager/coach/player/fan behavior...)

**Safety:** Review and adhere to the rules and requirements as outlined in the safety plan. Participate in the CPR and First Aid training if you have not attended in the past two years. Ensure all equipment (e.g. bats, helmets, spikes, catchers gear, safety equipment) used by players follows rules as outlined in the safety plan– check this each game. For each game, walk the field and facility to ensure there are no unsafe conditions and report any issues immediately to your manager. Prevent teammate horseplay on the bench which often leads to injuries.

**Foster Sportsmanship and Teamwork. Teach life lessons.**

**Provide Support and Encouragement for Cadet umpires.**

**Be the kind of coach the players will remember decades from now (for good reasons).**

**Adhere to the Zero Tolerance Policy**

**How to Become a Manager or Coach**

Any adult with an interest in coaching youth baseball or softball may apply for a manager or coach position with MBS. Checking the appropriate box in the online Registration Form or written notice to MBS, P.O. Box 373, Metuchen, New Jersey 08840 prior to the registration deadline will insure consideration for the position applied for.

By applying the applicant grants the league the necessary information and permission to complete any necessary background checks. This screening will identify past actions that may be grounds for rejection the application.

The Vice President/President will approve manager & coach recommendations made by each division commissioner. MBS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color or religious affiliation.

## **SECTION 8 – TEAM PARENTS ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Team Parent Meeting:** attend the Team Parent Meeting

**Communicate** with your team’s Manager so that you have a team email list. Ask your Manager if there is anything he/she will need help with during games/practices like managing the bench or keeping stats.

**Communicate** with your team. Make sure you have an accurate email(s) for each team member.

**Help with Opening Day Ceremony** (April)—pick up pretzels and juice at the Snack Bar and distribute to your team at the designated time.

**Photo Night**—(April) Distribute Photo Order forms to each member of your team. Communicate info to your team and assist your team the night of photos. More information will follow as soon as it is available.

**Snack Bar**—Your team will be given a date/time to cover the Snack Bar. Communicate this information to your team and make sure parents know how to sign up for a snack bar shift. Talk with parents and get this shift covered! Two hours of work at the Snack Bar counts as three hours toward workbond. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!** The money made at the Snack Bar is intended to cover all the fun at the MBS Picnic at the end of the season, so we must have volunteers in the snack bar for all assigned times. (Majors, Intermediates and U10 Softball Team Parents must “captain” snack bar for a week.)

**Somerset Patriots Game** (May)—Communicate with your team about Metuchen Baseball & Softball day at the Somerset Patriots Game. Collect forms and money from any families on your team that want to purchase tickets. You will need to turn in money for tickets at the Club House (date/time to be determined). Distribute tickets to the families.

**League Picnic** (June)—Let your team know about the picnic and encourage them to sign up to volunteer—time counts toward workbond and we need volunteers to make this day run smoothly. You will need to pick up your packet of wristbands at the Club House (date/time to be determined). Make sure your team knows you have the wristbands and sell them to any families interested. You will need to return any money and unsold wristbands to the Club House (date/time to be determined).

**Trophies**—You will need to confirm all names as they should appear on the trophies with each family. You will need to pick up trophies at the Club House when they are ready (date/time to be determined).

**End of Season Team Party**—(optional) Talk with your Manager and Coaches and schedule accordingly.

## SECTION 9 – CADET UMPIRE PROGRAM

1. MBS may utilize youth umpires from the Metuchen community for its Recreation League games. We believe this program offers a valuable experience for our youth that are passionate about baseball and Softball. The volunteers responsible will recruit both male and female candidates.
2. If MBS elects to utilize youth umpires, it will establish a training program for prospective umpires. All prospective youth umpires must attend and pass the winter training program each year to serve as an umpire during the season.
3. All Umpires are required to attend 8 hours of umpire training each year prior to the
  - a. beginning of each season. The training consists of 4 hours classroom and 4 hours of
  - b. on the field instructions. This training is mandatory each year. If an umpire does not
  - c. attend he/she will not be able to umpire.
4. The training will include instructions regarding on field safety, personal safety, player
  - a. safety, field positioning and rules. Emphasis will be placed on rule interpretation and
  - b. making the correct call. Also, of importance the topic of handling irate coaches,
  - c. managers, players, fans and parents will be reviewed.
5. A prospective umpire must be no younger than 12 as established by the BRL age chart.
6. The following rules shall be guidelines which should be followed by the Umpire Coordinator to the extent possible given the availability of the youth umpires:
  - a. First year umpires will only be assigned to work Minor Division baseball games and U8 Division Softball games.
  - b. Second year umpires and later may be assigned to any Division.
  - c. No umpire may be assigned to any Division in which he or she would play according to the age chart set forth by BRL.
7. Managers will provide scores and feedback regarding the assigned umpires to the Umpire Coordinator after every game.
8. No Manager, Coach, Parent or anyone else will question the calls of the umpire, yell, harass or otherwise attempt to influence an umpire. There will be zero tolerance for umpire harassment.
9. The Umpire Coordinator will use the Manager comments as well as his or her own observations during the Rec League season to provide ongoing training to the youth umpires.
10. Umpires with the highest rankings throughout the Recreation League season will have first priority to work playoff games.

11. Umpires will be paid at a higher rate for playoff games per the following chart.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Regular Rate</b>	<b>Playoff Rate</b>
Minors	\$20	\$30
Majors	\$20	\$30
Intermediate	\$25	\$37.50
Juniors	\$50	\$60
U8 Softball	\$20	\$30
U10 Softball	\$20	\$30
U12 Softball	\$25	\$37.50

## **SECTION 10 – SHOWCASE**

The Showcase is our winter event where players showcase their skill level. The primary goal of the showcase is to ensure fair and balanced teams. The showcase data is also used to ensure players are playing in the proper division. Play up requests are granted infrequently. Play down requests are driven based on the safety of the child athlete.

### **General**

- All Players intending to play in any baseball Division from Minors and older or any softball Division from U8 and older (“Draft Divisions”) should attend a Showcase.
- Players intending to play in the Draft Divisions who do not attend a Showcase will still be permitted to play on a MBS team but will not be eligible for consideration to play up to the next Division.
- MBS will hold two Showcases in February or March.
- The Managers of each Division will attend the Showcases for their respective Divisions and will rate each player in various baseball/softball skills. The Manager ratings will be collected at the end of the Showcase by the Player Agent and, thereafter, will only be available for review by the Board. The Board will maintain the confidentiality of the Manager ratings.
- At least two Board Members should observe all player Showcases for purposes of determining eligibility to play up as set forth in Section

### **Playing Up**

- MBS strongly encourages Players to play in the Division corresponding with his or her age as set forth in the current Cal Ripken Babe Ruth Baseball Age Chart “Baseball year” or “Softball year”.
- We expect very few players to play above his or her baseball or softball age.
- Players who have never played baseball or softball before will be placed into the Division corresponding with his or her age unless the player’s Showcase results indicate that placement in a different Division is appropriate taking into consideration the safety of the player and other players in that Division.
- Once placed into a Division, a player must play at least one season in each Division before advancing to the next Division.
- A Player may only “play up” one baseball / softball age year. If so, the year is described as “playing year”. Players are eligible to begin to showcase / play up in the Minors “8” Division and “U8” for Softball. As such, for those Divisions covering 2 years, only those Players who are in the oldest year for that Division may “play up” to the next Division. For example, only 7-year-old Players in Farm may be considered for “playing up” into Minors. Only 8 players who have played a year in minors are eligible to play up to Majors. 9-year-

old players will remain in Majors. 10-year-old players are eligible to play up to Intermediate. 11U players will remain in Intermediate. 12U players are eligible to play up to Juniors.

- Players wishing to “play up” into the next age Division may do so upon:
  1. The written request of the parent or legal guardian,
  2. Extraordinary Showcase results in the top 10% of the proposed playing year division.
  3. Need of players to balance divisions
  4. Relevant commissioner(s), Player Agent and President approval.
  5. Playing up is expected to be an infrequent event.
- Upon conclusion of the Showcase, the Player Agent will compile the list of those Players who are eligible to “play up”.

### **Playing Down**

- The option to “play down” should only be exercised when there is a concern for the safety of the Player.
- “Playing down” will render the Player ineligible for consideration for a Travel team.
- Players wishing to “play down” an age division may do so upon:
  1. The written request of the parent or legal guardian,
  2. Appropriate showcase results driven by safety concerns
  3. Relevant commissioner(s), and Player Agent approval.
- Player Agent will maintain a list of play down athletes right after the Draft. At that time, the Player Agent will notify all Parents who requested that his or her child be considered for playing up or down which Division his or her child will be assigned to and will create the Division roster for the Draft.

### **Managers**

If the child of a Manager is selected to play up or play down, that Manager can be placed in division of the “expected” outcome. In the event of an unexpected outcome, the manager will be an unofficial “4<sup>th</sup>” coach on the team.

If once all decisions regarding playing up or down are made, there remains a Manager vacancy in any Division, the Board will assign a new Manager prior to the Draft.

## **SECTION 11 DIVISION PLACEMENT / DRAFT**

1. Players in non-Draft Divisions will be assigned to a team by the Commissioner of the Division.
  - a. The Commissioner of non-Draft Divisions will give consideration to team assignment requests by Parents but will give priority to the goal of creating teams of equal strength and assuring that each team has a full complement of adult volunteers.
  - b. Siblings in non-Draft Divisions will be assigned to the same team unless a Parent requests otherwise.
2. Players in Draft Divisions will be assigned to a team pursuant to a Player draft (the "Draft").
  - a. At the start of the Draft, the Player Agent will give each Manager his or her own Showcase ratings as well as the overall ratings of each Player as compiled from all of the Manager Showcase ratings. These documents will be collected by the Player Agent upon completion of the Draft and will be destroyed. The Player Agent will also provide each Manager a copy of the Coach and Team Parent volunteers from the MBS registration system for use during the Draft.
  - b. The Commissioner of the Division will also attend the Draft and will receive a copy of the overall ratings of each Player as compiled from all the Manager Showcase ratings.
  - c. Managers will then draw numbers to determine the Draft order and will draft Players to his or her team until all Players are selected. The Draft order will be such that the Manager choosing in the last slot of the first round will have the first slot of the second round and so on (Snake Pattern).
  - d. Siblings in Draft Divisions will be assigned to the same team and will count as that Manager's pick in the current round as well as the following round.
  - e. No consideration will be given to team assignment requests by Parents as the primary purpose of the Draft is to create evenly-matched and competitive teams.
  - f. Upon the completion of the Draft, any further decisions regarding the assignment of Players to a MBS team will be made by the Division Commissioner.
  - g. The Commissioner will work with the managers prior to the start of the draft to confirm the draft position of each managers athletes. Historically first year athletes of a Manager in a division start with a 3rd round draft pick and second year athletes in a division start with a 2nd round draft pick. Players ability and experience should be factors in this determination.
  - h. Draft decisions must include Sponsors with athletes associated, 2 assistant coaches per team, and one team parent. Team names picked in reverse draft order.

## **SECTION 12 - COACHES CLINIC/ MANAGER TRAINING**

Managers and coaches are required to attend one of our annual coach's clinic held in March. Topics to be covered include equipment requirements and safety issues such as emergency first aid and CPR review given by our Safety Officer. The fundamental coaching skills and drills will be reviewed by representatives of Metuchen High School along with the Officers of Metuchen Baseball & Softball. Topics covered will include hitting, sliding, fielding, pitching and how to run an effective practice.

Our President will give a short talk on respect and any new rule changes. We will also discuss the proper behavior regarding respecting our young umpires and their decisions.

The Safety Director will ensure all background check forms are obtained from each manager and proper safety classes have been taken. Discussion regarding the proper use of our pitching machines and batting cage safety will also be noted.

## **SECTION 13 - BASEBALL DIVISION RULES**

### **Rules of General Application**

1. All players dressed for the game will bat.
2. No players shall sit out for consecutive innings
3. Each player must play a minimum of 4 innings each game.
4. Free defensive substitutions.
5. Each player must play at least 1 inning in both an infield and outfield position unless there is a safety concern with putting a player in the infield. Catchers and Pitchers are considered infielders.
6. No exceptions to the minimum playing guidelines without a written request being received by Player Agent.
7. All Managers will be required to complete and retain a schedule of each player and where they played each inning along with the pitch counts for each pitcher.
8. Violations of any of the player participation guidelines above will result in the following penalties for the Manager:
  - a. 1st - Warning
  - b. 2nd - 1 game suspension from coaching
  - c. 3rd - Prohibited from coaching for remainder of Recreation season
9. Managers or Coaches will serve as base coaches
10. Stretching and warm up drills will be performed by each team prior to start of game.
11. The Division Commissioner will have the ability to establish local game rules in addition to those rules listed below in order to ensure fair competition and proper player development throughout the season. These rules may be changed throughout the season as communicated by the Commissioner to all Managers.

### **Intermediate Division**

1. Pitching and Catching
  - a. Players are limited to pitching 3 innings per game, 6 innings per week and must adhere to pitch count and days rest as described in "Baseball Pitching and Catching Rules"
  - b. Players may not play catcher and pitcher more than 4 innings combined in a day.
2. Regulation game is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings or when official time reaches 1 hour and 50 minutes.

### **Majors Division**

1. Pitching and Catching

- a. Players are limited to pitching 2 innings per game, 6 innings per week and must adhere to pitch count and days rest as described in “Baseball Pitching and Catching Rules”
  - b. Players may not play catcher and pitcher more than 4 innings combined in a day.
2. No stealing of home. One stolen base per batter. Leading is permitted after the ball crosses the plate.
3. No advancing to first on dropped third strike.
4. Runners may only advance to home after the ball has been put into play by the batter or when forced in by virtue of a base on balls.
5. Players may only take one base on an overthrow.
6. Inning ends after 3 outs or when the offensive team scores 5 runs. The last inning will be unlimited runs for both teams.
7. 10 run mercy rule after 4 full innings.
8. Regulation game is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings or when official time reaches 1 hour and 50 minutes.

### **Minors Division**

1. Pitching and Catching
  - a. Players are limited to pitching 2 innings per game, 6 innings per week and must adhere to pitch count and days rest as described in “Baseball Pitching and Catching Rules”
  - b. Players may not play catcher and pitcher more than 4 innings combined in a day.
  - c. Players pitch from 40ft or 46ft depending on ability. By May 1st, all players capable of pitching effectively at 46ft must pitch from that distance the rest of the season.
  - d. After 4 balls, a coach will pitch to the batter. If there are 1 or 2 strikes on the batter when the coach comes in to pitch, the player's count against the coach pitcher will begin with 1 strike. If there are no strikes on the batter when the coach comes in to pitch, the player's count against the coach pitcher will begin with no strikes.
  - e. When the coach is pitching, the pitcher will play the position defensively and then resume pitching to the next batter.
  - f. No walking, but a batter may take first base if hit by pitch. The decision to continue batting after being hit by a pitch is left to the batter and Manager’s discretion.
2. Inning ends after 3 outs or when the offensive team scores 5 runs. The last inning will be unlimited runs for both teams.
3. No player may advance any base on an overthrow.
4. No stealing of any base.
5. No advancing on an overthrow.
6. No advancing to first on dropped third strike.

7. 10 run mercy rule after 4 full innings.
8. Regulation game is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings or when official time reaches 1 hour and 50 minutes.

### **Baseball Pitching & Catching Rules**

1) Maximum pitches per day allowed:

- a. 11/12/13 year old's – 70 pitches per day; 3 innings per game
- b. 9/10-year old's – 55 pitches per day; 2 innings per game
- c. 8-year old's – 40 pitches per day; 2 innings per game

2) Pitchers must adhere to the maximum inning and/or pitch count as specified for the division (s)he plays in and are not allowed to pitch in both games of a doubleheader. (*A week starts on Sunday. One pitch counts as one inning.*) Pitch counts are cumulative for Recreation League and Travel Team.

3) A pitcher shall be removed in a game following two hit batters in one inning or three in a game.

4) A player who catches a certain number of innings per game may not enter the game as a pitcher:

- d. Intermediate – 4 innings
- e. Majors – 3 innings
- f. Minors – 2 innings

5) A player who throws more than a certain number of pitches per game may not enter the game as a catcher:

- g. a. Intermediate – 41 pitches
- h. b. Majors – 31 pitches
- i. c. Minors – 31 pitches

6) A pitcher may pitch on back to back days so long as he throws 20 or less pitches on the first day. The maximum pitch count for the second day includes the pitches thrown of the first day. (Example: 12-year-old throws 10 pitches on Friday may throw up to 65 pitches on Saturday)

7) Pitchers league age 14 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- j. a. If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, 4 calendar days of rest must be observed.
- k. b. If a player pitches 51 to 65 pitches in a day, 3 calendar days of rest must be observed.

- l. c. If a player pitches 35 to 50 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days of rest must be observed.
- m. d. If a player pitches 21 to 34 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day of rest must be observed.
- n. e. If a player pitches 1 to 20 pitches in a day, 0 calendar day of rest may be observed.

### **Farm Division**

1. Coaches Pitch
2. Drills for first ½ hour and then a 2 or 3 inning game
3. 5 swings and a tee is used.
4. All batters hit in each inning.
5. No stealing.
6. Runners may not advance on errors.
7. Outs recorded, bases are cleared after 3 outs, but the offensive team continues to bat until completely through the line-up.
8. On a base hit in the outfield runner may only advance to 2nd base.
9. Add double bag first base for safety.

### **T-Ball Division**

1. Drills for 45 minutes and then a 2 or 3 inning game.
2. Add double bag first base for safety.
3. All batters hit in each inning.
4. No stealing.
5. Runners may not advance on errors.
6. No outs recreationorded. Offensive team continues to bat until completely through the line-up.
7. On a base hit in the outfield runner may only advance to 2nd base.
8. Coaches may pitch at the Manager's discretion. The goal is to allow players who are able to hit without a T to do so while keeping the game moving at a reasonable pace.

## **SECTION 14 – SOFTBALL DIVISION RULES**

### **U12 Softball**

1. Each player must play a minimum of 4 innings each game in a six-inning game.
2. No player will sit out for consecutive innings and no player may sit more than one inning in a game unless all players have sat one time
3. “Cinderella” batting is in effect. All girls in attendance at the game and in uniform will bat whether they play the field in that inning unless they are injured or unable to play
4. Each player must play the infield and outfield for one inning each game (Minimum 4 inning game). Catchers and Pitchers are considered infield positions.
5. Players are limited to pitching 3 innings in one game and a maximum of 6 innings in 2 consecutive games.
6. Pitchers may re-enter the pitching position after moving to another fielding position.
7. Pitching – If 2 hit-by-pitches in inning, the pitcher is removed from the inning at umpire’s discretion (safety rule). Third HBP in game, pitcher is removed at umpire’s discretion.
8. Inning over after 3 outs or 5 runs have been scored. Last inning is unlimited runs
9. Speed up rule for catchers on base with 2 outs, to put on gear, who will catch the next inning. Player who made last out shall occupy the base
10. Pitching distance is 40 feet.
11. There is no pitch count required.
12. A Maximum of 10 players may be on the field, and the game can be started with a minimum of 7 players.
13. Second year U10 players can be called up when there are 8 players anticipated for a game, to prevent a forfeit.
14. Season should start with a call up list and players can be added as season progresses
15. Coaches are allowed in the first base and third base coaches’ boxes only.
16. Rotating call up list kept by U-10 and U-12 Commissioners.
17. An effort should be made to give all call up eligible players
18. For the playoffs call up order should be drawn in random order amongst players who were part of the original call up list. This should be done by the divisional commissioner and VP of Softball
19. For inter-league games, players may be “borrowed” from other U12 teams to prevent a forfeit.
20. Stretching and warm up drills will be performed by each team prior to start of game.
21. Regulation game is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings or when official time reaches 1 hour and 50 minutes.
22. All playoff games will be six innings with no exceptions. If rain should stop the game, it will be completed at a later date.
23. Mercy rule is 10 runs, after game is official.
24. Players can steal 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or Home after the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
25. A player may attempt to advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike if there is no runner on 1B.
26. This division will use a 12” raised seam fast-pitch softball.
27. No jewelry of any kind may be worn on the field

28. Composite barrel bats may not be used on Metuchen fields
29. Injuries or extenuating circumstances aside, players must attend 50% of regular season games to be eligible to pitch in the playoffs.

### **U10 Softball**

1. Each player must play a minimum of 4 innings each game in a six-inning game.
2. No player will sit out for consecutive innings and no player may sit more than one inning in a game unless all players have sat the bench one inning
3. "Cinderella" batting is in effect. All girls in attendance at the game and in uniform will bat whether they play the field in that inning unless they are injured or unable to play
4. Add a double 1<sup>st</sup> base for safety.
5. A team will bat until the earlier of 3 outs or 5 runs
6. Unlimited runs in last inning
7. Each player must play the infield and outfield for at least one inning each game. Catchers and Pitchers are considered infielders.
8. Players are limited to pitching 3 innings in one game and a maximum of 6 innings in 2 consecutive games. Innings can be non-consecutive
9. Pitchers may re-enter the pitching position after moving to another fielding position.
10. Pitching – If 2 hit-by-pitches in inning, the pitcher is removed from the inning at umpire's discretion (safety rule). Third HBP in game, pitcher is removed at umpire's discretion.
11. Pitching distance is 35 feet. Coaches do not pitch.
12. There is no pitch count required
13. Speed up rule for catchers on base with 2 outs, to put on gear, who will catch the next inning. Player who made last out shall occupy the base
14. Coaches are allowed in the first base and third base coaches' boxes only.
15. A Maximum of 10 players may be on the field, and the game can be started with a minimum of 7 players.
16. Second year U10 players can be called up when there are 8 players anticipated for a game, to prevent a forfeit.
17. Rotating call up list kept by U-8 and U-10 Commissioners.
18. An effort should be made to give all call up eligible players
19. For the playoffs call up order should be drawn in random order amongst players who were part of the original call up list. This should be done by the divisional commissioner and VP of Softball
20. For inter-league games, players may be "borrowed" from other U12 teams to prevent a forfeit.
21. Regulation game is 6 innings. Official game is 4 innings or when official time reaches 1 hour and 50 minutes.
22. All playoff games will be six innings with no exceptions. If rain should stop the game, it will be completed at a later date.
23. Mercy rule is 10 runs after game is official.

24. Players are allowed to steal one 3<sup>rd</sup> base after the ball crosses the plate. Leading is allowed after ball crosses the plate.
25. Players cannot steal home, run must score on contact or a walk
26. Overthrow – next base plus one base (runner must stop, yet runs at own risk). Play will stop when the ball is secured within the pitching circle. If a runner is in process, the umpire will decide if the runner has passed the halfway mark on the base path, if not, then the runner will return to the previous base.
27. This division will use an 11” raised seam fast-pitch softball
28. No jewelry of any kind may be worn on the field
29. Composite barrel bats may not be used on Metuchen fields
30. Injuries or extenuating circumstances aside, players must attend 50% of regular season games to be eligible to pitch in the playoffs.

## **U8 Softball**

1. Each scheduled game time is 1 hour and 50 minutes
2. The first 6 games teams should practice drills and game situations for 1 hour followed by a 50-minute game
3. After game 6 teams should practice drills and game situations for 40 minutes followed by a 70-minute game. This will allow time for player pitching.
4. No player will sit out for consecutive innings and no player may sit more than one inning in a game unless all players have sat one time
5. No player will be infield for more than 2 consecutive innings unless that player is pitching
6. No player shall sit out or play outfield for consecutive innings
7. “Cinderella” batting is in effect. All girls in attendance at the game and in uniform will bat whether they play the field in that particular inning unless they are injured or unable to play
8. Time slots for games are limited to 1 hour and 50 minutes.
9. Add a double 1<sup>st</sup> base for safety.
10. Division is a mix of coaches and kid pitch
11. Pitching distance is 32 feet.
12. This division will use an 11-inch “incrediball” softball.
13. For the first 3 games modified U6 rules will apply. A team will bat throughout the entire batting order each inning. Players may only advance one base a t time. Batters will have five swinging strikes after which a Tee can be brought out to help the batter.
14. From the 4<sup>th</sup> game on, Umpires will call balls and strikes. Fourth strike on batter must be swinging; batter will be recorded as an out. (no tee) (no walks)
15. Coach pitch only for the first 6 games
16. After game 6, the division should introduce pitching and players will be permitted to pitch up to 2 innings per game after the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning.

17. Coaches should only pitch players who have demonstrated the ability to consistently throw strikes. A player should be able to get the ball in close proximity to the strike zone on up to 50% of pitches.
18. After 4 balls, a coach will pitch to the batter. If there are 1 or 2 strikes on the batter when the coach comes in to pitch, the player's count against the coach pitcher will begin with 1 strike. If there are no strikes on the batter when the coach comes in to pitch, the player's count against the coach pitcher will begin with no strikes. When the coach is pitching, the pitcher will play the position defensively and then resume pitching to the next batter. In-season pitching skills clinics may be utilized to advance player-pitching development.
19. If a player pitches four balls to three batters or hits 2 batters, the coach will pitch the rest of the inning.
20. Second year U6 players can be called up when there are fewer than 9 players anticipated for a game
21. Rotating call up list kept by U-6 and U-8 Commissioners.
22. An effort should be made to give all call up eligible players
23. When players pitch hitter is out after three strikes. The third strike can be swinging or called.
24. No walking, but a batter may take first base if hit by pitch. The decision to continue batting after being hit by a pitch is left to the batter and coaches discretion.
25. Coach allowed on the field as a pitcher and as back up to the catcher (speed up rule).
26. Players cannot steal bases.
27. The game can be started with a minimum of five players.
28. Runners cannot advance on an overthrow
29. After game 3, on balls hit to the outfield, runners may advance until the ball is controlled in infield. If runner is not halfway to next base when ball is controlled of the infield the runner must return to the previous base
30. Scorebooks will be kept tracking outs and runs
31. The umpire's decision is final. There are no protests of umpire calls.
32. No jewelry of any kind may be worn on the field
33. Coaches allowed on field to help players
34. Composite barrel bats may not be used on Metuchen fields

### **U6- Softball (Pony Division)**

1. Players to have equal opportunity at all positions.
2. Players to have equal opportunity at all positions.
3. Minimum of 2 innings for each game.
4. Time slots for games are limited to 1 hour and 30 minutes.
5. Players will play entire game.
6. All players at the game will bat in every inning.
7. Add a double 1<sup>st</sup> base for safety.
8. Coach pitch, with Tee option

9. Batters will have three swinging strikes after which a Tee will be brought out for the batter.
10. Coaches will pitch and catch for games.
11. Pitching distance will be based on batter's ability and skill.
12. The game can be started with a minimum of four players.
13. Players cannot steal bases.
14. Runners cannot advance on an overthrow.
15. This division will use an 11-inch "incrediball" softball.
16. No jewelry of any kind may be worn on the field
17. Composite barrel bats may not be used on Metuchen fields

## **SECTION 15 – CALL UP LIST**

- At the conclusion of the second week of League games, each Manager will notify the Player Agent and Commissioner of those players on his or her team who should be included on a Call Up List.
- Players placed on the Call Up List will be eligible to play in games in the next age Division on an as-needed basis to ensure teams in the older Division have enough players for each game.
- No Player on the Call Up List may be called up more than once until all other Players on the Call Up List have been afforded an opportunity to play as a Call Up.
- This program will be in place for Farm to Minors, Minors to Majors and Majors to Intermediate Divisions.
- There will be no call ups from the Intermediate to Juniors Divisions.
- Players must be one age level lower to be called up. For example, 7 for Minors, 8 for Majors, and 10 for Intermediate.
- A player may not play in an older Division game which conflicts with a game scheduled for the player's primary MBS team.

## **SECTION 16 - PLAYOFFS**

- Final standings will be based on the teams winning percentage.
- All Draft Divisions excepting Minors baseball and 8U softball will have a playoff to determine a League champion at the end of the regular season.
- Playoffs will be single elimination. Seeding will be based upon regular season records with the top seeded team playing the lowest seeded team.
- The higher seed will be the home team.
- Participation rules will remain in effect during playoff games.
- No time limit rule applies in all division playoff games. All games are to be played to conclusion (daylight & safety permitting).
- Softball Only - Playoff seeding to be determined based on standings from Metuchen vs Metuchen games. Interleague games do not count towards final standings.

## **SECTION 17 - BUDDY BALL**

MBS shall support a separately organized local Buddy Ball organization designed for those individuals who have special needs. MBS' support of the local Buddy Ball organization may include any activities as may be approved by the Board including, without limitation, maintenance of such organization's funds and provision of volunteers for such organization's games and activities.

Buddy Ball participates in the opening day parade, and we assist in food and drink preparation in the Buddy Ball Day/Picnic.

Youth volunteers in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or older may assist in the Buddy Ball Baseball Picnic day with a Buddy.

Buddy Ball is currently run by Bob Donahue.

## **SECTION 18 – TRAVEL TEAMS**

### **Baseball**

Metuchen will look to sponsor one or more travel teams for the following ages: 7U, 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U, 12U and 13-15. For each season, the number of teams for each age will be determined by the number of committed players and coaching volunteers. Travel team rosters will be comprised of 12-15 players, 3 coaches and 1 manager.

### **General Eligibility**

Baseball is designed to be a program for all children, regardless of talent or ability. Travel Baseball is available only to a small percentage of children who, through selection process and exposure to the coaching staff, are chosen as the best candidates to represent MBS in games against teams from surrounding areas.

While it would seem obvious that the best baseball players would make the Travel Team, this is not always the case. The selection process involves the evaluation of many tangibles and intangibles. Some of these include:

**Baseball talent and ability:** The primary criteria for selection to a Travel Team.

**Eligibility:** Any player on a Travel team must be enrolled, and be an active participant, in the MBS spring recreation program.

**Coachability:** If a child has shown an inability to follow direction, lacks focus, or has been a behavioral problem, they might not be selected, even if they are one of the best players in the division. Conversely, a child who shows a strong willingness to learn and improve, but is not one of the top players, might be selected.

**Sportsmanship:** A child who has exhibited a lack of sportsmanship towards his/her teammates, opponents, coaches or parents may be excluded from consideration. Additionally, if a parent has exhibited a lack of sportsmanship toward players, coaches, other parents or umpires, their child may be excluded from consideration.

**Commitment:** If a child has shown prior disregard for practice and/or game dates they might not be selected, even if they are one of the best players in the division.

**Availability:** Travel Baseball is primarily a summer program but has grown to spring and fall. If a child's family goes away for one or more weeks during the summer, they might not be selected.

### **Travel Seasons**

The Travel Program is divided into three (3) seasons: Spring, Summer, and Fall.

### **Spring Travel Season**

The Spring Travel season begins the same time as the recreation season. Travel games do not conflict with in-house games and will be primarily scheduled on Sundays. Recreation practices and games take precedence over travel practices and games. Spring Travel is competitive, but development is primary focus.

### **Summer Travel /Tournament Season**

The Summer Travel season begins almost immediately after the completion of the Recreation Season usually the on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. The summer travel/tournament season is the most competitive season of play.

### **Fall Travel Season**

At the discretion of the Travel Coaching Staff, a Travel Team may play a Fall Travel schedule. Sometimes, it is the choice of the Travel Coach to take the Fall season off, and to work on fundamentals. This is the most relaxed season that focuses on development. This season plays at the next baseball year and therefore is the first season a player plays with new age/division rules.

### **Summer Travel/Tournament**

#### **Eligibility**

- Players must meet the residency rules of Metuchen Baseball & Softball (“MBS”) as established by Babe Ruth Inc. Players must be registered in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.
- Since the team roster is reserved for players who have excelled during the regular season, players must have participated in a minimum of 60% of the regular season games of their team. If injury or extenuating circumstances caused a player to a significant number of games during the rec season an exception may be made.
- Players may only participate on teams of their respective age group unless extenuating circumstances warrant an exception approved by the Commissioner(s), applicable Baseball or Softball Vice President, and President.
- Once the exception is granted, the younger player will play on the older age group’s team and not switch between teams for certain tournaments.
- Players in the baseball program should declare MBS as his or her first priority over any other sport or postseason program.

#### **Availability**

- Players must commit to being available to play or practice from the end of the MBS season until the end of July. The post-season will begin on or about June 15 and run through July 31. If a family is going on vacation for a total of 7 days or more during this period, the player should not be nominated.
- Prior to nominating a player, the manager MUST contact the player’s family and explain the tournament team time commitment and receive approval from the family that their child is prepared to make the necessary time commitment to participate on the tournament team. Parents need to confirm the availability and commitment to the team prior to nominating a player.

## **Ability**

The top performing players for each age group should be considered for the team. Throughout the season, managers should observe players from other teams who may be nominated as well as identify potential nominees from their team to opposing managers.

## **Teams**

Teams will be selected for baseball U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U13, and U14 and softball U8, U10, and U12.

- Junior division managers vote for the U13 and U14 teams. In the event there is a Junior's District Team, the Team can be comprised of both U14 & U13 players.
- Intermediate division managers vote for the U11 and U12 teams.
- Major division managers vote for the U9 and U10 teams.
- Minor division managers vote for the U8.
- Softball Major Division managers vote for the Parkway U12 team.
- Softball 10U division managers vote for the Parkway U10 team. g. Softball 8U division managers vote for the Parkway U8 team.

## **Player Selection Process**

1. Register on the website and select the desired season(s) to play travel baseball after being nominated.
2. Managers must bring signed nomination forms to the draft- no exceptions.
3. Each baseball team will have up to a 12-player roster, 14 for softball and Junior with no alternates.
4. If the 8-year-old team cannot fill its roster with players from that age group, the roster can be completed with players from 7-year-olds.
5. After determining that the roster cannot be filled, nominations from the younger age group can be brought forward and considered for selection.
6. All players nominated from the older age group will be placed on the team before filling in with younger players.
7. The regular season team managers will vote from the nominated pool of players to fill the team. If a division has less than 4 teams, a selection committee will be comprised of the division managers plus a combination of the division commissioners, coaches, and/or volunteers. The President and Player Agent will determine the members of the selection committee.
8. Prior to the vote for an age group, each of the age group's managers will be given an opportunity to advocate for players he/she feels have earned an opportunity to participate in Tournament team games based upon their level of play during the regular season.
9. Pay all player fees and uniform costs prior to the start of that travel season

## **Voting**

1. If 10 or 11 (12 or 13 for softball) players are unanimously selected on the first ballot, a team manager is announced, and a second ballot will be taken.

2. Players unanimously selected on the second ballot will be added to the team. Players not receiving 30% of the votes will be eliminated from the pool of players available for a third ballot or managers selection. After the second ballot, the team manager may select the final player(s) or allow the division managers or selection committee to vote on the final position(s).
3. If less than 10 (12 for softball) players are unanimously selected on the first ballot, a second ballot will be taken to fill the team roster. Players who were not unanimously selected on the first ballot, but who receive votes on the first ballot will be eligible for the second ballot. Players who did not receive votes on the first ballot will be eliminated from the pool.
4. Players unanimously selected on the second ballot will be added to the team. Players receiving less than 30% of the votes will be eliminated from the pool for the third ballot and/or the manager selection.
5. If after the second ballot, the entire team roster has not been unanimously selected; a final ballot shall be taken. The player(s) receiving the most votes in the 3rd ballot will be added to the team.
6. In the event of a tie for the remaining team positions, the Player Agent shall vote to break the tie unless the Player Agent is participating in that age group's selection process as a manager, in which event the President shall cast the tie-breaking vote. If both shall be participating in that age group's selection process as managers, then the Vice-President shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
7. The names of the remaining players receiving votes for Tournament team selection shall be placed in a pool from which Tournament team replacements will be made. The Player Agent will maintain the list of replacement players.

#### **Other**

1. Penalties for missing games or practices for reasons other than health issues or preapproved family conflicts: Second missed game, suspended for next two games. Three or more missed games, suspended for remaining tournament games. The Player Agent may issue exceptions to these penalties.
2. Should a replacement player be needed, the Player Agent and President will select the player from the replacement pool who had received the highest number of votes.
3. Once the required numbers of players have been elected to each of the team rosters, the Tournament committee will select the Tournament team managers. Each Tournament team manager will then select their coaches based upon a list of eligible coaches provided by the Tournament committee.
4. Tournament team managers are not permitted to participate in any other postseason programs outside of MBS.
5. The MBS Officers will review all tournament team voting. Any manager, or group of managers, who conspire to 'fix' or attempt to unfairly influence the Tournament team selection process, as determined by the MBS Board of Directors, will be permanently banned from participating in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.

6. The Board of Metuchen Baseball & Softball retains the right to correct any errors it identifies in the above guidelines even it results in the previously defined guidelines being usurped.

## **Spring and Fall Travel Baseball**

### **Eligibility / Availability**

1. Eligibility begins with being nominated from the prior Summer Tournament Season
2. Players must meet the residency rules of Metuchen Baseball & Softball (“MBS”) as established by Babe Ruth Inc. Players must be registered in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.
3. Since the team roster is reserved for players who have excelled during the regular season, players must have participated in a minimum of 60% of the regular season games of their team.
4. Players may only participate on teams of their respective age group unless extenuating circumstances warrant an exception approved by the Commissioner(s), applicable Baseball or Softball Vice President, and President. Players wishing to play one year above their league age must note this during registration
5. Once the exception is granted, the younger player will play on the older age group’s team and not switch between teams for certain games and tournaments.
6. A Player on a MBS Travel Team who misses a Recreation League game due to a Travel team practice or game will be not be considered to have attended the Spring League game for purposes of meeting this 60% requirement.
7. A Player who was not eligible to play on a MBS Recreation League team the previous Recreation League season but will play on a MBS Recreation League team the following Recreation League season (such as new town residents) may petition the Board for a waiver.
8. Register on the website and select the desired season(s) to play travel baseball
9. Pay all player fees and uniform costs prior to the start of that travel season. Exceptions and/or alternate arrangements will be considered where a financial hardship exists.
10. Commit to missing no more than four of the travel games for Spring and/or Fall
11. Notify coaches of other extracurricular activities that may interfere with play time

### **Teams**

Teams will be selected for baseball U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U13, and U14 and softball U8, U10, and U12.

### **Baseball Player Selection**

1. The player agent will communicate via e-mail the organization of the Spring and Fall Travel Season.
2. If there are enough interested players the league will select and allocate players first to the Blue team and then to the White Team at the discretion of the Board.

3. No players who are selected for the Blue team are permitted to play for the white team. The Blue team will begin to assemble with the top 12 nominees for summer and can expand to up to 15 for spring and fall travel seasons.
4. If there are at least 24 players who meet the eligibility requirements on the list for an age group and 8 committed coaches/managers, then two teams may be designated for the selection process with board approval.
5. The Blue team manager selects the first 12 players. The Manager of the white team selects the next 12 players based on current year showcase scores and or current year nomination ranking from the Summer Season.
6. Teams will be developed from oldest to youngest to ensure any player playing above baseball age is placed on the appropriate team.

## **Softball**

Metuchen will look to sponsor one or more travel teams for the following ages: 14U, 12U, 10U, and 8U. For each season, the number of teams for each age will be determined by the number of committed players and coaching volunteers. Travel team rosters will be comprised of 12-15 players, 3 coaches and 1 manager.

### **General Eligibility**

Softball is designed to be a program for all children, regardless of talent or ability. Travel Baseball is available only to a small percentage of children who, through selection process and exposure to the coaching staff, are chosen as the best candidates to represent MBS in games against teams from surrounding areas.

While it would seem obvious that the best softball players would make the Travel Team, this is not always the case. The selection process involves the evaluation of many tangibles and intangibles. Some of these include:

**Softball talent and ability:** The primary criteria for selection to a Travel Team.

**Eligibility:** Any player on a Travel team must be enrolled, and be an active participant, in the MBS spring recreation program.

**Coachability:** If a child has shown an inability to follow direction, lacks focus, or has been a behavioral problem, they might not be selected, even if they are one of the best players in the division. Conversely, a child who shows a strong willingness to learn and improve, but is not one of the top players, might be selected.

**Sportsmanship:** A child who has exhibited a lack of sportsmanship towards his/her teammates, opponents, coaches or parents may be excluded from consideration. Additionally, if a parent has exhibited a lack of sportsmanship toward players, coaches, other parents or umpires, their child may be excluded from consideration.

**Commitment:** If a child has shown prior disregard for practice and/or game dates they might not be selected, even if they are one of the best players in the division.

**Availability:** Travel Softball is primarily a summer program but has grown to spring and fall. If a child's family goes away for one or more weeks during the summer, they might not be selected.

### **Travel Seasons**

The Travel Program is divided into three (3) seasons: Spring, Summer, and Fall.

#### **Spring Travel Season**

The Spring Travel season begins the same time as the recreation season. Travel games do not conflict with in-house games and will be primarily scheduled on Sundays. Recreation practices

and games take precedence over travel practices and games. Spring Travel is competitive, but development is primary focus.

### **Summer Travel /Tournament Season**

Typically, tournament teams are selected in late May with practices starting in early June.

### **Fall Travel Season**

At the discretion of the Travel Coaching Staff, a Travel Team may play a Fall Travel schedule. Sometimes, it is the choice of the Travel Coach to take the Fall season off, and to work on fundamentals. This is the most relaxed season that focuses on development. This season plays at the next baseball year and therefore is the first season a player plays with new age/division rules.

There are cases where a player will not advance in age group during the fall season and play with the same level they participated in during the Spring season. This decision will be made by the Managers, Player Agent, and VP of Softball and will be determined by skill and total number of athletes registered in each division.

### **Summer Travel/Tournament**

#### **Eligibility**

- Players must meet the residency rules of Metuchen Baseball & Softball (“MBS”) as established by Babe Ruth Inc. Players must be registered in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.
- Since the team roster is reserved for players who have excelled during the regular season, players must have participated in a minimum of 60% of the regular season games of their team. If injury or extenuating circumstances caused a player to a significant number of games during the rec season an exception may be made.
- Players may only participate on teams of their respective age group unless extenuating circumstances warrant an exception approved by the Commissioner(s), applicable Softball Vice President, and President.
- Once the exception is granted, the younger player will play on the older age group’s team and not switch between teams for certain tournaments.
- Players in the softball program should declare MBS as his or her first priority over any other sport or postseason program.

#### **Availability**

- Players must commit to being available to play or practice from the end of the MBS season until the end of July. The post-season will begin on or about June 15 and run through July 31. If a family is going on vacation for a total of 7 days or more during this period, the player should not be nominated.
- Prior to nominating a player, the manager MUST contact the player’s family and explain the tournament team time commitment and receive approval from the family that their child is prepared to make the necessary time commitment to participate on the tournament team. Parents need to confirm the availability and commitment to the team prior to nominating a player

## **Ability**

The top performing players for each age group should be considered for the team. Throughout the season, managers should observe players from other teams who may be nominated as well as identify potential nominees from their team to opposing managers.

## **Teams**

Teams will be selected for softball U8, U10, U12, and U14 divisions

- Since there is no U14 Commissioner, the U14 team will be selected by the U14 manager with approval from Player Agent and VP Softball
- U12 Managers vote on U12 Team
- U10 Managers vote on U10 Teams
- U8 Managers vote on U8 Team

## **Player Selection Process**

10. Register on the website and select the desired season(s) to play travel baseball after being nominated.
11. Managers must bring signed nomination forms to the draft- no exceptions.
12. Each softball roster will have between 12-14 players at managers discretion
13. After determining that the roster cannot be filled, nominations from the younger age group can be brought forward and considered for selection.
14. All players nominated from the older age group will be placed on the team before filling in with younger players.
15. The regular season team managers will vote from the nominated pool of players to fill the team. If a division has less than 4 teams, a selection committee will be comprised of the division managers plus a combination of the division commissioners, coaches, and/or volunteers. The President and Player Agent will determine the members of the selection committee.
16. Prior to the vote for an age group, each of the age group's managers will be given an opportunity to advocate for players he/she feels have earned an opportunity to participate in Tournament team games based upon their level of play during the regular season.
17. Pay all player fees and uniform costs prior to the start of that travel season

## **Voting**

8. If 10 or 11 (12 or 13 for softball) players are unanimously selected on the first ballot, a team manager is announced, and a second ballot will be taken.
9. Players unanimously selected on the second ballot will be added to the team. Players not receiving 30% of the votes will be eliminated from the pool of players available for a third ballot or managers selection. After the second ballot, the team manager may select the final player(s) or allow the division managers or selection committee to vote on the final position(s).
10. If less than 12 players are unanimously selected on the first ballot, a second ballot will be taken to fill the team roster. Players who were not unanimously selected on the first

ballot, but who receive votes on the first ballot will be eligible for the second ballot. Players who did not receive votes on the first ballot will be eliminated from the pool.

11. Players unanimously selected on the second ballot will be added to the team. Players receiving less than 30% of the votes will be eliminated from the pool for the third ballot and/or the manager selection.
12. If after the second ballot, the entire team roster has not been unanimously selected; a final ballot shall be taken. The player(s) receiving the most votes in the 3rd ballot will be added to the team.
13. In the event of a tie for the remaining team positions, the Player Agent shall vote to break the tie unless the Player Agent is participating in that age group's selection process as a manager, in which event the President shall cast the tie-breaking vote. If both shall be participating in that age group's selection process as managers, then the Vice-President shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
14. The names of the remaining players receiving votes for Tournament team selection shall be placed in a pool from which Tournament team replacements will be made. The Player Agent will maintain the list of replacement players.

#### **Other**

7. Penalties for missing games or practices for reasons other than health issues or preapproved family conflicts: Second missed game, suspended for next two games. Three or more missed games, suspended for remaining tournament games. The Player Agent may issue exceptions to these penalties.
8. Should a replacement player be needed, the Player Agent and President will select the player from the replacement pool who had received the highest number of votes.
9. Once the required numbers of players have been elected to each of the team rosters, the Tournament committee will select the Tournament team managers. Each Tournament team manager will then select their coaches based upon a list of eligible coaches provided by the Tournament committee.
10. Tournament team managers are not permitted to participate in any other postseason programs outside of MBS.
11. The MBS Officers will review all tournament team voting. Any manager, or group of managers, who conspire to 'fix' or attempt to unfairly influence the Tournament team selection process, as determined by the MBS Board of Directors, will be permanently banned from participating in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.
12. The Board of Metuchen Baseball & Softball retains the right to correct any errors it identifies in the above guidelines even it results in the previously defined guidelines being usurped.

#### **Spring and Fall Travel Baseball**

##### **Eligibility / Availability**

12. Eligibility begins with being nominated from the prior Summer Tournament Season
13. Players must meet the residency rules of Metuchen Baseball & Softball ("MBS") as established by Babe Ruth Inc. Players must be registered in Metuchen Baseball & Softball.

14. Since the team roster is reserved for players who have excelled during the regular season, players must have participated in a minimum of 60% of the regular season games of their team.
15. Players may only participate on teams of their respective age group unless extenuating circumstances warrant an exception approved by the Commissioner(s), applicable Baseball or Softball Vice President, and President. Players wishing to play one year above their league age must note this during registration
16. Once the exception is granted, the younger player will play on the older age group's team and not switch between teams for certain games and tournaments.
17. A Player on a MBS Travel Team who misses a Recreation League game due to a Travel team practice or game will be not be considered to have attended the Spring League game for purposes of meeting this 60% requirement.
18. A Player who was not eligible to play on a MBS Recreation League team the previous Recreation League season but will play on a MBS Recreation League team the following Recreation League season (such as new town residents) may petition the Board for a waiver.
19. Register on the website and select the desired season(s) to play travel baseball
20. Pay all player fees and uniform costs prior to the start of that travel season. Exceptions and/or alternate arrangements will be considered where a financial hardship exists.
21. Commit to missing no more than four of the travel games for Spring and/or Fall
22. Notify coaches of other extracurricular activities that may interfere with play time

## SECTION 19 – POSITIVE COACHING

### POSITIVE COACHING: 14 WAYS TO KEEP YOUTH SPORTS POSITIVE

1. **C**oncentrate on positives.
2. **O**ver Teach
3. **A**mplify successes.
4. **C**ompliment specifics.
5. **H**ave fun.
6. Instill laughter.
7. **N**ever presume anything.
8. **G**et into their shoes. Empathize.
9. **S**et an example of good sportsmanship.
10. **P**romote team spirit.
11. **O**rganize to avoid confusion.
12. **R**ecognize progress.
13. **T**each and assess skills.
14. **S**et reasonable expectations.

Here's a list of 14 ways to measure how you're doing as a "Positive" Coach.

#### **1. Concentrate on positives.**

It seems obvious, but sometimes, unless a coach makes a deliberate effort to look for positives, that coach can fall into the "criticism trap." It has been estimated that employers in the workplace miss 83% of the positive things going on in the workplace because they're focusing on negative issues, and problem behaviors. When we come to the practice field or the game, it's important for us to avoid the criticism trap. We've got to gear ourselves to catch the kids doing well. We've got to keep at least 4-1 ratio of positives to negatives. Research shows that if kids hear positives about themselves, it helps promote self-esteem.

#### **2. Over Teach**

Most kids are not one-trial learners. That's why it's important to 1) repeat instructions; 2) use "what if" scenarios (e.g., "There's a man on first. The ball is hit to right field between first and second. Where does the right fielder throw the ball?") over and over; and 3) get the kids to practice, practice, practice.

#### **3. Amplify Successes**

Kids respond to action, commotion, and emotion. That's why it's important to use lots of animation when noticing positive behaviors. Unfortunately, many coaches tend to show more animation when negative behaviors occur.

#### **4. Compliment Specifics**

Kids remember specifics. “Good game!” is less likely to register with a kid than “That’s the way to hit the cut-off man!” Unfortunately, coaches are often more specific in their corrections than in their praise. As a result, kids often tend to recall negative memories from youth sports coaches.

#### **5. Have Fun**

When I was coaching a AA team many years ago, one of my more “relaxed” players had his own mantra when he found himself, or his teammates, getting upset in practice or a game: “After all is said and done, Having Fun is #1.” Interestingly, his idea of fun was not just “fun and games.” He said he kept having fun because he was getting better and learning skills. If we coaches keep it “light” while continuing to teach skills, we’re helping the kids have fun.

#### **6. Instill Laughter**

That same player was struggling as a pitcher one game. He started off the first inning walking every batter until the team had 5 runs and, mercifully, the “5 run” rule applied, and we came in to bat. The teammates were hanging their heads as they entered the dugout. The pitcher came up to me, smiled, and said, “I’m glad we’ve got the 5 run rule. I’d a been out there ‘til tomorrow!” He laughed, the team laughed, and we got on with the game. Laughter can be a great stress reducer. A good coach keeps a sense of humor, doesn’t take himself/herself too seriously, and helps the kids relax.

#### **7. Never Presume Anything**

I remember when I was coaching t-ball. As I gave instructions to an outfielder to “hit the cut-off man”, he proceeded to walk over “hit” the cut-off man, on the arm. A good coach knows not to presume anything when communicating with the players, especially the younger ones, and will ask the players to repeat an instruction. A good coach uses as many senses as possible when teaching a skill: visual walk-through examples of base-running, hitting, fielding, etc.; erase boards to highlight issues; “what if” quiz games, etc.

#### **8. Get Into Their Shoes. Empathize.**

One thing that separates adults from kids is the ability to empathize, to see the world as a child sees it. So, as the season progresses, a good coach tries to look at any “problems” in youth sports through the eyes of the youth leaguer. For the very young, it’s often the first time they’ve had to “take turns.” For others, it’s a matter of playing only because parents need a baby sitter. For some, there are behavior issues, or family issues, or low self-esteem. A coach is not expected to be a therapist but should at least not take a player’s “problem behaviors” personally.

### **9. Set an Example of Good Sportsmanship**

A good coach leads by example, when it comes to sportsmanship: 1) winning without gloating; 2) losing without complaining; and 3) showing respect for opponents, teammates, and officials. A good coach expects his parents and players to be good sports. A good coach is intolerant of any “bullying.”

### **10. Promote Team Spirit**

A good coach works hard to get players to think “we” instead of “me.” Often the better athletes on the team receive most of the adulation, while the rest of the players are expected to stand by and cheer. A good coach will 1) teach the more gifted athletes to work with the less gifted, cheering them on, not belittling them; 2) encourage parents to cheer for all the team members, not just the “stars;” 3) spread out his “game ball” awards to notice all players on his team over the season; and 4) encourage positive nicknames for each player.

### **11. Organize to Avoid Confusion**

Kids learn better with structure and consistency. A good coach will spell out expected behaviors at practice and games, along with consequences (positive and negative) for behaviors. All coaches on the team need to be on the same page. A good coach is pro-active and has equipment ready beforehand at practice and games. Practices keep standing-around time to a minimum, with rotating “stations.” Positions and batting order for game are listed for all to see.

### **12. Recognize Progress**

Many young players play the “compare” game, comparing themselves with the other players on the team (“I’m not as fast...” “I can’t hit...” “I can’t throw as hard...” as my teammates.”) A good coach teaches players to compare themselves with themselves, noticing their progress in “getting better” in terms of frequency (“good stuff” is happening more often), duration (“good stuff” is lasting longer), and intensity (putting more energy into the “good stuff.”)

### **13. Teach and Assess Skills**

There are two ways that athletes are motivated. 1) Ego. “I’m only as good as the opponent I defeat. Every time I lose I’m a loser. There’s no place for second place.” 2) Task Mastery. “I’m as good as the skills I continue to develop regardless of the outcome of the event.” Athletes motivated only by ego tend to drop out of sports as they come up against tougher, more talented opponents. Athletes motivated by skill development are more likely to continue in sports. The goal of youth sports is to keep the kids coming back. A good coach, who emphasizes the development of skills (physical, mental, emotional), increases the likelihood that youngsters will continue to play youth sports.

#### **14. Set Reasonable Expectations**

Many youngsters drop out of youth sports because they feel they can't live up to the expectations of adults. A good coach teaches to the developmental level of youngsters, expecting age appropriate skills in the areas of concentration, coordination, dedication, and motivation.

One final note: Positive coaching in youth sports is an ongoing process. Accordingly, these 14 items are meant as a "blueprint", not a "scorecard."

**SECTION 20 - SAFETY PLAN & ACCIDENT REPORT**

A separate safety plan document will be maintained by the Safety Director. The safety plan will be updated annually in the Fall Season and includes the accident report.

## SECTION 21 - FIELD MAINTENANCE

### Base Paths

It is best to maintain as much of the base paths by hand as possible. Use a drag that is narrower than the width of the base paths. Make sure that the drag does not overlap the grass area to prevent the formation of a “lip” or ridge at the edge of the grass.

Prior to raking the base path, remove any white chalk material with a shovel. This will keep the clay more stable and not cause a hump, or raised area, down in the middle of the baseline. Rakes should also be used on the base paths. When raking the base paths, do not rake across the path, but go up and down the baseline. Raking across the path can cause a low spot to develop down the middle of the path.

Weeds in the base paths should be removed by hand. When raking the base paths, **do not rake across the path**. Rake up and down along the length of the path.

### Infield Skin

Infield Skin are the areas on a field composed of clay, such as base paths, pitcher’s mound and home plate area. These areas are composed of infield mix, also called infield clay.

The following is a suggested method to properly maintain the skinned areas of the infield:

- Rake excess dirt from underneath each base area to make it level.
- Remove any debris, including grass clippings, rocks, weeds, etc.
- Water the skinned area to allow the infield to be nail dragged. If the skinned area is already moist, this step can be skipped.
- Nail drag the infield.
- Add soil conditioner and spread with a rake.
- Screen or drag the infield.
- Water infield as needed to ensure desired moisture levels.

While maintaining the infield, the drags should be kept at least 6 inches away from the grass so that the loose dirt does not get into the grass thus forming a “lip,” or ridge, in the grass edge. A regular rake should be used along the grass edge. Should dirt get into the grass edge, a stiff brush broom should be used to “sweep out” the dirt back onto the skinned area, removing any grass clippings that may be swept onto the skinned area in the process.

Anytime a “lip” begins to develop where the grass and dirt area meet, use a water hose to wash the dirt out of the grass and back onto the skinned area.

To drag the infield skinned area, make a spiraling circle with the drag mat from the infield grass line to the outfield grass, starting at the third base foul line, across the skinned area to the first base foul line. This circular spiral should measure 9-10 ft. in diameter. **Start from the outside and work towards the pitcher’s mound.**

Edging the field should be done on a bi-weekly basis during the growing season. This will greatly reduce built-up edges. Always use a string line when edging the turf.

### **Pitcher's Mound, Home Plate and Bullpen Areas**

During every game, damage occurs to the pitcher's mound and home plate areas. Regular, proper maintenance will reduce time and money needed to rebuild and renovate these areas. It is also critical to maintain these areas properly to reduce the potential for injury.

The following is a suggested method to properly maintain the pitcher's mound and home plate areas on the field and in the bullpen areas:

1. Sweep debris material from the landing area and table of the mound. This allows the packing clay to be exposed. The landing area is the location on which the pitcher steps to pivot and throw. The table is the area at the top of the mound, measuring 36 inches by 5 feet.
2. Tamp any uneven packing clay level prior to watering.
3. Using a small roller can provide consistency in the mound and home plate areas.
4. Lightly moisten the clay to ensure new packing clay will bind to the existing clay.
5. Scuff-up, or loosen, damaged areas with a shovel.
6. Add new packing clay to the damaged areas.
7. Tamp newly installed packing clay into the ground.
8. Rake down the newly repaired areas.
9. Rake all debris from the pitcher's mound.
10. Add soil conditioner (if needed.)
11. Water the entire pitcher's mound.
12. Allow the mound to dry; however, do not allow the packing clay to dry too much to the point of cracking.
13. Once the pitcher's mound is completely prepared for the game, cover it with a tarp to maintain a proper moisture level. Repeat this process for the home plate, mound and in the bullpen areas.

In some cases, clay bricks are used to establish a firm throwing area. These bricks are a very acceptable material because they have not been hardened by heat, like bricks used in construction.

## Daily Field Maintenance Checklist

<b>Daily Routine before Practice:</b>	✓
Remove tarps	
Water skinned areas and baselines	
Install the bases	

<b>Daily Routine after Practice and Games:</b>	✓
Remove the bases and cover the base anchor sleeves	
Drag the skinned areas and baselines	
Recondition the mound, home plate area, cover with tarps	
Recondition the bull pen mound and home plate area	
Replace and tamp any loose divots in turf areas	
Dispose of trash in and around field and bleacher areas	

<b>Daily Routine after Practice and Games:</b>	✓
Remove the bases and cover the base anchor sleeves	
Drag the skinned areas and baselines	
Recondition the mound, home plate area, cover with tarps	
Recondition the bull pen mound and home plate area	
Replace and tamp any loose divots in turf areas	
Dispose of trash in and around field and bleacher areas	

<b>Day of Game Routine:</b>	✓
Remove tarpaulins	
Mow the grass	
Scarify the skinned areas with a spiker	
Drag the skinned areas smooth	
Water the infield area	
Sweep and clean dugouts	
Set the chalk lines and mark officially	
Paint or wash bases, pitching plate and home plate	
Check the operation of the field lights and scoreboard	
Prepare the press box and operation of the p.a. system	
Check the operation in the concession stand	
Dispose of trash found in and around field and bleacher areas	

## Field Tools, Equipment, and Materials Checklist

<b>Tools, Equipment, and Materials</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>✓</b>
Push Chalker	1	
Base hole covers	3	
Batter's box outline frame	1	
Push broom	1	
Drag	1	
Edge cutting shovel	1	
Outfield Line marker	1	
Garden Rake	1	
Infield rakes	3	
Garden Shovel	1	
String line	1	
Tamp	1	
Tarpaulins	2	
Watering equipment - hoses, nozzles	1	
Wheelbarrow	1	
<b>Materials</b>		
Line marking material bags	3	
Mound clay bags	2	
Infield Mix pile	1	
Charged Tractor Battery (charger in clubhouse)	1	
Other Tractor Maintenance / Supplies	1	