



Town of Clarence Baseball Association

***SPORTSMANSHIP and FUN!
Keep it in perspective.***



***House little league
-winning is a
byproduct of the FUN,
not the only focus!***



TCBA COACHING GUIDELINES

This booklet is a general guide only.

Please refer any questions to the League Director for your league

Please visit our website at: www.clarencebaseball.org for additional information and the most current copy of the TCBA By-Laws



2012 Season

Dear Coach,

Welcome and thank you for accepting the responsibility of coaching a youth baseball team for the Town of Clarence Baseball Association (TCBA). Your decision to volunteer your time and talents is greatly appreciated.

TCBA takes great pride in offering the very best youth baseball program in Western New York. As a TCBA coach, you will play an important role in helping our program to meet the high standards that our parents have come to expect.

Your success as a TCBA coach will depend upon the time and effort you put in and the manner in which you conduct yourself. Remember, the goals of the TCBA are to improve each player's individual skills, to teach our players the value of good sportsmanship and above all else, TO HAVE FUN! You should communicate these goals to your players and parents from day one and commit yourself to these goals every minute you spend with our kids.

In addition to offering a quality program, TCBA offers first class facilities and resources to insure the best possible experience for our members. In 2006, we opened four new baseball diamonds at Memorial Park and there are plans to build an additional diamond at Memorial Park in the near future. TCBA is one of the few youth programs in Western New York to have access to an indoor practice facility. We continually update and upgrade our equipment. This year we have continued the tradition of holding pre-season player clinics featuring the instruction of a former minor league baseball player, as well as a player/coaches clinic run by the Clarence High School Varsity Baseball Coach Dave Smith and his staff. Our website, clarencbaseball.org, will keep everyone current with TCBA news and information.

All of the pieces are in place for a successful season, but the experience your kids have in 2010 is largely dependent upon you. Sportsmanship is paramount in everything you do as a TCBA coach! Remember and refer to the TCBA Code of Conduct, By-laws and Coaching Guidelines which you have signed and agreed to.

Thank you again for volunteering your time and good luck this season. Now, let's play ball!

Paul Bliss
2012 TCBA President

COACHES' GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS

Following are several suggestions which will help you and your team have a successful year.

Coaching

1. Work with your league director. Make sure you follow all TCBA rules, directions, and guidelines.
2. One person cannot possibly do all the work of managing a team and instructing the kids. Get team parents to help you and to volunteer for all team needs. One person cannot effectively teach 10 - 12 kids at a practice, or control a team properly during games. Make sure you have parent volunteers for all the "extras" - snack schedules, game reports, scorekeeping, etc.
3. Your behavior is extremely important at all times. Coaches must demonstrate sportsmanship at all times. Coaches who downgrade their own or opposing players or who criticize umpires create the impression on young minds that this is way players on the team should also behave.
4. Successful coaches use game conditions as a proving ground for what they are trying to accomplish, and as a way to reinforce positive items. If a mistake is made, teach the team by emphasizing what should be done the next time, instead of dwelling negatively on the impact of the mistake on the game. Demonstrate ideal sportsmanship yourself at all times. Treat other coaches, umpires, and opposing team members the way you yourself would like to be treated, teaching your team this same invaluable lesson by showing them how it's done.
5. Always remember - umpires are volunteers and often just kids themselves. They will make mistakes. Do not argue with them at any time - work with them instead.
6. It is very helpful to have a team parent meeting as early as possible. The parents need to have a good understanding of what you expect from your players - and from them - and how you plan to run the team and the season. This also provides an opportunity for you to emphasize that you expect parents to display the same example of good sportsmanship that you and your assistants will set at all times. This is also a good opportunity to secure volunteers.
7. You should arrange for scrimmages before the start of the season to ensure your players are familiar with game conditions and how a game actually goes. Scrimmaging also helps ensure that you thoroughly understand the specific rules for your particular league.
8. Coaches must control the game, players, parents, and fans. If any player, parent, or fan is causing a problem, breaking the rules, or misbehaving, address it appropriately and immediately.

Player Safety

- Keep all equipment behind the bench and backstop.
- Designate a specific on-deck area for ONE batter to warm-up.
- Make sure fielders are watching batters during batting practice.
- Make sure catchers wear protective equipment properly, and batters, base runners and base coaches wear helmets at all times.
- Make sure pitchers wear helmets while warming up on the mound.
- Do not practice or play in unsafe conditions.

Heat Stress. Hydration, Liquids, Liquids, Liquids

Heat can be as dangerous as other weather conditions, like rain, lightning, and cold. Younger children especially don't know the warning signs and symptoms, or how heat stress feels.

Children are susceptible to heat stress.

Make sure children are well hydrated before prolonged physical activity and during the activity.

Periodic drinking should be enforced, even if the child does not feel thirsty. Children should wear light-colored and lightweight clothing; sweat-saturated clothes should be replaced by dry clothes.

Decrease a child's amount of sun exposure and be especially cautious with children if it is very humid.

The duration of exercise and rest periods should be adjusted according to the humidity, air temperature and degree of sun exposure.

Please see OSHA Information, which follows for more detailed information.

First Aid

Bring ice to the field. A First Aid kit is included with equipment, but ice is invaluable. If there is any indication of a broken bone or any serious injury call the paramedics **(911)**.

Do not play an injured player.

Game Reports

Game reports can be submitted online through the website for the Clarence Bee. Each report should mention 3 to 4 players, and each player on the team should be mentioned at least once during the season.

Games/Postponements

ALL games must be played as scheduled. Coaches cannot cancel any game. Rescheduling of games will only be permitted due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions.

If BOTH coaches agree that a game should be postponed due to weather or field conditions, the home team coach must notify the League Director and the umpire assigned to the game.

The League Director must reschedule the game, arrange for an umpire and notify both coaches of the new date when the game must be played.

NO game will be played if teams are notified by the Town or League Director that the fields are unplayable.

Call Up Procedure

Coaches must follow the call up procedures set by the their League Director.

Equipment and Facilities

Please make sure that all of your equipment is safe for use.

Bat grips should be secure, and barrels not dented.

Each team will supply one new ball for every game.

Balls should be collected after the game and turned in with your equipment so they can be used as practice balls for next year.

Helmets should be checked to make sure they are not cracked.

Coaches are responsible for the pick up, return, and care of equipment.

Indoor facilities, diamonds, fields, dug outs, benches, etc. **MUST BE CLEANED UP AFTER EACH USE.** Make sure the players are taught and learn this discipline.

Each coach, team, and player must leave all facilities in clean, picked up fashion after each use.

CARE FOR ALL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT BY ALL, ASSURES ALL AREAS AND ITEMS ARE SAFE AND READY FOR ALL.

OSHA

Protect Yourself Heat Stress

When the body' is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur and can result in death.

Factors Leading to Heat Stress

High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting,
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes such as irritability or confusion.
- Upset stomach or vomiting.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- Seizures or fits.

Preventing Heat Stress

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses: monitor yourself and players.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks or heavy meals.

What to Do for Heat-Related Illness

- Call 911 (or local emergency number) at once

While waiting for help to arrive;

Move the person to a cool, shaded area.

- Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- Provide cool drinking water.
- Fan and mist the person with water.

Conducting a Practice

It is important in conducting a practice that you have your activities pre-planned so things will not get out of control. A suggested practice schedule would be as follows:

- **A 10 minute warm up** - All players loosening up by throwing to each other. Calisthenics are good to loosen up joints and muscles to prevent injury.
- **30 minute batting practice** - Let each player get 3 to 5 good hits. Others not batting should field the batted balls.
- **45 minute dummy game** - This gives players a real game experience and lets you concentrate on fundamentals. Do not just talk fundamentals, instead, execute them in practice.
- Always start practice on time. Players must understand that they are expected to be on time.
- Young players tend to daydream. Make sure they stay alert. During fielding, you should have players on their toes when the pitch is made so they become used to this in games.
- Ask the players to obey instructions - **no exceptions**.
- Practice means work, but makes it enjoyable. The more fun they are having the more they are likely to learn.
- Never stop teaching at practice. Children learn by repetition.
- If you have assistant coaches, use them at practice. A good assistant is invaluable to a coach.
- Set aside a time during regular practice to work individually with those players who need help in specific areas. If you have assistance, let them have this time during practice to work with other players.
- Above all, you must require all players to try. They may have different levels of talent, but everyone can try.
- Hustle means running off and on the field between innings, running out every hit ball and backing up fellow players on the field.
- Encourage team unity and spirit. Never allow a player to criticize another. This creates animosity and hurts morale.
- Correct errors of a player in practice diplomatically and immediately. This way the player learns at the proper time while it is still fresh in their minds.
- Understand the difference in criticism and correction. Correction deals with the problem, not individual. Criticism directed at an individual always has a negative effect on all.
- In a game situation, tell players not to panic under pressure, but stay relaxed and concentrate.
- Lastly, be consistent in practice by making it clear to the players what you expect of them. If you do so, you will have a fundamentally sound team.

Teaching Batting Skills

Most young players are eager to hit a home run every time they step up to bat. It is important that they understand that this is a mistake. The key idea in teaching batting skills revolves around one thought **Keep your eye on the ball**. Contact is the number one priority because contact results in hits, which builds self-confidence.

With that in mind, here are some helpful hints to teach young players to become better hitters.

- Choke up. This helps to obtain bat speed. Bat speed determines distance.
- Weight on back foot. This helps maintain balance and gives the batter power. Body control is good balance.
- Swing level. Discourage uppercuts. Uppercuts cause pop-ups.
- Have a short stride. This keeps the batter on balance and promotes a level swing. A long stride causes loss of balance and power.
- Keep your eye on the ball. Watch a pitch all the way to the catcher's mitt. Remind the player that he/she has to see it to *hit* it.
- Spread your feet as wide as your shoulders. Hit the ball out in front of the plate. Hold the bat firmly, but do not *squeeze* it. This will inhibit wrist action and slow down the bat.
- When on deck, watch the pitcher. Is he/she wild, getting tired, mixing up pitches? This will help you anticipate pitches when you go up to bat.
- Typically, stand close enough to home plate so you can touch the outside corner with the tip of your bat. Adjust your position up or back in the batter's box or in or away from home plate depending on the pitcher's speed and location. Also try setting up a little behind home plate.
- Learn the *strike zone*. Make the pitcher pitch to you and do not chase pitches out of the strike zone. Learn where you're best in respect to the strike zone.
- *Focus* on the pitcher. Pick out an object on his/her person, i.e. the bill of his/her cap or his/her chest. When the pitcher starts his/her wind-up, focus on the ball and follow it all the way in.
- Keep knuckles straight, hands back and knees bent.
- Swing at about 85% of your total capacity. Do not over swing.

Most important, make sure your players use a bat that is not too heavy for him/her. Many times a player grabs the wrong bat and cannot get it around. Check your bag for the proper bats for your team. Too many choices are sometimes the wrong thing.

Teaching Fielding Skills

Here are a few fundamentals that all players must learn if they are to become good fielders. The biggest mistakes youngsters make in fielding is that they try to get too fancy or cute. As a coach your role is to instill fundamentals into their play. These tips may be helpful.

Infielders

- Get in proper position. Stay low with glove down and your back parallel to the ground. This helps in protecting players and allows for quick body movement when pursuing grounders. Be on your toes, not flat footed.
- Charge grounders with both hands out in front of you. Do not wait for the ball to play you.
- If a hot grounder is too hard to handle, try and just knock it down and keep it in front of you. This prevents extra bases.
- Always look the ball into your glove.
- Always call out loudly on pop-ups. Always chatter.
- Cross your legs over when pursuing grounders. Do not shuffle from side to side.
- When tagging a runner, keep your glove closed and both hands on the ball. When making a tag on a runner at a base, use the base to protect yourself and drop the tag between the base and the runner's feet, straddling the base.
- Keep run down throws to a minimum. Get the runner out going back to the base he/she came from.
- An accurate throw is better than a hard one. Throw at your fellow player's chest. Get the sure out. Back each other up.

Outfielders

- Do not stand flat-footed when the batter comes up to the plate. Watch the ball closely as the pitch is made and anticipate a hit to your field.
- When fielding a hit, always look to the cutoff man for instructions on where to throw the ball.
- Catch fly balls over your head, with your hands above you so you will be in good position to make a quick throw.
- When pursuing fly balls, try to keep your eye on the ball as much as possible. If hit to your right, turn right and look over your left shoulder. Do the opposite for a ball over your left side. Back track using crossover footwork. When the ball is hit, your first move should be back. Remember that you can always come in on a fly ball easier than you can go back on one.
- If a grounder is difficult to field, block it with your body to avoid extra base hits. Keep throws low and bounce them to the infield if you cannot reach it on the fly accurately. "Call out" all fly balls to avoid collisions.
- Back up all fellow outfielders in the event they miss the ball.
- When throwing, both infielders and outfielders alike should get a good grip on the ball's seams and make sure they have a secure grip before throwing.

One last tip. Always think to yourself, "What do I do if the ball comes to me?" Or "What do I do if the ball does not come to me?"

Philosophy of Baseball

1. ***Sportsmanship***
2. ***Teach the Game***
3. ***Make it FUN!***

As coaches, you have chosen to accept the responsibility of the experience for the kids who have come to play the game of baseball. All of our actions and decisions should emulate this philosophy to maximize their enjoyment and leave them wanting to continue to participate in the sport.

Your Role as A Little League Adult, Parent, Coach

Local Little Leagues are entirely volunteer organizations. Each league depends on adults like you to organize and conduct every aspect. Not only do adults serve as administrators, volunteer coaches, and umpires they also help with field maintenance, fund-raising, concessions, and numerous other special projects.

Your willingness to exchange time and effort for your child's benefit and enjoyment is very important to the functioning of your local Little League. Cheering your daughter or son on from the stands is one important way to be involved, but we invite you to do even more by volunteering to help run your local Little League program.

Without a doubt, Little League is a family affair that gives parents and children a common ground for spending time together. Whether you are coaching the players, selling popcorn to the fans, or bringing soda for the team after the game, your family will enjoy being a part of Little League in your community. Most of all, you will appreciate the benefits of your enthusiasm and involvement in his or her activities.

When winning is kept in perspective, there is room for fun in the pursuit of victory or more accurately, the pursuit of victory is fun. With your leadership Little League can help your child learn to accept responsibilities, accept others and most of all, accept her or himself.

Keeping Winning in Perspective

Are you able to keep winning in perspective? You might answer with a confident yes, but will you be able to do so when it is your child who is winning or losing, when your child is treated a bit roughly by someone on the other team, or when the umpire makes a judgment against your child? Parents are sometimes unprepared for the powerful emotions they experience when watching their sons and daughters compete.

One reason that parents' emotions run to high is that they want their children to do well; it reflects on them. They also may believe that their children's failures are their own. Parents need to realize that dreams of glory they have for their youngsters are not completely unselfish, but they are completely human. Parents who are aware of their own pride, who are even capable of being amused by their imperfections, can keep themselves well under control.

Being a Model of Good Sportsmanship

Flying off the handle at games or straining relations with the coach or other parents creates a difficult situation for your child. Just as you don't want your daughter or son to embarrass you, don't embarrass your Little Leaguer.

It's no secret that kids imitate their parents. In addition, they absorb the attitudes they think lie behind their parents' actions. As you go through the Little League season with your child, be a positive role model. How can you expect your child to develop a healthy perspective about competing and winning if you display an unhealthy one? Remember little league is supposed to be a fun experience for your child, and one in which he or she will learn some sport skills. Winning will take care of itself.

Some parents seem to abandon good principles of child rearing when their child is participating in sports. However, just as your child's home, school, and religious environment affect the type of person he or she will be, so does the sport environment especially when your child is young. Remember this:

- If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
- If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
- If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
- If children live with praise, they learn to like themselves.
- If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
- If children live with recognition, they have to have a goal.
- If children live with honesty, they learn what trust is.

Ten Commandments of Parental Behavior

(These commandments are adapted from an article by sports psychology expert Rick Wolfe, author of Good Sports, The Concerned Parent's Guide to Competitive Youth Sports.)

Unfortunately, children's extracurricular activities today are often marred by the involvement of parents who lose their perspective of what is important and how to behave appropriately. Here is a reminder of how grown-ups should act at kids' baseball games and practices.

1. Talk about the other kids on the team — in fact, on other teams as well — in the same manner that you would want parents to talk about your own child. This is the golden rule applied to sports. Sitting in the stands watching the game is a social affair. When you are making conversation, think about what you are saying before you actually say it. To be on the safe side, only voice praise for the other children. That way, you'll never go wrong.
2. It's nice to give the coach a pat on the back when your child plays well or the team is doing great. It is even nicer when you give the coach a pat on the back when your child is playing poorly.
3. Give officials a pat on the back too. The officials are volunteers who sacrifice their time to provide safe, fair competitions for your child and help them learn their play correctly. Consider being an official yourself.
4. Remind your child that it is the effort that counts. We know all the kids want to win. Everyone wants to play well. But if there are winners, there will be losers, and times will not improve every game. Be prepared to cushion your child's disappointment by pointing out how proud you are of their hard work and effort.
5. Avoid the post game analysis. When the game is over and your child climbs back in the car, avoid AT ALL COSTS the detailed, excruciating analysis of everything they did right or wrong. Just let them chill out, savor the fun of having played, and relax. The absolute worst time for "friendly criticism" is immediately after the game.
6. Smile, A lot. Kids' sports are about having fun, and because kids take their behavioral cues from you, try at least to look like you are enjoying yourself.
7. If you aren't a good sport at the games then your child won't be either. If you blame the coaches, the other players, the officials for your game, then they will copy your behavior and won't accept responsibility for themselves.
8. Learn the rules. Know the schedules. Read your website, ask questions, and make it your job to know what is going on.
9. If you must yell at the games, shout only praise and encouragement. There is never any place for derogatory, snide or sarcastic remarks at children's games.
10. Above all, be there for your children. Support them, praise them, and let them know you can always be counted on for unconditional love, regardless of how they play.

Dealing with Parents

Coaching a Youth League team is exciting and rewarding. But from time to time, you may experience difficulty with parents. Some may want their children to play more or they might question some of your judgments as a coach. This is normal, so don't feel that you're alone if this happens.

Here are a few thoughts to remember when dealing with parents:

- Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement.
- Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- No coach can please everyone. Don't try.
- Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not the parents.
- Make certain all parents know your ground rules. Have rules, regulations, your philosophy, practice dates and times, etc. printed on a sheet of paper you can pass out to all parents. Have a parent meeting before the season begins to discuss your operating procedures if necessary.
- Resist unfair pressure. You are the coach and it's your responsibility to make the final decisions.
- Most important, be fair. If you treat all players equally you will gain respect.
- Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. If you do change something, make sure the parents are informed as soon as possible.
- Handle any confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowd situation. Don't be defensive. Don't argue with parents. Listen to their view points, and thank them for it.
- Don't discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time.
- Ask parents not to criticize their children during a practice or game. Don't let your players be humiliated even by their own parents. Explain that you must be under complete control of your team when they are on our 'turf.
- Don't blame the players for their parents' actions, if negative. Try to maintain a fair attitude.
- Parents must accept the fact that umpires, coaches and other league officials are volunteers and should not be subjected to criticism during ball games.

Always remember that you will be dealing with all types of children and parents with different backgrounds and ideals. One of your main challenges as a coach is to deal with these differences in a positive manner so the team's season will be an exciting and enjoyable experience for all.

PLAY FAIR, HAVE FUN!

BASEBALL RULES

Baseball's Rules are nearly the most intricate of any sport and continual study is necessary if they are to be mastered.

Coaches must keep in mind that this is little league baseball, not the major leagues. Rules are very important and TCBA strongly wishes to have our teams follow the rules of the game. However, please remember that in complicated situations, the umpires will make a decision and that decision is final. Coaches need to cooperate, learn and grow while following the rules.

Coaches must also keep in mind that TCBA has some specific rules for each of its leagues which differ from official major league and official little league rules. The By-Laws will prevail in any question.

The official baseball rules are simply intended to be an assist and guide for coaches, and are in no way intended to be specific rules for any one league.

Following are some relatively common situations which can arise in a ball game and are too often misunderstood.

1. Appeal Plays: there are many instances when a violation of the rules by an opponent must be called to the umpire's attention before he can rule on it.
 - a. Failure to touch a base
 - b. Leaving the base too early before a fly ball is caught.
 - c. Batting out of order. This violation must be called before a ball is delivered to the next batter. It is the original batter, not the one who batted out of turn, who is called out.
 - d. Failure of a player to return immediately to first base after he has overrun or over slid first base.
2. The ball is "Dead" in the following cases:
 - a. The batter is hit by a pitched ball.
 - b. A balk is called.
 - c. A ball is batted illegally (the batter hits it while out of the batter's box)
 - d. A foul ball is not legally caught.
 - e. Interference is called on a player.
 - f. A batted ball hits a runner or umpire before touching a fielder.
 - g. A ball touches a spectator.
3. A ball is judged foul or fair by its position relative to the foul line, not where the fielder is when he touches it.
4. The infield fly rule: The batter is declared out when he hits a fair fly ball which can be handled by an infielder when first and second, first second and third are occupied with less than two outs. A runner may advance at his own risk.
5. If two runners are on the same base, possession of it belongs to the player who originally occupied it. The other runner may be tagged out if he fails to return safely to his original base.
6. If the batted ball hits an umpire or runner after having passed a fielder, other than the pitcher, it is in play.
7. A base runner must run around a fielder who is in the act of fielding a batted ball.
8. A fielder may not block a runner if he is in the possession of the ball.
9. On a ball handled by the catcher, the batter must run in the three-foot lane.
10. A base runner is out if he runs more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged.

Official Baseball Rules can be found on the www.clarencebaseball.org website under "coaches"

or at this link: http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/official_rules/foreword.jsp

He Is Just a Little Boy

He stands at the plate with his heart pounding fast.

The bases are loaded, the die has been cast.

Mom and Dad cannot help him, he stands all alone.

A hit at this moment, would send the team home.

The ball meets the plate, he swings and he misses.

There's a groan from the crowd, with some boos and some hisses.

A thoughtless voice cries, Strike out the bum."

Tears fill his eyes, the game's no longer fun.

So open your heart and give him a break,

For its moments like this, a man you can make.

Please keep this in mind, when you hear someone forget,

He is just a little boy, and not a man yet.

by: Chaplain Bob Fox,
Condensed Chicken Soup for the Soul