



Rowayton Little League President's Newsletter – November 2009

It might be hard to believe, but just before the last few leaves fall from the trees, RLL 2010 is well underway. Your board has already met and a number of activities have begun to get everything in shape for next season. This month's newsletter will remind us of a few warm days last summer, but will focus mainly on what we are planning to do to make 2010 the best season ever. From expanded winter clinics, more and more opportunities for parents/friends to join in and make a difference, new special events during the season and meaningful opportunity for postseason play through mid-July are just a few of the topics being developed/implemented. There is a lot packed into this little newsletter, so I hope you find it informative. In particular, it **is time to sign up for Winter Clinics**, we want each of YOU to find a place to participate in and contribute to our broad program, and we want you to have a little fun with thoughts of baseball, even in November. As always, you know where to find me (rknight@lakewoodcap.com) anytime, and in the upper corner of the Velotti Field stands most nights between April and July!

Happy Thanksgiving,
Roger

This month's edition brings you:

- **Thank you and highlights of the 2009 Season**
- **RLL's Winter Clinics Expanded!!! Time to sign up ASAP**
- **Administrative Teams ready to take on 2010 -- there is a place for EVERY ONE
of you to participate and make a difference**
- **Velotti Field at Bayley Beach just keeps getting better ☺**
- **Softball is off to the races in Rowayton – come join the ride!**
- **“Hey Blue, What's the Call!” – The Monthly Twist**
- **Ah, nothing like the sound of the CRACK of the bat!**
- **Calendar of Events**
- **Where would we be without our sponsors?**

Thank you and Highlights of the 2009 Season

For many of you, our annual season ending Picnic was a chance for everyone involved to say “thank you” to each other for another great season of baseball in Rowayton. We have a very special community program in Rowayton, and it works to its fullest when it can engage as much of the community as possible. The obvious contributors (coaches and board members and umpires) deserve gratitude for their hard work, but there are many more unsung heroes who make it all possible and to whom I wish we could all express our appreciation. We made several important strides last summer in expanding our reach to more parents and more friends of Rowayton baseball providing regular opportunities for input and numerous ways to become involved as little or as much as one can/desires. We are committed to doubling our efforts in this regard, so please begin to think about where YOU would like to participate and how YOU can join in our community wide effort, both for Rowayton and for yourself.

Not to take up too much time on the past because we have so many things to discuss about the future, but I did want to point out some highlights of last summer.

- Rowayton was recognized in the District Wide Opening Ceremonies for 50 years of baseball and several members of the Velotti family (Vince Velotti was Rowayton’s first President and for whom our field at Bayley Beach is named) were in attendance. Rowayton and the Velotti family led the parade of several hundred players to being the 2009 Little League Playoffs
- We successfully started a third softball team increasing our softball numbers to more than 50 girls in just three short years since its formation
- Despite unprecedented rainfall, the Fields and Facilities team were able to make Velotti Field the location most likely to be ready for play in all of Norwalk!
- The Board was reconstituted to create administrative “teams” across a wide spectrum of activities and responsibilities and each is open to ANY parent within our program. We will have much more to say about this over the coming months and hope each of you can find the team or teams to join that best suit your interests
- We honored Frank Schlater, our unsung hero when it comes to working with Norwalk Parks and Rec on issues relating to our fields as Volunteer of the Year 2009
- The conduit that had become inoperable at Bayley Beach and was determined to be one of the primary causes of flooding on and around Velotti Field has finally been fixed by contractors working for the City of Norwalk. Thanks to the tireless work for Frank Schlater, Tim Coupe, and Mike Barbis, we go into next season with renewed optimism.

We are not out of the woods by any means, and there are a number of other thorny factors that will come into play, but we feel we can begin to address them one-by-one now that the conduit is repaired.

- Our Umpire Development Program, borne out of necessity, was one of the true bright spots for the League. The program prepared 12 young men (most alumni of Rowayton Little League) to umpire our minors and majors games, and the requirements were rigorous. I am happy to report that the gang of 12 were the envy of Norwalk, with Norwalk LL regularly asking if we might expand the program to provide umpires for many of their games not played at Bayley. I want to thank all the parents and coaches who understood how their support would be critical, and their actions (or lack of reaction!) made the on-the-job training go extremely smoothly. From the perspective of the new umpires, they learned much more than the rules of the game and their poise, command of the field, confidence in interactions with adults and strong presentation as role models to the players, will pay dividends for them in all walks of life.

RLL's Winter Clinics Expanded – IT IS TIME TO SIGN UP!

Last Winter, RLL teamed up with a group of winter professional baseball instructors (5 Tool Sports Inc.) to provide interested Rowayton youth with baseball clinics. The clinics were broken into two age groups and were held in January and February. We had little time to prepare, but over 40 kids signed up and the program was a runaway success. Not only did it provide our kids with the opportunity to hone their baseball skills with top notch instruction, but it gave each of them an early comfort level resulted in a fast start once the outdoor season began. As an extra benefit, many of the kids got to spend quality baseball time together which contributed to camaraderie that was obvious on the fields all summer.

This year, the Player Development Team has been working with 5 Tool Sports to provide even more opportunity for winter instruction and have been taking into account numerous helpful comments/suggestions from our families. In summary, we are planning two sessions, the first begins on Dec. 6th and the second at the end of January, each of which will have specific objectives. We strongly encourage each of our players between the ages of 7 and 12 to consider both sessions. The first will be geared toward certain specific skill development and the second will be broader in scope and be designed to prepare each player for the upcoming outdoor season. We are also putting together winter clinics specifically for pitchers starting Dec. 8th and for our softball players, which will begin in January. A detailed flyer will be distributed via email by this weekend and sign-ups will begin immediately. As there will be a limit to the number of participants, please be sure to sign up as soon as possible.

The benefit of winter instruction/clinics cannot be underestimated and I hope each of you will give it serious consideration. If you know any of the players/families who participated last year, please check with them about the program. I know you will come away excited about it for your

child. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Brian Arsenault, head of our Player Development Team (barsenault@optonline.net), or me.

Administrative Teams Ready to Take on 2010

I hope that some of you have been itching to share your thoughts about last season with the “right people” and be a part of our programs for 2010. I am happy to report that our introduction of administrative teams last season has resulted in the “right people” getting together regularly as individual groups. Some of our best ideas and successful implementation of new programs last season were developed by our adult team. Each of our teams will begin meeting for the 2010 season in January and we hope EVERY parent and friend of Rowayton Little League will find a place to belong and contribute on one or more teams. These administrative teams have no set size and have a broad mandate to further their areas of focus. Within the teams and the valuable discussion they foster, we hope that opportunities to contribute to the league will surface and our ranks of volunteers will soar, not because people are asked to do a job, but because individuals will find areas of interests that draw them into service. That is our Goal for each of you!!!! Team Leaders (aka board members) are already well on there way to develop a list of issues/challenges/opportunities to discuss and I am excited about our continued efforts to include all the talents our parents and friends possess. The beauty of this structure is that it allows for commitment of time of our league volunteers to vary widely depending upon their particular constraints, while also providing for a forum to develop and implement new ideas.

Below is a list of our existing teams. Next month, I will confirm the names and emails of each team leader and we hope to have further description of each team up on the web for your review. In the meantime, if you already know where you might want to get involved, please let me know and I will be sure you receive information about that team(s) plans for January.

<u>Team</u>	<u>Team Summary</u>
Majors	Responsible for our most senior player division
Minors	Manages our first division with child pitching
Community League	Responsible for our coach-pitch players’ division
T-Ball	Responsible for our entry division beginning at age 5
Softball	Responsible for our girls softball division
Fields and Facilities	Manages all aspects of Velotti Field and the two school fields
Equipment and Safety	Responsible for safety of our players across all divisions and works with each player division on procuring required equipment
Events and Promotions	Plans and runs our special events, including Opening Day, Closing Picnic, Pitch-Hit-Run Competition, Picture Day, etc.
Player Development	Involved across all divisions in designing programs to maximize development including winter clinics, coaches clinics, structure of Team practices, etc.
Finance	Handles all financial activities of the league

Velotti Field Just Keeps Getting Better

Stay tuned for a number of “improvements” at Velotti Field this upcoming year. The Field and Facilities team is actively pursuing several capital expenditure initiatives to present to the Board next month, and we plan on continuing to provide the resources needed to make Velotti Field the envy of Norwalk. As you may recall, last year brought the new bathroom and our new tractor. Continuing efforts to improve the drainage at Velotti Field should pay dividends next season and a few other purchases we have planned will be extremely well received. If you would like to be part of our Fields and Facilities Team, please drop Tim Coupe (tim@coupeware.com) an email and he will add you to his distribution list and invite you to his first team meeting of the year.

At the District 1 Opening Ceremonies we announced that a new sign will be designed and installed near the outfield entrance to Velotti Field. The sign will commemorate our 50 years of baseball and we hope to have it ready for our 2010 Opening Day Ceremonies.

We are building our Softball Committee/Team and want YOU to join us!!!

Did you know that our Softball division is the fastest growing player group within Rowayton Little League??? The idea for a softball league was just a concept in Jeff Walsh’s mind three years ago, but with the help of fellow “founder” Frank Schlater, eager parent coaches, and strong support by CT District 1, we find ourselves with teams in three age divisions and over 50 girls participating (last summer). While we cannot thank Jeff enough for all of his hard work, we must now begin to build a team of parents/friends around the program to further the cause of Rowayton Softball into the future. Like we began last summer in all of our player divisions and other areas of responsibility, we are determined to bring together a number of parents/friends who can work together to build the program. The best administrative teams are those that have a diverse group of members who can provide guidance and ideas, as well as helping hands as their schedules permit. We will be sending out a separate letter on plans for an upcoming Softball Team meeting and I hope many of you will consider joining in and being part of this growing program. If you already know that you want to join in, please email me and I will be sure to have you on the list.

Hey, Blue – What’s the Call? The Monthly Twist

Haven’t we all seen a manager on TV question an umpires call a bit too vociferously? While we expect better behavior on the part of Little League managers and coaches, it is no secret that baseball is filled with arcane rules, many of which rarely come into play and can certainly cause a stir when called. In our last newsletter of the summer, we began a new section that included an example of a rule that came into play in one of our Rowayton games. We then altered the actual scenario just a little and asked you “What’s the Call, if any?” We hope to continue this every month. Good luck with this month’s entry (for a little fun, cover up the answers at the bottom to

see how you would have called it. If you get the calls wrong, don't worry because 1) you don't have to be the umpire (a very tough job), 2) most people don't know the answers, and 3) umpires don't get all the calls right either.

Rule #1: There is a Runner on first and the Batter hits a line drive down the first base line and into right field. The Runner makes it all the way home and the Batter reaches second ahead of the throw from the right fielder. HOWEVER, the umpire signals that the runner left first base before the ball was hit by the batter. WHAT'S THE CALL on the Runner and on the batter (i.e., safe or out? What base(s) should they occupy)?

Twist #1: Same as above, except the Runner was on 2nd base at the start of the play, rather than first base. WHAT'S THE CALL on the Runner and Batter?

Twist #2: Same as above, except the Batter hit a triple rather than a double. WHAT'S THE CALL on the Batter and the Runner?

Twist #3: Same as above except there were runners on 1st base and 2nd base (runner of 1st left early), both of whom scored while the Batter was making it cleanly to 2nd base with a double. WHAT'S THE CALL ON EACH OF THE PLAYERS (Runner 1, Runner 2 and the Batter).

ANSWERS:

Rule #1: Batter gets his double and is on 2nd; Runner must return to first open base after the Batter's final position, which means he/she must return to 3rd base – no score

Twist #1: Exact same ruling as above; Batter to 2nd base, runner to 3rd base – no score

Twist #2: Batter gets his triple and the Runner scores

Twist #3: Batter gets his double, player originally on 2nd scores, and the player originally on first goes back to occupy 3rd – one run scores, two players still on base

FUN, huh????!!!

(In the coming months, we hope to add an "Ask the Ump" blog on our website. In the meantime, please send me any ruling questions that you may have and I will answer you directly and, possibly, include the discussion in a future newsletter!)

AH – nothing like the sound of the CRACK of the bat!

I don't know about you, but there is something special about the sound off a wood bat when the ball is hit purely. You just KNOW it will be a good hit by the way it sounds and I, for one, wish we could hear the sound in places other than major and minor ballparks. As I am sure you are aware, the issue of wood vs. aluminum bats rages on and I do not see it ending any time soon. In fact, just this issue is the primary topic of next week's Connecticut District 1 President's meeting. The recent judgment against Louisville Slugger in a case brought against them about the lack of appropriate safety labeling on aluminum bats is just one of many flash points. We here in Rowayton are not going to resolve the debate, but, that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun with it. I plan to discuss with the Rowayton Board a special event for next season, which I have dubbed, "Wood Week!". We have been in discussions with a wood bat company who is interested in sponsoring this special event during which time we will be introducing our Majors (and, possibly, Minors) players to wood bats during weekday practices. We will then have a slate of games at Bayley scheduled with other teams from around our District over the following weekend. If anyone is interested in joining in on the planning, et al, for Wood Week, please send me an email and I will let you know as soon as we have decided which of our administrative teams will be responsible for the Event.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu, Nov 19 th	Darien	7:00pm	CT District 1 Little League Commissioners Meeting
Sun., Dec. 6 th	Batters Box	12:30pm	First session of Pre-Winter Clinics
Tues., Dec. 8 th	Batters Box	5:00pm	First Session of Pitchers Clinics
Tue, Dec. 15 th	Community Center	7:00pm	Rowayton LL Board Meeting
Sat. Jan. 23rd	Rowayton School*		2010 Registration Day
Tues. Jan. 26th	Community Center	6:00pm	2010 Registration Evening
Month of January	various	tbd	Administrative team meetings
Sun, Jan. 31 st	Batters Box	12:30pm	First Session of Pre-season Clinics
Apr 24 th	Velotti Field	tbd	Opening Day Ceremonies
June 19 th	Velotti Field	5:00pm	Closing Picnic
June 21 st	Postseason play for 8-12 year olds runs through third week of July		

*Tentative location – please refer to website for updated information

Our Sponsors are THE BEST!

Once again, thank you to all of our 2009 sponsors. Please be sure to frequent these loyal friends of Rowayton Little League whenever possible. They deserve our gratitude AND our business!

Rowayton Market	All Seasons Marine
The Restaurant at Rowayton Seafood	Michael's Cleaners
Prudential Real Estate	William Raveis Real Estate
Dr. Osherow	River Cat Grill
Rowayton Hardware	Brendan's 101
Rowayton Fire Department	Fairfield County Bank
Rowayton Fuel	Darien Rowayton Bank
Rowayton Pizza	

DON'T FORGET -- our website is www.rowaytonlittleleague.com and as we head closer to the upcoming season, the web will be packed with information and will be able to answer most any of your questions. We plan to utilize the site even more in 2010 and welcome your thoughts and comments.
