



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

2000 Program Wraps Up

Winners on to World Series

Country's best safety program developers to attend Series

The programs are in, and the judging is complete!

Out of over 2,200 safety plans submitted, four Regional Finalists have emerged. Another great set of plans was turned in, with 33 percent of all leagues having a qualified safety plan in 2000. That's great, and you should all be justifiably proud.

Here are the the top two finalists from each region. The first place league's president and safety officer will be recognized at the Little League World Series.

Central Region

First Place:

Bolingbrook, Ill., Associated Little League

Second Place:
Crystal Lake, Ill., Little League

East Region

First Place: **Avon Grove Area Little League, West Grove, Pa.**

Second Place:
Pottstown, Pa., Little League

South Region

First Place: **Windcrest Little League, San Antonio, Texas**

Second Place: **Dunedin, Fla., National Little League**

West Region

First Place: **Granada Hills, Calif., Little League**

Second Place: **Reno, Nev., American Little League**

Safety Awards

The first and second place winners from each region will receive \$500 to spend on safety equipment for their leagues or toward their insurance premium. The first place plans will be judged for the overall national winner, to be announced in Williamsport at the World Series. The winning league will receive a Musco Light-Structure 2™ lighting system for a 200-foot Little League field. The system meets or exceeds Little League lighting standards.

The judging was really close this year, as many leagues demonstrated their commitment

to increasing safety at all levels. However, some safety plans did not make the final round of judging due to the lack of documentation.

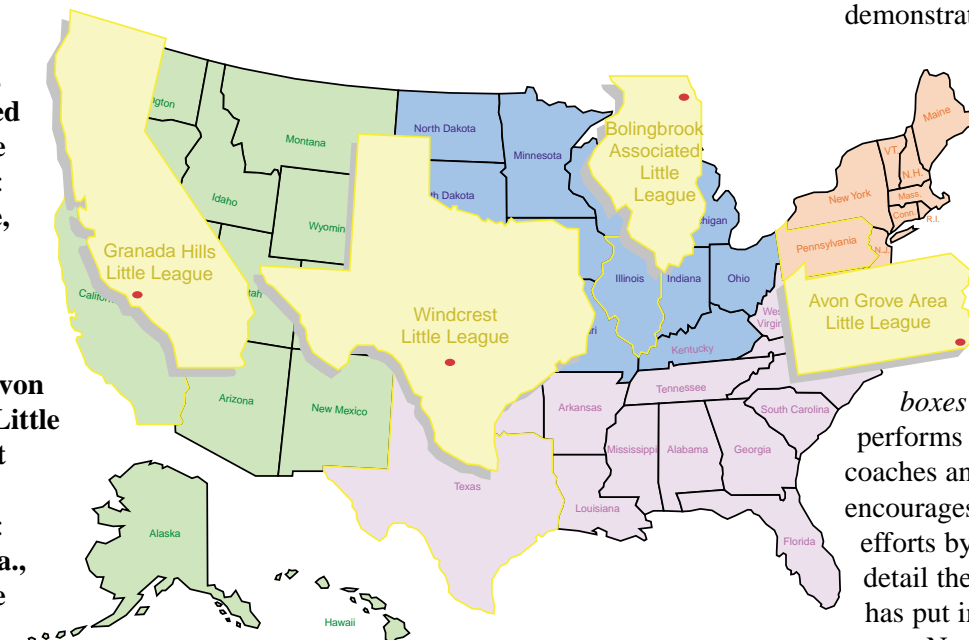
Next year

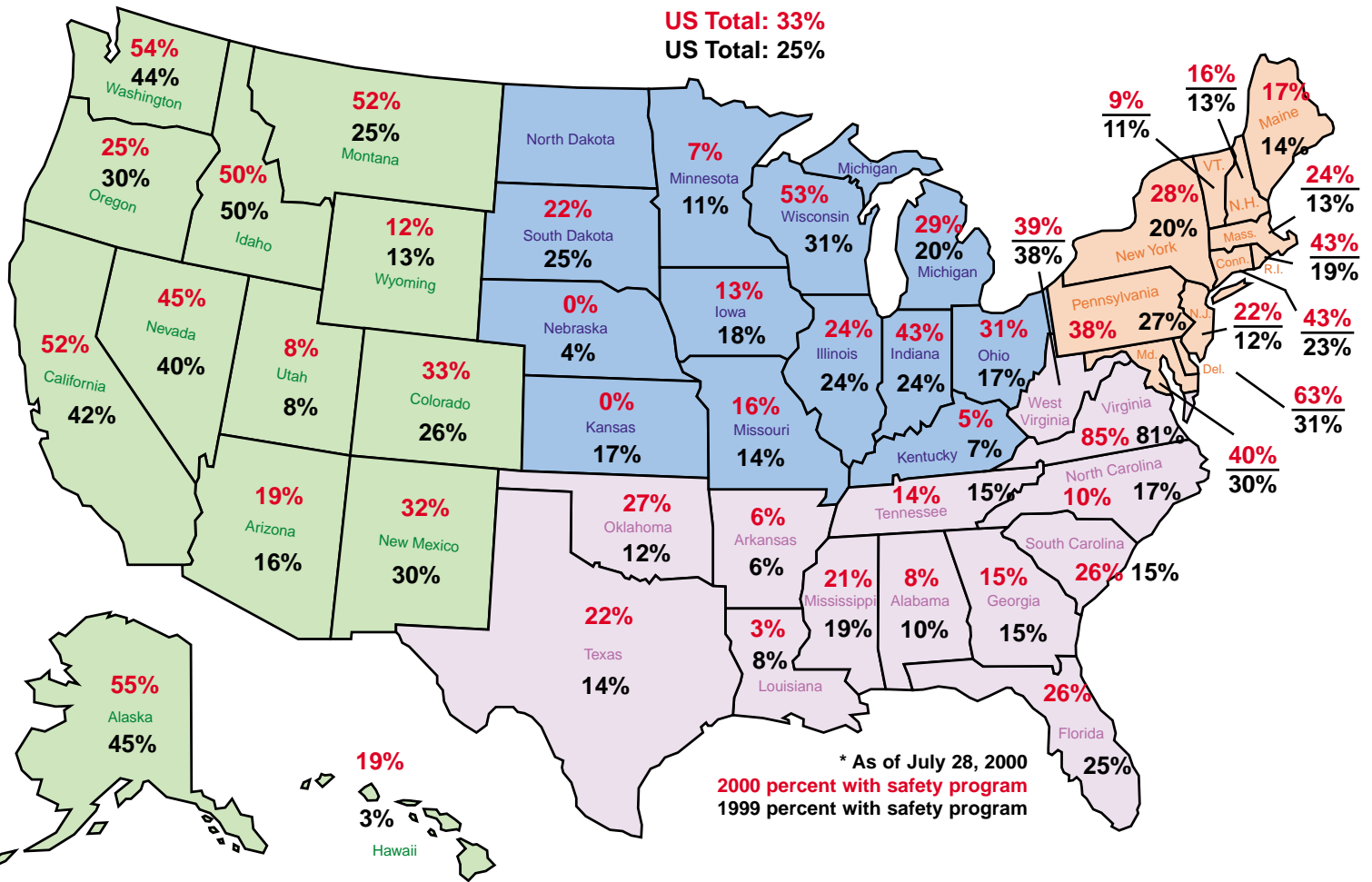
remember: *It's not enough to check the*

boxes saying your league performs background checks on coaches and volunteers, or encourages and recognizes safety efforts by kids. You need to detail the efforts your league has put in place.

Not only will your league

receive better recognition for those efforts, but other leagues might benefit from something you're doing so well that we publish it in the ASAP newsletter. With so many good plans, we can't call every league to verify information until we have our top finalists. Next year, please share the *how* as well as the *what* that improves safety in your plan.





Leagues with safety plans: 1 in 3

4 of every 10 Little Leaguers play in league with program

Well, the plans just kept flowing in. With a flood of over 1,000 plans in a single 5-day period, the total has risen to 2,216 plans, and of those, 2,127 received a player accident insurance premium credit from CNA Insurance.

But the good news keeps getting better. Let's look a little closer. While 33 percent of all *leagues* in the country now have a safety plan, 39 percent of all *teams* play in a league which has developed and implemented a safety program. That's almost 4 out of every 10 Little Leaguers benefiting from the hard work you and your fellow safety officers have been giving your league. That's what this program is all about: Making it safer for the kids!

Here's how each region did **this year/last year**.

Central Region	—	26 percent/20 percent
East Region	—	30 percent/20 percent
South Region	—	29 percent/24 percent
West Region	—	44 percent/36 percent

The West Region continues to lead the country as a region, with outstanding growth by California, as well as northwest states Alaska, Idaho, Montana and Washington, all with 50 percent or more participation.

The East Region jumped past the South for second place, with 30 percent, with solid growth by Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland and Rhode Island all with 38 percent or higher.

The South Region had the lowest growth, but was just edged out for second place overall by the East, with 29 percent. The best state in the country in terms of safety participation, Virginia increased its majority to 85 percent, with West Virginia reaching almost 40 percent. Texas had an increase of 41 plans over 1999, rising 8 percent.

The Central Region showed good growth, moving to 26 percent participation, with Wisconsin again leading at 53 percent, pursued this year by Indiana at 43 percent.

Fitness predicts sports injury risk

A new study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine throws a curve to the conventional wisdom which held that females were at greater risk for sports injuries than males. Physical fitness is a much better predictor for sports injury risk than the sex of the athlete, according to US researchers in a published report.

Therefore, the higher injury rate among females suggests they need more conditioning training before engaging in rigorous physical activity, the study authors suggest.

The research team looked at male and female US Army trainees to assess both their overall fitness levels at the beginning of basic training, and the frequency and degree of injuries during the training period. Researchers suggested that examining this particular injury-prone non-civilian environment was ideal in assessing the potential gender-injury relationship, in that both sexes are exposed to identical training objectives and schedules, diet, living situations, and healthcare access.

“The implications are that there shouldn’t be ‘one-training-fits-all.’ By throwing everybody into the same intensity of training to begin with no matter what the preparedness is, you run the risk of someone getting injured... sometimes minor injuries, sometimes more serious ones,” said study co-author Dr. Thomas Mangione of the John Snow Inc. Research and Training Institute in Boston, Mass.

Mangione and colleagues followed 509 male and 352 female army trainees — average age of 20 years — from the beginning and throughout a standard 8-week basic training regimen. All the trainees were tested for body composition and fitness levels with regards to flexibility, muscle strength, endurance and aerobic capacities. All the participants were divided into one of five groups based on their fitness levels before training began. Throughout training, the trainees’ medical records were reviewed and injuries noted.

The investigators found that with the exception of flexibility levels, the men were generally much more physically fit than the women at the outset of training, and that the women incurred 2 times the amount of overall injuries throughout the regimen than the men. Additionally, the women were 2.5 times more likely to

incur serious injury — resulting in lost training time — than the men.

However, researchers also found that within each of the five assigned fitness level groups, the men and women did not differ in injury occurrence levels, leading them to conclude that injury was related to fitness preparedness — particularly aerobic fitness — rather than gender.

In addition, the women experienced much higher improvement than the men in their fitness levels by the completion of the program. The researchers noted that such differences have been attributed in earlier studies as being a function of greater training benefit going to those starting at lower fitness levels.

Mangione said the study results suggested a need for a “change in perspective” with regards to training protocol if injury rates are to be lowered. “The implication is that there needs to be some kind of fitness assessment at the beginning and maybe two tracks of training,” he said. “Start them out more slowly and build up their endurance and their cardiovascular abilities and then put them into more vigorous training, and by

doing so (training groups) would avoid injuries.”

Mangione pointed out that changing the military mode of physical training was critical in a way that perhaps doesn’t apply to civilians, since individuals usually engage in “self-pacing” so that they only do what they feel capable of doing. “Unlike in the case of someone wanting to start skiing or biking, in the circumstances of the armed forces, basically people are being forced to exert themselves at a level they may not be prepared to do and they are not allowed to say, ‘Gee I don’t feel like going out for that 5-mile run today.’ In training for sports situations outside of the armed forces, this might not occur.”

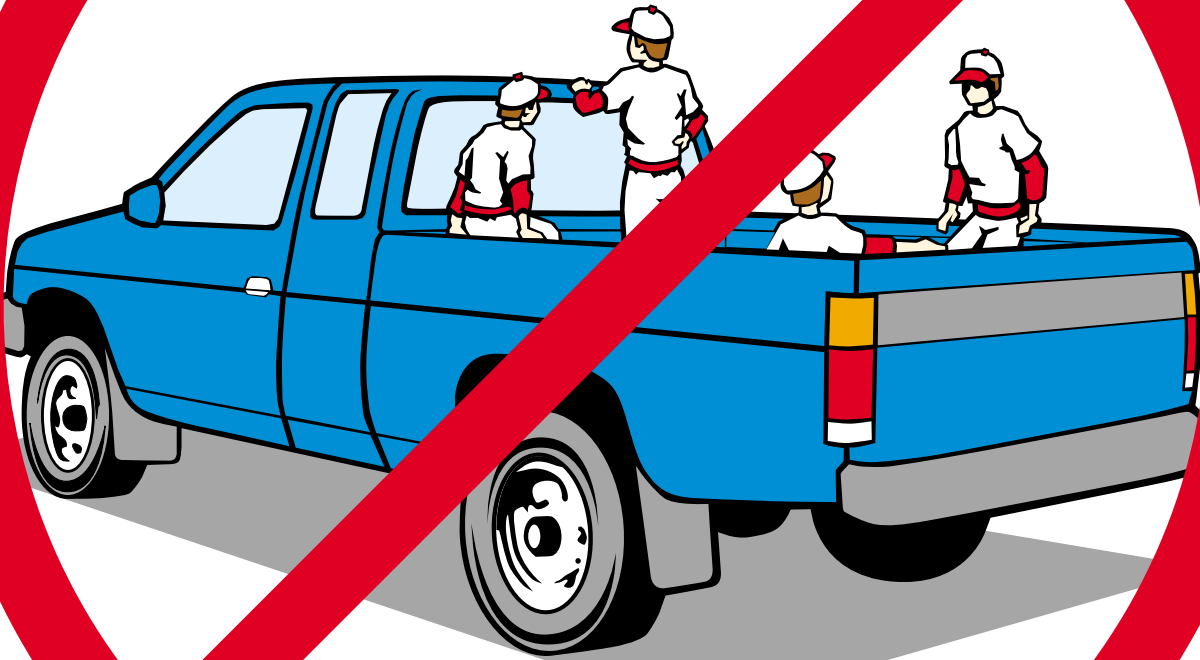
Mangione also noted that testing for fitness levels need not be viewed solely as a female issue. “Test results to determine physical fitness before training begins could be gender neutral,” he said. “You could give it to both men and women — and it wouldn’t be that all women would fail. It’s just that it seems currently that women would probably benefit more as a group to have this alternative mechanism.”

(SOURCE: *The American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2000;18:1-5.)

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— Study co-author
Dr. Thomas Mangione

PLEASE



Keep'em Safe! Kids Aren't Cargo!

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children 5-15 years of age. Kids should ride in the back seat with seat belts fastened.
- Children riding in the beds of trucks have no safety restraining devices to protect them in case of an accident.
- Passengers who are ejected from a vehicle are three times more likely to die than those who remain in the vehicle.

** Information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*

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'Can helmets be painted?'

Q: *"I'm trying to locate specific information related to the topic of 'painted' batting helmets. Is there any reference in Little League regulations that prevents All-Star Teams from painting their helmets? I've had people come to me for information regarding this issue and cannot find any references to it. It's my understanding that helmets cannot be altered with paint due to the possibility of material incompatibility. If helmets are painted, will this void the warranty of the equipment? Please advise so that we can prepare our All-Star umpiring staff for the upcoming All-Star season."*

**Dale Johnson, Safety Officer
Maryland District 5
Rising Sun Community Little League**

A: Helmets should not be painted. According to information supplied by manufacturer Rawlings, applying paint to the surface of batting helmets could degrade the plastic, and will void the warranty. The correct paint to use is not available for retail sale. Any other paint than that authorized by the company may deteriorate the shell, risking the player's safety and voiding the warranty and company's liability. Although not a rule, since 1998 Little League has held the position that batting helmets not be painted, and recommends not using any that have been painted.

Q: *"What is the position of Little League Baseball on the use of 'Bat Sleeves' (weighted lengths of hard material that slip over the bat. Clearly bat donuts are not allowed but we are unclear about these new sleeves."*

**Bill Needles
Laguna Hills Little League**

A: Bat rasps, or sleeves, are designed in a different manner than the traditional bat donut. Donuts can be purchased for different sizes of bats, and were generally purchased for the bigger bats, so Little Leaguers would put them on, swing them, and the donut could slip over the barrel of the bat, and injure someone nearby. The bat sleeve just fits over the knob of the bat, and doesn't pose a risk of flying off the end of the barrel when it's being swung. So it is approved for use by all ages of players in Little League.

Q: *"Dear ASAP, I have a concern about the drinking of alcoholic beverages at team parties. I am a parent and proud sponsor of our league. I think the drinking of alcohol in front of children at their team function shows poor judgment, irresponsibility, and is a liability for everyone involved. I would like to know how to address this to my league in the hopes that we can either enforce current rules or make new ones. We are the examples our children will follow."*

Diane

A: This is a good question, but one which you need to take to your local membership and administration, according to Little League's Risk Management Director Dan Kirby. Little League rules basically deal only with the player-performance issues of the game. Your league has the ability to regulate team functions through local rules. You could consider this as an issue for selection of a manager and/or make it a part of the ASAP safety plan. If you want to make an official rule that no alcohol shall be allowed at formal functions, your league has the authority to do so.

Have a question or tip to share?
Call the ASAP Hotline:
800-811-7443,
or e-mail: asap@musco.com



Or write to us at:
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FROM READERS

"You've heard people say, 'Create a safe working environment!' As if that's something you can turn on and off like a light switch. But here's a way to help you do that: Positively reinforce safety. When you see someone doing something safely, mention it to them. Thanking people for safe efforts (especially in a low key manner) will help build a safer environment. Remember safety is not always negative, there are positive aspects, too."

Lee Joyce, State Safety Director, Virginia State Little League

Impact of Coaches

"I have come to a frightening conclusion,

"I am the decisive element in the gym, on the field, or in the pool.

"It is my personal approach that creates the climate.

"It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

"As a coach, I possess tremendous power to make an athlete's life miserable or joyous.

"I can be the tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

"I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

"In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and an athlete humanized or dehumanized."

An adaptation of Haim Ginott

Presented by Dr. Tom Crawford, 1993 USOC Coaching Symposium, Colorado Springs, Colorado

ASAP HOTLINE
24 HOUR TOLL-FREE
800-811-7443

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has been delivered! Didn't get it? Visit:
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