



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

Include Everyone in Plan

Learn from injuries which could have been avoided

People learn best from experience. But when leagues begin putting together safety plans, they shouldn't have to experience injuries to prevent them.

Here are the real-life examples of the injuries which Little League has seen across the country.

Facilities

Bleachers or steps: make sure you check your railings and seats. Several injuries occur every year because people don't have any handhold, it isn't a solid railing or the bleacher simply breaks. At registration time, make sure steps have handrails to prevent falls on slick steps.

Concession stand: Volunteers have been seriously injured due to faulty equipment. Check everything before you begin using it each season.

Lighting: Electricity can be deadly. Have a qualified electrician check your lights prior to use each year and perform any maintenance as needed, such as grounding.

Gates and entryways: Keep all entrances clear and well-marked for pedestrians, and maintain areas where cars are not permitted to safe-guard pedestrians.

Equipment

Riding mowers: No one should ever ride on anything other than on the seat. In 1999 a child riding on a fender lost a limb when he fell off a tractor pulling a mower.

Golf carts: They look so innocent, and many leagues use them for all kinds of tasks. But their very innocence works against leagues. People have been run over, thrown

out of moving carts, and otherwise injured. First: Don't use these for inappropriate tasks or allow underage drivers. They are transportation, not tractors. If it is stopped, turn off the engine and take the key out. Children jump in the seat quicker than you can say "Hey, don't play with that!" and injuries occur to them or bystanders. Put these guidelines and restrictions in your safety plan.

"Attractive nuisances": Put away all equipment when it's not being used. Child love to play on equipment like drags and mowers which could cause injury. Make sure no equipment is accessible unless it's in use.

Activities

Sliding injuries: These continue to plague leagues. The Junior League is a major focus for these types. Teach proper sliding techniques, but do so on grass, or with the bases away from the laceration-causing posts.

Volunteer Application Form: Encourage use of the form found in the Safety Officer Manual. Your league needs to ensure all volunteers have the players' best interests in mind.

Enforce philosophy: In competitive situations, train your coaches and umpires

to maintain their composure and not allow their feelings to over shadow the Little League philosophy. Reinforce the intent of good sportsmanship, not winning.

Enforce the rules: Make sure catchers wear all appropriate gear at all times. Check the playing equipment before every use; make sure it's safe to use or destroy it so it can't be used if not safe.

2001 Safety Officer Manual in the mail and on the Web!

The 2001 Safety Officer Manual on CD-ROM is updated and ready to help you develop a safety plan.

First, there are no new requirements for 2001. May 1, '01 is the deadline for safety plans to be submitted. The new material will soon be delivered to your door, but is now available on Little League's Web site at: <http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap>

Here's what's new:

- "A Year in the Life of Hometown Little League" booklet is on the CD; this helpful resource is now part of your manual. Print as many as needed;
- Want to explain the ASAP program to a group? Dan Kirby's PowerPoint presentation is also there;
- Auto-run feature immediately boots the CD once you put it in your PC's CD drive;
- A new contents browser pops up, allowing you to view each item on the CD without searching.

When is contact malicious?

“Dear ASAP,

“An interesting play occurred last spring that is worth noting. An offensive player was running into home plate. He slid ‘under the tag.’ He appeared to be clearly safe. The plate umpire called the runner out. The plate umpire was quietly asked, ‘Wasn’t he under the tag?’ The plate umpire replied, ‘Oh yes, but there was contact.’ The absolute, only contact was the catcher tagging the runner, after the runner had slid under the catcher’s legs to touch home plate. The umpire was quietly instructed that this contact did not constitute an out. The batter remained ‘out,’ which was fine. The umpire could contemplate his call later, for future games.

“Two important safety issues are addressed here: First, you can get your point across in an instructional, quiet way to an umpire, without stirring up the spectators. Second, what constitutes incidental contact versus malicious contact?

“Regardless of how we feel about volunteer umpiring in the Little League, we are saving millions of dollars by not paying umpires. Some of that saved money can be put into safety. A ‘bad call’ is incidental compared to a lack of safety precautions. Incidentally, paid umpires also make ‘bad calls.’ Little League has the right idea when it comes to using volunteer umpires.

“Regarding contact, let’s review the rules as related to safety. No player, offensive or defensive, shall maliciously contact another player. Malicious contact by an offensive player constitutes an out and an ejection of the player. Malicious contact by a defensive player constitutes obstruction. The runner gets, at least, the base he/she was headed towards. The defensive player gets ejected.

“The offensive runner shall not make any deliberate attempts to interfere with the play of a defensive player. For example, the offensive runner shall not wave his/her hands in an attempt to interfere with a play. The offensive runner shall not try to slap a ball out of a defensive player’s hands. These are examples of deliberate interference. The offensive player will be called out and another out may be called if the umpire judges that the interference impeded a double play.

“These rules are set up to insure a safe and fair playing field. So what is incidental contact? Incidental contact is the natural contact that occurs when the ball, the defensive player and the offensive player are all headed for the same location. Unless we change the way baseball is played, this will happen a lot.

“Should the umpire see malicious contact or a deliberate or unintentional interference by the offensive player, the umpire needs to ‘call an out.’ Otherwise any mild contact, even such as brushing of uniform or leg against one another can be judged as incidental contact,



which did not interfere with the play. Here the runner is ‘safe.’

“True, a fine line can be drawn between interference and incidental

contact. The umpire’s responsibility is to make the judgment on these instances. The coach’s job is to accept the umpire’s judgment.

“I hope this clarifies a couple of safety issues, as well as defines some points on umpiring. Truly the umpire is an important element in baseball safety on the field.”

Yours In Safety,

**Thom. E. Whitlatch OD, District Safety Officer
Pennsylvania District 23**

“It is important to understand the intent of rules and apply them so safety is not compromised, but at the same time it is important that someone does not go too far in the name of safety and change the way the game is to be played.

“Also, the obstruction rule does not award the base the player was headed toward — the player is awarded one base past the one last legally touched. For example, if in a rundown between home and third an obstruction is called when the runner is headed toward third, the player is awarded home and not third.”

**Dan Kirby, director
Risk Management Department, Little League Baseball**

(This exchange was on the Safety Officer e-mail server. To subscribe, go to: <http://www.dpll.org/safetyform.htm>)

Doctor says kids on sleds need helmets

Want to help keep your league's kids safe this winter? Tell them to keep some of their bike equipment out when they bring the sleds out. Their helmets.

If America's kids wear helmets when they sled, thousands of head injuries each year could be avoided, said Dr. John R. Tongue of Tualatin, Ore., a physician who checked figures on head injuries resulting from sledding.

"Head injuries from sledding are certainly preventable," said Tongue, who studied sled injuries for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Data compiled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission show around 7,000 sledders ages 16 and younger are taken to hospital emergency rooms each year to be treated for head injuries. "Forty-three percent are brain injuries and a third are serious, so you are talking about a serious problem," Tongue said.

Other types of helmets also could prevent injury, but bike helmets are cheap, commonly available and capable of doing the job, Tongue said.

The risk is probably greater among younger kids, whose necks are weak and heads are large in proportion to the rest of their bodies, Tongue said. Besides, the younger kids are newer to sledding and probably are not paying as much attention to dangers such as sledders behind them.

Although bike helmets weren't created for sledding, there are similarities in the types of accidents. Kids are striking something, going forward and tumbling off.

Parents need to make some adjustments in the bike helmets to make them fit right while keeping their kids' heads warm, however. A cloth cap — possibly a tight fleece — could be worn under the helmet to keep body heat from escaping through the helmet's vents, he said.

And the straps might have to be readjusted to be sure the helmet fits properly when wearing a cap inside. If the helmet is too tight, it may be time to buy a new one — but because helmets commonly can be found for \$30 or less, that's no big deal, Tongue said.

Most kids don't wear helmets when they sled, however. In a study based at St. Louis Children's Hospital, only two of 83 patients had worn helmets, Tongue said. But 91 percent of the children had gloves and 61 percent had waterproof boots, he said.

The physicians group's national safe-sledding campaign highlights helmet use as well as not sledding down the slope headfirst, and sledding with adult supervision off streets, in areas free of hazards such as rocks and fences.



Video children for future need

"Last weekend during our local soccer tournament we invited the Florida (Masonic) Lodge to do their Child Video ID Program. It was a great success. The members of the program not only fingerprinted the children, but made videos of them also. I was fortunate enough to sit in on two of the video sessions. These videos not only serve to help find lost children, but have been used in reconstructive surgery after a disfiguring injury. Members keep only the parent consent form, the parents get the video tape and all other information on the child, and a parent or representative selected by the parent must sit in on the video taping. You might check to see if your area has a program such as this." (See poster above.)

Gary Burmann

Team Athletic Trainer Elite Storm Soccer Member, National Youth Sport Safety Foundation Staff Member University of South Florida Student Trainer's Camp



Think **PASS!**

1. **P**ull Ring

2. **A**im at Base of Fire

3. **S**queeze Lever

4. **S**weep Side to Side



'Can player warm up pitcher?'

Q: *"Little League rules state that a catcher must wear a mask and helmet when warming up a pitcher. Some umpires allow a bench player to warm up a pitcher at the start of a half inning without this equipment provided they remain in a standing position. Is this interpretation of the rule proper?"*

**Bud White, safety officer
North Venice Little League, Los Angeles, CA**

A: According to Dan Kirby, director of risk management at Little League Headquarters if the catcher isn't ready at the beginning of the inning, it is best for the pitcher to play catch with one of the fielders, i.e. the third baseman or first baseman, while waiting for the catcher. This is preferable to introducing a new player to the field who doesn't have the correct equipment for the position. Anyone in the catcher's position (behind home plate) should have on all required equipment. As you note, the rules are open to interpretation on this, but Dan feels this is the best solution. A quick reminder: Adults should never catch a pitcher, even for a few minutes while the catcher finishes getting ready.

Q: *"I am the safety officer of the Newton (Mass.) South Little League. I understand there is a training program provided by Little League regarding prevention of Little League Baseball injuries. Can you tell me more about this and how I might go about signing up my league? I also understand there is a video called 'Play it Safe.' How do I get a copy?"*

Thank you,
**Chris Anschuetz
Newton, Mass., South Little League**

A: The Emergency Management and Training Program (EMTP) is offered free each year October thru May and teaches the basic first-aid necessary for emergency situations on the field. Simply call Little League Headquarters or your regional office and request the information on the program. Or you can check out the September ASAP News where the program is discussed. It is available on-line at:
<http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap/newsletters>
The "Play It Safe" video is no longer available, but the manual "Play It Safe" is also available on-line at:
<http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap> under the "Play It Safe" section of the Safety Officer's Manual.

Q: *"I really liked the format of Fairfax Little League's coaches manual. It is direct and to the point. Is it available for use as is after updating all the information to reflect what we need for our league? I didn't see a way for me to edit the manual from the CD."*

**Vickie Wessel
Horizon Little League, Scottsdale, Ariz.**

A: Glad the manual is sparking thought on safety issues. Yes, you can use the Fairfax plan as a model or guide for your plan, but be aware there are points which you have to show you are implementing to qualify for the 20 percent player accident insurance premium credit (first aid training for coaches, fundamentals training, etc.). The Fairfax plan can be copied by highlighting and transferring the text to a separate word processing document, where you can manipulate the text. Your plan doesn't need to be in the same, nifty-looking format to be effective; it's the substance that counts.

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:
ASAP
100 1st Ave. West
Oskaloosa, IA 52577



Little League Baseball, Inc.
P.O. Box 3485
Williamsport, PA 17701

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Williamsport, PA
Permit No. 90

What's Inside

PAGE

1

PLAN SAFETY
Plan against
these injuries
this season



PAGE

2

RULES REVIEW
When is contact
malicious in
baserunning?



PAGE

5

SAFETY CHATTER
'Can another
player warm up
the pitcher?'



HOTLINE IDEAS

FROM READERS

"We have installed ThorGuard Lightning Detection System at Ruzicka Park, our main ballpark. This is an advanced warning system for lightning. The system's sensor monitors energy as far away as 15 miles and evaluates the potential for lightning within an area of approximately two miles in radius. When the ThorGuardian senses a hazardous condition, the system automatically provides both audible and visual alerts.

"Lightning has always been a major concern for our league, with this system we are doing everything possible to make it safe for league players and patrons. We now can be able to evacuate all our fields when a potentially hazardous storm is approaching. This system will give us an all clear signal when conditions are SAFE."

**Joe Dudek, safety officer
Bartlett, IL. Little League**

**This safety officer receives an ASAP cap for sending his safety idea. What is your league doing to become safer for the kids?
Call the ASAP Hotline!**

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

The 2001 Safety Officer Manual
will soon be delivered! For the latest, visit:
www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap

ASAP News

ASAP News is a service of
Little League Baseball®, Inc.
facilitated and published by
Musco Lighting, Inc.
P.O. Box 808
Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577

© December, 2000, Little League
Baseball and Musco Lighting
Hotline: 800/811-7443
Fax: 641/673-4852
E-mail address: asap@musco.com



Check it out! The ASAP News is on the Web at: <http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap/newsletters/index.htm>