



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

ASAP at Congress



The ASAP Effect

ASAP proves value through reduced injuries, insurance costs

The 2001 Little League International Congress is in the books, but its impact will be felt for the next three years.

ASAP again was a major presentation, and the good news was an uplifting message for proponents of the program, as well as a wake-up call to those who haven't yet started safety plans in their leagues and districts.

Between 600-700 district personnel attended, listening to Dan Kirby, risk management director of Little League, talk about the program's history, present and future.

ASAP History

ASAP was begun as a grass roots effort to develop a safer environment for the players, volunteers and spectators of Little League Baseball. Little League's accidents were fairly static each year, so while the same leagues weren't having the same injuries each year, Little League knew the same injuries in about the same proportion would occur each year.

ASAP's founders wanted to improve that, and got dedicated district and staff people to help develop the program. That has occurred, and at each Congress since 1995, ASAP has been presented and reinforced to the district staff in attendance.

ASAP's Present

Now, six years after its start, ASAP came to Congress to prove its value, and support itself as a mainstream program ready to assist leagues make a difference.

The ASAP effect? Over \$1.1 million has been saved annually averaged over the five years which ASAP has been in full effect, from 1996-2000. That includes reducing the number of injuries from an average of 5,695 each year in the five year period 1991-1995, down to 2,390 injuries on average each year 1996-2000.

That equals 11.5 injuries per district prior to ASAP, compared to 4.8 injuries per district since ASAP, for a 58 percent reduction in injuries per year under *A Safety Awareness Program*.

The news is especially impressive as ASAP has yet to reach even a simple majority of leagues, with just one year at 33 percent of all leagues and 40 percent of all teams operating under a safety plan. DA's were challenged to get their leagues involved, to see what results this program could provide if more leagues took advantage of the benefits to provide a safer environment to all participants.

What Would Little League Be Without ASAP?

A note of caution was raised, as medical costs have continued to rise, with costs per injury averaging \$465 from '91-'95, up to \$634 paid per injury from 1996-2000. If ASAP had never been adopted, the annual savings in insurance costs would have exploded to over \$3.6 million, for a turn-around of \$2.1 million annually.

The Mission:

To create awareness, through education and information, of the opportunities to provide a safer environment for kids and all participants of Little League Baseball.

With the growth of ASAP averaging about 8 percent per year, ASAP is expected to grow to just over 40 percent in 2001, but many states and districts are missing the advantages of developing a safer environment in their areas. Last year, the Central Region averaged 26 percent; the East Region reached 30 percent; the South Region, 29 percent; and the West Region led the nation with 44 percent.

While ASAP has grown steadily, the participation has not been uniform. Kirby pointed out that of the almost 500 districts across the country, 102 districts, or 21 percent of the country, have NO leagues with safety programs.

▲ See Page 3, "The ASAP Effect"

'Now is the time!'

Go to: <http://www.littleleague.org/enews>

Sign up with Little League E-News for all the latest

After just three days, over 600 people have already visited Little League's newest communication vehicle, E-News, to sign up for the latest information available.

E-News is Little League's email notification of news of interest to many different groups throughout the program.

E-News allows you to find out about the latest ASAP News, Little League news releases, MyTeam.com updates, special offers on Little League merchandise, summer camp information, and official rules updates. People signing up may select any number of the options.

In the first three days, of the 600 people who signed up, 375 have asked for the ASAP News notification, 475 have requested the news releases, 450 want rules changes and others have shown interest in the summer camps and others.

However, only 49 people signing up have been safety officers. While safety officers do receive the printed version of the ASAP News, the on-line version is available in a much more timely manner, usually two to three weeks before the Postal Service can deliver it. Not only does signing up allow you to be notified of the newest material, but you can ensure you never miss a copy for any reason.

While hundreds of coaches, umpires and parents have taken advantage of this no-cost, timely notification, the opportunity is to get hundreds of thousands of people signed up throughout Little League.

Encourage all your parents, coaches, league officials and umpires to sign up for the areas which interest them,

but especially the ASAP News. Currently we can only send out one copy of the ASAP News, and safety officers must make copies to help them raise safety awareness in their leagues. Now, whether you have a safety committee or just people you know are interested, you can have them sign up and learn the latest right along with you.

"Now is the time to get people to sign up for these items, while the season is still going on," explained Risk Management Director Dan Kirby. "After the season is over, people lose interest and won't take the time. But if they do this now, we can ensure the information gets out to the leagues despite any turnover in positions. There are many people out there who don't even know about this program, and the positive effects it can have on a league. Getting people signed up to receive the newsletters will show them the information is for everyone.

"It's not just information for safety officers. There are rules changes, coaching tips and information, concession guidelines, and material which will help parents. It's geared to everybody," Kirby noted. "I'm excited about the possibilities this offers. We can send you any changes, off-season notifications, as well as the on-going information about making your league better and safer through education and awareness. It only takes a minute, and then you'll get the information

when you have time to look at it. We can't mail out hundreds of thousands of these newsletters, but with E-News, hundreds of thousands of people can receive it."

The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying the Little League E-News sign-up page. The page title is "Little League E-News" and the URL is "http://www.littleleague.org/enews/first.asp". The page features a cartoon character of a man in a suit running with a briefcase. The main heading is "Little League Baseball E-NEWS" with the tagline "Fast... Fresh... Free!". Below this, there is a sign-up prompt: "Sign up now and get Little League news your way!". The form includes several sections with checkboxes for selecting interests: "ASAP Newsletters", "Little League News", "MyTeam.com Updates", "Special Offers on Little League Merchandise", "Summer Camp Information", and "Official Rules Updates". There is also a section for "I am a:" with checkboxes for "Safety Officer", "League Official", "Debit Official", "Volunteer", "Parent", "Press Contact", "Coach/Manager", "Umpire", and "Fan". The form fields include "Email", "Name", "Address", "City", "State", "Zip", "Country", "Day Telephone", and "Evening Telephone". An "Add Me" button is at the bottom of the form.

ASAP makes Congress impact

▲ “The ASAP Effect” continued from Page 1

Follow the Leaders

District Administrators were urged to appoint district safety officers as a key component to promoting safety in their districts. Kirby noted of the 483 districts, 296 have DSO's, and several have multiple DSO's.

Why is this important? Of the 2,128 qualified safety plans submitted in 2000, 1,899 were in districts with a DSO. Only 229 safety plans were submitted from roughly two-fifths of districts without a DSO. So the correlation is clear: having an active district safety officer helps promote district-wide safety participation.

ASAP's tools were also reviewed: from the ASAP News, ASAP Hotline, asap@musco.com email address, Safety Officer Manual on CD, on-line references at www.littleleague.org/manuals/asap as well as the new E-News registration all contribute to helping develop safety awareness and are ready to be utilized.

The audience was told ASAP stands ready to help develop a workable safety plan which will help reduce injuries. It will also help in the nationwide effort to contain costs to make Little League affordable for all areas of the country, regardless of affluence. Kirby noted the ASAP organization, with Little League staff, ASAP's defined program and fellow safety officers, District Administrators and DSO's as all ways which ASAP helps get safety efforts started.

Awards and Recognition

CNA Insurance has offered a player accident insurance credit for five years now, an incentive to leagues to develop a qualified safety plan. The average league submitting a qualified safety plan received \$155 each year of the program, from the 20 percent player accident insurance credit. Kirby noted \$845,000 has been claimed in this credit from leagues implementing safety programs. But he noted \$4 million in credits were available during that period, so less than 25 percent of the total has been claimed by leagues. The 20 percent credit is again available this year, and Kirby expects leagues to claim over \$400,000 by implementing safety programs.

Each league which submits a facility survey, regardless of having a safety program, also earns a Disney character pin representing the year of the survey filed. This year's coming pin will be the full Disney baseball team, with all nine characters.

Recognition in the ASAP News is also important to the program, with all districts' participation levels being

highlighted in the newsletter, whether good or bad. The top plans are also highlighted, with stories to help other leagues learn from their experience.

The top two plans in each region receive \$500, and the developers of the best plans from each region earn a trip to the World Series, where they are honored for their award on Lamade Stadium field at the Series. The plan which is judged as the best in the country wins a Musco lighting system for a 200-foot field, worth over \$20,000 as the national first-place prize.

Safety: Top Priority

Kirby drew examples from real life injuries to show the value of a safety program, and how safety plans in these leagues might have saved injuries and lives.

His first example was of a boy riding on a tractor's fender which was pulling a mower. The child fell off the fender and lost a leg under the mower deck. The fender the child had been sitting on had a sign which read: “This is not a seat.” Proper procedures on equipment usage might have saved the boy's leg.

Another player injury occurred when a third baseman was warming up between innings, throwing over to first. The third baseman was not moved over toward short stop, and when the pitcher stepped backward off the mound, the throw going to first hit the pitcher in the side of his head, causing brain damage. A safety plan addressing proper warm-ups might have stopped this.

Concession workers are also at risk when no safety plan exists. In one example, Kirby mentioned a woman who was severely burned when the deep fryer she was to use exploded, because it hadn't been checked before it was turned on for the start of the new season. Another instance involved an unsecured CO² tank which fell over in a concession stand with the impact knocking the top off, and killing a worker.

Finally, just having a safety plan won't prevent all injuries. Everyone must be aware of safety concerns, and take the appropriate steps to avoid an injury. Dan's final example involved a league which discovered a corner sticking up on home plate. They evaluated their field, assessed a problem, but rather than fixing it, they told players not to slide at home. Unfortunately, a close game developed, and in the fifth inning, a player tried to score, and slide into home. The player's knee sustained a severe injury which needn't have happened. If the game had been delayed long enough to fix the problem which had been identified, two concerns would have been avoided: a player injury and major medical costs.

Rules changes approved in Ottawa

Little League Baseball's 22nd International Congress in Ottawa, Ontario, resulted in nine changes to the rules and regulations under which the game is played. Four additional modifications were considered by the 437 delegates attending the congress, but failed to garner the required two-thirds majority required for consideration by the Little League Baseball International Board of Directors.

Here are the modifications and the voting results:

Item 1

Affects Rule 1.11(h) – Junior and Senior Baseball
Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are permitted.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 1:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2001**

Item 2

Affects Rule 3.03(c) – Junior and Senior Baseball
A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed. NOTE: This change would affect tournament play as well.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 2:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 3

Affects Rule 4.04 – Little League Baseball and Softball
The batting order shall be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. Substitutes must take the place of the replaced player's position in the batting order except as covered by Rule 3.03. Little League (Majors) Division: A league may adopt a policy of a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team roster present for the game batting in order. If this option is adopted, each player would be required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order. However, a player may be entered and/or re-entered defensively into the game anytime provided he/she meets the requirements of mandatory play.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 3:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 4

Affects Rule 4.05 – All Levels of Baseball and Softball
The offensive team shall station two base coaches on the field during its time at bat, one near first base and one near third base. Base coaches shall be eligible players in the uniform of their team; or one (1) adult manager or coach. An adult manager or coach is only permitted to occupy the first or third base coaches box if there is at least one other adult manager or coach in the dugout.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 4:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 5

Affects Rule 4.05 – All Levels of Baseball and Softball except Big League
The offensive team shall station two base coaches on the field during its time at bat, one near first base and one near third base. Base coaches shall be eligible players in the uniform of their team; or one (1) adult manager or coach; or both base coaches may be adult managers or coaches.

THIS ITEM FAILED

Item 6

Affects Rule 4.07 – All Levels of Baseball and Softball
When a manager, coach or player is ejected from a game, he/she shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. He/she may not sit in the stands and may not be recalled. Any manager, coach or player ejected from a game is suspended for his or her team's next physically played game.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 6:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 7

Affects Rule 6.06 – Little League Baseball and Softball
A batter is out for illegal action when – (d) he/she fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing.

THIS ITEM FAILED

Rules changes approved and denied

▲ “Rules Changes” continued from Page 4

Item 8

Affects Rule 7.14 – Little League Baseball and Softball
Once each inning a player who has not appeared in the batting order may be used as a special pinch runner for any offensive player. The player for whom the pinch runner runs is not subject to removal from the lineup. If the pinch runner remains in the game as a substitute offensive player, or batter, the player may not be used again as a pinch runner.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 8:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 9

Regulation I – The League - Affects Junior, Senior and Big League Girls Softball
Junior League is an extension of the local Little League to accommodate girls league ages 13 and 14; Senior League is an extension of the local Little League to accommodate girls league ages 13 –16; Big League is an extension of the local Little League to accommodate girls league ages 14-18.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 9:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 10

Regulation I – The League – Affects All Levels of Baseball and Softball
President may manage, coach or umpire provided he/she does not serve on the Protest Committee nor serve as Tournament Team manager or coach.

THIS ITEM FAILED

Item 11

Regulation I – The League – Affects All Levels of Baseball and Softball
Remove the 10-team limit restriction. (Maintain 20,000 -population limit and 1,000-students-per-league limit.)

THIS ITEM FAILED

Item 12

Regulation II – League Boundaries - Affects All Levels of Baseball and Softball
(d) The Board of Directors of the Local League, with the approval of the player involved, reserves the right to continue as a player, any individual (1) whose residence changes or (2) who lives outside the league’s boundaries because of a revision of such boundaries even if the child then resides in the territory of another league. Current Major League, Minor League or Tee Ball players or any sibling whose brother or sister meets the criteria under II (d) may also be retained. Any player meeting (1) or (2) above may be retained for the remainder of his/her career, including Little League, Junior, Senior and Big League competition. NOTE: A player who qualifies under this regulation and elects not to participate for a playing season is not eligible to be retained for the subsequent season. Additional information: Approval of this change would NOT eliminate paragraph IV (h).

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 12:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

Item 13

Regulation III – The Teams – Affects All Levels of Baseball and Softball
(d) NOTE: (2) If a player is not going to be replaced on the team roster because of illness or injury of a temporary nature, and the player receives medical treatment from a licensed physician, that player must supply written authorization to the player agent from the treating physician that the player can resume participating with or without restrictions.

**BOARD ACTION ON ITEM 13:
APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002**

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

AT CONGRESS
ASAP makes
big impact in
Ottawa, Canada



PAGE

2

SIGN UP NOW!
E-News helps
spread the
safety news



PAGE

4

RULES CHANGES
Congress OK's
new rules for
Little League



May 1 Deadline ???

Over 1,000 plans have come in preceding the deadline, with some excellent safety ideas and programs. From past experience, many people will have waited until the deadline to send in their plans and we will see many more hundreds arriving in the mail postmarked on May 1. But while the deadline is just past, if you haven't sent in your safety plan, you are still encouraged to do so. Little League is still considering a reduced player accident insurance premium credit for qualified safety plans which come in late, and has given a reduced credit in the past. Don't miss out on your chance to get a safety plan turned in this year. One note: All safety plans are to be implemented during the May 1, 2000 to May 1, 2001 period, so please show how your safety plan was in effect during this time if submitting it late. However, all plans which are received after the May 1st deadline will not be eligible for the awards contest of the best plans. All leagues, both safety officer and president, as well as the DA, are notified by mail if the safety plan has been accepted or if it needs further clarification is necessary to be accepted. Please wait until after June 15 to inquire of your plan's status if you have not been notified, as thousands of plans are being reviewed and leagues contacted. If you have not been notified by June 15, please feel free to contact Little League Headquarters at 570/326-1921 and ask for Dianne Fisher, or email her directly at dfisher@litleleague.org for assistance.

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

**Have a tip, question or
request?**
Call the ASAP Hotline.

ASAP News

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

© May, 2001, 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>