

ASAP news



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

Preparing today's youth for tomorrow. Should you

"Little League Baseball and Softball is an organization designed to build good citizens. It is a program of leadership, preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's leaders. At the local level, Little League relies on a devoted legion of adult volunteers to help ensure that the organization remains structured and runs smoothly. Your local Little League program is always looking for

responsible and enthusiastic individuals to support and coordinate Little League events and activities. As a volunteer, you should have a keen interest in the safety, well being, and overall development of children. By reading further, you will discover that the benefits of volunteering are endless. You will also gain a better understanding of why you should become involved, who volunteers are, what you can do, and how you can sign up."

So begins the newest effort by Little League Baseball and Softball to

strengthen the safety and positive environment for all children and volunteers in LLB. The Parent Orientation Program was recently sent out to all league presidents across the country. Through this program, parents and other volunteers learn of their crucial role in "keeping it fun" and reducing the chances of altercations, which do no one any good.

The program includes:

- LLB Parent Orientation Program CD.
- "Keeping It Fun: Tips for Conflict Resolution" video.
- Little League's Official Pre-Game Program cassette tape, including the National Anthem, The Little League Pledge and a Special Message.
- "Keeping It Fun: Tips for Conflict Resolution" cards.

These resources will help you develop a training program which will positively reinforce the fundamental principles of Little League, and create the best possible environment for your league's kids to participate.

Program Highlights – Maintaining Proper Conduct

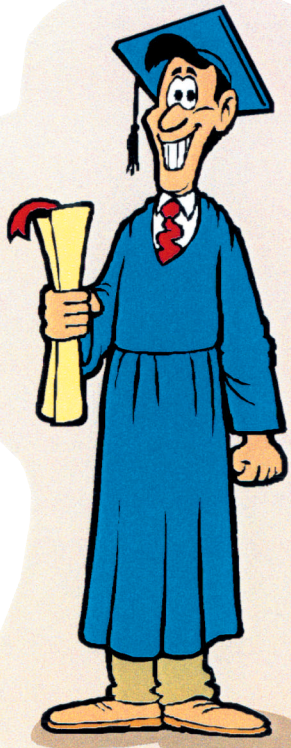
One of the most important things that you can do as a Little League parent is to show positive support of all players. While many parents are often very enthusiastic when watching their child's

games, it is important that you do not get overly involved, taking personal offense to official calls or decisions made by coaches and umpires. Most of the time, these decisions are made in reference to official game rules that you may not be familiar with. If you have a question about an official call or rule, you should contact the coach after the game, or call the Little League Regional Office. These rules are enforced simply for the safety of your child, ensuring that he/she will have a positive Little League experience.

Why should I become a volunteer?

When you volunteer, you become an important part of Little League. Without you, the organization could not provide America's youth with the quality form of recreation that has come to be the reputation of Little League Baseball. You will be rewarded by knowing your service is giving back to the community while showing support of the children in your area. It will also allow you to meet and form friendships with other members of the community, while instilling the values of Little League — loyalty, character, and courage — into your children. This is exemplified through the Parent/Volunteer Pledge:

- *I will teach all children to play fair and do their best.*
- *I will positively support all managers, coaches and players.*
- *I will respect the decisions of the umpires.*
- *I will praise a good effort despite the outcome of the game.*



Conflict Resolution

In all aspects of life, conflict will arise. So it's not surprising that conflicts would occasionally arise during a Little League season. To help deal with potential disputes, Little League offers these six simple steps to conflict resolution. While these steps may not be applicable to every situation, these basic conflict resolution skills should prove to be helpful in many situations.

Step 1: Speak to the Person in

Private. Choose an appropriate time and place. Never berate a person in public.

Step 2: Listen Actively. Listen fully to the concern. Ask questions to clarify a point.

Step 3: Repeat Step 1 with Roles

Reversed. Identify the person's problem, as you understand it. Tell your side of the story. Describe WHAT happened, and WHY it happened. Use "I" statements and acknowledge their point of view and feelings.

Step 4: Expressing Feelings. Take turns expressing how you feel about the situation.

Step 5: Solving the Problem. Suggest ways to resolve the situation.

Step 6: Select a WIN/WIN Solution.

Find a way to resolve the problem together that benefits you both.

Step 7: Agree on a Follow-Up.

Offer to meet again if the concern persists.

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood." — Steven Covey, author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Whether it's on the playing field or in the game of life, Little League believes these simple steps to conflict resolution will help to diffuse confrontations from the beginning and also help to improve problem-solving skills.

Glossary Terms

Dispute – a verbal controversy between two or more people, a dispute is not yet a conflict

Conflict – is a state of disagreement and disharmony

Listen Actively – involves focusing entirely on what the other person is saying, and confirms understanding of both the content of the message and the emotions and feelings underlying the message. For example you can begin the conversation with: "First help me understand your concerns regarding your son," or later clarify the concern by asking, "So, you view speed as your son's best quality on the field and are upset because you feel I am not utilizing that strength?"

Feeling Words – an important aspect of effective communication. Instead of stating opinions, describe how the situation or dispute makes you feel. For example, say something like: "I get angry when you insult my coaching in front of others, because I know I am trying my best to help the kids."

"I" Statements – involves taking responsibility for your thoughts and feelings. For example you could say something like: "I feel you are criticizing your child too harshly during the games," instead of saying, "Everyone thinks you're being too harsh with your child."

Remember, you cannot control the way other adults handle themselves, but **you do have control** over your own reactions and conduct.

Be familiar with league rules and procedures.

For more information, visit the Little League Baseball website at www.littleleague.org or contact your local District Administrator for further information.

For information concerning the availability and ordering of additional program materials, contact Scott Rosenberg at Little League Baseball, 570/326-1921.

Conflict Resolution Steps developed by David Rattray, First Nations Education Center.



Parent Orientation

Meeting Outline

Age Structure

Discuss the age range of children participating in the League.

Little League International allows flexibility for local leagues to set up divisions based on the age demographics of the children participating.

Review the age ranges for the different divisions offered by the league, i.e. Tee Ball, Minors, Majors, Junior League, Senior League, Big League.

Mandatory Play

Overview of local league's format for Tee Ball games.

Little League International sets mandatory play at six (6) defensive outs and one (1) time at bat for all other levels except Big League, for which there is no mandatory play.

Mandatory play rule changes during tournament.

Reference Rule 3.03.

Pitching Rules

No pitching is allowed in Tee Ball.

Pitching rules are specific to each division.

Rules are designated to limit the number of innings a pitcher can pitch so as to protect the arms of the pitchers and to develop additional pitchers.

Reference Regulation VI.

Player Selection Procedure

Discuss how tryouts will be handled.

Discuss the draft system for the league.

Review the player selection process for each level or division.

Review the league's policy for replacement of players, i.e. calling players up to the Majors, from the Minors, in midseason.

Tournament Selection Procedure

Review the different tournament levels the league will participate in, i.e. 9/10-year-old, Major League (11/12-year-old), etc.

Review the player selection process.

Review start date for tournament.

Review selection of managers and coaches for the tournament teams.

Review the expectations for time commitment for practices and games.

Schedules

Review schedule information for each division including start/end dates, number of games, field locations, etc.

Safety Rules

Overview: A Safety Awareness Plan (ASAP).

Procedure for reporting an injury.

Only managers, coaches, umpires, players and approved volunteers are allowed on the playing field at practice and/or games.

League must approve personal equipment that will be used in games or practices, i.e. batting helmets, bats, etc.

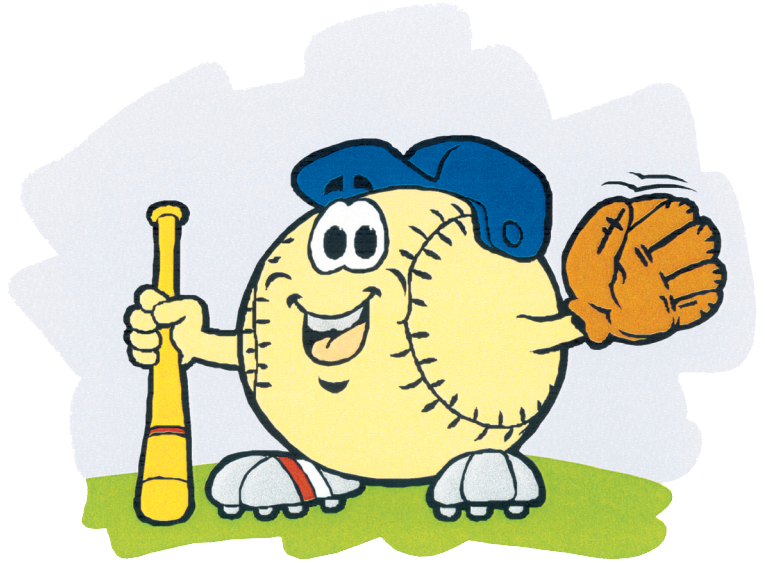
Hand out "Safety Code for Little League" to parents.

Field Dimensions

Review pitching distances at different levels.

Review base path distances at different levels.

Review outfield fence distances at different levels.



Role of the Umpire

Umpires are representatives of the league.

Umpires are authorized and required to enforce all rules.

Remind parents and players that any umpire's decision involving judgment, such as a ball or strike, fair or foul ball, is final.

Umpires shall not call games until at least 30 minutes after play has been suspended.

Reference Rule 9.00.

Protesting a Game

No protests in Tee Ball.

Parents cannot protest a game.

Review procedure for how manager/coach would protest.

Parent/Volunteer Code of Conduct

Discuss volunteer positions.

Distribute Code of Conduct.

Distribute Pledge.

Lightning Kills . .



A thunderstorm is approaching or nearby. Are conditions safe, or is it time to head for safety? Not wanting to appear overly cautious, many people wait far too long before reacting to this potentially deadly weather threat.

To promote a better understanding of the threats of lightning, the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in conjunction with lightning experts across the country, are sponsoring Lightning Safety Awareness Week from April 28 to May 4, 2002. The goal of this campaign is to give people a better understanding of the dangers of lightning so they can make safer decisions when thunderstorms threaten. The safety recommendations outlined during the week are based on lightning research and the lessons learned from the unfortunate experiences of thousands of lightning strike victims.

Thunderstorms produce two types of lightning flashes, 'negative' and 'positive.' While both types are deadly, the characteristics of the two are quite different. Negative flashes occur more frequently, usually under or near the base of the thunderstorm where rain is falling. In contrast, positive flashes generally occur away from the center of the storm, often in areas where rain is not falling. Because these positive flashes occur where the lightning threat

is perceived as low or nonexistent, they often catch people by surprise.

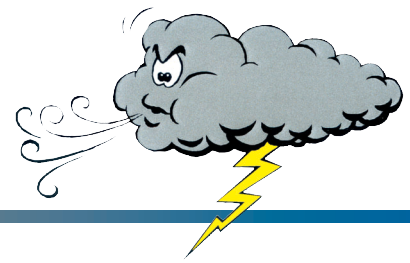
Each year across the United States, thunderstorms produce an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground flashes of lightning — each one of those flashes is a potential killer. According to the National Weather Service, an average of 73 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering devastating neurological injuries that persist for the rest of their lives. A growing percentage of those struck are involved in outside recreational activities.

Officials responsible for sports events often lack adequate knowledge of thunderstorms and lightning to make educated decisions on when to seek safety. Without knowledge, officials base their decisions on personal experience and, sometimes, on the desire to complete the activity. Due to the nature of lightning, personal experience can be misleading. While many people routinely put their lives in jeopardy when thunderstorms are nearby, few are actually struck by lightning. This results in a false sense of safety. Unfortunately, this false sense of safety has resulted in numerous lightning deaths and injuries during the past several decades because people made decisions that unknowingly put their lives or the lives of others at risk.

For organized outdoor activities, the National Weather Service recommends those in charge have a lightning safety plan, and that they follow the plan without exception. The plan should give clear and specific safety guidelines in order to eliminate errors in judgment.

Prior to an activity or event, organizers should listen to the latest forecast to determine the likelihood of thunderstorms. NOAA Weather Radio is a good source of up-to-date weather information. Once people start to arrive, the guidelines in the lightning safety plan should be followed. The information, on page 5, outlines some considerations when creating a lightning safety plan.

Play It Safe



When should activities be stopped?

The sooner activities are stopped and people get to a safe place, the greater the level of safety. In general, a significant lightning threat extends outward from the base of a thunderstorm cloud about 6 to 10 miles. Therefore, people should move to a safe place when a thunderstorm is 6 to 10 miles away. Also, the plan's guidelines should account for the time it will take for everyone to get to a safe place. Here are some criteria that could be used to halt activities.

1. If lightning is observed. The ability to see lightning varies depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and obstructions such as trees, mountains, etc. In clear air, and especially at night, lightning can be seen from storms more than 10 miles away provided that obstructions don't limit the view of the thunderstorm.

2. If thunder is heard. Thunder can usually be heard from a distance of about 10 miles provided that there is no background noise. Traffic, wind, and precipitation may limit the ability to hear thunder less than 10 miles away. If you hear thunder, though, it's a safe bet that the storm is within ten miles.

3. If the time between lightning and corresponding thunder is 30 seconds or less. This would indicate that the thunderstorm is 6 miles away or less. As with the previous two criteria, obstructions, weather, noise and other factors may limit the ability to use this criterion. In addition, a designated person must diligently monitor any lightning.

In addition to any of the above criteria, activities should be halted if the sky looks threatening. Thunderstorms can develop directly overhead and some storms may develop lightning just as they move into an area.

Where should people go for safe shelter?

There is no place outside that is safe in or near a thunderstorm. Consequently, people need to stop what they are doing and get to a safe place immediately.

Small outdoor buildings including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds, etc., are NOT SAFE.

Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the greatest amount of protection. Office buildings, schools, and homes are examples of buildings that would offer protection. Once inside, stay away from windows and doors and anything that conducts electricity such as corded phones, wiring, plumbing, and anything connected to these.

In the absence of a substantial building, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed provides good protection. Occupants should avoid contact with metal in the vehicle and, to the extent possible, move away from windows.

When should activities be resumed?

Because electrical charges can linger in clouds after a thunderstorm has passed, experts agree that people should wait at least 30 minutes after the storm before resuming activities.

Who should monitor the weather and who is responsible for making the decision to stop activities?

Lightning safety plans should specify that someone be designated to monitor the weather for lightning. The 'lightning monitor' should not include the coaches, umpires, or referees, as they are not able to devote the attention needed to adequately monitor conditions. The 'lightning monitor' must know the plan's guidelines and be empowered to assure that those guidelines are followed.

What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?

Most lightning strike victims can survive a lightning strike; however, medical attention may be needed immediately — have someone call for medical help. Victims do not carry an electrical charge and should be attended to at once. In many cases, the victim's heart and/or breathing may have stopped and CPR may be needed to revive them. The victim should continue to be monitored until medical help arrives; heart and/or respiratory problems could persist, or the victim could go into shock. If possible, move the victim to a safer place away from the threat of another lightning strike.

For additional information:

The National Weather Service and NOAA have set up a web site that provides a wealth of information on lightning and lightning safety. The address is:

www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/

In addition, the National Collegiate Athletic Association has adopted a specific set of lightning safety recommendations used for intercollegiate athletic events. The recommendations can be found at:

www.ncaa.org/sports_sciences/sports_med_handbook/1d.pdf

For further information concerning lightning or weather safety, contact the nearest National Weather Service Office. The nearest office can be located on the following web site by clicking on the appropriate state.

www.stormready.noaa.gov/contact.htm

More information on NOAA Weather Radio can be found at:

www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr

*Article By John Jensenius
Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service*

Youth Sports Parent Code of Conduct

Preamble:

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”

I Therefore Agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or sporting event.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
17. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.



You've Got Questions

We've Got Answers

"I need some advice and direction regarding the lighting that we recently installed on one of our small fields. I would like to know the recommended method of inspecting the lighting installation. The Operating Manual goes into good detail as far as performance and installation requirements but does not go into a process for qualifying the installation. It does say that the lights have to be inspected annually by a "qualified electrical technician." This may be loosely interpreted. Secondly, if I am free to obtain the services of a local building/electrical inspector, I would like some additional information and material as an inspection checklist, that I could provide that inspector with. Such as a larger drawing size format of the field lighting layout. Is the Lighting section in the Operating Manual available as a separate publication?"

Rick Hesek
Safety Officer
Northboro, MA, Baseball Association

Lighting can be a challenging, but rewarding, endeavor. LLB has a manual called the 2000 Little League Baseball Lighting Standards and Safety Audit. This document is copied from the information found in the Operating Manual, with some larger graphics which hopefully make the information easier to use. It goes over the recommended method of inspection, which is primarily in the form of a light level check, but has other checklists, too. Feel free to give a copy of this to the qualified electrician. The "qualified electrician" term is vague, but should be interpreted as someone qualified to do a check of the electrical system for shorts, wear on wires, and other concerns which could endanger people around the lights as well as the equipment itself. Many leagues have electricians as members who can do a review of the installation

for you. The described manual should be their guide.

Examining the lighting performance involves doing a light level check. Examples of conducting a proper light level check are also included in the booklet. This will determine the light levels your lights generate. As you may know, LLB requires 50 footcandles average illumination on the infield, and 30 footcandles on the outfield maintained. New lights will produce more light initially, so the initial light levels should be 62.5 average footcandles infield and 37.5 average footcandles outfield when checked just after the installation. This is so when the lights pass their initial brightness, they will still meet the performance levels of 50/30 for the rated life of the lamps (7 to 10 years, depending on the number of hours the lights burn each season). If new lights do not meet the minimum average initial footcandles, first make sure you had specified meeting LLB standards in your contract and then talk to the manufacturer to have them comply with those standards. The packet also includes equipment checklists and other information on meeting LLB standards. Hopefully with a new lighting system, you will already have met all of these. Just for future reference, your DA is supposed to approve all lighting plans before leagues install new lighting, and he/she is supposed to ensure that the plans meet LLB standards. Double-checking the lights after installation is recommended to ensure compliance with Little League standards.

Have a question or tip to share?

Call the ASAP Hotline:

800-811-7443

or email: asap@musco.com

or write to us at:

ASAP
100 1st Ave. West
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

DEADLINE

Don't miss out! The May 1 deadline is almost here to submit your qualified safety plan and receiving a 20 percent player accident insurance credit for your league. Put the finishing touches on and send it in to:
 Little League Baseball
 ASAP Safety Awards
 P.O. Box 3485
 Williamsport, PA 17701

Plans must be postmarked by May 1, 2002 to be eligible for all the awards and credits available. The creators of the best plans from each U.S. region will win a trip to the Little League World Series in August. The best plan in the nation will earn a Musco Lighting 200-foot field lighting system.

After you submit your safety plan, you can check its status at: www.littleleague.org/asap/plans.asp where you can see if LLB has received it, if it is approved, or what item(s) might be keeping it from being approved. There's also a link on the bottom left column of LLB's home page on their web site. The site now has a reference which tells you when it was last updated, so you'll know if the information is the most up-to-date, or if you need to give LLB staff a little more time to record your information. Remember, over 2,500 plans came in last year, so please be patient in checking. And do keep a complete copy of your submission, just in case.

What's Inside

Hotline Ideas from Readers

1 Preparing Our Youth.
Little League relies on devoted adult volunteers.

2 Conflict Resolution.
Conflicts occasionally arise during a Little League season.

4 Lighting Kills ...
Are conditions safe, or is it time to head for safety?

6 Code of Conduct.
Competition should reflect the "Six Pillars of Character."

"When local area cell phone dealers update their service and offer existing customers new, advanced technology cell phones, i.e. moving from analog to digital service, the old phones can prove a benefit to local leagues. These phones are usually thrown out, but they are still usable communications devices. Ask your local cell dealers if your league can use the phones which have been turned back in for emergency situations. There is no minimum billing, and the phones can still dial 9-1-1 to report an emergency at one of your fields without permanent telephone service."

Tom Siewert
President, Tri-Cities Little League
West Dundee, Ill.

"While completing the facility survey, I came across something that was not part of the inspection. Our league has a double gate on every field. Not just a single gate entry or over-sized gate to allow 4-wheelers or equipment on or off the field, but double gates so wide that we could bring an ambulance on the field to provide care in case of a medical emergency. I was very impressed that our facilities people and those who designed our fields had done such a wonderful thing. I thought this would be a great tip for people constructing or designing new fields or making changes in their fences. They could easily design a plan that included a double gate for emergency situations."

John Behrens
Safety Officer, Navy Ortega Lake Shore
Little League Jacksonville, Fla.



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