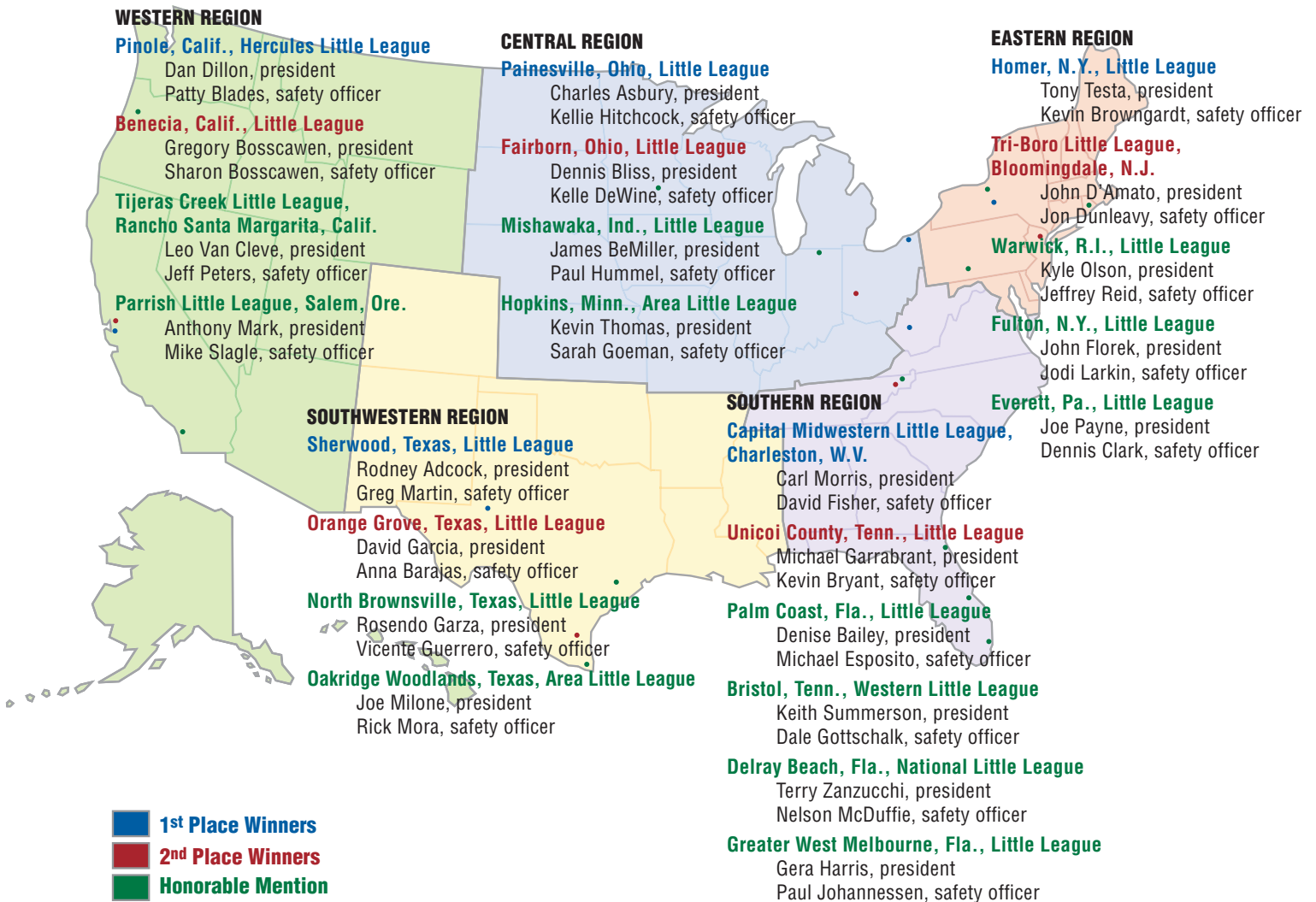


ASAP news



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

2005 National ASAP Safety Plan Winners



Leagues Promote Safety!

Creating and maintaining a safety plan, although voluntary, may be the single most important effort you can do yearly to make your league the best it can be.

Every year, leagues make many improvements to their programs: fixing fences and infields; replacing broken or old equipment; and maintaining the overall physical conditions.

Those efforts are necessary, but raising safety awareness, along with training volunteers in proper fundamentals and first aid, will help everyone see issues before someone is injured.

Having to hold a crying player while an ambulance comes to take him or her to the hospital is one of the worst responsibilities a coach or manager must

fulfill. Now imagine three out of four coaches, or 75%, who will NOT have to endure this heart-rending task.

That is what's happening across the country thanks to ASAP — A Safety Awareness Program, and the dedicated volunteers of Little League who have implemented safety programs in their local leagues. Since its inception,

Reducing Injuries:

Safety Balls, Break Away Bases, Face Masks;

Every ball field around the world has witnessed wins, losses and injuries. Thanks to your emphasis on safety and participation in safety programs, your leagues are able to concentrate on the game. Even though injury rates are on the decline, you must continually emphasize safety and work to have your volunteers participate in safety awareness and injury prevention.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) research published in the February, 2003 issue of *JAMA - Journal of the American Medical Association* estimated that up to one third of baseball injuries can be avoided if proper safety balls, faceguards, and safety bases — all optional — are used.

A Softer Side of Baseball

Do you recall the last time you or a member in your league was hit by a ball? It hurts! Ball impact continues to remain the prominent cause in baseball injuries. In 2003, *JAMA* reported that 44.6% of all baseball injuries were ball-related. You can expect two to three of your players to be hit by a ball at each of your games, and more than 7% of these impacts will cause your player extreme discomfort.

To help the problem, manufacturers have invented safety balls called Reduced-Impact Factor (RIF), Soft Compression, and others. They have a polyurethane

core compared to the wool wrapped cork in traditional balls. Reduced impact balls are able to compress over a larger area and for a longer time, decreasing the impact sustained by a child.

Reduced impact balls are designed to look and play like a real ball. They have the same weight, liveliness, and surface characteristics as a traditional ball. *JAMA* published a study that when labels were removed, as children and adults threw, pitched and batted both traditional and safety balls, they were unable to detect a difference in the balls.

Therefore, neither you nor your players should be able to feel a change, and your league's performance will not be altered when using a reduced-impact ball. You even have the opportunity to switch balls when your team starts tournaments or moves into an older age group without any detriment.

Reduced impact balls are competitively priced and according to research studies published by *JAMA*, can provide your league with many benefits:

- Serious and minor injuries may be reduced by 23%;
- Reduction in death rates;
- Children's fear of ball impact reduces;
- Enhances skill development;
- Can lower your teams insurance rates;
- Does not change the game.

In 2003, traditional balls caused 1,737 injury claims whereas safety balls caused only 153 injuries. *JAMA* concluded, "the reduced impact ball was consistently associated with a reduced risk of injury [and] reduced-impact balls appeared to be the most effective type of safety ball reduction."

Guarding Against Injury

Clear, plastic, protective visors and metal, mesh guards are beginning to appear more frequently on the young,

Reduced-Impact Factor Balls

Company Name



| Company Name | Tee Ball/Coach Pitch Level 1 Age: 5 - 8 | Non-Competitive Minors/Coach Pitch Level 5 Age: 7 - 10 | Competitive Minors Level 10 Age: 9 - 12 |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Worth® | RIF® Level 1 RIF-1L | RIF® Level 5 RIF-5L | RIF® Level 10 RIF-10L |
| Wilson® | Soft Compression Level 1 - A1217B | Soft Compression Level 5 - A1228B | |
| Riddell® | Flex Core Level 1 BB-FL1 | Flex Core Level 5 BB-FL5 | |
| Rawlings® | TVB (Tee Ball) SCOR1 | SCOR5 | SCOR10 |
| MacGregor® (Sport Supply Group) | Safe/Soft Level 1 | Safe/Soft Level 5 | Safe/Soft Level 10 |
| Easton® | IncrediBall® SofTouch® A122 311 | IncrediBall® SofTouch® A122 311 | |
| Diamond® | DFX-L1 or FlexiBall® | DFX-L5or FlexiBall® | |
| A.D. Starr® | STARR®1 Safety 1-S | STARR®5 Safety 5-S | STARR®10 Safety 10-S/SP |

* These are just a sample. Other manufacturers also carry soft/safety/reduced impact balls. Check with your favorite supplier for details.

Equipment

'Optionals' Gaining Popularity

enthusiastic faces of ball players around the country. USA Baseball's Medical and Safety Advisory Committee reports that in 1995 approximately 4,600 injuries would have been avoided if helmets and face guards were used. The use of protective face gear has decreased the number of facial injuries because the standard faceguard is constructed to withstand a 67 mph hit. However, there is still concern about the number of leagues who do not emphasize faceguards.

A recent study conducted on compensated injury claims filed with Little League shows that more than 4% of all injuries were caused by ball impact to the face. The impact can cause severe pain, fractures, broken bones, and death.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) approved a facemask/guard standard at its annual meeting in June 2005. The rule will require all high school fastpitch softball players to wear batting helmets with National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOSCAE) - approved facemask/guards starting Jan. 1, 2006.

Ideas of implementing facemasks on other levels are being brought up as well. Even though it is not a current rule in Little League, the CPSC urges you to work cooperatively with your players to achieve widespread use of faceguards.

Your team should use facemasks when at bat, base running, and possibly even on defense. When you add facemasks to your league you can expect:

- 35% reduction in facial injuries;
- Reduction in death rates;
- Fear of face impact reduced in children;
- Face guards do not interfere with the game.

After reviewing research results in 2003, JAMA reported that 155 injuries occurred without faceguards compared to 28 injuries when facemasks were used. They

concluded that faceguards were associated with a reduced risk of injury in youth baseball.

Sliding into Safety

Encouraging your league's use of breakaway bases would prevent your players from many injuries when sliding into bases. The American Orthopaedic Surgeons encourages your community to use safety bases. Currently there are about \$2 billion in medical costs due to injuries from traditional bases, and experts state that 97% of base injuries can be reduced with safety bases.

Safety bases are designed to flex and absorb energy as your players slide into them. If a hard, uncontrolled slide occurs, safety bases flex until enough force is applied to "pop" the bases free from its mount. These safety bases are much safer than the traditional stationary bases that are bolted to a metal post and stuck into the ground.

There are several safety base resistances that dislodge according to different forces. When you determine your league's average weight, size, and age, you will have the knowledge to purchase the appropriate safety bases for your fields.

Rogers Break Away Base, which is licensed by Little Leagues Baseball International, quoted Dr. David Janda from JAMA, saying that break-away bases should be used at the major-league level as well as during minor league, college and recreational league games, which would include Little League.

Baseball remains one of America's favorite pastimes with about 5 million children participating in organized leagues; it is your responsibility to emphasize baseball safety. Even if you are on a limited budget, you can make a difference. It would be best to start with reduced-impact balls since they account for the most injuries. However, all three safety equipment pieces are critical for ensuring your league's safety. ☺

League adopts safety balls after Tee Ball'er injury

The importance of reduced impact balls cannot be overstated for younger players who may not yet have the ability to react quickly enough to avoid being hit, whether by a thrown or hit ball. The following story comes from a caller to the ASAP Hotline earlier this season about how her son was injured in an accident with a traditional hard ball.

On the morning of May 21, 2005, Anthony Cecca took the infield for his Tee Ball game in Massachusetts. Enthusiastically waiting to field the ball, he stood on the pitcher's mound awaiting a player's hit of a traditional baseball. In a matter of seconds, the ball was hit and smacked Anthony in his face.

Anthony arrived home that morning and his mom and dad observed that his face was badly swollen. Within 24 hours he began non-stop bleeding. After noticing the bleeding would not stop, his mom, Sharon, called for an ambulance and he was rushed to the hospital.

After some time in the E.R., the doctors announced Anthony had suffered a broken nose and two broken nose arteries. Two emergency surgeries were needed immediately, and then Andy had to stay in the children's hospital to recover.

The doctors told Sharon that if she had not acted as quickly as she did, Anthony could have bled to death.

Sharon commented, "As a mother I was sick to my stomach. When we play at our house, we use a soft ball that you can squeeze. I am horrified this could happen. Anthony used to play hockey and roller hockey. He never had a bruise. Now he hasn't played any sports since the accident."

After the incident, the local league's president visited the Cecca family. Since then the league has switched to safety balls for all Tee Ball divisions. Sharon Cecca shared, "If I could change other leagues, I would. I don't ever want to see this happen to another child. Accidents do happen."

Keeping Your Head in the Game

Taking a look at head injuries and safety equipment in Youth Baseball

Mask defends against injuries while player is on defense

(Editor's Note: The following letter is from the Rhinehart family who are involved in the Upland Foothill Little League in Upland, California.)

"Matty, our 9-year-old son, was making his Major League pitching debut in April when a freak accident occurred.

"In his second inning on the mound, the batter lined a shot right back at his head. The ball nicked his glove, but it caught him square in the right cheek, just under his eye.

"After a sleepless night in the emergency room, we received the good news that there had been no significant damage to my son's face.

"After being on the DL (disabled list) for 10 days, he was able to return to playing, provided we took precautions to protect his face. Our first thought was to have him wear his batting helmet fitted with a mask while playing in the field.

"However, we heard about Game Face™ from one of the mothers on our team. We ordered one, and my son has been wearing it ever since.

"It is very lightweight, comfortable, does not limit his vision and most of all, it protects his face. Matty took absolutely no time at all in getting comfortable with wearing Game Face, and now it is just another part of his uniform.

"We feel very comfortable in seeing Matty playing without the fear of another freak accident occurring, and we would highly recommend checking this product out."

Rick & Stephanie Rhinehart

Upland, Calif., Foothill Little League

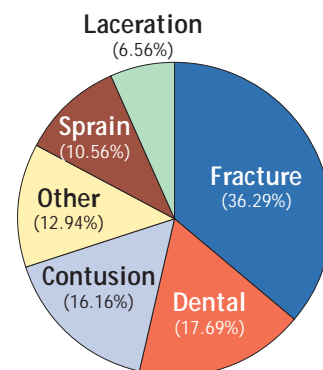
You can find this product at www.gameface.com.



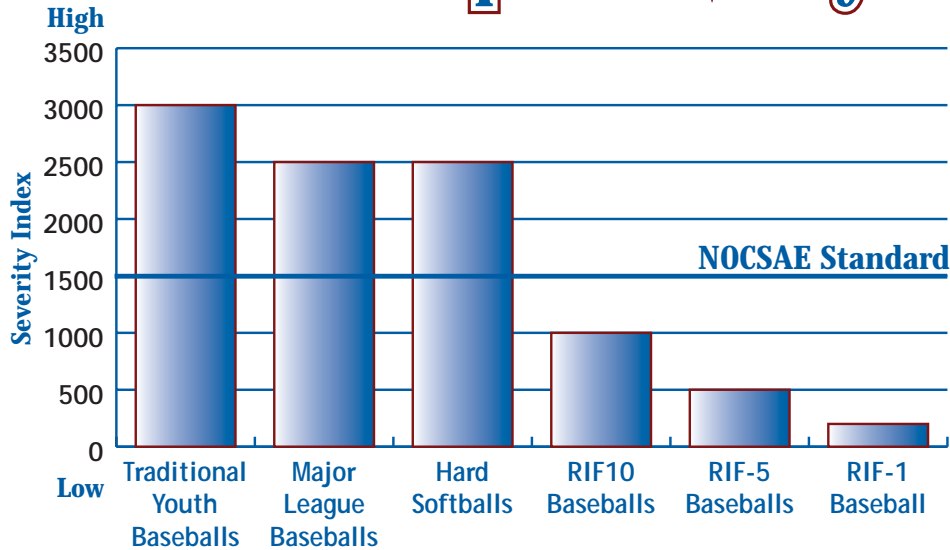
Matt Rhinehart, quite literally, puts on his "Game Face."

Most Common Player Injuries

(Includes both offensive and defensive players)



Ball Type and Head Impact Severity



| Division | Participants per Year | Compensated Injury Claims, per Year | Leagues Using Safety Ball, per Year | Leagues Using Faceguards, per Year |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tee Ball | 615,765 | 39 | 3,226 | 995 |
| Little League Minor | 827,440 | 302 | 701 | 1,211 |
| Little League Regular | 519,350 | 676 | 404 | 1,069 |
| Upper League | 285,525 | 394 | 682 | 969 |
| Total | 2,248,080 | 1,411* | 3,675 | 1,625 |

Source: JAMA, Feb. 5, 2003 — Vol. 289, No.5

Note: There is a correlation between the number of injury claims and the number of Leagues using safety equipment in each division.

* Number of total injuries for 2003 is greater than the number of compensated injury claims for 2003.

FIGHT THE BITE!



JOIN THE "SWAT TEAM" AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS

Defend Yourself Against Mosquitoes:

DRAIN standing water around the house weekly since it's where mosquitoes lay eggs, including: tires, cans, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, toys and puddles.

DUSK & DAWN are when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active., so limit outdoor activities or take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

DEET is an effective ingredient to look for in insect repellents. Always follow label instructions carefully.

DRESS in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or in areas where mosquitoes are active.

West Nile Virus disease is rare, but if you have symptoms including high fever, severe headache and stiff neck, contact your health care provider immediately.

Combata la Picadura:

Desague agua estancada alrededor de la casa (en llantas, cubos de basura, macetas, canalones y charcos) pues ahí ponen huevos los mosquitos. Corte la hierba y arbustos y no riegue demasiado.

AL ATARDECER y AMANECER están más activos los mosquitos que portan el virus. Evite actividades afuera o tenga precauciones para prevenir picaduras.

"DEET" es un ingrediente que deben tener los repelentes de insectos para que sean efectivos. Siga las instrucciones.

VISTASE con camisas de manga larga y pantalones cuando esté afuera en la tarde o al amanecer o donde haya muchos mosquitos.

La enfermedad del virus del Nilo Occidental es muy rara, pero si usted tiene los siguiente sintomas como dolor de cuello, fiebre alta y fuerte dolor de cabeza, contacte inmediatamente a su proveedor de servicios

www.fightthebitecolorado.com

Submitted by the Tri-Lakes Athletic Association Little League.

Need A Good Idea?

The following ideas have been pulled from the safety plans submitted to Little League Baseball, Inc., to be judged in ASAP's best safety program contest. Some of these ideas may not be new to you, but if you see something your league can use to increase safety locally, please use the idea.

*If you do something to increase safety in your league that you haven't seen here or in the Common Sense section of the Safety Officer Manual, please call your idea to **800-811-7443** or email asap@musco.com. We'll send you an ASAP cap for your concern in helping others "make it safer for the kids."*

Equipment: Compliance

Moorpark Little League, California

League ID: 405-13-02

The Moorpark Little League Board of directors has adopted a child protection policy that no names be placed on hats or uniforms of players in the Farm Division (8-year-olds) or lower.

Tiburon Peninsula Little League, California

League ID: 405-03-01

Each of the fields is equipped with a large first-aid kit with various accessories, including ice packs, bandages, synthetic gloves, goggles, hydrogen peroxide and CPR/Ambu masks. In addition, an AED (automated external defibrillator) is located at the Bel Aire field. Emergency contact numbers are attached to the inside lid of each of the TPLL first-aid kits. These are stored in the equipment boxes at each field and are replenished on a regular basis. Portable first-aid kits are issued to each team manager whose team travels to other communities. These should be brought to all practices and games located outside the TPLL.

Facilities: Compliance

Bridge City Little League, Texas

League ID: 943-32-01

Cement was added to complete the entire facility. Cement was poured for remaining unpaved areas and extending to the parking areas. This eliminates the gravel in the park area reducing the possibility of slips and falls. Handicap access was also improved with better walking surfaces.

South Sutter Little League, California

League ID: 405-02-02

We are pleased to announce many improvements to the South Sutter Little League this year, which include:

- Many improvements to create an awesome girls field, which included new fencing and complete sod coverage of the field with the addition of a new sprinkler system.
- Complete cleanup of the park area, including removal of broken concrete, trimming of all trees, mowing and spraying lawns.
- Complete painting of snack bar, inside and out.
- New boards and painting of bleachers.
- Improving bathrooms, such as new doors and lights.
- Improving water system for clear drinking water.
- Upgrading Tee Ball dugout with new benches.

East Boise National Little League, Idaho

League ID: 412-02-05

We have had field renovations and improvements on 9-10-year-olds, 11-12-year-olds, Junior/Senior, and softball fields including re-seeding of bare ground areas, removal of lips from infield and base lines, additional soil applied in outfields to eliminate low spots and holes. Additional work was done to sand in-fields, apply lava soil to coaches boxes and walk path to plate. We also re-measured and adjusted mounds as necessary. Refurbish bullpens as needed.

Take A Tip...

Benton City Little League, Washington

League ID: 447-05-02

The concession stand manager will possess a Washington State Approved Food Handler's Permit and the stand will have a minimum of two permit-bearing personnel on site while food is being prepared and served.

Activities: Education

Oak Ridge Woodlands Area Little League, Texas

League ID: 943-28-013

One of our goals this year is to develop a program with St. Luke's and The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research to conduct a sports injury clinic for all board members, managers and coaches.

Bryan Little League, Texas

League ID: 943-33-03

We have been in contact with the Bryan Police Department to have an officer present during games and other activities as their schedule allows. We have also talked with them about providing "Stranger Danger" training to all managers, volunteers and athletes. This training will provide all individuals concerned with the danger/warning signs of child abduction and abuse.

Tucson International Little League, Arizona

League ID: 403-12-09

Safe kids know whom they can ride with. The magic word is a code that you share with your parent(s). No one is to know this word other than you and your parent(s). It's used as a code word in special ways. For example, if your parent(s) can't pick you up from ball practice, they may send someone else to bring you home. You should only go

with that person if he or she knows the magic word. If a person tries to pick you up who doesn't know the magic word, you should run from them, find help and call 911.

Activities: Compliance

Fort Bragg Little League, California (Along with other surrounding Leagues)

League ID: 405-35-21

Our league will encourage parents, players and all participants to suggest ways to improve the safety program.

Vasalia Little League, California

League ID: 405-34-18

One of our safety goals this year is adding Saturday games for the Junior/Senior Division, which will ease scheduling concerns and prevent so many games being played so close to dark.

Poway National Little League, California

League ID: 405-31-23

Poway National Little League will contact police and fire department personnel, prior to the beginning of the Little League season, to advise the dates of play and location of the league field site and practice facilities.

Activities: Reporting

Bridge of the Gods Little League, Washington

League ID: 447-04-76019

Our league has posted and distributed a list of all members of the board of directors with their phone numbers, in case of an emergency. All coaches are aware of whom to contact and what needs to be done in case of an injury or a near miss. ☺

Leagues Promote Safety

(Continued from page 1)

injuries throughout Little League have dropped 75 percent, for three out of four injuries that are now NOT occurring.

This year, 65% of all leagues across the country have implemented a safety program, a 7% increase over 2004. Due to the size of these leagues, well over two-thirds of all players, volunteers and spectators will attend games in a league with a safety program.

The Western Region continues to lead the nation, rising from 73% to 80% participation by leagues in 2005. The Southern Region rose from 65% to 70%, second highest participation of any region.

For all regions, the best increase came in the Eastern Region, moving from 50% in 2004 to 58% in 2005. The Central and Southwestern Regions each increased 7%, improving from 54% to 61% and 45% to 52%, respectively, from 2004 to 2005.

As leagues continue to work to reduce injuries, recognizing the leagues who are leading the effort to create the best safety plans in the U.S. has become increasingly difficult, as the level of effort and excellence continues to rise. ASAP wishes to salute everyone who submitted a safety plan in 2005, and especially these regional winners, who have raised the bar for safe equipment, facilities and activities.

The first and second place winners are each awarded \$500 for their safety programs. The league with the best safety plan in each region will earn a trip to the Little League World Series in Williamsport this August. ☺

What's Inside

Info from LLB International

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See how your league can increase safety with equipment

4 Defensive Mask

A California family's letter tells how their son stays safe even on defense after a facial injury

5 'Fight the Bite'

Post this safety sign to help your league fight West Nile disease

6 Common Sense Ideas

Learn great ideas from other leagues on safety awareness

Little League Adopts Change in League Age Determination Date

The Little League International Board of Directors has accepted a recommendation from USA Baseball to change the league age determination date for its players starting in the 2006 season.

The league age determination date is the age a player has attained as of a specific date, for the purpose of placing the player in a particular division. For more than 55 years in Little League, that date was July 31.

Starting in 2006, the date in all divisions of Little League Baseball will be April 30 of the current year. The date in all divisions of Little League Softball will be Dec. 31 of the previous year.

For example: Under the old regulation, a baseball player who turns 13 in May, June or July of 2006 would have been considered league-age 13 for the entire season. That would be the case, despite the fact that such a player likely would have played most or all of the regular season (which generally ends in June) without having actually reached his or her 13th

birthday. Under the new regulation, such a player will have a league age of 12 throughout the 2006 season.

Under the old softball regulation, a player who turns 13 from January through July of 2006 would have been considered league-age 13 for the entire season. Under the new regulation, such a player will have a league age of 12 throughout the 2006 season.

USA Baseball represents amateur baseball in the U.S. as a member of the United States Olympic Committee and the International Baseball Association Federation. Virtually every major national youth baseball organization in the U.S., including Little League, is a USA Baseball National Member. USA Baseball recommended the league age determination date be changed from July 31 to April 30, for the 2006 season for all youth baseball organizations.

The change was made in softball to reflect the fact that most national youth softball organizations use Dec. 31 as the league age determination date. ☺

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