

DOUBLE ISSUE!
Featuring 16 BIG
pages of Safety Info

ASAP news



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

Online Facility Survey Released

A new online Facility Survey will help leagues more effectively track their fields' use and maintenance needs, as well as plan for future improvements.

The Facility Survey is one of the 13 minimum requirements for a league to have a qualified safety plan and receive your league's cash award. Your survey, safety plan and registration form must be submitted no later than May 1, 2007.

Website advantages for your league:

- Information is accessible from any location with internet access;
- PDF print-outs — your league can print out last year's information and take it with you to check current field conditions;
- Eliminates repetitive entry — the form will auto-load the answers from last year's survey, allowing you to only fill in the answers that have changed.

To access your information:

Log onto:

<http://facilitysurvey.musco.com>

League ID: (ID with dashes included, ie: 113-01-01)

Password: (supplied by Little League International via previous email)

You should have received the specific information for your league in an email from Little League International in mid-February. If you did not, please contact the ASAP Hotline (800-811-7443) to request this important information.

Information entered into this website will NOT be used by Little League for

compliance issues, but simply for your league to improve its facilities in safety and quality and plan for the future.

Once you have finalized your information online, Little League will be notified your Facility Survey has been completed. Written surveys or a print-out of your online form may still be submitted with your safety plan, but are not required if the survey was completed online.

This website was created through the partnership of corporate sponsor Musco Lighting, a founding sponsor of *A Safety Awareness Program — ASAP*.

If you have questions on the Facility Survey, check the Help / FAQs section on the website, call the ASAP Hotline at 800-811-7443, or email asap@musco.com for help.

Comments from Local Leagues Like Yours!

"Thanks for this program it will make the process a lot easier for me each year."

John Faust, President
Valley Stream Little League,
New York District 29

"Thank you very much for this very useful tool! :)"

Vicki Tiffany, President
Eastwood Little League,
Kalamazoo, MI

"This is the best thing I've seen. I love it, I love it."

Mystic Goodman
American Eastern Little League
Softball, Pine Bluff, AR

Protect Your Players

The most common injuries

This season, help keep your players safer by understanding what can cause injuries — both nationally and in your league — and how raising awareness with proper training and equipment use will reduce the chance or lessen severity of injuries.

Injury statistics fluctuate year to year, but types of injuries are fairly constant. Little League has tracked injuries for years. Injury changes since ASAP began can help you to make a difference in the player injuries in your league, through improved training and equipment.

Know Where to Make Impact

Know the highest percent of injuries to player? Fractures. The most frequently injured player? Base runner. The most common injury to runners? Leg-foot.

Put these together and statistically you can have the greatest impact on injuries by adopting disengage-able bases *now* to reduce or eliminate fractures to your base runners' legs and feet from bad slides. Learn from other trends locally to make a safer environment for all.

To some extent, accidents will happen. Even with the best training, a "freak" accident can occur.

But having an atmosphere of volunteers trained to know what to do and how to teach it creates an atmosphere where injuries are not "the norm" and the expectation is that people will do everything they can to avoid injuries. That helps raise safety awareness and will lead to reducing injuries.

Little League's injuries were predicable for many years; not the same leagues, but the numbers were so similar Little League staff could predict the types and numbers every year. Since ASAP, injury numbers have dropped — now by about 75%. Some trends remain consistent, even if lower as a total. Other trends have shifted, as rules changes and awareness of high-rate injuries.

'No Head-First Slides' Rule

Prior to the "no head-first slide" rule, base runners had 41% of injuries to "other", which included head and neck injuries and 36% of injuries to arms and hands. The remaining injuries were to the leg-foot area, at 23%.

As the most frequently injured position on the field (21% of all injuries), these head and neck injuries were a serious concern in both number and type.

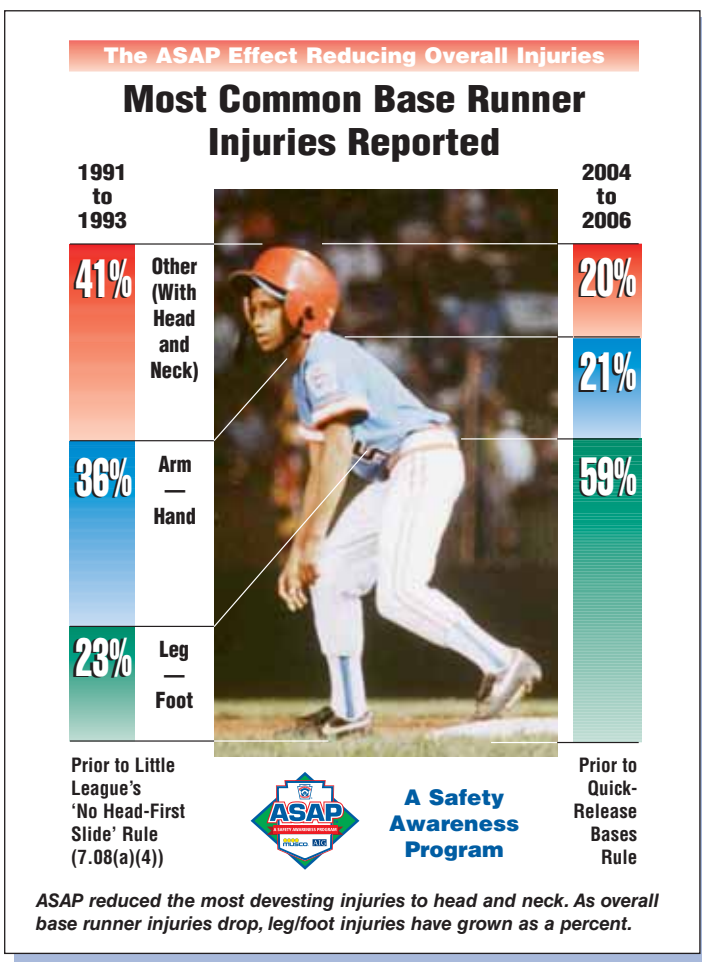
Since the sliding rule, "other" has dropped to 20% and arm-hand injuries to 21%, while leg-foot injuries, as a percent, have risen to 59% of all base runner injuries.

With the adoption of the disengage-able bases rule in 2008, the percentages will likely shift again as the total number of sliding injuries goes down. These injury patterns and rule changes show how Little League makes changes to improve the safety of players as patterns develop.

Equipment Changes Helping

Over the last several years, Little League has reduced the "hardness" of official balls allowed, softening core compression of the standard ball used. Also, leagues have adopted reduced impact balls for younger ages, reducing ball injuries.

Bats have also been addressed, with ball exit speed ratio (BESR) being limited



since around 2000, and now adding bat performance factor (BPF) limit to be printed on all bats by 2009. Most bats already meet this, but by printing the information on bats, umpires may easily remove any bat not performing like a wooden bat (a wood bat's performance is the baseline of 1.00; non-wood bats must not perform better than 1.15 by 2009).

Local leagues have considerable control over equipment used, and to some extent, the injuries suffered because of that equipment. Reduced impact balls, face guards on batting helmets, as well as equipment to protect batter's elbows, hands and feet (usually considered only

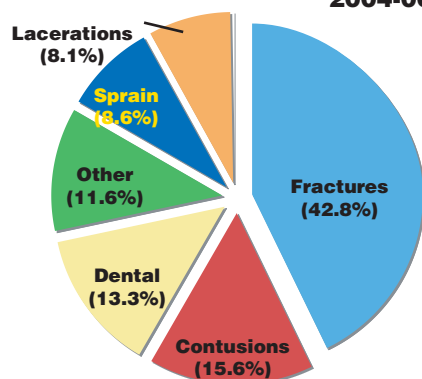
From INJURIES

have common causes . . .

at the more advanced levels of play) are all allowed. Some leagues even mandate a helmet with face guard for their Minor League pitchers, to protect these players.

The 2004-2006 Little League injury data indicate the top three most common injuries to all players were fractures, contusions and dental. Prior to ASAP, from 1985 to 1993, the top three types of injuries were fractures, contusions and sprains. Dental injuries came in fourth.

Most Common Player Injuries, 2004-06



Why the change? As injuries drop in one or more areas due to improvements in safety awareness of equipment or training, areas not affected rose as a percent of the whole. Fractures are hoped to decrease as leagues adopt disengage-able bases.

To help reduce dental injuries or lessen the severity, encourage use of or provide molded mouth guards. Whether in the field or at bat, being hit in the mouth is no fun, but a fat lip is better than a lost tooth. Players with orthodontic work (braces, etc.) are especially at risk of injury and should wear a mouth guard.

For the period 2004-2006, the two most commonly injured player positions are offensive: batter (18.5%) and the already discussed runner (21.0%). Injuries to batters largely fall in two areas: arms/hands and face.

Arm/hand injuries (37.2%) can be affected with training, to better gauge where pitches are coming. The facial injuries (42.9%) are made up of face (13.78%), nose (13.45%), teeth (9.75%) and eye (5.88); although small in total numbers, optional face masks can help reduce this even more.

Infielder, Outfielder Injuries

The top cause of injuries to infielders is not surprising — batted ball (28%) — but colliding and thrown balls are a close second (23.8% and 19.2%). In a game, the rush to “make the play” can take a fielder’s eyes off the ball and cause an injury, or a ball can take a bad hop coming up off rough ground. For

outfielders, the batted ball far outweighs any other injury cause at 46%. Make sure in your fundamentals clinics you emphasize the basics of focusing on the ball all the way into the glove and positioning the body to receive the ball, as well as “calling the ball.”

As players gain size and muscle, the chance of being injured also rises. Emphasize proper training for your Little League (Majors) and Junior League players. You can’t know if a player will grasp and properly perform a skill after one practice, two or 10. Return to basic fundamentals; make sure all players can perform skills needed under pressure, and you’ll help reduce injuries.

TAILOR TRAINING TO YOUR LEAGUE

Take a look at your league’s injuries and “near-misses” to spot trends. While national trends can give “big picture” views of injury prevention, your local league will possibly have different causes of injuries. By looking at these over time you can address training, facilities or equipment issues specific to your league.

If you don’t track your league’s injuries, start now. Give coaches the ASAP Incident / Injury Tracking Form (at: <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/index.asp>) and ask they fill it out any time an injury occurs, or almost does.

By training all volunteers to same levels, you reduce chances of a team learning to slide improperly, or another not learning to “call the ball” to avoid collisions.

Many leagues develop a corps of volunteers that know and relate the fundamentals needed to avoid injuries. But turnover happens; if you don’t train coaches to step in or provide a first-time

manager with that needed info, you could quickly see a rise in your injuries rate.

“If you have low coach turnover, with quality people doing good work, it can give you a false sense of security. You can think you don’t need to work hard tracking injuries or improving training annually,” states Dan Kirby, Little League Risk Management Director. “The vast majority of injuries are still directly related to skill level and proper training.”

Training for the specific age and skill level with local concerns included allows your league to drive training down to the major points of emphasis locally, which might not show up or show up differently, on national averages.

Finally, also train for off-field issues. Falls in concession stands or bleacher injuries are other concerns to raise awareness of. Consider your entire facility when you look at improving safety awareness thru training and safety changes this season.

Going Beyond

Make your league safer for your players, volunteers and spectators by improving on your safety plan this spring.

Creating a qualified safety plan involves 13 minimum requirements. Creating a safer league requires looking at your league annually with fresh eyes. See what needs to be done to make it “safer for the kids” and everyone involved in your league. Many of the best, common sense ideas for improving safety are not required in the 13 ‘minimums.’ Are you ready to move above them?

Is your safety plan the same this year as it was last year? If so, it’s time to take a fresh look at the facilities, equipment and activities in your league, with an eye toward reducing your risks of injuries.

Creating a safer environment takes an active safety environment. Visible needs are identified and corrected immediately (tripping hazards in the outfield, broken equipment, abusive coaching behavior, etc.). These should be recognized by safety-conscious people in the league at once and corrected before a problem develops and anyone is injured. The 13 minimum requirements of your safety plan will help you identify and work on these type of concerns.

The goal of safety awareness means raising your game from visible hazards, to areas that could be enhanced for better safety of less easily recognized concerns (new safety equipment for batters or fielders, improving facilities’ safety equipment or features, better training or clinics for coaches, parents or players).

For this you need to perform an annual review of your safety program and look at both repairs and improvements in facilities or new equipment to adopt locally. Review the “Common Sense” section of the Safety Officer Manual on CD, and you’ll see idea after idea used by leagues, in a common sense approach to safety that are not required.

Facilities Updates

Every year you inspect the damage that another year of wear and tear has done to your facilities, and what you have to do to fix it. This is also a good time to decide whether to upgrade anything at your complex to increase safety.

Overhead Screens — On complexes with more than one field, spectators watching one field are in danger from balls from others. Screens or netting help protect these kids, parents and grandparents from balls hit into common areas.

fence without taking their eyes off the ball. Avoiding collisions with the fence is both a facilities and training issue.

Ball Returns — Tossing balls to umps over a tall backstop can cause needless injury. Installing ball returns in your fence allows a pass-through for umpires to retrieve a fouled-off ball when it’s convenient, without risk to players.

Control Traffic/ Pedestrians — Distracted players and spectators are at risk as they walk around fields, watching



Protect players inside and out of batting cages by installing a second fence or netting around the primary cage. Note posts to keep cars from running into the fence, as well.

Fence Tops — Almost a standard now for fences, the PVC pipe fence topper protects players from the edges of chain-link fencing. Lamade Stadium in Williamsport, among others, uses padded covers. But it’s not required. Does your field have one?

Warning Tracks — Help reduce injuries against fences. These border paths help outfielders “feel” their approach to a

games and talking. Provide good flow for traffic; separate pedestrians and seated spectators from drivers with railings, posts or other physical barriers. Control speed in and around fields, with signs and speed bumps. Designate and clearly mark places for pedestrians to cross streets.

See other facility improvement ideas on page 6.

Minimums

Training Improvements

The clinics you provide for your volunteers shouldn't be the same every year. Work hard at updating the information and relevance annually, whether introducing stretching, CPR / AED, drug awareness or other concepts. The fundamentals and first aid clinics for volunteers are just the start of possible trainings your league could offer.

CPR or AED Training — Minutes can mean the difference between life and death to someone who has suffered a heart attack or a disrupted heart beat from an event like commotio cordis. When an ambulance or professional medical help is even eight minutes away, the chances of survival are cut in half.

The survival rate for heart injuries if the heart isn't effectively pumping blood drops by 10 percent per minute after the first three minutes. Train a corps of people who can provide emergency care, either CPR or use an automated external defibrillator (AED), until professional medical services can arrive.

Heat Illness/Lightning Danger/Weather

— Teach your volunteers what to do in case of a weather situation. Make sure policies are in place and people know them for all extreme weather situations, so coaches and parents don't argue about when to pull players off the field.

Safety Patrol / Safety Committee — Develop a group of people to help you raise safety awareness. The goal of ASAP is to raise the awareness of everyone involved, so many eyes are watching for dangers; many hands are helping improve your league.

Equipment Upgrades

Selecting equipment is often seen as a low priority, but choosing equipment that includes safety components is growing in popularity and importance. Don't buy the same thing (whether balls, bats, bases or helmets) just because you've always bought it. Consider an upgrade to safety:

Reduced Impact Balls — Studies have shown ball impact is the number one cause of baseball and softball injuries.

Reduce the severity of most injury types by adopting a reduced impact ball, especially in the younger divisions. These balls meet Little League specs and may be used locally.

Disengage-able Bases — Required for all Little League fields by the start of 2008, help reduce leg and foot injuries now by changing to safer bases now. Studies show disengage-able bases reduce sliding injuries from 80% to 95%.

Face Guards on Batting Helmets — Reduce facial injuries from ball impacts to batters and base runners. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated by using reduced force balls, quick-release bases and face guards on batting helmets 36 percent of all injuries in baseball/softball could be eliminated or reduced.

Protective Cups — Encourage or require all infielders to wear supporters with cups to reduce the chance of this injury. Recommend for all male players.

Mouth Guards — Protect fielders' teeth, especially infielders with these devices.

Top Ideas For Training

Here are some great ideas for improving your training clinics.

Join Forces for Better Attendance — Leagues may allow coaches/managers from near-by leagues to attend, for additional training opportunities and different trainers and approaches. Keep track of who attends, and share that with the home league's board. Work with your district administrator on setting clinic dates, to avoid multiple clinics being set on a single day.

Where geographically feasible, leagues may work together on a combined training; or even offer specialty clinics (CPR, etc.) as a district-wide clinic to make available for those interested.

Divide and Conquer — Break up your training by divisions, to give targeted, specific information based on the ages and needs of the players. Provide trainers who are knowledgeable of that division to give appropriate information to the players' and coaches' needs.

Fundamentals Training for Players — By creating a section of your clinic to include players, managers and coaches can work through the lessons they learn with their players, still under the supervision of the trainers. This helps "drill down" to the lowest level of the player, to instill the information.

Provide Parent Orientation and Training — Set expectations for parents in an orientation clinic, so parents know what they should do. Provide guidelines on proper attitude and actions; go over the league's position and what the league will do in situations, so parents don't need to interject themselves into the middle of potential conflicts. Provide parents the opportunity of attending the same clinics coaches do, so they don't undermine the approach the league and coaches are trying to develop in players. Keep everyone on the same page and avoid conflicts from the outset.

Use Survey to Plan for Improvements



This league fixed the curling bottom edge of this fence before someone was injured.

Annual review of fields and surrounding spaces can help you target problems before they cause injuries

Take the Facility Survey form with you to review all your fields and equipment prior to the season. Look for areas that have deteriorated over time, as well as considering upgrades to improve the safety of facilities

Your fields are a great source of pride for your league, but they are also a great responsibility. Without proper upkeep and maintenance of your facility, injuries are sure to follow. An annual review of your facilities should be an important part of considering where you need to put effort in improving your safety plan.

Take your facility survey form with you as you look at the complex or individual fields. If you use fields that are owned by the city, county or schools, discuss your findings with that group. Help them to understand any shortcomings found and the risks posed to your league's participants.

Check Bleachers

- For worn or broken treads and seats
- For grounding rods if they are metal structures or have metal frames
- For structural stability, especially if bleachers are moved from site to site during the year
 - **Improve it!** Put back guard and hand rails up sides on bleachers above three tiers
 - **Improve it!** Install screens or netting above bleachers, especially for adjoining fields

Check Fences

- For breaks, tears and ragged spots
- For coverage of dugouts top to bottom

- Bottoms for curled and unburied spikes
 - **Improve it!** Install protective guard tops along any heights under 6 feet or less
 - **Improve it!** Install fencing around bull pens to protect pitchers, catchers
 - **Improve it!** Put dark screens behind home and in center field fences as a pitcher's eye and a batter's eye
- For bases too high due to erosion of infield material, especially home plate
 - NOTE: The beveled black edge on "bury-all" standard home plates, should always be below grade. Only the white portion is the plate and should show. Instruct umpires NOT to clear dirt from the black edge for players' sliding safety
 - **Improve it!** Replace standard bases with disengage-able bases now

Check Fields

- Fill any holes in sod or surface in infield and base paths
 - **Improve it!** Lay new base path/ infield material for better ball "hop" consistency
 - Smooth out irregular or raised grass edges between infield material and grassed areas
 - **Improve it!** Lay grass seed or new sod on sparsely grassed areas early
- Fill holes in outfield grassed areas; check fence lines for rodent entry points and fix
 - **Improve it!** Put in warning tracks next to outfield and foul line fences

Check Lighting

- For light levels (average 30 footcandles infield, 20 footcandles outfield for lights installed prior to 1992; average 50 fc infield, 30 fc outfield for newer)
- For leaning poles, wood deterioration, drooping fixtures
- For exposed wiring leading to poles
- For drooping overhead wires
- For grounding rods attached to poles
- Have an electrician completely check the electrical system for shorts or other potential problems, especially on older lighting systems.



Little League® Volunteer Application - 2007

Use extra paper to complete if additional space is required.

A COPY OF VALID GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO IDENTIFICATION MUST BE ATTACHED AND USED TO VERIFY INFORMATION BELOW.

Name _____ Date _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____
 E-mail Address _____
 Date of Birth _____
 Occupation _____ Social Security # _____
 Employer _____
 Address _____

Special professional training, skills, hobbies: _____

 Community affiliations (Clubs, Service Organizations, etc.): _____

Previous volunteer experience (including baseball/softball and year): _____

Do you have children in the program? Yes No

If yes, at what level? _____

Special Certification (i.e. CPR, Medical, etc.): _____

Do you have a valid driver's license: Yes No

Driver's License#: _____ State _____

Have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty to any crime(s): Yes No

If yes, describe each in full: _____

Have you ever been refused participation in any other youth programs? Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

In which of the following would you like to participate? (Check one or more.)

- League Official Coach Umpire Field Maintenance
 Manager Scorekeeper Concession Stand Other

Please list three references, at least one of which has knowledge of your participation as a volunteer in a youth program:

Name	Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____

As a condition of volunteering, I give permission for the Little League organization to conduct a background check on me, which may include a review of sex offender registries, child abuse and criminal history records. I understand that, if appointed, my position is conditional upon the league receiving no inappropriate information on my background. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability the local Little League, Little League Baseball, Incorporated, the officers, employees and volunteers thereof, or any other person or organization that may provide such information. I also understand that, regardless of previous appointments, Little League is not obligated to appoint me to a volunteer position. If appointed, I understand that, prior to the expiration of my term, I am subject to suspension by the President and removal by the Board of Directors for violation of Little League policies or principles.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Applicant Name (please print or type) _____

NOTE: The local Little League and Little League Baseball, Incorporated will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Local League Use Only:

Background check completed by league officer _____ on _____

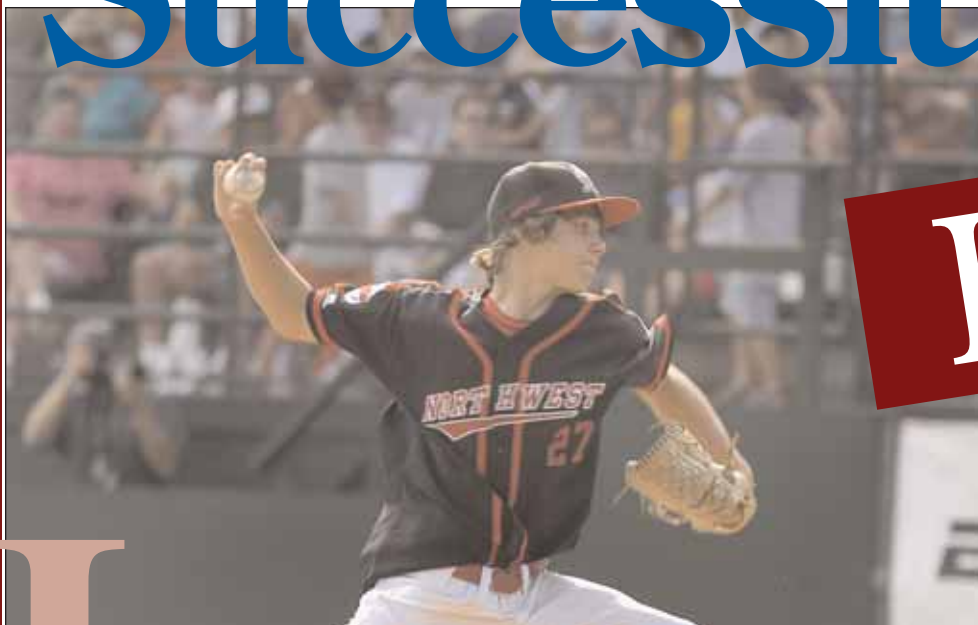
System(s) used for background check (minimum of one must be checked):
 Sex Offender Registry Criminal History Records *Choicepoint

*Please be advised that if you use Choicepoint and there is a name match in the few states where only name match searches can be performed you should notify volunteers that they will receive a letter directly from Choicepoint in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act containing information regarding all the criminal records associated with that name, which may not necessarily be the league volunteer.

Only attach to this application copies of background check reports that reveal convictions of this applicant.

Successful Ways

Pitch Count



Implementing the new Pitch Count Regulation can take many forms; find the right one for your league!

Little League's new Pitch Count Regulation has been used in leagues testing it over the last two years, with great success. Now that it is being introduced across all of Little League Baseball, these leagues are sharing their ideas on successful implementation with others. The following is a summary of some of the best ideas. These and others are contained in the manual "Protecting Young Pitching Arms" recently distributed to all leagues.

Conclusions

A common thread in many of the responses was the importance of clear communication. Leagues reported that the official scorekeeper, the pitch counter(s), the umpire-in-chief and the managers should all be made aware of the pitch counts.

It's very important for leagues involved in interleague play to ensure all officials concerned are "on the same page."

Most leagues also kept the Pitch Count Log someplace accessible, so that both teams would know which pitchers were eligible for a particular game, and which ones were not. The location for the log varied, however. Some kept it in the concession stand or another common building, while others maintained the log

on the league's web site, or sent it to managers via e-mail.

The person who actually counts the pitches can vary from league to league. Here are a few of the ideas for the official pitch counters:

- The official scorekeeper. (Sometimes, a coach or parent from home or visiting team).
- An assistant to official scorekeeper. Only duty to track pitch counts.
- A coach or parent for each team in game. Two tallies compared every half-inning.
- A base umpire.

The mechanics involved in counting the pitches also can vary:

- The official scorekeeper counts up the balls, strikes, foul balls with two strikes, and fair batted balls in a scorebook designed for this purpose or on a separate sheet of paper.
- The official scorekeeper uses a commercially-available computerized scoring program, rather than the traditional paper scorebook, which allows the user to easily track the number of pitches throughout game.

- The assistant to the scorekeeper counts up the balls, strikes, foul balls with two strikes, and fair batted balls using a form designed for this purpose.
- The person doing the counting uses a hand-held counter specifically designed for counting pitches or counting laps. These are generally available at sporting goods outlets.
- The person doing the counting uses a standard "inventory counter" that is available in most office supply stores.

The bottom line is, whichever system works best in your league for counting pitches, is the system you should use. It might take some leagues a week or two to become accustomed to the new regulation, and some refinements in putting it into effect in your league may be necessary — just as they were in the leagues that used "pitch counts" over the past two years.

For more on Pitch Counts, go to:

http://www.littleleague.org/media/Pitch_Count_Resource_Page.asp

Comments from the Field

"I am proud to report that we had absolutely NO arm injuries in 2006, as opposed to at least two a year in previous years. I believe the Pitch Count Pilot Program was a key factor. In our league, each team designated a "pitch count person" (not a coach, but a parent in the stands, as the coaches have too much else going on). The parent was given a hand-held counter and kept track of each pitch. After the end of each half-inning, the parents from each side compared their counts, which were exactly the same 99 percent of the time, then reported them to the official

s to Implement

ounts

scorekeeper. The scorekeeper had a simple log for each game, which were kept with the official scorebooks in our board room.” — Kent, from a local Little League in California

“We had each team’s scorekeeper keep track of pitches. We made up our own form, which was modeled after the pitching affidavit for tournament play. Before each game, the managers checked both forms to determine eligibility, and after each game, the opposing manager had to sign the sheet (in ink). We bought counters for all teams to use.” — Greg, from a local Little League in New Jersey

“We found that the teams that developed the younger pitching advanced further at the end of the season in the Tournament of Champions. With a year of experience, I don’t think we’ll get any objections from the coaches this year. After a little training of the scorekeepers, coaches and umpires, this seemed to work.” — Kevin, from a local Little League in California

“We created a sheet that was placed in the scorekeeper’s notebook that kept track of the number of pitches for each pitcher. The scorekeeper was the official pitch count recorder. We used two counters for each game and kept track of the pitches on one counter for each pitcher that was in the game.” — Pat, from a local Little League in California

“The feedback I received from my managers was that the process was pretty easy and straightforward. Feedback from the parents was very positive, and we know they can be our worst critics.” — Bill, from a local Little League in Pennsylvania

USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee Position Statement on Youth Baseball Injuries Updated: May 2006

USA Baseball, the governing body of amateur baseball in the US, updated their position on ways to reduce baseball injuries last summer, and pitch counts were a major part of the recommendations. Here is some of that statement:

“Baseball is one of the safest sports available for today’s youth. However, many of the serious injuries suffered by adult baseball pitchers may have begun to develop at the youth level. One of the missions of the USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee is to provide scientifically based information to its youth baseball members to reduce the risk of injury and maximize the younger player’s ability to perform and advance to higher levels....

“Based upon its expertise and review of existing studies, the USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations for minimizing a pitcher’s risk of future serious arm injury and maximizing his chance of success:”

- “Coaches and parents should listen and react appropriately to a youth pitcher when he/she complains about arm pain. A pitcher who complains or shows signs of arm pain during a game should be removed immediately from pitching. Parents should seek medical attention if pain is not relieved within four days or if the pain recurs immediately the next time the player pitches. League officials should inform parents about this consideration.
- “Pitch counts should be monitored and regulated in youth baseball.” (See the specific guidelines Little League has established by age in the official rules or the Winter 2006 ASAP News issue.)

- “Pitch count limits pertain to pitches thrown in games only. These limits do not include throws from other positions, instructional pitching during practice sessions, and throwing drills, which are important for the development of technique and strength. Backyard pitching practice after a pitched game is strongly discouraged.”
- “The risk of throwing breaking pitches until physical maturity requires further research but throwing curves and sliders, particularly with poor mechanics, appears to increase the risk of injury.
- “Pitchers should develop proper mechanics as early as possible and include more year-round physical conditioning as their body develops.
- “Baseball players — especially pitchers — are discouraged from participating in showcases due to the risk of injury. The importance of ‘showcases’ should be de-emphasized, and at the least, pitchers should be permitted time to appropriately prepare.
- “Baseball pitchers are discouraged from pitching for more than one team in a given season.
- “Baseball pitchers should compete in baseball no more than nine months in any given year, as periodization is needed to give the pitcher’s body time to rest and recover. For at least three months a year, a baseball pitcher should not play any baseball, participate in throwing drills, or participate in other stressful overhead activities (javelin throwing, football quarterback, softball, competitive swimming, etc.)”

Additional publications and research findings available at www.asmi.org.

NON-WOOD BATS



Recent news stories regarding the safety of defensive players facing batters using aluminum bats have grabbed headlines and sparked comments across the U.S. The governing body of amateur baseball in the US weighs in on this topic.

The Youth Committee of USA Baseball recently issued the following statement regarding non-wood bats.

Little League International is a member, along with other youth organizations, of USA Baseball. Little League also holds a seat on USA Baseball Board of Directors.

USA Baseball often coordinates research that affects all youth baseball organizations. For example, USA Baseball was instrumental in the recent change to the league age determination date by all youth baseball organizations.

USA Baseball, the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of baseball as designated by the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, recently held a meeting of its National Youth Membership, and on behalf of the following organizations has released the following statement:

1. American Amateur Baseball Congress
2. American Legion Baseball
3. Dixie Baseball

4. Little League Baseball, Incorporated
5. Babe Ruth Baseball
6. PONY Baseball
7. National Baseball Congress / Hap Dumont Baseball
8. Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)
9. United States Sports Specialties Association (USSSA)
10. National Police Athletic League (PAL)
11. T-Ball USA

PERCEPTION: Aluminum bats are more dangerous than wood bats.

The National Consumer Product Safety Commission studied this issue and concluded in 2002 that there is no evidence to suggest that aluminum bats pose any greater risk than wood bats. Multiple amateur baseball governing bodies, including the NCAA, National High School Federation, Little League International, PONY, et al, all track safety statistics and have concluded that aluminum bats do not pose a safety risk.

PERCEPTION: Balls come off aluminum bats faster than wood.

Since 2003, all bats are required to meet the "Bat Exit Speed Ratio" (BESR) performance limitation, which ensures that aluminum bats do not hit the ball any harder than the best wood bats.

PERCEPTION: Injuries from aluminum bats are more severe than with wood bats.

Two out of the three deaths from a batted ball in the last decade came from wood bats. Dr. Frederick Mueller, Director of the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research, has indicated from his studies that catastrophic injuries from wood bats may be more frequent than aluminum bats.

PERCEPTION: The Brown University study proves that aluminum bats hit the ball harder than wood bats.

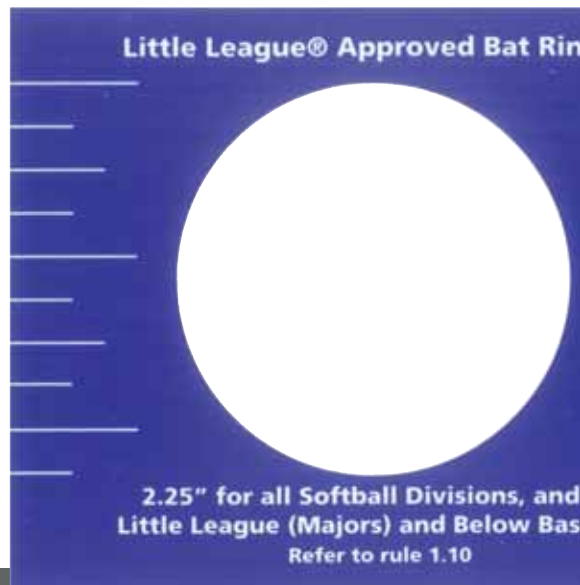
This study is irrelevant by today's standards. All of the bats used in the Brown study would not be allowed to be used today, because they do not meet the BESR standard.

PERCEPTION: The use of aluminum bats places children at an unacceptable risk of injury.

A study from the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research shows that there have been only 15 catastrophic batted ball injuries to pitchers out of more than 9,500,000 high school and college participants since 1982.

During the last five years a number of states, individual organizations, city councils, and others have proposed the banning of metal baseball bats on a number of different levels. These actions have typically been in reaction to a catastrophic injury as opposed to being based on creditable injury data or research. In May of 2002 Consumer Product Safety Commission stated, "The Commission is not aware of any information that injuries produced by balls batted with non-wood bats are more severe than those involving wood bats". This statement was true in 2002 and it is true in 2007.

The Medical/Safety Advisory Committee of USA Baseball was initiated due to the lack of injury data needed to make decisions affecting the safety of baseball participants. Prior to 2005 there has not been significant research comparing injuries to baseball pitchers from metal bats versus wood bats. In 2005 the USA



Perception vs. Reality

Baseball Medical/Safety Committee initiated a three-year research project comparing line drive baseball injuries to pitchers from metal bats and wood bats. Metal bat injury data were taken from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Injury Surveillance System and wood bat injury data collected from college summer leagues (NCAA recognized college summer league teams all use wood bats).

After two years (2005 and 2006) of collecting batted ball injury data to the pitcher from 93 NCAA college baseball teams and 246 college summer league teams there have only been 17 injuries to NCAA college pitchers and 15 injuries to college summer league pitchers. Only 32 injuries after 331,821 balls were hit into play (Balls hit into play are calculated by taking the number of at bats and subtracting strike outs and bases on balls). The injuries in the summer leagues were more severe than the NCAA injuries. One-third of the summer league injuries involved the head and face as opposed to none in the NCAA. The third year of the study will be completed in 2007.

What this data does indicate is that injuries to the pitcher from batted balls are very rare and can happen while using metal or wood bats. There is no

data to indicate that the few catastrophic injuries to baseball pitchers from metal bats would not have happened if the batter was using a wood bat.

Before any sport makes rule changes, equipment changes, or other changes

related to the safety of the participants, it is imperative that these changes are based on reliable injury data and not anecdotal information.

More information on this is available at: <http://www.littleleague.org/media/bats.asp>

Bat Rules & Changes Will Increase Safety

Batting is a significant part of baseball and softball, but make sure your bats are safe for play. Below are some rules and rule changes that will increase the safety of batters and fielders:

Rule 1.10 (baseball only)

NOTE 3: Beginning with 2009 season, non-wood bats used in divisions of play Little League (Majors) and below must be printed with a BPF (bat performance factor) rating of 1.15 or less.

What does this mean? Bat manufacturers agreed several years ago that the BPF (bat performance factor) of bats they are now manufacturing will not exceed a 1.15. The BPF is a formula that measures how fast a baseball comes off the bat. Starting on Jan. 1, 2009, however, all bats used in the Little League (Majors) Division and below must be designated (printed) with a BPF of 1.15 or less

Rule 1.10 NOTE 4 (baseball);

NOTE 3 (softball) Non-wood bats may develop dents from time to time. Bats that

cannot pass through the approved Little League bat ring must be removed from play. The 2 ¼ inch bat ring must be used for bats in all softball divisions, and in the Tee Ball, Minor League and Little League Baseball divisions of baseball. The 2 ¾ inch bat ring must be used for bats in the Junior League, and for wood bats in the Senior/Big League and the 2 ⅝ inch ring for non-wood bats in Senior and Big League Divisions of baseball.

What does this mean? For a non-wood bat to become dented over time is normal. But some umpires have been disallowing bats that are slightly dented. As a result, Little League will provide a number of Little League Approved bat rings at no charge to every league for use in all divisions of play. Additional bat rings may be purchased from Little League International or the Regional Center. The ring has holes for three sizes and is made of sturdy plastic. If the bat passes through the proper ring, it is "legal." (Obviously, however, if a bat has visible cracks in it, it should not be permitted in a game.)



The Bat Ring shown here is not actual size. It is available from Little League for the protection of your batters.

2.75" for Junior League Baseball
Refer to rule 1.10

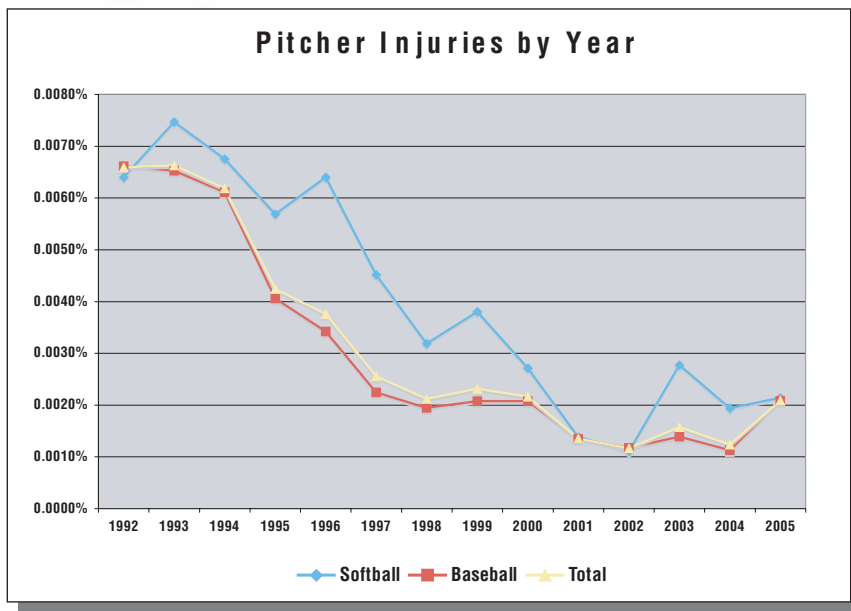


2.625" for Senior and Big League Baseball
Refer to rule 1.10

Little League Statement

NON-WOOD BATS

Pitcher Injuries by Year



Little League International has received numerous inquiries from volunteers and media regarding the safety of non-wood bats. In the last 15 years, changes in data on injuries to the pitcher, the most vulnerable infield position, have remained relatively constant or decreased. The best available data on injuries, as well as recommendations from the governing body of baseball, do not support a ban for non-wood bats. Little League is committed to the safety of all its participants and will continue to monitor this issue.

Background of Wood Bats

Recent innovations in metal alloys have allowed a reduction in the weight of some models of bats, while allowing the bats to remain in conformity with the length and diameter guidelines in the various divisions of Little League Baseball and Softball. Some volunteers and those in the media have raised questions about whether the weight of the bats used in Little League games should be limited, relative to the length.

Non-wood bats were first developed, partly through research by Little League, as a safer and more cost-effective alternative to wooden bats. Non-wood bats were first used in Little League in 1971, and have almost completely replaced wood bats in all divisions of play. Wood bats, which can break in half if not used properly, are now widely used only in professional baseball.

As a member of USA Baseball, the governing body for all amateur baseball in the U.S., Little League Baseball and Softball follows the recommendation of the USA Baseball Medical and Safety Advisory Committee. The position of the Advisory Committee is that further research and data needs to be collected before any changes are made to Little League rules regarding the weight of bats. There is currently no rule in any division of Little League Baseball or Softball that

places a maximum or minimum limit on the weight of bats.

Little League Statement

At present, injury data in all divisions of Little League Baseball and Softball shows there has been a 69 percent decrease in reported injuries to pitchers as a result of batted balls since 1992. Data on injuries to pitchers is being used because the pitching position is nearest the batter, and the pitcher is the least likely among all fielders to be fully prepared when the ball is hit.

During that same period, the number of injuries to other fielders as a result of batted balls has remained relatively constant or decreased. A summary of the data is below, along with participation figures and the current bat specifications for each division.

In 2003, nearly 108,300 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for baseball- or softball-related injuries according to the National Safe Kids Campaign (NSKC). However, only 42 injuries in Little League Baseball and Softball activities, ages 5 to 18, required an insurance claim to be paid that year. Among the same ages in the same year, more than 185,700 football injuries and 205,400 basketball injuries were treated, NSKC reported.

Annually, less than three-tenths of one percent of U.S. Little Leaguers are injured in games or practices to the point of requiring medical treatment. Injury data for Little League are obtained through analyzing medical claims on accident insurance provided by Little League through AIG Insurance. More than 95 percent of the chartered Little League programs in the U.S. are enrolled in the Little League Group Accident Insurance plan.

In conclusion, there appears to be no indication that would cause Little League to mandate a limit on the weight of bats or the use of non-wood bats, based on the most current facts. Statistics show that Little League's record on safety continues to be outstanding not only among youth sports, but in baseball and softball in particular.

However, Little League Baseball will continue to monitor this situation closely, and will react accordingly and appropriately when indicated.

Preventing Injuries

Each year, almost 500,000 baseball- and softball-related injuries are treated in hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, ambulatory surgery centers and hospital emergency rooms.*

The following “Safety Top 12” is based around suggestions of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) to prevent baseball & softball injuries:



- Always take time to warm up and stretch. Research studies have shown that cold muscles are more prone to injury. Warm up your body's core (which helps relax muscles for stretching) with jumping jacks, stationary cycling, running or walking (in place or around the field) for 3 to 5 minutes. Then slowly and gently stretch, holding each stretch for 30 seconds.
- Your equipment should fit properly and be worn correctly.
- Wear a batting helmet at the plate, when waiting a turn at bat, and when running bases. Don't "flip off" or allow your helmet to fall off when running bases.
- Facial protection devices that attach to batting helmets are available. These shields can help reduce the risk of a serious facial injury if you get hit by a ball.
- Follow the requirements about the number of pitches thrown as specified for your age, not by the number of teams played on.
- A reasonable approach for the number of pitches allowed in practice is 30 to 40 pitches, although there is no concrete guideline.
- Wear the appropriate mitt for your position. Catchers should always use a catcher's mitt.
- Catchers should always wear all their equipment: helmet, face mask, dangling throat guard, long-model chest protector, protective cup supporter and shin guards.
- Wear molded, cleated ball shoes that fit properly.
- Inspect the playing field before use for holes, glass and other debris. Remove the objects and fix holes before playing.
- Coach: Be knowledgeable about first aid and be able to administer it for minor injuries, such as facial cuts, bruises, minor tendinitis, strains or sprains.
- Coach: Be prepared for emergency situations and have a plan to reach medical personnel to treat injuries such as concussions, dislocations, elbow contusions, wrist or finger sprains and fractures.

For more information on "Prevent Injuries America!®," call the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons' public service telephone number 1-800-824-BONES (2663).

**Source: U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's 1999 NEISS data and estimates, based on injuries treated in hospitals, doctors' offices, ambulatory care facilities, clinics and hospital emergency rooms.*



Sharing Shows Caring

Common Sense Safety Ideas!

We have created and adopted a new league mascot called “Game Ball” that we use for league public relations and to promote safety issues.

— **Unicoi LL, Tennessee**

The Crash Test Dummies appeared at our safety meeting.

— **Peninsula LL, California**

As Safety Director for the Buckingham Little League, let me say THANKS to Musco for the ASAP program, the monthly newsletters, and to all the leagues who continue to write and give their own helpful hints in keeping us all safer.

— **Buckingham LL, Florida**

Make sure all league personnel know how to contact EMS rescue personnel.

— **District 10, Florida**

Arrange for local EMS personnel to attend meetings to help teach the parents the importance of safety and how to assist in giving basic first aid.

— **Belvedere LL, South Carolina**

We have a newsletter that we send out regularly. This newsletter contains what the happenings are around the facility and also safety reminders. This newsletter also promotes our web site that contains other safety information.

— **Whittier LL, California**

In our newsletter every week there is a question about basic first-aid and safety. This encourages the children to read the newsletter and provides them with helpful education in the area of safety.

— **Mission Hills LL, California**

Team Safety Officer/Safety Parents will have a five-minute safety meeting with the team each week.

— **Homer LL, New York**

We put a bulletin board in our clubhouse where we post clippings of safety ideas.

— **Pallisades Park LL, New Jersey**

We provide mail slots at the ball park for all managers where they can receive regular safety reminders.

— **South Beaches LL, Florida**

We have added the board position of “Coaching Coordinator.” This person’s job is to coordinate the coaching clinic and make those notes available on our website, thus enhancing the knowledge and skills of our managers and coaches and ensuring our players receive the best training our league has to offer.

— **Tijeras Creek LL, California**

The Safety Committee meets on the first Monday of each month at the ball field to discuss safety issues and review the ASAP News newsletter.

— **Virginia Beach LL, Virginia**

The Board Members are in charge of volunteering for officer of the day. All questions and concerns during the game will be directed to the officer, wearing a yellow jacket, and is officially on duty to help offer assistance when needed.

— **Mt. Eden National LL, California**

Each of our fields has a 4’ x 4’ billboard expressing the importance of safety.

— **Darlington American LL, RI**

Want to Increase Safety? Get Everyone Involved!

We have the POSSE Program: The safety officer is our "Safety Sheriff" and Field Directors are his "POSSE." The name "POSSE" stands for Planning, Organization, Safety, Service, and Education.

— **South Portage LL, Michigan**

The Unicoi County Little League is continuing the "Outfield Angels" program. Under this program, any adult volunteer, who has passed an approved background check, will wear a yellow or other highly visible T-shirt with a vest. This "Outfield Angel" will patrol the Little League complex, moving around watching for anyone who may need assistance. This person will be equipped with a two-way radio to call for help if the need arises. The vest will also be equipped with basic first aid supplies and deterrent spray for dogs in the case of a dog attack. The two-way radio will be monitored during all game times by a league official in the press-box who can then provide additional assistance or call for additional help.

— **Unicoi LL, Tennessee**

All managers and coaches wear red shirts and hats with the Little League logo printed on the front. This allows players and spectators to know who should be on the playing field and gives them a contact person if any emergencies occur.

— **Frederick County LL, Virginia**

The billboard outside the concession stand has one side dedicated to safety.

— **Maugansville LL, Maryland**

We displayed a banner to show players and visiting teams that safety is our first priority.

— **South Beaches LL, Florida**

We have been in contact with the local police department to have an officer present during games and other activities as their schedule allows.

— **Bryan LL, Texas**

This year we added a business card size, "SCLL Safety Big Five." This is a check-off card for coaches to refer to before games. It is the main points and most important things to remember.

— **Santa Cruz National/American LL, California**

Leagues get teams, players, coaches thinking about safety issues.

Virginia Beach LL, Virginia

We have a Team Safety Plan Contest. Teams that submit a safety plan for their team to the League Safety Officer will receive a coupon for ½ price hotdogs, chips, and a drink for the whole team at the Concession Stand. There is a list of information that must be included in your Team Safety Plan. These are similar to the requirements made in the League Safety Plans.

East Woonsocket LL, Rhode Island

To promote safety for the season, each team will promote safety by creating team posters with the theme being, "How to be safe while playing baseball." During the Little League season, team posters will be shown to parents and league members at the opening day parade. All posters will be on display in the league clubhouse for the season.

DeMotte LL, Indiana

DLL will offer an optional safety poster contest for players of the league. All posters will be judged by the board and the winner will receive a gift certificate for a new batting helmet with a face guard. Rules will be announced on opening day.

Winslow Township American LL, New Jersey

We have an essay contest: Why I play little league baseball/softball. One softball and one baseball player will win a \$20 gift card for a sporting goods store.

North Anaheim LL, California

During the season we had a safety poster contest. Each division had the opportunity to have one winner. Each winning team received a free pizza party. This contest was held to push safety awareness.

Blackwood Kiwanis LL, New Jersey

We held a safety poster contest to increase kids' awareness of safety.

Peninsula LL, California

We acknowledge one team per week with a team safety award that promotes and demonstrates good safety practices.

Deer Park LL, Virginia

We have a coloring/slogan contest, which is a contest in which the child has to color a slider and a curveball and tell us, in their own words, how to Play-It-Safe. The child can win a \$25.00 gift certificate if their entry is drawn. We also have a Whiz-kid-quiz. This quiz is entered into a drawing. If the child's quiz is drawn, they get a choice of a hot dog, slice of pizza, or nachos, and the receive a reward. The reward is a coupon to the concession stand.

South Baltimore LL, Maryland

We are in our 6th year of the annual Safety Pin Design Contest. This event gets children involved in safety. We have a theme each year that children design around. The winning design is turned into a pin and sold at our concession stand throughout the year.

West Salem LL, Oregon

Each coach will be given coupons to the concession stand to hand out to players during the season. These are to reward the players for coming to the coach with a safety concern or "good catch." Either the coach or the team mom will need to fill out the back side of the coupons explaining how the players contributed to our Safety First goal. All the coupons that are turned in to the concession stand will be saved for a grand prize drawing at the end of the year for a \$100 gift certificate at a sports store. The more you practice safety, the more chances you have to win.

Mountain View LL, California

If a child submits a safety idea that is then implemented at our ball park, then in addition to being credited in next year's Safety Manual, he or she will receive a gift certificate for the concession stand.

Common Sense Ideas From Leagues

4 Go Beyond

Make your league safer by improving your safety plan.

8 Pitch Count

Successful ways to implement it into your league.

10 Non-Wood Bats

Safety of non-wood bats; perception vs. reality.

14 Safety Ideas From You; The Leagues

Sharing shows caring, increasing safety.

San Mateo LL, Florida

Only league approved coaches are allowed to practice teams.

Temecula LL Softball, California

Selected participants within the league will be identified as a coach, manager, team parent, etc. and photographed by the league. While on the field, the participant should carry a photo ID. No participant will be allowed to be around children without proper ID.

Churchland LL, Virginia

New this year are “volunteer badges” for all of our volunteers who come in contact with our children. No volunteer will be allowed on our fields during games or practices without the badges being worn, showing all that they have been checked by our staff.

West Redding LL, California

We purchased 8 Camelback hydration systems for our umpires to prevent heat illness.

Lake View LL, Texas

Prior to practices and games, the Safety Officer, Chief umpire, or and league officer should check the detector to make sure no thunderstorms or lightning is in the area.

Fort Des Moines American LL, Iowa

We go one step beyond the requirement of background checks and check all volunteers for any criminal conviction. Anyone who is convicted of a felony or any crime against another person is carefully scrutinized by our board.

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