

WELCOME TO KIWANIS BASEBALL

The following guide is designed to provide information to parents and family members about the various aspects of the program. We want all participants, players and family members alike, to know what to expect from the program, what the program expects from its participants, as well as how the program is organized, and who to consult with questions or problems.

Philosophy

While we hope that the kids will be able to learn baseball related skills, experiencing competitive situations in a positive, productive manner, our primary goal is to allow the kids to enjoy themselves playing baseball. To this end, the program is designed to gradually introduce both baseball skills and levels of competition through a progressive system suitable for the majority of the children who participate. Naturally, there will always be some players who may, at particular age levels, be more advanced, in terms of skills or experience, than their peers. Thus, the program offers parents certain options for placement of a child within the program.

The program attempts to find coaches who will adhere to the philosophy of allowing the kids to enjoy the games in a safe, wholesome atmosphere while teaching skills related to the game of baseball.

Players are expected to show good sportsmanship at all times; to be on time for games and practices, notifying head coaches, in advance, when the player cannot attend a practice or a game; to be respectful of all umpires at all games; to refrain from making negative or mean comments to coaches, teammates, or opponents; and to maintain a positive, cooperative attitude at all times.

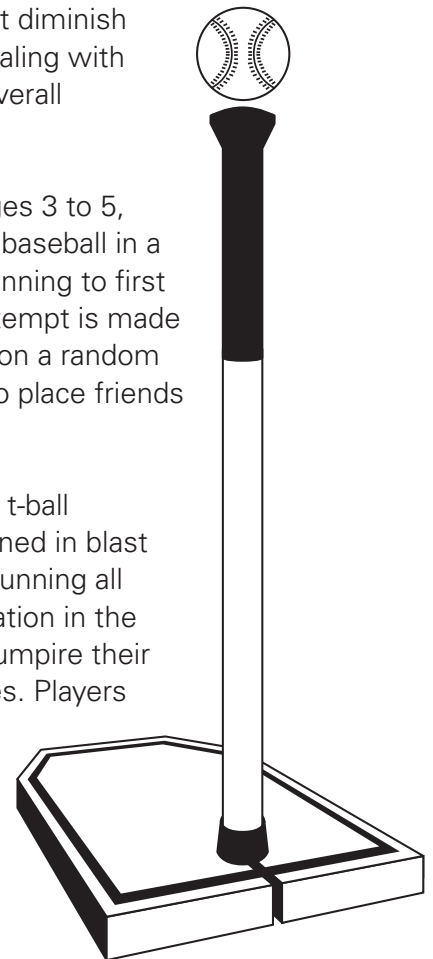
Structure

It is important to note that competition does exist in the Kiwanis Baseball program. While the program attempts to ensure that the intensity of the competition does not diminish the enjoyment of the participants, helping players to develop basic skills in dealing with competitive situations is considered one of the secondary objectives of the overall experience of Kiwanis Baseball.

The program's entry level is known as BLAST BALL. Designed for children ages 3 to 5, blast ball operates in a totally non-competitive environment, employing a soft baseball in a game designed to teach very basic skills such as hitting the ball from a tee, running to first base, and fielding a batted ball. No score is kept. There are no umpires. No attempt is made to "balance" teams for competition purposes. Players are assigned to teams on a random basis, although the league will make every effort to accommodate requests to place friends together, or to group players for transportation purposes.

The program's second level is T-BALL. Designed for children ages 5 through 7, t-ball continues the use of a soft baseball as it attempts to build upon the skills learned in blast ball by adding additional baseball skills, such as playing positions in the field, running all the bases, catching the baseball, and throwing the baseball to the correct location in the appropriate situation. T-Ball is non-competitive. No score is kept and coaches umpire their own games. No attempt is made to "balance" teams for competition purposes. Players are assigned to teams on a random basis, although the league will make every effort to accommodate requests to place friends together, or to group players for transportation purposes.

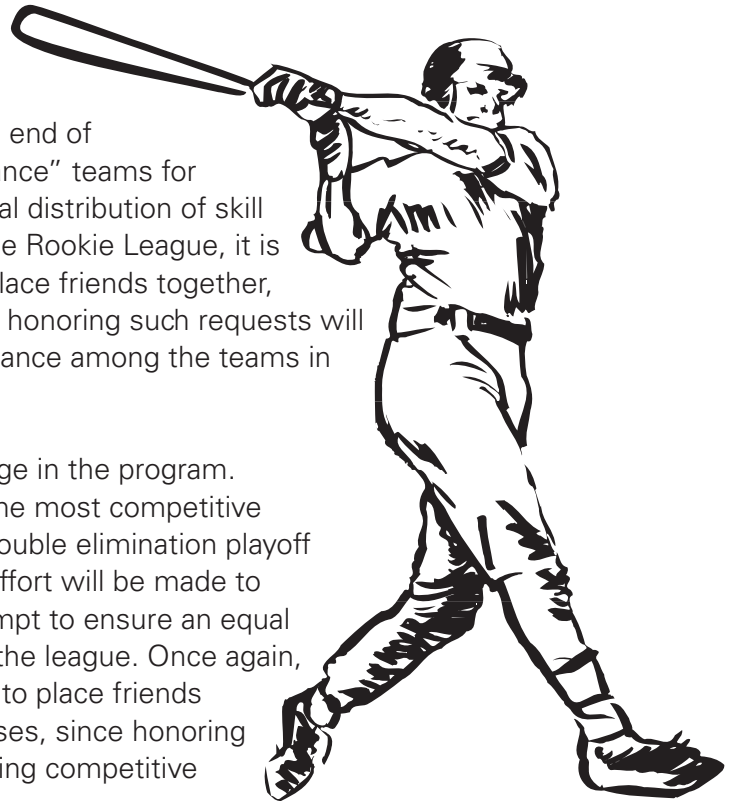
The program's third level is called the ROOKIE league and is designed for children ages 7 and 8. For the first time, the hard baseball is introduced and the batters are exposed to a pitched baseball, as opposed to hitting the ball



from a tee. Moreover, this is the first level where competition is introduced. While the league is designed for 7 and 8 year old players, parents of younger children who prefer their children participate in a competitive environment, as opposed to the non-competitive environment of T-Ball, may request that their children, under age 7, play in the Rookie League instead of T-Ball. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In the Rookie League, a pitching machine, rather than a coach or a player, pitches the ball to the batters. Baseball skills learned at the previous levels are re-emphasized in an environment that introduces some elements of competition. The score is kept in the rookie league and, sometimes, there are umpires, although often times the coaches umpire the games. No "statistics" or "standings" are kept and there are no playoffs at the conclusion of the regular season schedule. Since competition is introduced at this level, the program attempts to "balance" teams for competition purposes. Players are assigned to teams based upon their experience and demonstrated skill level. While this process is more art than science due to the fact that it is difficult to evaluate the skills of a player who has never participated against a pitching machine, the program makes every effort to "even out" the teams. Therefore, it is frequently impossible to accommodate requests to place friends together, or to group players for transportation purposes.

The program's fourth level is called the JUNIOR league and is designed for children ages 9 and 10. This is the first level where players actually do the pitching, as opposed to a tee or a machine, meaning that batters face live pitchers for the first time. The level of competition increases slightly with official score books being kept for all games and umpires working at every game. League standings are recorded and there is a single elimination playoff tournament at the end of the regular season. Every effort will be made to "balance" teams for competitive purposes in an attempt to ensure an equal distribution of skill levels throughout all the teams in the league. As in the Rookie League, it is frequently impossible to accommodate requests to place friends together, or to group players for transportation purposes, since honoring such requests will be secondary to the goal of achieving competitive balance among the teams in the league.



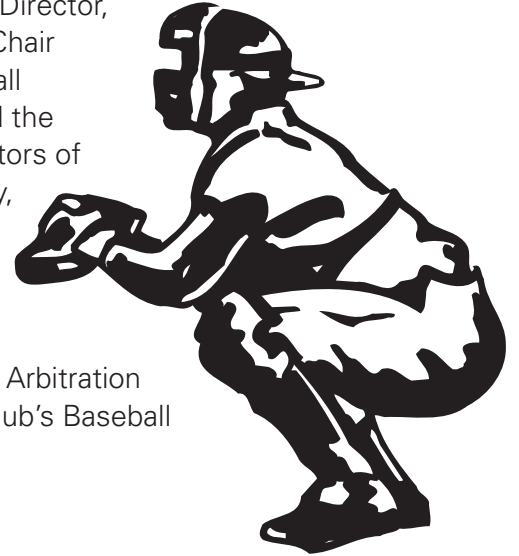
The BAMBINO or CAL RIPKEN league is the final stage in the program. Designed for children ages 11 and 12, this league is the most competitive level. League standings are recorded and there is a double elimination playoff tournament at the end of the regular season. Every effort will be made to "balance" teams for competitive purposes in an attempt to ensure an equal distribution of skill levels throughout all the teams in the league. Once again, it is frequently impossible to accommodate requests to place friends together, or to group players for transportation purposes, since honoring such requests will be secondary to the goal of achieving competitive balance among the team in the league.

Parents may opt to place a younger child in a more competitive level. However, only rarely will a parent be permitted to place an older child in a less competitive level. Regardless of the level of competition, the enjoyment of the participants, safety, and sportsmanship are the basic elements of the Kiwanis Baseball philosophy.

Organization and Administration

The Kiwanis Club of Staunton operates the Kiwanis Baseball program in partnership with the City of Staunton. The Club handles all day-to-day operations, establishes all rules and procedures, enrolls players, schedules games, etc., while the City provides and maintains the fields.

While, as with all Kiwanis Club activities, the Board of Directors of the Club bears the ultimate responsibility for the program, the actual administration of the program is the responsibility of the Club's Baseball Committee, which oversees all aspects of the program. The Executive Director, who is employed by the Baseball Committee, and who reports to the Chair of that committee, handles day-to-day operations. Assisting the Baseball Committee and the Executive Director is a volunteer committee, called the Bambino Board, which is appointed each season by the Board of Directors of the Kiwanis Club, and which is responsible for suggesting overall policy, providing user feedback, and handling issues related to tournament teams.



While it is hoped that serious disputes within the program will be kept to a minimum, when such disputes arise, they are handled by the Arbitration Committee of the Bambino Board, subject to appeals to the Kiwanis Club's Baseball Committee.

Scheduling

The current Kiwanis Baseball regular season begins immediately after Easter and extends through the end of the school year. No games are played on Easter Sunday or on Mother's Day.

During the season, teams usually play two games per week, Monday through Saturday. Games are not scheduled on Sunday, except when rainouts require make-up games to be played.

The Executive Director distributes a schedule of games to each coach before the beginning of the season. With the exception of weather disruptions and unanticipated school events, the schedule issued at the beginning of the season will be followed, as written, to assist parents in their planning.

Funding and Fundraising Activities

While no child has ever been charged a participation fee, costs connected with the program, including, but not limited to, equipment, insurance, and maintenance, total approximately \$65.00 per player. Obviously, these funds must be raised if the program is to operate successfully. The money is generated in three ways.

First, the concession stand at the Kiwanis Field and the Bosserman Field, along with the concession stand at the May Field generate a large portion of the income required. Players, parents, family members, and spectators can play a big role in supporting the program by patronizing the concession stands.

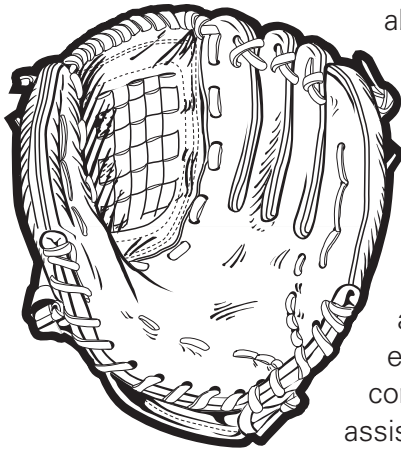
Second, the annual Peanut Drive produces significant revenues. Quite simply, the program cannot survive without these revenues. That is why the Kiwanis Club asks all families to participate in the drive, although such participation is not required. Boxes of peanuts are distributed to families who wish to participate at the start of the season. Players and/or families are asked to sell the peanuts during the two or three weeks of the drive and return the money to the Executive Director. He keeps records of the sales and awards prizes such as baseballs, bats, major leaguer team caps, ball bags, etc., to the top sellers.

Third, area businesses pay a fee to sponsor league teams.

The program cannot operate unless parents volunteer to work in the concession stands, families support the peanut drive, and businesses agree to sponsor teams.

Coaches

All coaches are volunteers. Any person who wants to be a coach in the program should indicate his or her desire during the registration process, or otherwise contact the Executive Director. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Bambino Board, will approve coaches and assign them to teams. Normally, each team has a head coach, and two assistant coaches. Every person who volunteers to coach is subject to a background check since Kiwanis Club policy prohibits any person with a history of child abuse or child neglect serving in any capacity in the program.



As with any youth sport activity, the coaches are usually parents whose children participate in the activity. Some of these volunteers possess extensive baseball knowledge, while others possess minimal knowledge. However, all coaches are expected to adhere to the philosophy of Kiwanis Baseball by serving as good role models in their conduct, by treating players and parents with respect, by keeping parents informed of all practice and game times, and, regardless of their baseball knowledge, by making every effort to teach the appropriate baseball skills and, where appropriate, competition skills, to the players. The program will provide coaches who require assistance in any of these areas with all possible aid.

In addition to the coaches, each team requires a team administrator. This used to be called the “team mom,” but the role is not limited to women only. This person, usually a parent, serves as contact point between the program and the parents, helping to coordinate concession stand work schedules and peanut drive activities, among other things. Persons wishing to help out by filling that role should indicate their willingness to do so during the registration process.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Players will receive coaching from people who will serve as positive role models for sportsmanship and overall behavior.

Each child will have the opportunity to play. In Blast Ball and T-Ball, all players will bat and play in the field in each inning. The Rookie and Junior leagues require a “bat-through” hitting lineup and each child must play in the field in at least every other inning. In the Bambino/Cal Ripken league, each child must play a minimum of half of every game.

To the greatest extent possible, games will begin and end on time. There are time limits for all games and these limits will be strictly enforced. No play will be permitted after 9:00 PM on weeknights.

Parents will be able to make suggestions and voice complaints to program officials without fear of repercussions.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU

Parents are asked to serve at least one shift in the concession stand when his or her child’s team is designated as the home team. Given the number of players on each team, and the number of scheduled games, if all parents participate, no individual will have to work in the stand more than once or twice during the entire season.

Parents are asked to participate in the peanut drive.

All parents are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and civility toward all umpires, players, coaches,

team family members, and program officials, and to insure that all other family members and guests do the same.

Parents and other spectators are expected to direct only positive, encouraging comments toward any player.

Parents are asked that children be on time for practices and games, and parents are expected to pick up their children in a timely manner after practices and games.

Parents are expected to address their concerns, politely and in private (away from the children) to the coaches as a first step. If not satisfied, parents may address those concerns, politely and in private (away from the children), to the appropriate program officials.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP

The program always needs people willing to serve as umpires. The program will provide training and support to any person who is willing to serve as an umpire. Most persons who umpire games receive a nominal fee for their services, although some perform the task on a volunteer basis.

Volunteer to serve as the team administrator. The job is neither difficult nor time consuming, but it provides a valuable service.

Please make sure you place all trash in the appropriate trash receptacles and make sure that all family members, including young children do the same. Please keep an eye out for any safety concerns and report those concerns to the Executive Director.

TOURNAMENT TEAMS

The Kiwanis Baseball Program is affiliated with Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken Baseball, a national organization dedicated to youth baseball. One of the advantages of this affiliation is the opportunity for players to participate on tournament teams following the conclusion of the Kiwanis regular season.

Tournament teams are, in effect, all-star teams which compete in a tournament season beginning in mid-June and ending in mid-August. These teams play in two types of tournaments. Surrounding leagues in Augusta County and other areas such as Charlottesville, Waynesboro, and Winchester sponsor Invitational tournaments. Babe Ruth Baseball holds District, State, and Regional tournaments. While the Invitational tournaments, as well as the Babe Ruth District tournaments, involve local travel only, Babe Ruth State and Regional tournaments can require more extensive travel.

Tournament team play is much more competitive than regular season play and requires an extensive commitment on the part of everyone involved, coaches, players, and parents during the tournament season. Every child in the Rookie, Junior, and Bambino leagues is eligible for consideration as a tournament team player, although parents who do not wish their children to be involved in tournament team play are under no obligation to participate.

Under normal circumstances, Kiwanis Baseball fields tournament teams in the categories of 8 and under, 9 and under, 10 and under, 11 and under, and 12 and under. The



number of teams or, if there are to be any teams at all, is determined by the interest of the players and parents and the availability of coaches.

Players are selected for teams based upon a vote of regular season head coaches, umpires, and members of the Bambino Board who have been active in watching regular season games. The Bambino Board's Tournament Committee selects the coaches.

KIWANIS BASEBALL CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

While we hope that this handbook will answer many of your general questions, we realize that situations requiring more specific information may occur during the season. Following the contact list shown below should enable you to receive the necessary answers to any questions you might have.

Your team's head coach is your first point of contact for any issues that might arise during the season. If you are having a problem with that coach, we would still request that you approach the coach and address your concerns politely and away from the children.

If the head coach cannot answer your questions or is otherwise unable to resolve issues to your satisfaction, you should contact Ken Bosserman ~ Executive Director of the Kiwanis Baseball program. Normally, he can be found at the Kiwanis Baseball Complex any time games are being played. His phone number is (540) 885-2014.

If your contact with Mr. Bosserman proves unsatisfactory, you should contact Dan Bonner ~ Chair of the Kiwanis Club Baseball Committee. His phone number is (540) 885-8516.

YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT

Your feedback is extremely important to the Kiwanis Club as it continues striving to improve the Kiwanis Baseball experience. Please feel free to make suggestions or comments to Mr. Bosserman or to Mr. Bonner, or to any member of the Bambino Board. Those board members are:

Debbie Gregory, President
Jim Williams, Vice President
Dan Bonner, Secretary
Alan Garrison, Treasurer

Calvin Bell
Ken Bosserman
Travis Cason
George Folks
Glen Gill
Jim Goodloe
Jason Hand
Jenny Jones
Donna Morris
Mike Wal



Play Ball!