

SCRIPPS RANCH LITTLE LEAGUE PLAYER, PARENT, MANAGER & COACH CODES OF CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

Little League Baseball is intended to provide a fun, safe experience for kids and their families. Scripps Ranch Little League strives to obtain this goal. We also hope that Little League will help build character by teaching fairness, sportsmanship, how to try your best, how to play as a member of a team, and principles like respect and responsibility. In order to meet these goals, everyone (the league, managers & coaches, parents, and players), must work together. Only then can we truly achieve a safe, healthy and fun experience for all. To help accomplish this, we have adopted the following Codes of Conduct. The Player, Parent, Manager & Coach Codes of Conduct are intentionally included in a single document, so that each will know not only their role, but what is expected of others.

PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Players' responsibilities are simple; Be respectful of others, be responsible, play fair, always do your best, and always exhibit good sportsmanship. This includes:

- No verbal or physical abuse of anyone (you must show respect towards teammates, opponents, umpires, officials, parents, managers or coaches).
- No poor sportsmanship, before, during or after games.
- Listening to and paying attention to your Manager and Coaches.
- Remembering that winning a game is the result of teamwork, and you are part of a "team."
- Following safety rules, such as no on deck circle, no bats in the dugout, etc.

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The role of parents, while quite simple, cannot be overstated. Parents should both support and share their children's experiences. Proper support and sharing of your child's experience includes:

- Not forcing your child to participate in sports.
- Remembering that children participate in youth sports to have fun.
- Remembering that while parents and adults are essential to Little League, the game is for the kids.
- Keeping your child's manager informed of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of your child.
- Complying with and helping others to comply with safety rules, such as:
 - Not playing catch with players at the game field, on game day. This is both a safety rule, and a rule designed to make sure that game day is reserved for the kids.
 - Making sure your child owns and is wearing a protective cup in (CAPs division and above).
- Making sure your child knows the safety rules (no bats in dugouts, no on deck circle, no practice swings, wearing their cup, etc.).
- Being a positive role model and exhibiting sportsmanship at all times, including:

- Teaching your child how to do their best, and regardless of whether they win or lose, to take pride in their efforts, to support their team, and to exhibit good sportsmanship.
- Not voicing disagreement, questioning, or commenting upon calls and decisions of umpires, managers and coaches, or plays/decisions by players. Mistaken calls, mistakes by managers, coaches and players are an anticipated part of the game, and as adults, we must teach children sportsmanship, including how to accept such mistakes without getting upset. Good Sportsmanship includes recognizing that someone may have made a mistake, and though you do not agree with the decision, you have sufficient good sportsmanship not to comment on, question, or argue about the mistake. By your actions, you teach your child sportsmanship ... teach them good sportsmanship, not bad sportsmanship.
- Learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
- Applaud and cheer your child, as well as all the other players (on both teams).
- Do not address ridicule or criticism at anyone, including spectators, players on either team, officials, managers or coaches.
- No use of profanity, no use of alcohol at the field, and maintaining Little League's smoke free environment at the field.
- Help your child's manager and coaches. They have an important job to keep the warm-ups, practices and games high energy, safe and fun. You can help by getting your child to the field on time, by helping to prepare the field for the game, helping to take down the field after the game, and by being there on time to pick up your child.
- Refrain from coaching their child or other players during games and practices, unless they are the manager, or one of the official coaches of the team.

MANAGER AND COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Safety

Obviously, safety is the most important aspect of managing and coaching. Your role, is to personally follow, and ensure others follow Little League Incorporated and SRLI safety rules! To do this, you must know the rules. Take a few minutes to review and learn the rules. Over 60 years of experience went into spotting the areas where serious threats to safety exist, and to implement rules, which if universally followed, will substantially reduce the risk of injury in most areas. Here are some examples (for the complete list of safety rules, please read the Little League Baseball Rules and Regulations, as well as the Scripps Ranch Little League Local Rules):

- A) Except in the Juniors Division, there is no on deck circle, and players should not be taking warm up swings (unless they are standing at the plate, with the pitcher getting ready to pitch the ball.) Kids swinging bats represents one of the most serious threats to safety. Let's face it, kids often don't have enough safety awareness to check to see if anyone is near them when they swing, and similarly, kids often don't pay attention to where they walk or run, and will run right into the path of a player swinging a bat. The result can be devastatingly terrible. The simplest and best way to avoid this is to keep all bats out of the players hands until they are walking up to the plate to bat. This means no bats in the dugout either.

- B) Adults cannot warm up players on game day at the game field by playing catch with them. If you put 24 players on the game field, add to this parents, many of whom throw harder than players, and many of whom may not catch or avoid being hit as well as players, and you have created a totally unnecessary safety risk to the kids and parents. Besides, game days are for the kids, not the parents to play. However, it is permissible for managers and coaches to throw infield grounders or outfield flies, and catch the return throw (but even managers and coaches may not play catch with a player at the game field).
- C) No adult may ever warm up a pitcher (i.e., no adult should ever be in the catcher's crouch, even if it is not a game day, and even if the coach is wearing a cup and catcher's mask). Remember, "kids catch kids."
- D) While hitting infield, no adult may catch the return throws at the plate (i.e., shag balls at the plate) while another adult hits infield. Only the adult hitting the ball may catch the return throws (it is hard to imagine a coach would hit himself in the back of the head with the bat ... but quite easy to see how one coach could accidentally hit another coach standing nearby, when he swings to hit the ball). A player may shag return throws only if the player is wearing the catcher's helmet and mask.
- E) Make sure your equipment is safe, and the players are properly equipped (all players, from Caps through Juniors, must wear a cup, all catcher's helmets must have a dangling throat guard to protect the throat), no cracked or broken batter's helmets.
- F) Unless you are base coaching, helping with the batting Tee (T-Ball and Caps), running the pitching machine (Caps or Maps), or stationed in the outfield (T-Ball and Caps), you must stay in the dugout! If you are one arm's length from the end pole, and able to duck inside the dugout in the event of a foul tip or errant throw, this is acceptable.
- G) If you are in a division where players may slide into bases, teach the players the correct technique before they get into a sliding situation and injure themselves.

2. **Fairness**

Be fair to all players. We realize that baseball is a competitive game, and that healthy competition is a good thing. However, the desire to "win" must be secondary to fairness, and should never result in treating a player unfairly. Good managers discover how to be competitive, while also being fair to all the players. Fairness is a subjective term. As a result, we have enacted "rules" which can be found in our Local Rules, requiring certain minimum levels of play, etc. In addition, we have adopted the following minimum guidelines regarding other matters, which we ask that managers and coaches follow.

The fair play "Rules", enacted in our Local Rules, are so basic (such as assuring players play a minimum amount of innings, get a minimum number of at bats, etc.), that we have made them mandatory for every game. Other principles of fair play, are not as easy to administer, and thus we have made them guidelines found in this Code of Conduct. We have done so, in recognition that exacting rules may be difficult, and because we realize that it is possible that in a particular game, a particular player may not play in all the positions fairness might dictate. By making this a standard, it is our desire to give managers some degree of flexibility. For instance, if

a situation arises where a manager can not meet these standards in a particular game, he should simply make it up to the player at the next game. The following principles, are principles which over the course of a season, each manager and coach should meet, and indeed, decisions as to who is allowed to manage or coach in the following year, may be based upon such matters as found in this Code of Conduct, including adherence to safety rules, fair play, etc.:

- a. **In T-Ball and Caps**, the goal of managers and coaches should be, barring safety or other issues, to assure each player gets the same playing time, the same number of at bats, and equal exposure to all positions. Players should play a minimum of one inning infield, and one inning of outfield per game. No player should sit out more than two innings in a game, no player should sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning, and no player should sit out two innings in a row. You should be organized in the preparation of your lineups and position charts to insure fairness (keep track of who plays where, and make sure you rotate fairly).

Managers and coaches need to exercise their best judgment and common sense when making lineups and position charts. If you have a player who is not sufficiently skilled to play infield (this would be a very unusual situation), and the parents agree, you are not required to play them in the infield. Similarly, if you have a player who struggles to catch a thrown ball, placing he or she at 1st base, while you have a hard throwing player at the pitcher, or 2nd baseman position, should be avoided. Other possible exceptions include players who are late to the game, or other disciplinary issues (i.e., a manager or coach has discretion not to position players in the infield who habitually do not attend practices, or who refuse to pay attention, or are misbehaving, in an infield position.) We want to be fair to all players, and to managers and coaches as well.

- b. **During the regular season in Maps through Minors AA**, the goal of managers and coaches should be, barring safety or other issues, to assure that each player receives “approximately” equal playing time, at bats, and exposure to playing the infield (not necessarily every position, just time in the infield). Players should play a minimum of two innings in the infield, and one inning in the outfield, per game (in Maps, the catcher’s position counts as an outfield position). No player should sit out more than two innings in a game, no player should sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning (unless the other player is pitching, in which case that player can come out when he or she is done pitching), and no player should sit out two innings in a row. Unlike T-Ball and Caps, this does not require players to play each specific infield position, merely that they play infield. If a player is not sufficiently skilled to play shortstop or pitcher they can play elsewhere in the infield. Managers and coaches should of course try to provide players with exposure at all positions, including pitcher, but are not required to do so if in their judgment, the position is beyond the skill of the player. Managers should be organized in the preparation of their lineups and position charts to insure fairness.

Managers and coaches need to exercise their best judgment and common sense when making lineups and position charts. If you have a player who is unsafe to have play infield (this would be a very unusual situation), and the parents agree, you are not required to play them in the infield. Similarly, if you have a player who struggles to catch a thrown ball, placing he or she at 1st base, while you have a hard throwing player at the pitcher or 2nd baseman position, should be avoided. Other possible exceptions include players who arrive late to the game, or disciplinary issues (i.e., a manager or coach has discretion not to position players who do not

attend practices, or who refuse to pay attention, or are misbehaving, in an infield position. We want to be fair to all players, including those who do their best, play fair and show good sportsmanship. During the play-offs in Maps through Minors AA, all the foregoing guidelines still apply, except that a player is required to be played in the infield only one inning per game.

- c. **During the regular season in Minors AAA and Majors**, the goal of managers and coaches should be, barring safety or other issues, to assure that each player receives a fair amount of playing time, at bats, and exposure to playing the infield. While there are no minimum infield and outfield “requirements”, managers and coaches should try to have each player receive some measure of infield play per game (preferably two innings). If a player is not sufficiently skilled to play shortstop or pitcher they can play elsewhere in the infield. Managers and coaches should try to provide players with exposure at all positions, but are not required to do so. No player should sit out more than two innings in a game, no player should sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning, (unless the other player is pitching, in which case that player can come out when he or she is done pitching), and no player should sit out two innings in a row. You should be organized in the preparation of your line ups and position charts to insure some reasonable degree of fairness. If you have a player who is unsafe to have play infield, and the parents agree, you are not required to play them in the infield.

Use your common sense and best judgment when assigning positions to players who are significantly less skilled than the average player. Other possible exceptions include disciplinary issues (i.e., a manager or coach has discretion not to position players who do not attend practices, or who refuse to pay attention, or are misbehaving, in an infield position. We want to be fair to all players, including those who do their best, play fair and show good sportsmanship. During the play-offs, when we use straight Little League rules including a non-continuous batting order, the foregoing guidelines do not apply. However, all players must play three innings in the field (9 consecutive outs).

- d. **For the Juniors Division**. While there are no additional fair play requirements currently imposed upon the Juniors division (beyond those included in the Little League Rules and Regulations), managers and coaches are strongly encouraged to exercise as much fairness as is feasible during the regular season. This includes, where safe to do so, exposure to differing positions.
- e. **Be Fair to your Own Child**. Some managers unfairly favor their own child, some are unfairly demanding of their own child. Treat your child like you would any other player. Don't use your position as manager to assign your child exclusively to the best positions, and don't forget to show your child the same patience you show to other players. Let your son or daughter be part of the team.

3. **Organization**

Be organized and be on time. Prepare for the season as if you wanted to make this the greatest season your players have ever had. Consider what you want to teach these players in practices, plan your practices so they will be high energy, fun, and instructional. Prepare your lineups before arriving at the field, giving thought to fairness. Track the positions and innings your players have played, so you can be fair. Keep your team's parents informed regarding what is going on. Perhaps a brief weekly newsletter or update will keep them in the loop.

Arrive at practices and games on time so the kids will be properly supervised at all times, and pre-game activities will be properly taken care of. As a general guideline, you should have your team arrive an hour to thirty minutes before game time, depending on the age of the players. In addition, if you have the first game, you and other coaches/volunteers should arrive an additional 30-45 minutes before the team will arrive, in order to drag, wet, chalk and prepare the field before the players begin arriving (again, so that you can properly supervise the players when they arrive).

Keep your team's parents well informed of events, game times, schedules, practice dates and times, team rules, and any last minute changes. Be sure your parents know what to do in the event of inclement weather. Keep in mind, for most, Little League is a social experience, where kids and parents come to be with friends and have fun. Plan some fun "team building" events, and try to make it the best season these players and their parents have ever had.

4. Field Preparation and Maintenance

Whether you are the home team, or the visiting team, if you have the first game, both teams should have volunteers arrive 45 minutes before your players will arrive (i.e., if your players are to arrive 45 minutes before the game, you should arrive one and one-half hours before the game). First, drag the field. Second, chalk the field (you can chalk after wetting the field if you prefer). Third, wet the field. Fourth, put down the bases, set up any pitching machine, get out the umpire and base coaching equipment. With help field prep is a really easy job, and the kids will have a great field to play on. If you don't get enough help, field prep. can be quite difficult (you are trying to prep. the field, while supervise your arriving players, etc., and this can be quite difficult, and not safe or fair for the kids).

After the last game of the day, managers and coaches should inspect and make any repairs necessary to the pitching mound (particularly the area directly in front of the rubber, and the landing area), as well as the batters' boxes. Typically, repairs will require filling depressions and holes with wet infield clay mix, tamping and raking level. If these repairs are not made at the end of the day, it is nearly impossible for the repairs to be made by the team showing up for the next scheduled game, as any repairs made shortly before the game, would not likely dry by game time.

Please be sure to be an adult, and put the equipment back in the shed neatly, so the next guy won't have to clean up your mess just to do field prep. Also, **BE SURE TO LOCK THE SHED'S LOCK, WHILE THE SHED IS OPEN, AND THEN AGAIN AFTER YOU HAVE CLOSED UP THE SHED.** Every season, manager forget to lock the lock when the shed is open, and some enterprising kid wanders off with the lock, and then later, when the day is over, the lock cannot be found, and the shed cannot be locked up. We also get a surprising number of adults who forget to lock the shed up. Bottom line, as a result of sheds not being locked up, we lose a lot of equipment.

5. Be A Professional

Part of baseball, is that umpires, managers, coaches, and players, make mistakes. Learning to deal with these mistakes in a professional, calm and sportsmanlike manner, is one of the most significant things for teaching players sportsmanship and honor. Don't argue, question, or direct negative comments at an umpire, opposing team players, managers, coaches, or parents. Managers and coaches should never make or suggest calls for the umpire by saying such things as "strike", "ball", "yeah", "no", "out", "safe", "fair", "foul" during the play. Let the umpire make the call!

If an issue arises which requires a discussion, the **Manager, and only the manager** must **ask** for time out, and if a time out is awarded by the Umpire, the manager can then discuss this issue quietly, privately and politely with the chief (home plate) umpire and any other umpire(s) who are involved in the issue. The opposing manager has a right to be present during any such discussion. This discussion is to be a calm, polite conversation out of the hearing range of spectators. The goal (particularly with youth umpires) should not be to dispute, argue or change the call, but should be to insure that the umpire understood and applied the correct rule, and if not, to have the situation corrected in a manner not upsetting to the umpire, players and parents. If the call is not a call the manager believes is critical, or which he or she feels a protest is appropriate, the manager should consider letting the call, good or bad, go, and perhaps, along with the opposing manager, discuss this call with the umpire a later time, in a manner designed to help the umpire to better understand the rule, and how a call might be better made in the future.

Don't ever scream at your players, make negative comments directed at them, or engage in an emotional outburst. Such conduct has no teaching value, ruins the game for all involved, and has no place in Little League. Managers and Coaches who shout at players or behave badly, will not be allowed back the following season, and could be removed immediately, depending on the severity of the situation. It is a certainty that players will make gross and even hard to believe mental and physical mistakes and errors, they are after all ... just kids. Show patience and understanding, not anger and intolerance.

6. Control Your Team

Pay attention to what your players are doing and saying in the dugout, and on the field. More often than we would like to believe, players do and say inappropriate things, including pushing shoving and bullying players on their own team, making comments directed at the opposing players, parents, and sometimes the umpire. Also, some parents can get too wound up, and say or shout inappropriate things, such as trying to make or influence umpire calls, questioning calls, yelling at other players, etc. As the team manager, these parents are your responsibility. If a spectator becomes too unruly, the umpire can, at his or her discretion, eject your team manager (you).

7. Educate Yourself & Teach Your Players

Take some time to learn to be a better youth coach. Attend league clinics (we try to get the best), read on the subject, visit websites, and teach yourself to be a great manager or coach. Measure success in how much knowledge and skill your players pick up, while still having fun. If your players learn good mechanics and fundamentals, they will likely have greater success, greater success means they will have more fun on the field and enjoy baseball more. Learn the rules. Attend rules clinics (you will be surprised how much you learn). Learn to teach your players not only how to catch, throw and hit, but also, how to do their best, how to win and lose with grace, how to be a part of a team, how to overcome things like instances of failures and errors (sometimes their own and sometimes those of others on the team, or umpires), etc.