

Ridgefield Little League Manager and Coaches Expectations

1. Parent Meeting: Critical to communicate early in the year: your objectives, if you need help, what your expectations are, your coaching style, etc. I would suggest at first practice. I'll e-mail out example you can edit. If your goal is to have everyone play every position, than tell them up front. If your goal is to win every game, you better make that clear that it will impact playing time. Please don't make this your goal. Most of the parents are drop-off parents.
2. Team Parent: Get one and rely on them to schedule things like end of year celebration, pictures and concession stands. You have enough to do, get help.
3. Practice: Baseball can be a boring game, design your practice with a lot of moving parts; get parents to help and make it fun. The Ripken Way "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect." Recommended practice frequency and duration
 - a. Pee Wee CP and Tee Ball: 45 Minutes; 1-2 times per week.
 - b. Minors: 60 Minutes: 1-2 times per week, plus a hitting session in the cages or Fieldhouse.
 - c. Majors: 60-90 Minutes: 2 times per week, plus a hitting session in the cages or Fieldhouse.
4. Practice Format: This is what we have found Best; the more help you have, the more you can do in a single practice. Get parents involved.
 - a. Warm Up: 10 minutes.
 - i. Play Catch: focus on loosening up muscles and proper format. Start close together and gradually get further apart.
 - ii. Running Drills: High Knee, Butt Kickers, Grape Vine, Sprint (Get blood flowing).
 - b. Every Day Drills: 10-15 min: These are things that the team becomes familiar with, and you can quickly pick one, call out name and everyone jumps to action. Some of the favorites include:
 - i. 4 Corner Catch (around the horn): Typically this is done with lots of space (bases), but it doesn't have to be. You can play this like normal catch if space is limited. 2-3 athletes line up at each base, ball is through around the horn, after you catch and throw, go to the end of your line. Develops Arm strength.
 - ii. Two Line Drill: Lines of athletes at short stop and second base with 1-2 first basemen. Rapidly hit ball to shortstop (throw to first), then they go to the end of the 2nd basemen line and then hit ball to athlete at 2nd (throw to first), then they go to the end of the shortstop line. If ball gets by first basemen, let it go; keep it moving. A ball should be in play every 10 seconds.
 - iii. Follow the Ball: Line of athletes behind 3rd base, plus one on second and first. Hit ground ball to athlete at 3rd, they throw to second (after they throw, they run to second replacing the person there), person on second throws to first (after they throw, they run to first replacing the person there). Person on first runs home and drops ball in bucket and continues to join line of people at third. Keep it moving.
 - iv. Relay Drill: This is a bit complicated, but works on catching fly balls and hitting relays (cutoffs). Line of athletes in Left Field and Right Field. Bucket at home plate and third base. Person plays Shortstop, 2nd base, 3rd base and catcher. Ball hit to Left Field, ball relayed home through shortstop. Athletes follow the ball, wherever they threw it, they become that position, Left Field → Shortstop → Catcher. Catcher throws ball in bucket and runs to line in Right Field. Ball is then hit to right field, they relay to third via the second basemen. Again, follow the ball: Right Field → 2nd Base → 3rd Base. Athlete on third drops ball in bucket and runs to end of line in Left Field. When you team is working well, you can hit a ball every 5 seconds. Lots of catching, throwing and running.
 - c. Rotations: You need help to pull this off. Rotate the athletes every 5-10 minutes.
 - i. Infield Drills: one coach works 4-5 boys on basics of fielding.

- ii. Outfield Drills: one coach (parent) hits fly balls.
 - iii. Bull Pin: Get your pitchers and catchers to throw 25 – 40 pitches. One coach (parent) observes).
 - iv. Hitting: One parent / Coach feed balls in batting cage, or set up a station for soft toss or tee work with whiffle balls.
- d. End of Practice Game: If they worked hard and accomplished your goals, end practice with a fun 10 minute game. Baseball is a game; kids love to have fun.
 - i. Over the Line
 - ii. Thunder Ball
 - iii. Double or Nothing
 - iv. King of the hill – Fly Balls
 - v. King of the hill – hitting: ball has to be fair and clear the infield.
 - vi. Around the horn: probably too complicated for most of these teams.
- 5. Focus on fundamentals. Throwing, Catching, Hitting. Don't make it too complicated: outfield get it to second base. Infield throw it to first. Once they have that, then introduce more complexity. Double plays are rare. Celebrate them.
- 6. Most coaches typically set the team strong up the middle: Pitcher-Catcher-Shortstop-Centerfield, and then build out from there. If you have a strong pitcher, most hits will go to the right side. First basemen only need to be able to catch. Third base - stay awake. Most coaches liked having everyone play infield at least one inning a game, but that's a style thing. Throw from second is short, just need to be able to knock the ball down.
- 7. Rules:
 - a. Little League rules are king; read them. Especially the pitch rest rules. If you know the rules, it will help you out.
 - b. Local & District Interleague Rules: These will be e-mailed out to the coaches. They have been designed to make games not last 4 hours, and incent coaches to develop players in different positions.