

ROSS VALLEY LITTLE LEAGUE

PARENT HANDBOOK

2017

Ross Valley Little League
336 Bon Air Center, PO Box 281 Greenbrae, CA 94904
www.rossvalleylittleleague.org

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I. Welcome

2017 Spring Baseball Season

Dear RVLL Parents,

Welcome to the Ross Valley Little League 2017 season! This year marks the RVLL's 61th year as a community organization dedicated to teaching and inspiring our children to the highest level of baseball skill and sportsmanship.

As a 100 percent volunteer organization, the strength of our League resides in our parent community. Without your help, support and volunteer hours we could not manage to successfully support and provide an amazing baseball experience for hundreds of children in the Ross Valley community each season. 2016 continued our leagues consistently high registration numbers with 432 children playing baseball in T-ball, Farm, Rookies, Double A, Minors, Majors and Junior leagues.

Given the significance of your role as a supporting parent, the RVLL Board of Directors developed a Parent Handbook to provide all participating families with pertinent information on what to expect this season in terms of your volunteer commitment. We also encourage all parents to visit the RVLL website and read the information under the Parents tab for additional resources.

Thank you very much for supporting your child through the RVLL. We look forward to a fantastic Spring baseball season. If you have any questions regarding the RVLL Parent Handbook and/or parent involvement, please contact any of your 2017 Board members.

See you on the field,

Albert G. Stoll, Jr., RVLL President

II. Parent Commitment Requirements

Parents with a child in the RVLL can expect a significant investment of time during the Spring season. While parent presence is not mandatory for all practices and games, you can expect that your child will at least be required to attend one, 1.5 hour weekly practice session with their team and two, 2.0 hour games each week in Minors through Juniors leagues.

T-ball and Farm are limited to one 1.0 hour practice per week and a game on the weekend. Double A and Rookie league players have one 90 minute game during the week and another on Saturday, with a practice scheduled for every Sunday.

Your regular presence at games where possible is also highly encouraged. All children want to see their parents in the stands and your presence is visible support and encouragement for your child's performance.

In addition to practices and games, for parents with children in Minors and Majors, Snack Shack duties for a minimum of two games during the season is required whenever your child's team plays on the Majors baseball field. (Please see the Snack Shack section of the handbook for full details on what is expected)

During the season there are also additional RVLL events that we highly encourage all families to actively participate in and support where possible. These include the Opening Day parade and ceremonies, RVLL Day at AT&T Park, and Closing Day Ceremonies. Full details on each of these events are available in the Calendar of Events section of the handbook.

Parents can volunteer their time to support their child in the League in various ways, which include but are not limited to:

- Signing up to bring team snacks for games
- Volunteering their truck for the Opening Day parade
- Helping to decorate the team truck; team banners
- Working at the Snack Shack
- Helping the team coach on the field during practices; helping with equipment and clean-up after each game
- Helping your team parent
- Becoming a RVLL sponsor!

There are numerous ways to get involved, so sign-up and offer your assistance in any way you can. We guarantee you that one of best ways to have the most fulfilling experience with your child is to become an active member of the RVLL – you will also make some of the most dearest friends through the other parents you will meet and get to know on your teams.

III. Sports Parents Code of Conduct

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles:

Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Good Citizenship

The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character." I therefore agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.

3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the League.
5. I (and my guest) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language and gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well being of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or their performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and never question, discuss or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
17. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.

IV. Parents Pledge

The following RVLL Parent Pledge is based upon the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) Parent Pledge, recommended and supported by the national Little League Baseball. We ask that each parent with a child in the RVLL please read and agree to the following:

1. I pledge to get my child to practice and games on time. I understand that it can be embarrassing for my child to be late and that I may be putting him/her at risk by not providing adequate time for warm up. I will be on time to pick up my child from all games and practices. This shows respect for the coach, and it tells my child that he or she is my top priority.
2. I pledge to use positive encouragement to fill my child's Emotional Tank because athletes do their best when their "Emotional Tank" is full. I understand that fewer than 1% of youth sports participants receive college scholarships and that the top three reasons kids play sports are a) to have fun, b) to make new friends, and c) to learn new skills. I understand that the game is for the players, and I will keep sports in the proper perspective.
3. I pledge to reinforce the ELM Tree of Mastery with my child (E for Effort, L for Learning and M for bouncing back from Mistakes). Winners are people who make maximum effort, continue to learn and improve, and do not let mistakes, or fear of making mistakes, stop them. I understand that mistakes are an inevitable part of any game and that people learn from their mistakes. I understand that children are born with different abilities and that the true measure is not how my child compares to others but how he/she is doing in comparison to his/her best self.
4. I pledge to "Honor the Game." I understand the importance of setting a good example for my child. No matter what others may do, I will show respect for all involved in the game including coaches, players, umpires, opponents, opposing fans, and officials. I understand that umpires make mistakes. If the umpire makes a "bad" call against my team, I will Honor the Game and be silent!
5. I pledge to refrain from yelling out instructions to my child. I understand that this is the coach's job. I understand that games are chaotic times for children trying to deal with fast-paced action and respond to opponents, teammates and coaches. I will limit my comments during the game to encouraging my child and other players for both teams.
6. I pledge to refrain from making negative comments about my child's coach in my child's presence. I understand that this plants a negative seed in my child's head that can negatively influence my child's motivation and overall experience.

I will honor the PCA Parent Pledge in my words and actions.

V. Communicating With Your Coach

The Little League Baseball website provides parents with some useful tools for helping you and your child best communicate with your coach.

As stated in the Parent's Code of Conduct, we ask that each parent please respect, support and cooperate with your child's team coach. Our coaches are parents as well, and put in an incredible amount of personal time in addition to their full-time jobs to help ensure all teams

excel in the highest quality technique and game experience.

If at any time during the season you are not able to effectively communicate with your coach or if there is an issue that requires attention, we ask that you contact your league commissioner. A full listing of commissioners for each league is listed on the RVLL website.

VI. Parent Behavior During Games

RVLL asks your cooperation in displaying positive encouragement to ALL players and umpires during games. Demonstrating good sportsmanship and a positive attitude are important in building both confidence in all our players and umpires and make watching the games a fun and pleasant experience for everyone.

Please note that our umpires are children age 12 through teens and are also learning so we expect nothing but positive encouragement. There may be times when you question a call, but please support that child's decision and do not put undue pressure on the umpire(s).

A reminder that any kind of alcoholic beverage is also not allowed during the games or on campus.

VII. Role of Team Parents

Team Parents play a critical volunteer role in supporting the RVLL and the team to which their player is assigned. The Team Parent plays an important role in organizing the families for a successful season and given the depth of responsibilities, may opt to share the duty with another parent.

Areas of responsibility include:

1. Preparing and distributing a team roster and contact information to parents.
2. Coordination of Opening Day festivities such as securing parent participation in securing a team truck for the Opening Day Parade, team decorations and dissemination of information about the day's events.
3. Collect and distribute team and player picture information. Distribute photos later to parents.
4. Preparing and distributing a snack schedule by the first game. Every family is required to participate by providing a snack and a drink for all players on the team on a rotating basis. Each family can expect to provide team snacks/drinks at least 2x during the season. Snacks/drinks are only provided after games and not required for every team practice.
5. Preparing the Snack Shack parent schedule. The home team for any game played on the Bacich majors field are required to open, staff, and clean-up and close the snack shack on both weekday and weekend games. Each team parent should expect to work the snack shack at least twice during the season plus possible additional times during the play-offs.

6. Assist the Team Manager in finding parents to keep score and pitch counts during the season (only applies to Minors, Majors and Juniors).
7. Organize parents to ensure that dugout, sidelines and bleachers are clean and litter-free for the next game.
8. Coordination of the End of Season Team Party and thank you gifts for Team Manager & Coaches.

The Team Parent serves as the facilitator for ensuring these responsibilities get evenly distributed to all parents on the team. Good delegation helps tremendously and being Team Parent does not mean you have to do everything by yourself!

VIII. Player Uniforms & Equipment

All players will receive a team jersey for use during the season. Jerseys are distributed by each team coach at the beginning of the season. Parents are required to keep the jersey's clean and in good condition with the requirement that all jerseys be returned to the RVLL on the day of Closing Ceremonies.

Parents should be prepared to purchase the following items to complete their child's uniform requirement:

- Baseball pants (color of belt determined by your child's coach)
- Baseball belt (color of belt determined by your child's coach)
- Baseball socks (color determined by your child's coach)
- Slider shorts (for Double A and up)
- Cup (Hard cup only required for catchers) (for Double A and up)
- Baseball cleats

All baseball bats, pitching helmets, batting helmets and catcher gear are provided by the League for each team. Players are required to have their own baseball glove. Players are also permitted to use their own Little League approved bats, batting helmets if they prefer. A list of approved bats can be found at <http://www.littleleague.org/learn/equipment/baseballbatinfo.htm>

Due to mandatory RVLL rules, all pitchers must wear a pitching helmet at all times on the pitching mound.

IX. Practices and Games

Team practices are held once a week for 1.5 hours at a designated time slot provided to each team coach by the RVLL. At the coach's discretion, additional team practices may be required, usually subject to advance discussion with and availability of majority of team players. Parents are not required to be present during practice sessions, but volunteers to help assist are always welcome and subject to approval of each team coach.

Games are held two times each week during the season – one weeknight game and one weekend game. Each game runs about two hours, with an additional 45-minute warm-up prior to each game. Parents should expect a total commitment of 6 hours each week for games.

Practice and game locations vary by League, but generally run as follows:

Tball - Ross Commons, Farm - Ross Commons, Rookies - Ross Commons, Double A - Bacich Elementary School, Minors - Bacich Elementary School, Majors - Bacich Elementary School, Juniors - Varies.

X. RVLL Calendar of Events

A full list of all practices and games can be found on the RVLL web site at www.rossvalleylittleleague.org

Key event dates to get on your family's calendar for the Spring season:

RVLL Opening Day Parade – Gather at Ross Commons 8:00 a.m.; Parade starts at 8:30am; Opening Ceremonies – Bacich Elementary School 9:30 a.m.; 1st games: 10:30am; Team Photos scheduled throughout the day

April RVLL Day at the SF Giants AT&T Park 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

June RVLL Closing Ceremonies Minors and Majors Championship games- 10am, Bacich

June District Tournament of Champions begins

June All-Star Teams announced

Mid-June to mid-July All Star Tournaments

November Spring Registration Opens

XI. Spring Tryouts

Mandatory player evaluations are required for Double A, Minors, Majors and Junior Leagues. Tryouts are conducted at Marin Catholic High School and run by the RVLL Board. Each League is assigned a designated time slot between the hours of 8:30 a.m. through 3:00 p.m.

Upon arrival, each player is required to sign-in to obtain a player identification number. Try-out drills include hitting, pitching, catching and base running. While each player is reviewed and graded, the purpose of the scoring is to ensure that all teams are comprised of a balanced set of players (i.e., an equal set of beginner, intermediate and advanced players) to enable fair game play. All Double A and Minors players are assigned to a team, regardless of ability and/or strength of try- out performance.

League age 11 year old 6th graders interested in playing in Majors must tryout to earn selection to a Majors team. Selection to a Majors team is not guaranteed. League age 6th graders who do not get selected to a Majors team are assigned to a Minors league team. You may determine your child's League Age at:

http://www.littleleague.org/leagueofficers/determine_league_age/league_age_calculator.htm

XII. Opening Day

To officially kick-off the Spring season, an Opening Day parade and ceremony takes place in early March. All team players are required to attend in full uniform (with the exception of cleats; tennis shoes are recommended for safety purposes while riding the trucks).

Each team secures a pickup truck for the parade for decorating in team colors and signage. Each truck carries the team coaches and team players. The parade route begins at Ross Commons and concludes at Bacich Elementary School.

There will be Opening Day ceremonies and games during the day.

XIII. Snack Shack

For Minors and above, all teams are required to staff the RVLL Snack Shack on games that take place on the Majors baseball field on Weekdays. This usually breaks down to a minimum of two games per season for each team. Parent volunteers are required to staff the Snack Shack (two parents recommended) during the entire game, including early set-up and break-down. Volunteer parents should arrive at the snack shack 30 minutes prior to the start of the game.

On weekends paid staff will run the snack shack but a parent from the home team should check-in to see if they need help or a break. If weekend staff does not arrive, a home team parent should call the Snack Shack Coordinator.

Children under the age of 12 are not allowed in the Snack Shack for safety reasons. Children over the age of 15 can assist in the snack shack. Even if children assist through the shift, the team parent must work the closing, especially handling the money. The snack should be left in the condition it was found, stocked with available items and clean. If something is partially open or near expiration please use your judgement whether or not to discard.

When opening you may have to plug in particular machinery or devices. First get your hot dogs on the rotisserie first. Sodas and waters should be stocked, cold and ready to go. Popcorn is done in the microwave and the hot water in the kettle is used for Cup-o-Noodles.

If you plugged something in when opening the snack shack then please unplug again when closing, being careful not to unplug the refrigerator and freezer. Towards the end of the last game make sure there is a hotdog for each ref. There will be approximately \$50 in the register to start of each game. Throughout the game, place large bills \$20+ in the wall safe, through the slit in the top. The team parent volunteer is responsible for handling the money and transferring it into the safe. When the game is over, place all bills greater than \$5's in the wall safe and leave all the change in the drawer for the next game. At the end of your shift please sweep the floor, wipe down the counters inside and out, put the trash in the dumpster and restock beverages into the refrigerator. A complete list of closing activities is on the back of the door. When you are ready to leave, lock the doors to the snack shack and bathrooms and hang the key in the managers shed. The team manager can assist if needed. When all else fails, please contact RVLL Snack Shack Coordinator (email and mobile number should be on the

whiteboard).

XIV. SF Giants Day

Every Spring, the SF Giants host Little League Day at AT&T Park. This fun-filled day includes an early morning interview session with SF Giants players, an exclusive parade walk around the actual baseball field and special seating. Tickets are available for purchase through the RVLL.

XV. Closing Ceremonies

To conclude the season, a closing ceremony is held in mid-June at Bacich Elementary School. Each team and coaches are recognized, including trophies for the League champions in Rookies, Double A, Minors, Majors and Juniors. A Commissioner's Award is also presented by the coach to one member of each team who embodies the best sportsmanship and teamwork.

After the ceremonies, all team players are required to return their team jerseys back to their coaches.

XVI. All-Stars

Upon the conclusion of the regular Little League season, an All-Star team is named for the Minors and Majors divisions. These teams represent Ross Valley Little League at district level tournament play that runs from June 15 through roughly July 15. All Stars is a recognition of the best players in the league as voted on by their peers, managers, and other league representatives.

All-Stars are expected to fulfill the obligations associated with this honor, which include attending all mandated practices and tournament games. Much more content will be posted at the beginning of the Spring season. This content will outline the selection process for each level, provide guidelines, and express the details of the commitment players and their families are expected to make to All-Stars.