



# VIERA SUNTREE LITTLE LEAGUE 2022 SAFETY MANUAL

LEAGUE ID # 03090222

[www.vierasuntreell.com](http://www.vierasuntreell.com)

## PLAY HARD - PLAY SAFE - HAVE FUN



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# HISTORY OF VSLL

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Viera Suntree Little League began in 1997 with approximately 250 players and 4 fields on what was originally an undeveloped parcel of land next to Suntree Elementary School. In 1999, the first of several field improvements occurred including the clearing of the main entrance, which was where all of the palm trees are now. Dugouts and bleachers were also installed in that round of improvements.

In 2000, the team of Bob Kush and Bob Straub developed a plan to totally refurbish the fields at Suntree Elementary into what they are today. Through funding provided by both Mercedes Homes and McDonald's, the fields were cleared, irrigation and sod were installed, fencing was placed, additional electricity was added, and the first set of lights were installed on Jordan Blass Field. The total cost was approximately \$125,000. Two fields were named for Mercedes and McDonald's during the opening of the 2001 season.

The remaining field was named Rotary, in honor of the Viera Rotary and the Suntree Rotary. Both organizations had raised several thousand dollars for VSLL through golf tournaments held in the League's behalf.

In the Fall of 2002, after many letters, meetings, and a petition signing, the Brevard County Board of Commissioners agreed to install lights on the remaining three fields.

The concession stand/restroom facility was started in 2003 and completed in time for the opening of the Spring 2004 season. The construction took almost a full year because of building requirements, delays, and funding issues. VSLL learned a lesson in how difficult it is to build on property where specifications dictated by both the County and School Board must be met. The facility cost \$60,000 and was paid for entirely by VSLL thanks to sponsors, Casino Night, concession profits, donations, and reduced costs of Mercedes subcontractors and a partial reimbursement from the County.

The willingness of McDonald's and Mercedes Homes to allow the league to essentially skip a year of debt repayment from the 2000-2001 field improvements was also very helpful.

At the end of 2004, both the Mercedes and the McDonald's loans were repaid in full and the final light payment for Jordan Blass Field was made in January 2005.

Prior to Fall 2005, Rotary Field was "skinned" and a full dirt infield was installed. After Fall 2005, Mercedes Field was "skinned" and a true 90' dirt diamond infield was installed.

In January 2006, the foul ball netting was installed at the Suntree fields.

In Spring 2007, Viera Regional Park opened for use by VSLL.

VSLL's Challenger division began in Spring 2007.

Through the years, VSLL has financed a number of field and facility improvements as it continued to grow and prosper. Now, VSLL welcomes over 700 youth players, with 70 teams and including one Challenger Division, designed for players 4-18 years of age with mental and/or physical disabilities. This has been an incredible experience for all players and families involved.

*August 15, 2008: "Kevin Trainor named 2008 Good Sport of the Year by Little League International"*

The Little League Good Sport Award annually recognizes a Little League player who has demonstrated superior qualities of sportsmanship, leadership, a commitment to teamwork, and a desire to excel. Kevin Trainor of Viera Suntree Little League in Melbourne, Fla., has exemplified all of those qualities, and this August at the 2008 Little League Baseball World Series in Williamsport, Pa., he will be recognized with the Little League Good Sport of the Year Award.

"Being a good sport has little to do with talent or ability and everything to do with character and attitude," Stephen D. Keener, President and Chief Executive Officer of Little League Baseball and Softball, said. "Kevin is one Little League player who has demonstrated the ability to transform a potentially debilitating birth defect (Esophageal Artesia), into a willingness to lead by example and be a supportive teammate. These attributes nurtured through Little League often translate into success later in life, making Kevin a worthy recipient of this award."



# VSLC FIELD SITE LAYOUT - SUNTREE + VSLC

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## VSLC Suntree Field Complex

- ❑ The VSLC Suntree complex consists of 4 fields; Rotary Field, McDonald's Field, Jordan Blass Field and Mercedes Field. The complex resides next to Suntree Elementary School on Jordan Blass Drive in Suntree.
- ❑ The complex is owned by the Brevard County School Board, maintained by Brevard Parks and operated by VSLC.
- ❑ Parents are asked to remember that because the VSLC fields exist on Brevard County school property, the following rules MUST be followed:
  - No smoking or vaping is allowed in the VSLC complex. This includes the parking lot.
  - No alcohol is allowed in the VSLC complex. This includes the parking lot.
  - No pets are allowed in the VSLC complex. This includes the parking lot. Service animals are always welcome, but please identify the animal as such.
  - There can be absolutely no parking in front of the two chained entrances on either side of McDonald's field. These entrances are used by emergency vehicles, when necessary. The VSLC complex has no handicapped parking areas.
  - Trash must be picked up after every game or practice.

# VSLC Suntree Field Complex (Continued)

- ❑ VSLC schedules field usage times with the county prior to every season. These times include practices, games, clinics, and other special events. Any use of the field other than scheduled VSLC activity is considered trespassing by the county. It is important to understand that paying a registration fee to VSLC does not allow use of the field complex at times outside of VSLC scheduled activities.
- ❑ Even though foul ball netting has been installed at the Suntree fields, all spectators need to be alert at all times. Foul balls routinely come off of each of the 4 fields and constant vigilance, especially with regards to young children, is absolutely necessary.
- ❑ An AED is located in the concession stand as soon as you walk in on the right on the wall.
- ❑ An AED is located at both baseball and softball stairwell walls near the door.

# VSSL Viera Regional Park Field Complex

- ❑ The Viera Regional Park field complex consists of 7 fields: two 90' baseball fields, two 60' (Little League) baseball fields, two 60' softball fields and a t-ball field. The Park resides at the intersection of Lake Andrew Drive and Judge Fran Jameson Drive in Viera.
- ❑ The park is operated and maintained by Brevard Parks. VSSL has first priority on the fields.
- ❑ The following rules must be followed:
  - Smoking is allowed only in designated areas in the Viera Regional Park complex; this includes vaping.
  - No alcohol is allowed in the Viera Regional Park complex. This includes the parking lot.
  - No pets are allowed in the Viera Regional Park complex. This includes the parking lot. Service animals are always welcome, but please identify the animal as such.
  - Trash must be picked up after every game or practice.
  - Golf carts must be kept outside of the outfield foul poles. If you need to drop off / pick-up equipment, please move the golf cart to the designated area immediately. There is to be NO driving between fields or on the fields.

# INTRODUCTION TO OUR SAFETY PLAN



**History** – Prior to 1995, very little emphasis was placed on a regulated safety program for the safety and well-being of all Little League baseball players. In 1995, ASAP (A Safety Awareness Program) was introduced with the goal of re-emphasizing the importance of developing a safety program which would be utilized throughout the country and among all little leagues. The goal of this safety program is to prevent injuries while educating players, coaches and umpires rather than simply reacting to them.

**Mission of ASAP** – “To create awareness, through education and information, of the opportunities to provide a safer environment for kids and all participants of Little League Baseball.”

**Mission of VSLL** – “To create a fun and safe atmosphere where all children are welcome and encouraged to play baseball/softball while learning the fundamentals of teamwork, leadership, respect and the love for baseball.

## **Little League Pledge**

I trust in God  
I Love my Country  
and will respect its laws  
I will play fair  
and strive to win  
but Win or Lose  
I will always do my BEST!



## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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EMERGENCY: FIRE, POLICE and AMBULANCE

911

Brevard County Sheriff's Office

321-454-6652

Brevard County Fire and Rescue Station #48 (Viera)

321-633-2056

Brevard County Fire and Rescue Station #80 (Suntree)

321-255-4300

For all other questions, feel free to contact a Board Member on Duty.

For a medical emergency, please call 911.



# RESPONSIBILITY

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*Little League Policy* – One of the reasons for Little Leagues' wide acceptance and phenomenal growth is that it fills an important need in our communities. As the program expands, it is becoming, more and more, a major part in the development of young people. It instills confidence and an understanding of fair play and the rights of other people.

Many of the younger children who develop slower than others are given an opportunity not only to develop their playing skills but to learn what competition and sportsmanship are all about. All who take part in the Little League program are encouraged to develop a high moral code along with their improvement in physical skills and coordination. These high aims of Little League are more for the benefit of the great majority of children rather than the few who would otherwise come to the top in any competitive endeavor.

*Safety Responsibility* – The very fact that it is a basic principle of Little League to provide an opportunity for most of the youngsters who sign up for a team to receive these benefits, multiplies the exposure to accidental injury. Having accepted this large group of partly developed children, we must also accept the moral responsibility for their safety.

Safety is the responsibility of everyone! This obligation rest with every adult member of the league organization, as well as, with all inactive parents who have entrusted their children to us.

In addition to our basic moral responsibility, other significant reasons for an organized effort to prevent accidents are to:



1. Stimulate public confidence in this high caliber youth program
2. Hold insurance costs to a minimum
3. Reassure parents as to the safety of their children
4. Develop safety-mindedness for their protection in later life

The inexperience and dependence of young children on adult guidance make it imperative that ALL levels of authority make safety an integral part of their behavior, transaction of league affairs, and instruction to all players.

Everyone's approach to the problem of accident prevention must be from a positive point of view if it is to be effective. We should be concerned primarily with controlling the causes of accidents which can be eliminated without taking any action, speed, or competition out of the game. An attitude of alertness, hustle, and enthusiasm without antagonism should be encouraged. Good equipment and proper instruction more than outweigh the risk of injury. A lively spirit of competition give rise to that extra effort needed for development of skills.

To minimize accidents, particularly during the initial learning period, instruction in the basic skills should be approached gradually. This applies particularly to fundamentals such as running, ball handling, batting and sliding, which produce the majority of accidents.

An additional basic factor very important to the safe development and continuing use of baseball skills is the understanding and practice of teamwork and good sportsmanship. These intangibles have a direct bearing on accidents involving another person and can be made a part of the game by the following:

1. A courteous and considerate attitude by adults. They must set a good example.
2. Many of the players will need to be instructed in cooperation between teammates and good sportsmanship toward opponents.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

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## ***EXPECTATIONS OF PLAYERS***

- ❑ Show respect to all coaches, parents, players, and umpires at all times.
- ❑ Observe all posted signs. Players and spectators should be alert at all times for foul balls and errant throws.
- ❑ During the games, all players must remain in dugout area in an orderly fashion at all times.
- ❑ No swinging bats or throwing balls at any time within the walkways or common areas of the VSLL complex.
- ❑ Only a player at bat may swing a bat (ages 5 – 12).
- ❑ Juniors and Seniors on the field or on-deck may swing a bat. However, be alert to the area around you when swinging a bat to ensure no one is within striking distance.
- ❑ Profanity will not be tolerated, at any time, from any player, regardless of age.
- ❑ After each game, each team must clean up trash in dugout and around the field.
- ❑ Play fair at all times.
- ❑ Have Fun!!

## **EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES**

- Set a positive professional example for our youth at all times.
- Never demean a player, coach, parent, or umpire at any time. Remember, the kids are always watching your actions and looking up to you.
- Emphasize skill development, fair play and having fun!
- Want to win, but do not over emphasize it or sacrifice the League's values or goals to do so.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS**

- Be considerate of all coaches, players, and umpires. They are volunteers giving their own personal time to provide your child an opportunity to play Little League Baseball.
- Don't emphasize the Winning or Losing aspect of the game! Stress learning, fun, and good sportsmanship.
- Cheering should take the form of encouragement. No coaching or negative words aimed at any player, coach, or umpire will be permitted.
- Supervise your children who are not playing.
- Clean your area after each game and/or practice.
- Show support to your child, your team, and your league.
- Volunteer to help!! Without volunteers – there is no league!

## PARENT/VOLUNTEER PLEDGE

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*I will teach all children to play fair and do their best.*

*I will positively support all managers, coaches and players.*

*I will respect the decisions of the umpires.*

*I will praise a good effort despite the outcome of the game.*

# GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT TO ALL

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- Do not block emergency passage lane in parking area during games or practice
- Speed Limit is 5mph in roadways and parking lots while attending any VSLL function
- Watch for children in parking lots
- No smoking in the VSLL complexes
- No alcohol is permitted in the parking lot, fields, or common areas of the VSLL complexes
- No playing in parking lot at any time
- Always walk around or in between the playing fields. Do not cut across any field while a game is in progress
- No throwing rocks or any other items
- Golf carts are to remain behind the outside foul poles and can only be driven to the dugouts to drop off or pick up equipment. They must immediately be moved back to the designated parking areas outside of the foul poles.
- No horse-play at any time
- No climbing any fences or trees within the VSLL complex
- Have fun and enjoy the game!
- Be courteous to all players, coaches, umpires, and parents at all times.

# EXPECTATIONS

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## **What you can expect from your coaches and managers..**

- To be on time for all practices and games
- To be as fair as possible in giving playing time to all players
- To do their best to teach the fundamentals of the game
- To be positive and respect each child as an individual
- To set reasonable expectations for each child and for the season
- To teach the players the value of winning and losing
- To be open to ideas, suggestions, and/or help
- To never yell at any member of their team, the opposing team, or umpires
- To handle all confrontations in a quiet, respectful and individual manner

## **What Managers and Coaches expect from you and your players...**

- To be on time for all practices and games
- To always do their best whether in the field or in the dugout
- To be cooperative at all times and share team duties
- To respect not only others, but themselves as well
- To be positive with all teammates at all times
- To try not to become upset at mistakes of their own or others
- To understand that winning is only important if you can accept losing as well
- To come prepared to play, give 100% and to have FUN!

# EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILY + FRIENDS

- Come out and enjoy the games
- Cheer loud and make all players feel important
- Allow Managers and Coaches to coach and run the team
- Do not yell at Managers, Coaches, or Umpires
- Be strong role models for your own child as well as others watching your actions
- Eliminate negative comments
- Offer to help in any capacity! The more volunteers the better!
- Don't expect the majority of children playing Little League Baseball to have strong skills.  
This is where they learn.
- Allow children, Coaches and Managers to make mistakes
- Be supportive at all times
- Have fun and enjoy the Little League experience

# SAFETY CODE

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## **OVERVIEW**

It is the policy of VSLL to provide an environment in which the risk of injury is reduced to the lowest possible level by the application of our published safety code. Behavior in violation of the safety code will be treated as misconduct and may result in the application of appropriate corrective action up to and including dismissal.

The Safety Officer position is a part of VSLL's Elected Board, which reports to Little League Headquarters. The Safety Officer is responsible for the communication, application, and enforcement of the safety code rests in the hands of the Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer will facilitate Safety Committee Meetings and will delegate responsibilities to committee members and ensure follow through.

## **Manage and Monitor all Equipment:**

- Work in conjunction with the Equipment Manager to ensure all equipment is in safe condition.
- Instruct all managers and umpires to inspect equipment before and during each game for good working and safe condition.
- All equipment shall be kept in the dugout or in designated fenced-in areas.
- Equipment shall be inspected regularly for condition as well as for proper fit. The pitching machines must be maintained in good and safe working order.

### **Report all Accidents:**

- Safety Officer will file all accident reports with Little League Headquarters.
- Establish that accident forms are completed in a timely manner.
- Safety Officer will contact the injured player's parent or guardian within 24 hours upon receiving the report. During this contact, the S.O. will verify that all information received is correct and advise them of the League's insurance coverage.
- Record accidents and near miss reports.
- Submit ideas to the safety committee on how to avoid such accidents/near miss..
- Create a plan on how to avoid if possible.

### **Dedicated to Injury Prevention**

Responsibility for safety procedures should be that of an adult member of the Viera/Suntree Little League

Arrangements should be made in advance of all games and practices for emergency medical services. First Aid kits are issued located at the concession stand. Team manager are issued ice packs.

No games or practices should be held when weather or field conditions are not safe, particularly when lighting is inadequate.

Play area should be inspected frequently for holes, damage, stones, glass, and any other foreign objects.

All team equipment should be stored within the team dugout and not within the area defined by the umpires as "in play".

Only players, managers, coaches, and umpires are permitted on the playing field or in the dugout during games or practice sessions.

Responsibility for keeping bats and loose equipment off the field should be that of a player assigned for this purpose or the team's manager, coaches, (or Dugout Parent, if applicable.)

Procedures should be established for retrieving foul balls batted out of playing area.

During practices and games, all players should be alert and watching the batter on each pitch.

During warm up drills, players should be spaced so that no one is endangered by wild throws or missed catches.

All pre-game warm ups should be performed within the confines of the playing field and not within areas that are frequented by and thus endanger spectators (i.e. playing catch, swinging bats, etc.)

Equipment should be inspected regularly for the condition of the equipment as well as for the proper fit.

Batters must wear Little League approved protective helmets during batting practices and games

Catchers must wear catcher's helmet, mask, throat guard, chest protector, shin guards, and protective cup at all times (males) for all practices and games., when in a catching position. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Managers should encourage all male players to wear protective cups and supporters for practices and games.

Except when runner is returning to base, head first slides are not permitted in any age group below Majors. Head first sliding while advancing is prohibited per Little League Rules. .

At no time should "horse play" be permitted on the playing field, in the dugout, or within the VSSL complex.

Parent of players who wear glasses should be encouraged to provide "safety glasses" for their player.

The catcher must wear catcher's helmet, athletic support cup (MALE) and mask with throat guard when warming up pitchers. This applies between innings during a game, in the bullpen prior to a game, and also during practices.

Managers and coaches may not warm up pitchers before or during a game.

Players must not wear watches, rings, pins, earrings, or metallic items during games and practices.

On deck batters are not permitted (except in Junior and Senior divisions)

## **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

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### **Lightning**

When the threat of severe weather approaches, stop all games and practices.

Stay away from metal fencing (including dugouts) as well as trees.

Do not hold metal bats.

When lightning is within 5 miles, WALK – do not run to your car and wait for decision from your Manager/Coach on whether or not game or practice will be continued.

**LIGHTENING IS A SERIOUS KILLER,**

**PLEASE HEED THE WARNING AND TAKE APPROPRIATE COVER QUICKLY!**

**FIELD UPDATE: TEXT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM    Text: Hits15 to 84483**

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES**

Bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered, and the uniform changed, if there is blood on it before the athlete may continue.

Routinely use gloves to prevent mucous membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.

Immediately, wash hands and other skin surface if contaminated by blood

Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment.

Managers, coaches, and volunteers with open wounds should refrain from all direct contact until the condition is resolved.

Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and disposal when handling bloody dressings, mouth guards and other articles containing body fluids.

# VSLI SAFETY PROGRAM

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The goal of the VSLI Safety Program is to decrease the frequency and severity of injury associated with the sport and other recreational activities, while promoting healthy participation.

This document has been developed to provide a foundation for the future direction for Little League injury prevention. It provides basic guidelines for participation in Little League in the safest possible environment. It is intended for the use of VSLI organization, the Board of Directors, facility planners, team managers, coaches, parents, and all players in the league.

During warm-ups, practices and games – all managers, coaches and team moms will act as safety representatives for all team members.

Please report all accidents and/or near misses to our Safety Officer or Board Member on Duty.

This safety plan will be periodically reviewed and updated with the most current information.

# PREVENTING INJURIES

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Injuries are not necessarily an inevitable part of participation and much can be done to prevent them. Being prepared is the best way to prevent a sports injury. You can ensure a safer season by proper conditioning, eating a well-balanced diet, and using the proper equipment.

An individual participant should ensure they are conditioned and trained for the type and level of activity for which they plan to participate. Should a participant have any concern or questions about their health, professional advice from their personal physician should be sought. Conditioning should include, but is not limited to, strengthening of muscle, building cardiovascular endurance and stamina, and increasing muscle flexibility.

- o Strengthening muscles can be achieved through exercises such as calisthenics or supervised weight training.
- o Endurance and stamina can be achieved with aerobic activities such as running, walking, biking or swimming.
- o Strengthening muscles should always be done prior to any physical activity by warming up with light exercise. Particular attention should be focused on the groin, quadriceps and hamstrings.

It is important to make sure your body is fit from the inside out with a well balanced diet. Use of common sense and eating a variety of foods daily, make for a fit body. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and keeping sugar intake low are recommended.

It is essential to drink lots of fluids, especially water throughout the day. Thirst is not a good indicator of the body's fluid needs. By the time an individual becomes thirsty, their body may already be somewhat dehydrated. Drink water before, during, and after exercise and make it an essential part of the daily diet.

Injuries can be prevented or minimized by participants checking that their equipment fits properly and is well maintained, by understanding and abiding by the rules of Little League, and by seeking prompt first aid and treatment for any injury that may occur during practice or a game. Make sure to have the proper equipment at all times and inspect the field to be sure that it is in safe "regulation" playing condition.

Although it is virtually impossible to prevent injuries, individuals can reduce the chance of injury by utilizing safe practices at all times. These practices range from understanding the game to the proper use of equipment.

## **INJURY PREVENTION**

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**Attitude:** An attitude of alertness, hustle, and enthusiasm will spark the development of better skills.

Good sportsmanship and courtesy, which are necessary for a harmonious and safe environment, can be taught best through the good example set by all adults on and off the field.

The most effective tool to inspire an attitude of self-confidence and a desire to excel is the use of much PRAISE and RECOGNITION. Of course, this must be given when deserved so as not to be cheapened by too much repetition.

Guidance, on the most constructive attitude or point of view for both adults and youngsters, can be summarized by recommending a positive approach to all training techniques. It is emphasized that good training is the most effective weapon against accidents caused by unsafe acts.

## **Warm-Up Drills**

Warming up before practices and games is a means of safeguarding youngsters, at least to a degree, from poor physical condition and the lack of limbering up in order to reduce the potential of injuring themselves.

Time should be taken to limber up the body by bending and stretching limbs and muscles and the body.

When loosening up the throwing arm, in order to reduce the danger of being struck by misdirected balls:

- o All unauthorized people should remain off the field
- o Stress that the “Eye must be kept on the Ball”
- o Throwing and catching drills should be set up with players in two lines facing one another
- o Players should start throwing relatively close and gradually move further apart while throwing

## **Safe Ball Handling**

In addition to a player never losing sight of a ball from the time it leaves the pitcher, the bat or another player, the player should keep the glove positioned and the body relaxed for a last split-second move.

An infielder can best be protected by an aggressive short hop fielding play by maintaining proper fielding position. In addition, if moving forward, the player is in better position to make a throw.

Misjudging the flight of a batted ball may be corrected by drilling with fly balls, which begin easy and are made more difficult as a player’s judgment and skill improve.

It is safer for the player to knock a ball down and re-handle it, rather than to let the ball determine the play.

## **Collisions**

Collisions result in more injuries than is the case with most other types of accidents. They are usually caused by errors of judgment or lack of teamwork between fielders. It is important to establish zones of defense to avoid collisions between players. This is particularly important when players are chasing high fly balls. Once zones are established, drills should be held until these zones and patterns become familiar to the players. The responsible player should call out the intention to field the ball in a loud clear voice to warn others away.

The following are general rules:

- o Third Base should catch all balls reachable between Third and Catcher
- o First Base should catch all ball reachable between First, Second and the Catcher
- o Shortstop should catch all balls hit to Short, behind Third or up the middle
- o Second should catch all balls hit to Second, behind First or up the Middle
- o Shortstop has the responsibility for fly balls hit in the center of the diamond and in the area of Second Base.

Since the glove is usually on the left hand, it is usually easier to catch fly balls over second base.

- o The Centerfielder has the right of way in the outfield and should catch all balls, which are reachable.
- o Outfielders should have priority over infielders for fly balls hit between them
- o The Catcher is expected to field all topped and bunted balls, which are reachable except when there is a force play or a squeeze play at home plate.

## **Warning Track**

In addition to collisions between players, occasionally a player chasing a fly ball will crash into a fence. These accidents can be controlled by suitable drill work. It is simply a matter of giving the fielders an opportunity to practice getting the feel of a warning track under their feet. They must learn to judge the distance from the fence and the probable point where the ball will come down.

## **Retrieving Balls**

Balls that go out of the field of play should be retrieved and walked back to the field at which time it will be HANDED to a coach or umpire. At NO time, should a ball be thrown back into play from outside of the field. Too many times, players are not watching and may be struck by a thrown ball.

## **Keep Grounds Clear**

Coaches, Umpires or designated substitute players should maintain the playing area by picking up bats, balls, helmets and other equipment that are not being used in order to prevent players from tripping over them. Field inspection must be made prior to the start of each game.

## **Batter Safety**

A batter's greatest accident exposure is from the unsafe acts of others, namely wild pitches, which account for a major portion of all accidents. The best defense is an alert, confident concentration on the ball. Since the danger is increased as pitchers learn to throw with greater force and as more games are played, it is doubly important to take whatever counter measures necessary to offset this exposure.

- o A well fitted NOCSAE approved helmet is the first requirement as well as the use of an approved USA baseball stamped bat.
- o The development of the novice Batter's ability to take evasive action can be improved by getting the player to relax and concentrate on the ball from the time the pitcher starts delivery until it lands in the catcher's mitt. Players with slow reflexes can also be helped by simulated batting and ducking practice with a tennis ball.
- o The unsportsmanlike practice of crowding the plate or jumping around to rattle the pitcher must not be tolerated. This could endanger the batter if it causes the pitcher to lose control.
- o Painful finger and hand injuries can be reduced by making sure the batter holds the bat correctly when bunting. Youngsters have the tendency to lean too far over the plate and not keep the ball well out toward the end of the bat.

- o When the batter becomes a base runner, the player should be taught to run outside the foul lines when going from home plate to first base and from third base to home, to reduce the chance of being hit by a thrown ball.

### **Safe Handling of Bats**

A review of the batter's potential for causing injuries to others points to the following:

The most easily prevented type of accident is the too frequent fault of beginners throwing the bat while running to first base. This unthinking act may be corrected through individual instruction to drop the bat safely by:

- o Having the player hand the bat to the coach. The batter should be reminded before each pitch.
- o Having the player drop the bat in a marked-off circle near where running starts
- o Counting the player "out" in practices whenever the player fails to drop the bat correctly.
- o Having the player use a bat that does not have a slippery grip
- o The use of a USA Baseball stamped bat is mandatory.

### **A Dangerous Weapon**

This heading is used to draw attention to the seriousness of an accident exposure that may sound impossible but one which has caused several very serious accidents on several occasions.

An equally important serious injury is waiting for the absent-minded youngster who unconsciously walks into the swing of the coach's bat when the coach is hitting flies, or the equally unwary player who walks into the swing of a player in the on-deck circle (on-deck circles have been eliminated for players aged 12 and under).

These situations demonstrate the need for everyone to become safety minded, not only for their own good but also for the safety of others.

The following precautions are suggested:

- o The player, usually a catcher, assigned to catching balls for the coach hitting flies should be given the specific assignment of warning away anyone who comes too close.
- o All players and adults should be trained to walk around the on-deck circle whether it is in use or not. In addition, the player using the on-deck circle should be aware of all people around the circle and insure that the area is clear and safe to swing a bat.

### **Catcher's Safety**

The catcher, as might be expected from the amount of action involved, has more accidents than any other player. Statistics show that the severity is less in Majors and above than in Minors play. This can be attributed to the fact that the more proficient the player, the less chance of injury. Assuming that the catcher is wearing the required protection, the greatest exposure is to the ungloved hand.

The catcher must learn to:

- o Keep it relaxed
- o Always have the back of the throwing hand toward the pitcher when in position to receive the ball
- o Hold all fingers in a cupped position near the mitt, ready to trap the ball or throw it or hold the throwing hand behind the back or behind the ankle in a cupped position.

The catcher should also be taught to throw the mask and catcher's helmet in the opposite direction of heading toward a high pop up.

As the catcher learns to play this difficult position, a good habit is to keep a safe distance back from swinging bat. Estimate this as one foot farther from the batter from the ends of the outstretched fingers.

Compliant catchers gear is mandatory during routine practice, warm ups and all games.

*“THE BEST PROTECTION FOR ANY PLAYER  
IS KEEPING THE EYE ON THE BALL”*

**General Attention**

The whys of most ball handling accidents is due to the inattention, inaction or boredom.. This situation can be partly offset by using idle time to practice the basics of skillful and safe play, such as:

- o Idle fields should be encouraged to “talk it up”
- o Players waiting for a game or practice to start can pair off and play catch to improve their basic eye-on-the-ball technique. This should only be done in a predetermined safe location.
- o Practice should include plenty of variety in the drill work
- o Put a time limit on each drill and do not hold the total practice for more than two hours, or less if interest begins to lag.
- o Idle players along the sidelines can be given the job of studying the form of other players to improve their own techniques.

**General Horseplay**

No discussion in accident prevention would be complete without going into the problem of horseplay. This includes any type of youthful high- jinks that could even remotely be the cause of an accident. Even a mild form of such childish behavior could distract any player about to catch a ball or possibly when at bat, and result in an accident. After all, team play requires 100% cooperation among all players, and good sportsmanship demands courtesy to opposing players.

If show-offs and smart-alecks cannot find sufficient outlet for their high spirits in the game, quick and impartial disciplinary action must be taken.

## **Quick Reference for Common Sports Injuries**

*Blisters* are fluid pockets on the skin. The cause is friction usually from ill-fitting or stiff shoes and wrinkled socks against the skin.

You can prevent most blisters by eliminating friction and pressure on the skin. Wearing broken-in, proper fitting shoes and two pairs of socks are two recommended ways.

To relieve any pressure on a blister, cut a hole in a ¼" piece of foam or felt, forming a "donut" over the blister. The hole should be slightly larger than the blister. Tape the foam or felt in place.

If the blister has broken, neatly trim away the loose skin so that ragged edges will not cause irritation or infection. Treat the blister by cleansing with mild soap and water. Cover the blister with an antiseptic ointment such as Bacitracin and place a Band-Aid over the ointment. With the pain gone or reduced and the area protected, you can usually return to action almost immediately.

*Bruises* are a result from a direct blow, which causes tissue damage. Its effects are pain, stiffness, tenderness, and skin discoloration caused by internal bleeding into the soft tissue of the muscles.

While bruises are an accepted occurrence in sports, many can be avoided by the use of proper protective equipment.

The treatment for bruises is the application of a cold pack or ice over a moist towel to the injured area. This will minimize the extent of the injury and help it to relieve the pain. Never apply ice or cold pack directly to the skin.

*Cuts and Abrasions* are the most frequent injuries in sports. An abrasion is a rubbing off of the skin by severe friction or scraping on the ground. If not treated promptly and properly, an abrasion can become infected. A cut, caused by the tearing of skin, results in a bleeding, open wound, which if not treated correctly, also can become infected.

Although cuts and abrasions are taken for granted, consequences of competitive sports, wearing protective pads and the proper clothing can minimize their occurrences. For example, wearing long pants instead of shorts will reduce slide burns in Little League.

To treat cut or abrasions, hold it the injury under cold water, and then cleanse the area with mild soap and water. Wipe the area thoroughly with a sterile gauze pad to get rid of loose dirt and debris. Cover the wound with an antiseptic ointment and a Band Aid.

## **HEAT ILLNESS**

Participation in sports during very warm and highly humid weather conditions present a special danger to athletes. Individuals exerting themselves under such conditions are subject to heat cramps, heat fatigue, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

*Heat Cramps* are a sudden, painful tightening experienced in your calf muscle. They are temporarily disabling and may be caused by depletion of the body's electrolytes.

*Heat Fatigue* is brought on by a depletion of salt and water due to sweating. Fatigue dulls your alertness and makes you more vulnerable to injury.

Excessive depletion of salt and water in very warm conditions can produce *Heat Exhaustion*. Weakness, with profuse sweating and rapid pulse, indicates a state of shock due to heat exhaustion.

Most serious of all is *Heat Stroke*, an overheating of the body brought on by a breakdown of the sweating mechanism. The danger signs of heat stroke are lack of sweating, hot dry skin, flushed or grayish skin, rapid pulse, labored breathing, collapse, or convulsions.

In order to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke during hot or humid athletic activities, schedule these activities during the cooler morning or early evening hours of the day. Acclimate yourself to hot weather activity by carefully graduated participation schedules. Have rest periods of 15 to 30 minutes during activities of an hour or more in hot weather. Wear clothing that is white to reflect heat, loose enough to permit heat escape, and permeable to moisture to allow heat loss through sweat evaporation.

Drink extra fluids during hot weather and remember that regardless of whether you play in the sun or shade, temperature and humidity both are crucial factors.

Treatment includes rest, replacement of fluids and electrolytes, and stretching the affected muscles will usually take care of heat cramps. Rest and replacement of electrolytes and water lost through perspiration will eliminate heat fatigue. Immediate medical attention is critical for heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

A person suffering from heat exhaustion should be placed flat on their back in the shade with their head on the ground, level or lower than the body. Give them sips of an electrolyte drink or water, if conscious. Obtain medical care immediately.

*HEAT STROKE* is an emergency! Obtain medical care immediately. Delays in getting an individual to the hospital could be fatal. In the meantime, reduce the individual's body temperature as fast as possible by spraying them or sponging them with cold water. Give the victim fluid if conscious and raise the head and shoulders.

*MUSCLE CRAMPS* are a sudden, painful tightening experienced in the calf muscle or the back. The spontaneous muscle contraction, which can occur either during activity or hours later, usually strikes weight bearing muscles in the hip, leg, calf, and feet. Causes of cramps include dehydration, salt depletion, muscle fatigue, and reflex reaction to a blow.

To reduce the incidence of cramps, warming up before participation, drink a “sports drink” and/or water before and after playing, and prevent blows to the muscles by wearing proper equipment.

When muscle cramps strike, stretch the muscle within normal range of motion to help restore proper circulation. Then, rest the muscle overnight, if possible.

*STRAINS* are stretching injuries of a muscle or its tendon (connective tissue which attaches the muscle to a bone). Depending on how hard you stretch the muscle, your strain could be minor or very severe. In cases of moderate or severe muscle strains, contact your physician immediately.

*SPRAINS* are stretching injuries of a ligament (connective tissue which attaches a bone to a bone), resulting from a direct or indirect blow to a joint. For example, you strain a hamstring muscle, but you sprain an ankle or a knee.

Prevention of strains and sprains can be achieved by warming up and stretching before each game or practice to make muscles more elastic and flexible. Exercises that develop flexibility of the muscles will reduce the risk of injury by preventing muscles from fatiguing easily. Include in warm up, stretching exercises that will develop the flexibility of ligaments.

The most important treatment for all types of strains and sprains is the immediate application of ice or a cold pack over a moist towel to the injured area for at least 20 minutes. This will minimize the extent of the injury and help to relieve the pain and to reduce swelling.

After the danger of swelling has passed (usually after 48-72 hours), you can begin heat treatments. Heat helps promote healing by relaxing the muscles, tendons and ligaments, reducing the feeling of pain, and increasing blood circulation to carry off the body waste products in and around the injured area.

## **SAFETY SUMMARY**

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In summary, SAFETY is everyone's responsibility! Prevention is the key to keeping accidents to a minimum. Report all hazardous conditions to the VSSL Safety Officer or to a Board Member immediately.

Do not play on a field that does not appear to be in safe condition or that has unsafe playing equipment. Be sure your players are fully equipped at all times, especially catchers and batters. Check your team's equipment constantly. Above all, promote the idea that sports are fun. Be wary of any "win at all costs" zeal from parents, managers, coaches, professionals, and peers that may push an individual to meet unrealistic expectations. Advise individuals not to ignore any warning signs of injury and to never play with pain.

Should an individual sustain an injury or suspect that they might be injured, consult your personal physician immediately.

A First-Aid kit is available for any minor injuries to a player or spectator and is located in the concession stand at both Viera Regional Park and Suntree Fields. Each manager should have ice packs available. As a reminder, please report all injuries to our Safety Officer within 48 hours.

If you have a safety suggestion or concern, please share it with us. We encourage and recognize all safety efforts from all levels of players, parents and coaches. Submit your suggestion or concern to our Safety Officer or to any Board Member on duty. Remember.. safety is a responsibility of everyone!

# DO'S AND DON'TS OF AN INJURY

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## **In case of injury...Do the following:**

- Reassure and aid any child/children who are injured, frightened, or lost.
- Provide or assist in obtaining medical attention for those who require it
- Know your own limitations
- Know where First Aid kits are located
- Assist those who require medical attention
- Look for signs of injury (blood, discoloration, deformity of joints, etc)
- LISTEN to the injured describe what happened and what hurts
- Calm and soothe an excited or scared child
- FEEL the injured area gently and carefully for any signs of swelling, grating of bone
- Make arrangements to have a cellular phone available
- Know emergency phone numbers and contact numbers of players' family member



## **DON'T...**

- Administer any medications
- Provide any food or beverage (other than water)
- Hesitate in giving First Aid when needed
- Be afraid to ask for help if you're not sure of the proper procedures (i.e. CPR, etc)
- Transport injured individuals except in extreme emergencies
- Leave an unattended child at a practice or game
- Hesitate to report any present or potential safety hazard to the Safety Officer immediately!

# ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

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Prompt treatment can often prevent a minor injury from becoming more complicated or from causing permanent damage that may affect an individual's future in sports. Take Action Now!

In case of an accident or incident to any player, Manager, Coach, Umpire, or Volunteer, which requires medical treatment and/or First Aid, must be reported within 48 hours to the Safety Officer.

Reporting incidents can come in a variety of forms. Most typically, they are telephone conversations however; they can be communicated in writing as well.

At a minimum, the following information must be provided at the time of report:

- The name and phone number of the individual(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the incident
- A detailed description of the incident
- The preliminary estimation of the extent of any injuries
- The name and phone number of the person reporting the incident

# SAFETY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

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Within 48 hours of receiving the accident/incident report, the Safety Officer will contact the injured party or the party's parents and (1) verify the information received is accurate, (2) obtain any other information deemed necessary, (3) check on the status of the injured party, and (4) in the event the injured party required other medical treatment, will advise the parents of VSSL insurance coverage and the provision for submitting any claims.

If the extent of the injuries is more than minor in nature, the Safety Officer shall periodically call the injured party to (1) check on the status of any injuries and, (2) to check if any other assistance is necessary in areas such as submission of insurance forms, etc. until such a time as the incident is considered "closed" (i.e. not further claims are expected and/or the individual is participating in the league again).

# TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SAFETY

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- I. Be Alert
- II. Check Playing Field for Safety Hazards
- III. Wear Proper Equipment
- IV. Ensure Equipment is in Good Condition
- V. Ensure First Aid is Available
- VI. Maintain Control of the Situation
- VII. Maintain Discipline
- VIII. Safety is a Team Sport
- IX. Be Organized
- X. Have Fun

# UMPIRES

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A game is not complete without players, coaches, fans, and umpires. Umpire training clinics both on and off the field are available to all volunteer umpires periodically throughout the year. These clinics include safety training, rules of the game and calling the game. Contact the Umpire in Charge of VSSL to obtain a schedule.

# CONCESSION SAFETY

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The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture responsible for ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged.

- Clean - Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate - Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook - Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill - Refrigerate promptly.

## *Shopping*

- Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables.
- Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking.
- Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates.

## *Storage*

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour if temperature is above 90 °F).
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer.

- In general, high-acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years - if the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.

### *Preparation*

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash cutting board, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Cutting boards, utensils, and countertops can be sanitized by using a solution of 1 tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

### *Thawing*

- Refrigerator: The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food.
- Cold Water: For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.

### *Cooking*

- Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F.
- All cuts of pork, 160 °F.
- Ground beef, veal and lamb to 160 °F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.

### *Serving*

- Hot food should be held at 140 °F or warmer.
- Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder.
- When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting.

## **CONCESSION STAND SAFETY TIPS**

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No children under the age of 12 (with adult supervision) are allowed to work in the concession stand at any time. Review all Opening/Closing procedures posted in the concession stand to understand the operation. A safety procedures manual is available in the concession stands both at Viera Regional Park and Suntree (when operating).

Frequent and thorough hand washing remains the first line of defense in preventing foodborne disease. The use of disposable gloves can provide an additional barrier to contamination, but they are no substitute for hand washing!

Safe Food Handling precautions and Hand Washing Posters are posted in all concession stands and facility restrooms.

# VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS + BACKGROUND CHECKS

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VSLL highly encourages all parents and grandparents to volunteer and get involved in their Little League. At the time of registration, volunteer can let their interest be known on the online registration platform. Volunteers come in the form of Managers, Coaches, Team Moms, Concession Stand Volunteers, Fundraising Volunteers and more. There are plenty of opportunities available for anyone wishing to help!

In order to volunteer, a Little League Volunteer Application must be filled out and kept on file for those individuals 18 years of age or older. Random background checks will be run on applicants. Anyone refusing to fill out a volunteer application is ineligible to be considered a league member. All forms are confidentially retained for the year of application. A new application must be submitted each year. If you are interested in completing a Volunteer Application, you can email Viera Suntree Little League through the webpage : [www.vierasuntreell.com](http://www.vierasuntreell.com)