

❖ Pre-Season Tasks

- Contact your player's parents. Communicate the following via email.
 - Your contact information.
 - Equipment provided by the league.
 - Shirt.
 - Hat for boys, coordinating socks for girls.
 - Bats.
 - Helmet.
 - Balls.
 - Recommended player equipment parent to purchase.
 - Glove. (Required)
 - Baseball pants. White looks good yet grey is easier to clean.
 - Cleats. They are not required, but it helps and the kids enjoy them.
 - Uniform undershirt for cold days.
 - Team colors on the coach's portal.
 - Practice sessions will be in early April and will end after the first tee-ball games start. The schedule is available on the coach's portal.
 - Typically games are Friday's after 6 and Saturday mornings. There are a few cases where 5/6 girls have games on Tuesday after 6. The schedule is available on the coach's portal.
 - Parents are asked to assist at the MLL concession stand for one 4-hour session.
- Get with your coach to discuss this year.
- Once the games start, managers are asked to be a field director for one 4-hour session in the season. This mostly involves opening the bathrooms, calling games on weather, and keeping the concession stand people happy. It is quite easy, but we need a person to be the point contact and decision maker at the field. There is a detailed to-do list available for new coaches. I, other directors, and other experienced coaches will help you if needed. The schedule will be available on the coach's portal.
- When meeting with the players in your practices, give them a homework assignment of picking a team name. After they have thought about it, have a short list of names and let them vote. This is really fun for the kids. You will be surprised on their choices. Any name within reason goes and it doesn't have to be a typical team name. Here are a few fun names I have heard: Ninjago's, Mario's, Slappy Birds, Skylander's...

❖ Practices

- Have a preplanned agenda of what you like to accomplish for the practice.
- If you are the first practice for the day, you may need to get the bases out of the shed. Tees are also located in the sheds.
- For a lot of kids this is their first time on the fields.
 - Have them learn the names of the bases.
 - Teach them how to run the bases.
 - Run through first base and return while stepping on the orange base, not the white. (orange should be on the outside of the field)
 - Stop at second and third bases.
 - Run through home and go directly to the dugout. You will appreciate the kids knowing this when the games start.
- At some point show them how to get lined up for batting in the dugout. This may be when you do a scrimmage.
- In the practice, create little clinics with multiple small groups. Very similar to the spring clinics MLL put on. You don't want to have kids standing around waiting for something to do. You will need help from the parents for this.
 - Batting.
 - Throwing / Catching.
 - Ground balls.
- Batting safety.
 - If they have a bat in their hand, there should be a helmet on their head.
 - If not in use, all bats are to be either in the player's bags or hanging at the hooks in the dugout.
 - In practice, the only player with a bat in their hand should be the player hitting at the time or practicing a swing with a coach.
 - In game time, there should only be two players with a bat. One at bat and one on deck.
- Playing a position in the field. Fill the field with the players.
 - It may be easier to have two pitching positions about 10 feet apart. That's where most balls are hit.
 - Coaches can hit or throw ground balls from home plate, the players catch it and they throw it to first base.
 - Work on playing the position and not having the whole team run to where the ball is hit. It WILL happen.
- Have a scrimmage. If you have enough players put half in the field and half batting. You could also do kids vs. coaches/parents.
- Field marking. If you have not chalked a field before, give it a try around home plate before or after practice. The equipment is in the sheds. The home plate marking templates are hanging on the backside of the home plate backstop.
- Pick a team name.
- After your practice, be sure to clean up your field.
 - Pick up trash.
 - Rake the field. This doesn't have to be perfect, just level it out for the next group.

- It may be a good idea to hold the kids there until the field is clean. Otherwise your parent help will walk away. Kids pick up equipment and trash while the parents rake the field.
- If you are the last practice for the day, return the bases to the shed. Plug the holes with the orange plugs.

❖ Games

- By now you may have your team name chosen. Have fun with cheering for the team. Bring a mascot, make a sign, or create a cheer. It is kind of corny but the kids get a kick out of simple cheers for the batter like "Here we go Elliot... Here we go... *clap, clap*".
- **After** game snacks. Some teams like to have a rotation of parents providing snacks after the game.
 - Snacks ideas: juice boxes, cookies, nature bars...
 - If you can, get a parent to schedule and run the game snacks.
- Concession Contact List.
 - You will be contacted with a request for 2 sessions of 5 people to provide assistance at the concession stand. Prepare your parents that they will need to help out.
 - Don't even bother with a volunteer list. Once you get the information on which days your team will be needed, assign the days to your parents. They can trade or find a replacement. Otherwise you will get stuck all by yourself.
- If you are the HOME team, you are responsible for preparing the field.
 - If you are the first game for the day, you will need to get the bases out of the shed and install them.
 - Field marking. The home plate marking templates are hanging on the back side of the home plate backstop and the equipment is in the shed. This may be intimidating for any new coaches to the system. We have all been there. Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's just T-Ball don't get discouraged if it isn't perfect.
- Game play.
 - Three innings.
 - Each player will bat once per inning. The last batter will hit a home run. Have a printed lineup prepared posted in the dugout. A clipboard hung on one of the hooks works best. When the last batter is up, announce it to the field so everyone is ready for the home run.
 - Fill the field with all the players. It may be easier to have two pitching positions about 10 feet apart. That's where most balls are hit. After a game or two, you will understand how better to place the players. I usually instruct the players to throw the ball to 1st base when fielding the ball. For the home run hit, they can throw the ball to home plate if the pitcher is covering. As the season progresses, throwing to other bases is good, but not required, also if they are ready for the added complexity.
 - Ensure that any players placed at the pitcher or 1st base position are focused on the game. Unaware players can get hurt by well hit or thrown balls. It can be a badge of honor to be promoted to those positions when they are ready. Make sure the parents know this so they don't get concerned when their children are not playing the popular positions.
 - Rotate the batting order and field position order to insure that all players have a chance to be first/last and play most field positions throughout the season.
 - Keep an eye on the time. Try to speed up game play if getting close to the end of the time slot.
- At bat coaching and player instruction.
 - I suggest placing helper parents on 1st and 3rd base to assist in running the bases. It is not required, but it can help.

- A coach/manager will help the players get ready to hit the ball at home plate. Be careful not to place the ball until **YOU** are ready. The kids have a hard time waiting.
- A coach/manager will need to be in the dugout getting them in order and following the lineup. This is the most demanding position.
- In the field coaching and player instruction.
 - The coach and manager are in the field to help keep them focused.
 - It is preferred that only the coach and manager be in the field. Parents may want to help their child, but I find that kids listen to the coaches quite well. This will be a growing experience for the kids to follow a coach's instruction and the parents to let their kids follow instruction from the coach.
- The field manager for the day will be responsible for calling the games off on account of weather. The announcement will rarely be made in advance of the first game of the day. Notification of a cancellation will be at the fields. **In T-Ball**, if both coaches agree to cancel a game prior to any announcement by the field manager, it will not be a problem. Cancelled T-Ball games will not be made up. Managers must find the most efficient way to notify the parents about a cancellation.
- If you are the HOME team and there is another game after yours, rake the high traffic areas of the field for the next game.
- If you are the HOME team of the last game of the day, you are responsible for cleaning the field after your game.
 - Pick up trash.
 - Return the bases to the shed. Plug the holes with the orange plugs.
 - Rake the field. If the field is dry, it can be dragged flat with the golf cart. Be safe with the kids on or around the golf cart.
 - It may be a good idea to hold the kids there until the field is clean. Otherwise your parent help will walk away. Kids pick up equipment and trash while the parents rake the field.
- **Post game team discussion.**
 - At the end of the game, get your players together in a group somewhere in the outfield.
 - Try to have only coaches and players only. It is a great time for the kids to feel independent and have mentoring without parent intervention. This is a special moment for them.
 - It is a good opportunity to give out the post-game snack. Otherwise, the kids take the snacks and run off.
 - Praise, praise, and praise their efforts. Try to remember an event when each of them did something special, even a silly event like a coach getting hit by a ball is good.