

Guidelines for Coaches

Philosophy

The goal of the **Spring House League** program is to provide a safe, fun, developmental opportunity for all players, coaches, umpires and families.

For players, this means having equal access to both playing time and at-bats as well as exposure to various field positions. Balancing outfield/infield/pitching and catching opportunities over the course of a season is important. Consider **player safety** in position assignments. An appropriate approach to **individual development** is to have a player assume two or three positions in any particular game allowing for a concentrated learning experience. Coaches are asked to maintain game summary records over the course of the season, in support of the principle of equal play.

Let's Play Ball

1. Each Coach will be provided a team roster, scorebook (upon request), jerseys (\$40 cheque returnable at season's end is required for the Minor level and up), equipment, and a key for the Field storage bunker. In addition, the schedule will be posted on the OWLL website using **GoalLine**. A team specific login will be given to each coach prior to the season. This site will allow for entering final scores, player participation, pitch counts, booking practices and will maintain standings.
2. The tracking of player attendance and availability for games and practices is available on **Team Snap (through the app or online)**. You will get a **team invite** once your team has been formed. This is also a useful tool for communications with your team.
3. The development of specific baseball skills and increased general baseball knowledge is an important part of the house league season. Coaches should consider setting up individual **player profiles** that include an early season player assessment noting areas of strength and need for improvement. Share the profile with each player, provide ongoing feedback and suggestions including year end.
4. As in regular daily life, **communication is key**. Establish an ongoing communication rapport with parents from the season's outset. Set expectations, engage family members as

volunteers and be positive in your communication with all involved. Maintain a high praise to correction ratio to ensure a positive season experience.

5. Weekly **practices** are encouraged as the appropriate time to work on skill development. In developing a practice plan look to maximizing participation through small groups and concurrent teaching stations. You will find that there have been days/times set aside for each age level in GoalLine that are available to book. For skill development resources, review this site [Skill Development Package](#).

6. Booking of the batting cage. Like practice fields, the batting cage can be booked in GoalLine by coaches looking to hold batting and/or pitching practices. You will be given an access code through the masterlock app on your phone. Due to insurance, only players and coaches currently enrolled with OWLL are permitted within the cage. Please use common sense for injury prevention within the cage and when doing batting practices off tee's on the side please make sure to use ONLY wiffle balls so that the structure of the cage stays intact. Also, because of the turf mats, we ask that everyone wear running shoes not cleats.

7. An important part of the Coach responsibility involves managing pitchers arms (minor level and up). Little League has established a criteria for pitchers that includes **pitch counts** and rest (<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/pitch-count/>). The regulations also impact catcher's coming in to pitch in any single game.

8. Upon arrival for a game or practice, the Home team Coach is responsible for an **inspection** of the grounds and dugout areas. Be alert for glass, syringes, damaged fencing or grounds. The goal is to ensure a safe environment for players and coaches. Syringes should not be handled and the City should be contacted immediately at 311. The home team is also responsible for infield **raking and chalking** the lines. All coaches are responsible for a post game clean up of the dugout areas and returning the bases/rakes to the storage bunker and locking up.

9. The League normally assigns two **Umpires** for each game. However, sometimes only 1 or even no umpires are assigned. In cases where the league has been unable to assign umpires to a game, the head coaches from each team should ask two parent volunteers to assume the umpire responsibilities.

To avoid not having enough Umpires, we recommend that Junior and Senior coaches try to hold practices on the weekend when there are no games scheduled so that their players (ages 13+) are available to umpire games at the Minor and Major levels. For major aged teams please choose **either** a Tuesday **or** Thursday practice, not both.

Most of our umpires are teenagers and only a few years older than the players. Coaches are asked to be patient. Understand that the umpires are learning, in the same way that the players are learning.

10. In the event of **inclement weather or an unplayable field**, either Coach may initiate discussions with the other Coach to determine whether the game should be played. If postponed, one Coach must contact the Umpire-in-Chief (owlluic@gmail.com) and the Umpire Scheduler (owllumpsch@gmail.com) immediately so Umpires can be informed of the cancellation. This communication should happen at least 1 to 1.5 hrs prior to the start of the game.

Coaches are responsible for rescheduling the rainout games and contacting the Umpire-in-Chief to secure an umpire for the new date. Coaches also need to inform the Division Convenor (ie Minor) of the rescheduled date/time, so that the Convenor can reschedule the game in GoalLine.

Once a game has commenced, it is the sole responsibility of the Umpire to decide on game postponement or cancellation.

By Little League rules, the score for a 6-inning game is considered final after 4 complete innings (3 1/2 if the home team is ahead). In a 7-inning game (Junior and above), it is 5 complete innings (4 1/2 if the home team is ahead).

A game which is cancelled prior to completion is replayed from the start.

11. If **Lightning and thunder** are observed, the game is to be immediately suspended and may start only after 30 minutes have passed from the **last sighting** of lightning. All participants should proceed to their vehicles (<https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/staying-safe-from-lightning-at-the-field/>).

12. Coaches are asked to pay particular attention to injuries with a focus on **concussions (Rowans Law)**. A blow to the head, neck or face may cause a brain injury. Each team needs to designate a **Trainer** who will be exclusively responsible for determining re-entry into the game and complete the required injury report, whether the injury represents a possible concussion or other injury ([injury report](#)). Erring on the side of caution is highly recommended. For concussion information by age group: <https://www.littleleague.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=599577>

13. An important assignment for coaches is the management and **care of the equipment** bag and contents provided at the commencement of the season. Account for the equipment after each game or practice. Attempt to look for lost foul balls. Keep the equipment in a secure location when not in use. Proper maintenance of the League's equipment keeps the replacement costs down which is ultimately reflected in lower participation fees.

13. The Toronto Blue Jays have put together an informative document on designing effective **girl centered programs**. This is a must read for all coaches [Girl Centred Program](#)

14. Roles for parents on your teams: Assistant coaches (usually assigned from VP Dev prior to season starting), trainer, score keeper, game coordinator, team manager (often performed by the head coach but can be a role to fill by someone else as well). We are also looking to train adults to be able to be our umpires so if this is something a parent is interested in please let us know.

Who ya gonna call?

The OWLL website (www.owlba.ca) provides a list of current League Executives, baseball diamond locations and general league information

Convenors - each player level has a convenor responsible for everyday questions and concerns.

Injuries - reporting injuries [injury report](#) and email to president@owl.ca

Baseball Field concerns - communicate with the VP Player Development

Pre Game Postponement - communicate with the Umpire in Chief

Storage Bunker shortages - communicate with Fields Manager

Make a difference

OWLL Coaches have both the opportunity and the obligation to provide a **positive experience** for all the players who have registered to play Spring House League Baseball. The growth of baseball skills, life skills and an appreciation for the game are goals that all Coaches share.

It's your chance to **make a difference**.

"Thanks Coach - I had fun and can't wait to play again next year"

