

Remember...If it isn't fun, it isn't Little League!



7th Inning Stretch

October 1, 2005

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This Month's Newsletter

As I expected to happen, the news was quite light this month, and I expect it to last through most of the winter. This doesn't mean that we are giving up for the year, as there is always something to put out.

In this issue, I have included an article that was written by Little League International President and CEO Stephen Keener, which I feel is a must read.

I'm always looking for ideas, and if anyone has something they would like to see in the newsletter, please feel free to forward the idea to me.

Throughout the winter months, if there is anything at all that goes on in your League that you think would be of interest to others in the country, please feel free to forward it on to me. This could include new Leagues being formed, appointments within a League or District, successful fundraising events (that maybe others could use to make them successful as well), or anything of interest. Things might include a photo you came upon from through the season, or from the past. We might include "then" and "now" photos of the kids playing. Whatever you think might peak the interest in others.

Also...I would really like to be able to add something to the newsletter to recognize the great volunteers in this country...please let me know of any in your organization that have recently been given an award.

Please remember to try to get anything you can to me by as close to the end of the month as possible, as I put out the new issue on the 1st of every month.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and every issue.

Bob Taunton, btaunton@littleleague.ca

District Administrator

Ontario Little League District 7

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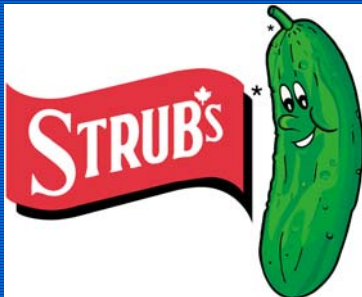
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Is There Such A Thing As Too Much Baseball?

This article was taken from the Little League International newsletter, and is an exceptional read...

Too Much Baseball is Not a Good Thing

(Note: This column by Little League International President and Chief Executive Officer Stephen D. Keener, is reprinted from the 2005 Little League Baseball World Series Program.)

Each August, the Little League World Series celebrates children playing baseball, and families and fans of Little League Baseball come to Williamsport to trumpet the success of these champions, but the final score and world championship banner are certainly not the most important things.

Little League is about playing, having fun, and learning some of life's lessons along the way. Too many times in recent years stories have been told about children playing and sacrificing for baseball where the only thing that seems to matter is the outcome.

That is most definitely not what Little League is about.

Terms like "overuse," "burnout," and "epidemic," have been unjustly linked to the Little League program when these stories surface involving children as young as 10 who are playing dozens and dozens of baseball games during the summer and continuing throughout the year.

Too often, the tradition and worldwide respect Little League Baseball and Softball has established has created the misconception that all youth baseball is Little League Baseball.

To the contrary, Little League remains true to its values of character, courage, and loyalty by regulating its program to create an environment where children from any walk of life can participate.

Throughout its 66-year history, Little League has been fortunate to have volunteers who join the program to do their part in nurturing future generations. Building strong citizens and improving the quality of life for families in their communities is paramount.

Regrettably, there is another cross section of society that seems aimed at profit and self-satisfaction that is fed by a twisted sense of commitment to children. These people look like Little League volunteers. They may even talk like Little League volunteers. But, their willingness to disregard the dramatic difference between "play" versus "work" for nothing more than a chance to exploit the children they are entrusted to mentor, has the



Stephen D. Keener
President and Chief Executive
Officer
Little League
Baseball and Softball

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The Little League Pledge:

I trust in God
I love my country
And will respect it's laws
I will play fair
And strive to win
But win or lose
I will always
Do my best

The Little League Parent /
Volunteer Pledge:

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

potential to cripple the future of youth athletics.

The evolution of ultra-competitive, excessively-expensive, and loosely-regulated "travel ball" has brought Little League unwanted and unwarranted criticism, especially at tournament time.

Because of the misleading comparison between tournament-hopping travel teams, and the "Road to Williamsport" traveled by Little League International tournament teams, critics claim the tournament is detrimental and contradictory to Little League's mission.

In reality though, those who support travel ball are in many cases fulfilling a self-serving goal by seeking out a "higher level of competition" for the expressed purpose of supposedly increasing their child's chances of landing a major college scholarship, or professional contract.

The intent of the various World Series tournaments is, and has always been, to reward local players and leagues for their participation in the Little League program. No local league is obligated to play in these tournaments, yet most do. Why? Because it's fun.

In the Little League division more than 7,000 teams play in the World Series Tournament that concludes here at Howard J. Lamade Stadium with 16 teams vying for the title of Little League Baseball world champion. Yet, 90 percent of the teams entered in the World Series tournament are done playing in the first three weeks.

In years past, Little League's critics have called the tournament too long, too stressful, or too competitive, but now come horrific reports of children and teenagers enduring arm and shoulders surgeries to repair ruptured tendons and broken growth plates as the result of playing too much baseball.

Little League's mission has always been to create an environment that promotes a healthy, fun experience, and never has it been about grooming Major League prospects. As noted author, and Little League volunteer, Stephen King once wrote, "A Little League field is a place where excellence should always be applauded, but never expected."

Do we expect too much of children today? For the parents who each year spend hundreds of hours traveling to "elite" tournaments, and thousands of dollars for private coaches and the like, these questions have to be asked: What's important? At what point does the child, who is playing several games a week, in different baseball programs, have to take a stand and say enough is enough? Should the child have to say anything, or is it time for the moms and dads to cast off the unfulfilled dreams of their youth, and focus on what is in the best interests of their children?

Little League is unyielding when protecting its players and adult volunteers. Whether governing the number of innings a player can pitch in a week, conducting background checks on volunteers, enforcing mandatory play rules, or requiring a player to solely commit to a Little League International Tournament team, all Little League rules and regulations are rooted in what is collectively believed to be most beneficial for local leagues and their participants.

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Little League can not manage, and is not responsible for, the operation of other youth baseball programs. Instead, the parents of the players who play on these travel teams are responsible. Moms and dads must in turn hold these people accountable and evaluate why they feel it is necessary for their son or daughter to be there.

It was not long ago when such specialization was frowned upon and diversity was in. Playing multiple sports made for well-rounded athletes with balanced skills, and an energy level that was peaked by new teammates, different challenges and variety of competition.

New York Yankees pitcher Mike Mussina, who is on our Little League International Board of Directors, grew up minutes from Williamsport in Montoursville, Pa., and he was a three-sport athlete. Mike has reminded me during several conversations on the subject that the cream of crop is destined to rise to the top regardless of how hard he or she is pushed at 9 or 10 years old.

In today's society so much is based on numbers, so the numbers I use when describing the long-range prospects of any youth baseball player go like this ... For the five million children playing baseball in the United States, 400,000 will play ball in high school. Of those 400,000, around 1,500 will be drafted by a professional baseball team. From those 1,500 or so, 500 will play two seasons or less in the minor leagues. Of the 500 in the minors, 100 will reach the Major League level, with one making it to Cooperstown, N.Y. and the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Travel ball is the latest degree of separation between the haves and the have-nots, but is it best for the children? Little League does not think so, and for that reason will not subscribe to the interpretation that the Little League program is too competitive, or not competitive enough, because being a Little Leaguer is not simply about competition.

This is the time to relish youth. The best way for grown-ups to respect the next generation of Little League coaches and volunteers is through their involvement, and understanding of what it means to be a role model to the children of today.

In life, perception too often is reality, and if a parent perceives his child to be a prodigy, then that child must prove that to be true, or not. If the answer is the latter, isn't a life-altering injury too high a price to find out, especially for a pre-teen?

I thank you all for coming to the 59th Little League Baseball World Series, and wish you an enjoyable time while you are with us in Williamsport.

Stephen D. Keener
President and Chief Executive Officer
Little League Baseball and Softball

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Help For Little League Hurricane Sufferers

We always think of the basic necessities being required for those who suffer through natural disasters, such as the recent passing of the two major hurricanes that went through the Gulf coast of the US in recent weeks. Hurricane Katrina was particularly devastating to the Louisiana coastal region as well as the city of New Orleans.

What we don't think of, and expectedly so, is that once people start getting back on their feet, the kids and parents will need some activities to allow them to keep going forward in life with some kind of normalcy. Brossard Little League President Lafleche Montreuil thought of this, and is trying to take action to help some his fellow Little Leaguers in the Gulf coast region get dusted off and playing baseball again as soon as possible.

The following is an edited version of an email that Lafleche sent out to a local radio station to gain support for the idea...

This week after several hours of cleaning and storing our baseball equipment for next years season, I came up with the idea of collecting any used baseball equipment (gloves, cleats, bases, team uniforms etc), donated from various players, and donating it all to a New Orleans Little League. I'm requesting your help.

On Sunday September 25, 2005, from 10h00 to 15h00 we will be collecting any used or new baseball equipment that people wish to donate. This will be done at the main Brossard baseball field called Marie Victorin. This equipment will then be stored with the city of Brossard for the next couple of months until its ready to be shipped to a New Orleans Little League, once they are ready to receive our equipment. There are many organizations collecting food, clothing etc for the folks that suffered great losses with Katrina. My thinking is that all kids should try to have their lives back to normal as much as possible. Baseball allows kids to be kids and have as much fun as possible. Little League is an international program with more the 3 million boys and girls playing baseball around the world. I consider this as a great big family.

We've already received great support with our players and the city of Brossard, we want to make this a big thing. Its all for a great cause.

If you need additional information you can call me on my cell 514.235.1025 or at home at 450.671.7515.

***Lafleche Montreuil
President, Brossard Little League LNDB***

Lafleche went on in an email to tell me as well....

Some baseball organizations in Quebec are also donating equipment. I even have some leagues that are not part of Little League that gave some stuff.

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So far we have uniforms, bats, gloves, baseball shoes, baseballs, bases, catcher equipment. We have 4 local sports store giving us new equipment, including some umpire stuff. We will continue to collect until the end of October. If need be we can stretch it to November. We are also in contact with CN to have the boxes shipped to New Orleans. It's amazing how everyone is jumping aboard. An email to Oprah was also sent last week. It would be nice to get a reply. The Montreal Gazette wants to have a write up about this idea in by the following day.

If anyone across the country is interested in sending some equipment to us, they can send it to my address; 1165 Provost, Brossard, Quebec, J4W 2L9

So...if anyone reading this could get in touch with their League President and see if they could help out Lafleche, I think this is a great idea, and well worth the time.

Once again, the contact info:

**Lafleche Montreuil
1165 Provost
Brossard, Quebec
J4W 2L9**

**Phone: 450.671.7515 (Home)
Cell: 514.235.1025
Email: lafleche.montreuil@vmd.desjardins.com**

Photos Of The Kids In Little League Canada

If you have photos to send in, please feel free to send them to me at btaunton@littleleague.ca.



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More Of Canada's Winning Teams

You keep submitting them, and I'll keep putting them in...there are still a huge number of winning teams that were not recognized in the last issue.



**St-Lazare Minor
District 2 Champions
Quebec Provincial Champions**

Blue's Corner...by Andy O'Brien

This month, Andy has a multiple choice question...

In order to make a legal catch, what must a fielder do?

- a) Hold the ball for at least 3 seconds
- b) Retain possession and control of the ball, and voluntarily release the ball
- c) Show control of the ball until the umpire sees the ball
- d) Solely based on the umpire's discretion

Answer at the end of the newsletter.

Do you have a suggestion for a topic? If so, please email Andy O'Brien at andrewobrien@rogers.com with the subject "Blue's Corner Idea."

Brain Teasers

The offensive manager calls "time out" after the first pitch to the leadoff batter in the 3rd inning. After several runners get on base the manager again requests "time out" to talk to the batter. The Umpire refuses to allow this 2nd time out.

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Right or Wrong?
Answer at the end of the newsletter.

Little League Mourns The Passing Of Former Chairman Ted Reich

This article was taken from the September issue of the Little League International newsletter. One of our DA's here in Canada said that Ted ***"paid particular attention to the International regions including Canada. He supported many of the initiatives and changes requested by Canada and other areas around the world. His support will be missed."***

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (Sept. 2, 2005) – Little League International today is saddened by the passing of one of its staunchest supporters, Ted Reich of Jersey Shore, Pa.

"First and foremost, Ted Reich was a great friend of Little League, and was a strong supporter committed to the advancement of the program – particularly in Eastern Europe," Stephen D. Keener, president and chief executive officer of Little League Baseball and Softball, said. "He will be missed by his family, to whom we offer our thoughts and prayers. But he also will be missed by our community, and by the Little League program for his contributions to it worldwide."



Mr. Reich was elected chairman of the Little League International Board of Directors at its annual meeting in November 1999 and served the full two-year term at that post.

Upon election, Mr. Reich said: "I am thrilled to be elected to this leadership role in the finest youth sports organization in the world. The Little League program is moving forward boldly with initiatives that will impact millions of children around the world, and I am honored to be a part of that."

Mr. Reich, the former chairman, president and chief executive officer of Jersey Shore State Bank, was a member of the Little League International Board of Directors from 1991 until his death. Under his stewardship, the Little League Baseball World Series expanded from eight teams to 16 in 2001.

Little League Baseball and Softball is the world's largest organized youth sports program, with nearly 2.7 million participants in all 50 U.S. states and scores of other countries.

Answer to Blue's Corner: The correct answer is "b"

Answer to Brain Teaser: Right. Rule 5.10. The offensive team is only allowed one time out per inning.

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