

7th Inning Stretch

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



May 2008

Volume 4, Number 3

Slow Month...

Hello again, and welcome to the new edition of The Stretch.

Slow month for news...hopefully what I did find is interesting.

Still hoping that I can find a coach or two to write articles and I am also trying to recruit umpires once again for the umpire columns...the columns for both coaches and umpires can be a teaching column or just experiences on the field, in tournaments, or if you were fortunate enough, at the World Series.

If you have ANY stories or photos you want to submit...nothing is refused!

Until next month...

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

Bob Taunton, Editor, The 7th Inning Stretch

Play Ball!

Email: thestretch@littleleague.ca

Brain Teasers

1: The right-handed batter bunts the ball down the first base line. He/she starts for first as the catcher starts to field the ball. They brush shoulders as both proceed toward first. **Is this contact ruled interference by the runner... obstruction by the catcher...or just disregarded?**

2: The pitcher is at the bottom of his set position. He/she backs off the pitcher's plate with his/her pivot foot and attempts to pick-off the runner at first. The errant throw gets by the first baseman and bounces into the stands. **WHERE DO YOU PLACE THE RUNNER?**

3: Runner on first...the batter smashes a base hit into right field. The runner from first rounds second base and stumbles...he/she jumps up and returns to the bag. The batter-runner is heading for second when he/she is obstructed by the first baseman. The right fielder is making a play on the obstructed runner at second. The umpire calls the obstruction. **WHERE DO YOU PLACE THE RUNNERS? (See the Obstruction article in this issue)**

4: Runner on second base, the batter smacks a ground ball between third base and shortstop. The ball gets by the third baseman diving to his/her left and hits the runner advancing to third. **IN YOUR JUDGEMENT**, the shortstop had a good chance of fielding the ball and retiring the batter-runner...but...the ball hit the runner. **WHAT'S YOUR CALL?**

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Tournament Bulletin

April 23, 2008

Dear Little League District Administrators, League Presidents and League Officials:

The Little League International Tournament Committee has made the following modifications to the 2008 Tournament Rules and Guidelines in **baseball only**. These changes, recommended by the Little League President's Advisory Committee and the Little League International Board of Directors, are in effect as of today.

Participation in Other Programs - The rule that prohibits players from participating in non-Little League programs (dual participation), once Little League tournament play has begun, has been rescinded at all levels of play for baseball and softball. However, the local Little League retains the right to dismiss a player from a tournament team if the player repeatedly misses games and practices.

Big League - The maximum number of players that can be named on a tournament team affidavit is now 17 (increased from 15).

Senior League - The maximum number of players that can be named on a tournament team affidavit is now 16 (increased from 14).

In the case of the first item above, it remains Little League International's position that a local Little League should expect that players it selects for this honor will make playing for the Little League Tournament Team their priority.

For the other two items, the maximum number has been increased because of the nature of play in these divisions. With players in these age groups also having jobs or other responsibilities, this gives managers more flexibility to ensure that games are not delayed or forfeited because of the lack of players.

Sincerely,
Patrick W. Wilson
Vice President of Operations
Little League International

2010 Little League Congress Location Announced

Dear Little League Baseball and Softball District Administrators:

The 25th Little League International Congress will be held in Lexington, Ky., March 12-15, 2010. The four-day International Congress is held once every three years, with a primary purpose to amend rules and regulations.

Lexington is the first city in the state of Kentucky to host an International Congress, and this will be the first Congress held in a state overseen by Little League's Central Region since 1975 (Chicago).

Co-chairmen for the Congress will be John Roll (Kentucky District 1 Administrator and member of the Little League International Board of Directors), and Kentucky District 3 Administrator Bill Bradley.

The Congress hotels will be the RadissonPlaza, Hyatt Regency and CrownePlaza. All Congress events will be held at the LexingtonConvention Center, which is connected to the Hyatt Regency and accessible via skywalk from the RadissonPlaza. The CrownePlaza also is located nearby.

For more information on the 25th Little League International Congress, [click here](#).

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

Umpire's Corner

Volume 4, Number 3

The following is taken from the Little League International E-Newsletter "Fairball".

OBSTRUCTION

OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. (NOTE: Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball.)

Having trouble identifying obstruction when it happens? Having trouble with your mechanics once you see a runner get obstructed? Check out these videos and see what obstruction is and what you as an umpire need to do when you see it happen.

[\(Watch Video\)](#)

2008 Little League Awards Program

June 1st is the deadline to submit nominations for the 2008 Little League Awards Program sponsored through the generous support of AIG.

Every district and league has individuals who should be recognized for their commitment and participation in the Little League program. By participating in the Awards Program you help demonstrate the benefits and values of volunteerism, family and sportsmanship. The various awards are listed below with links to the nomination forms on the Little League web site.

Volunteer of the Year Award: The Volunteer of the Year Award honors individuals who give selflessly of their time and efforts for the benefit of the children in their communities and who have contributed a spirited and dedicated commitment to the ideals and goals of the Little League program. <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/volunteeraward.asp>

Mom of the Year Award: The Mom of the Year recognizes mothers who have volunteered countless hours to their child's Little League program to ensure children have the opportunity to learn the value of teamwork, fair play, and discipline and enjoy the excitement and fun of summer days on a Little League field. <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/momaward.asp>

Challenger Award: The Challenger Award recognizes an individual whose loyal support and inspired volunteer commitment allows mentally and physically disabled youth the opportunity to enjoy the full benefits of the Little League program through participation in the Challenger Division. <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/challengeraward.asp>

Good Sport Award: The Good Sport Award honors Little Leaguers who exhibit the Little League values of character, courage and loyalty. These children learn what it means to truly be part of a team and conduct themselves accordingly to the principles of fair play and good sportsmanship. <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/goodsportaward.asp>

Send completed nomination forms directly to Little League International in Williamsport, Pennsylvania for nominees to be considered for national recognition. If you have any questions regarding the awards please contact me directly at srosenberg@littleleague.org.

Thank you in advance for your support of these awards and for taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to recognize deserving individuals.

Sincerely,

Scott Rosenberg
Director of Public Relations
Little League International

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

POWER UP



There is no denying it... we are in love with the power-hitter. Why not? Who doesn't love taking one deep and trotting around the bases? If you can hit with power, the coach will find a place for you in the line-up. Some of the greatest baseball players today can't throw, field, or run...but are considered great because they drive the ball over the fence. Who do you think is a better player, David Ortiz or Jose Reyes?

The name of the game today is power, and to get it, there are a number of things you need to do at the plate to maximize your explosion.

The key to power is using the legs. Pick any sport, and the legs are the driving force behind the power generated. They provide your horsepower, yet most kids don't use them. In order to drive the ball, kids must learn to pivot on the backside, or squish the bug. Driving hard with the back leg, and rotating while popping the hip creates power through your swing. Coaches who argue that you don't squish the bug, or pivot, need to re-examine what they are teaching. Without the pivot/pop of the hips, how else are you using the legs to their potential? It is important to note that when you squish the bug and rotate the hips that the front foot should straighten. Hitting off a stiff front leg allows you to drive hard while keeping the head still. It also allows the hands to clear through the hitting zone and for the batter to get extension through the baseball without rolling the wrists too soon.

Another important aspect to hitting with power is loading up. Pick anything that you swing... a tennis racquet, ping-pong paddle, hockey stick, golf club, hammer, fishing rod, etc. To swing it with power, you must go back to go forward. Why then would it be different for baseball? In order to hit with power, players need to learn to load up, or go back with their hands. At the same time, the legs need to load up too. That means taking your back knee and bending it inward slightly. The loading up with the back legs looks like you are about to race someone at the starting blocks. The hands go back, and the back legs loads up. Meanwhile, the head is stationary (or moves slightly backward). Loading up will get you in a position to pivot on that backside and drive through the baseball. A common saying at B2B Baseball is, "Stride and decide, load and explode".

The last component to power that we are going to touch on is the swing. It is no secret that you need to hit the ball on the sweet part of the barrel. Getting the sweet part of the barrel on the ball, however, is difficult for most young players. In order to be consistent, it is essential to develop a short, compact swing with extension through the ball. Most player make contact, and either stop their bats or take the bat immediately behind their body. It is important to make contact with the barrel and continue to stay on through the ball until the bat extends and the tip is pointed toward the field. The player then can continue the swing around the body and finish behind them. Some quick tips for the swing. Taking the hands inside the baseball and learning to get the barrel into the zone faster, along with extension through the baseball will maximize the power generated by the swing. Be sure to keep a loose grip on the bat also. Another favorite B2B quote, "The looser the grip, the more the whip".

This article wouldn't be complete if I didn't include some good drills you can do to improve your power. One of my favorite drills is called the "Happy Gilmore Drill". The ball is placed on the tee (or a player can soft toss to you) and the hitter stands behind the batter's box on a slight angle. The player takes a step with the back foot into the batter's box and gets momentum into the swing. It is important for the player to generate some speed when they step into the box. The back foot should land where the hitter's back foot would normally be in the box. When the back foot lands, the hitter will take the hands back and go through a normal swing...but with much more explosion! The player should stay balanced after the swing, with the head down on the ball.

Another one of my favorites, and possibly the best type of drill to improve skill and strength, is the one-handed drill. If done correctly, these drills teach the hands to take the correct route to the ball. It is important to get into a normal batting stance and treat it as an at-bat as opposed to just standing upright and swinging for no reason. These drills are good for either hand.

There is so much information on the topic that books are devoted to it. While we couldn't include all of the drills and skills that go into generating more power, the few that were mentioned will put you on the path to more power.

Marc Shoenfelt is the founder and President of B2B Baseball, an instructional baseball business that conducts youth coaching clinics. Marc has also written the book "Baseball's Forgotten Basics", an instructional book with a DVD companion.

The book can be seen and purchased at www.baseballsforgottenbasics.com, or for an autographed copy or to book Marc for a coaching clinic, contact him at info@B2Bbaseball.com.

“GETTING BIG THINGS from little swings”

Answers to Brain Teasers

1: 7.09(j). In this case...no violation has occurred. The umpire should disregard the contact and let the play proceed.

2: 7.05(g), 8.01(e). Since he/she stepped off the pitcher's plate before throwing wildly, the pitcher became an infielder. Award two bases...runner to third.

3: 7.06(b). Move the lead runner to third and award the batter-runner second.

4: 7.09(k). The runner is declared out for being hit by a fair ball...the batter-runner is awarded first.

Little League Coaching Resource Online

Great coaching is no accident. It starts with a love for the game. It grows from a strong desire to give children the tools they need to succeed on the field and in life. And it can happen in any league, with any team, anywhere in the world.

That's why Little League International created LittleLeagueCoach.org.

Expert advice from renowned players and coaches; video demonstrations; skills development drills and exercises: At LittleLeagueCoach.org, Little League managers and coaches can get all the tools they need to start their season right or build on what they already have in place.

And it's free.

Little League International considers providing these tools so important to our youth and so important to the success of your leagues that it has decided to offer them without any charge. Unlike some other youth sports organizations' coaching programs, it won't cost any Little League manager or coach a dime to access the exclusive content and resources at LittleLeagueCoach.org.

For more information including how the site will work for your managers and coaches, click here:

www.littleleague.org/media/CRC.asp.

LittleLeagueCoach.org

Great Coaching Starts Here. Free.



Become an Alumni Member and support Little League in your community and across the Country.

The Little League Canada Foundation's goal is "to ensure that all children in Canada have the chance to participate in Little League regardless of their abilities, either physical or financial". For an annual membership of \$10.00 or three year membership of \$25.00, as an Alumni member you will have the opportunity to have input into the growth and direction of Little League and its programs.

For a membership application form, please contact Little League Canada at Canada@litttleleague.org.

Little League Canada

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AIL CANADA



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For more info please call Casandra Robinson at (613) 301-2988 or Toll-Free (877) 336-3349 or visit:
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League Officials and Volunteers Link:
<http://returns.altig.ca/llbc>



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Questions or comments? E-mail us at canada@litttleleague.org or call 613-731-3301

[Privacy Policy](#)

Little League Baseball Canada 2008 Tournament Schedule

Baseball

Major (Little League):

World Series: August 15-24 Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Canadian Championship: August 2-9 North Sydney, Nova Scotia
Divisionals:
Atlantic: New Brunswick
Quebec: Montreal
Ontario: Timmins
Prairies: Medicine Hat
British Columbia: Prince George

Junior:

World Series: August 10-16 Taylor, Michigan
Canadian Championship: August 1-8 Coquitlam, British Columbia
Divisionals:
Atlantic: New Brunswick
Quebec: Rouyn-Noranda
Ontario: Windsor
Prairies: Lethbridge
British Columbia: BC District 6

Senior:

World Series: August 10-16 Bangor, Maine
Canadian Championship: August 1-8 Oakville, Ontario
Divisionals:
Atlantic: New Brunswick
Quebec: Montreal
Ontario: Ottawa, District 2
Prairies: Edmonton
British Columbia: Vancouver

Big League:

World Series: July 26 -August 2 Easley, South Carolina
Canadian Championship: July 19-23 Kanata, Ontario, D2
Divisionals:
Atlantic: TBD
Quebec: Montreal
Ontario: Thunder Bay
Prairies: TBD
British Columbia: Vancouver

Softball

Major (Little League):

World Series: August 7-13 Portland, Oregon
Canadian Championship: TBD
Divisionals:
Atlantic: Cape Breton
Ontario: Windsor
British Columbia: Victoria

Junior:

World Series: August 10-16 Kirkland, Washington
Canadian Championship: TBD
Divisionals:
Atlantic: TBD
Ontario: TBD
British Columbia: TBD

Senior:

World Series: August 3-9 Lower Sussex, Delaware
Canadian Championship: TBD
Divisionals:
Atlantic: TBD
Ontario: TBD
British Columbia: TBD

Big League:

World Series: August 11-16 Kalamazoo, Michigan
Canadian Championship: TBD
Divisionals:
Atlantic: TBD
Ontario: TBD
British Columbia: TBD

If anyone has information that can help to fill in the blanks...dates, District or League hosts, for any of the above, please email me with the details so I can update this page...thestretch@littleleague.ca