

7th Inning Stretch

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

June 2008

Volume 4, Number 4



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Preparing For Tournament Season

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

Tournament Season is rapidly approaching, wishing all teams good luck. Hope that all of your House League programs are running well...let us know, send some pics of the kids and maybe a story or two to show us how they are doing.

Working on a new look for "The Stretch" hope to have it ready for one of the next two issues.

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 pitcher's pick-off attempt sails by the first baseman and ricochets down the line in foul territory. The runner heads for third and is safe on a close play... however...he/she missed second base en route. Since a play occurred after the missed base...**CAN THE DEFENSE STILL APPEAL AT SECOND?**

2: Bases loaded...no outs. The batter chops a ball toward first. The first baseman comes in to field the ball as the batter-runner intentionally collides with him/her. **IN YOUR OPINION**, the defensive team had a good chance of completing a double play. **WHO'S OUT?**

3: Runner on first base. The batter smashes a line drive toward the first baseman...the ball bounces off the runner's shoulder and is caught in the air by the first baseman. In your judgment the runner did not intentionally interfere. **WHAT'S YOUR RULING?**

4: One ball, one strike...the batter squares around to bunt as the pitch sails outside the strike zone. He/she reaches out in an effort to bunt the ball but the ball strikes him/her on his/her right hand gripping the bat. The ball rolls several feet in front of the plate. **MAY THE PITCHER FIELD THE BALL AND RETIRE THE BATTER AT FIRST BASE?**

7th Inning Stretch

Update On Tournament Bulletin

In April, Little League International announced an increase in the number of players a tournament team can carry for the Big League and Senior Division tournament teams only. Due to increasing pressure on these age groups to play in more than one program, and the pitch count restrictions, it is felt that an increase in the number of players each team can carry would help alleviate this problem.

The Executive of Little League Canada discussed this issue, as there are obviously budgetary implications for Little League Canada as well as those Districts and Leagues hosting Regional tournaments in these two divisions in 2008. This change could potentially require a host district or league to find accommodation for an additional 10 players in Big League, and 5 in Senior, as well as provide for meals.

Given the late notice of this change, Little League Canada has decided not to implement this change for this season. This has been authorized by Little League International for 2008 only. As a result, the tournament teams in the Senior and Big League Divisions in Canada for 2008 will remain as they were in 2007. (14 players and 3 coaches in Senior, 15 players and 3 coaches in Big League).

Please ensure this is fully disseminated to the divisions within your districts and leagues which are affected by this decision.

Yours truly,
Roy Bergerman, President
Little League Canada

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

News From BC District 5



Lakehill Little League is celebrating their 50th birthday this year. Check out their [special website](#)



2011 Canadians Awarded to District 5

Congratulations to District 5 for being awarded the 2011 Canadian Little League Championship at the recent Spring LLBC Meeting. D5 Administrator Wayne Hobson is already hard at work getting things organized, and we know D5 will do a bang-up job.

Four Ottawa Female Baseball Players Selected For Team Ontario Bantam Girls 2008

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Hannah Martensen (Pinecrest Little League, ON D2) and Grace Lonergan (Carlingwood Frank Ryan Little League, ON D2) successfully return as members of Team Ontario Bantam Girls for the 2008 Nationals in Mascouche, Quebec – August 7th to 10th, 2008.

There had to be more talent to represent Ottawa this year! Jessica Nelson (Pinecrest Little League, ON D2) and Alexandra Bellini (East Nepean Little League, ON D2) were curious enough to attend the try outs and were also successful in being selected for the Team.

For 2008, Ottawa will be represented by 4 talented female ball players as part of the 14 member roster with team mates from the Greater Toronto Area, Burlington and Milton. Home grown from within Little League baseball, a shining example of the success and achievements that girls can accomplish when encouraged and accepted within a predominantly male sport. They continue to play within their respective Little Leagues and, in some cases, on their High School Varsity Baseball Teams.

We wish them all the best. Team Ontario will participate in tournaments throughout May, June and July in preparation for the Nationals.

Bon Chance!

Information on the 2008 Nationals can be found on the Baseball Canada web site at www.baseball.ca. More details will be posted as August approaches.

Little League On Jeopardy!

This is a message to let you know that the Friday, June 13 episode of Jeopardy! is expected to feature an entire category (five questions) dedicated to Little League.

The category is expected to include video clips featuring the Jeopardy! Clue Crew from Howard J. Lamade Stadium and the Peter J. McGovern Little League Museum. The scenes were filmed at the 2007 Little League Baseball World Series.

Little League Baseball For Wii And Nintendo DS

Activision, Inc., has announced the Aug. 8, 2008, release of “Little League Baseball World Series 2008” for Nintendo Wii and Nintendo DS. Featuring astonishingly realistic scenes and game action from the two stadiums where the Series is played each year, it is the first licensed Little League video game to hit next-generation consoles. Find out more details [here](#)

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

Creating A Tee Party



Every year, thousands of five and six year olds get introduced to the game of baseball. The level of choice to start players on their quest to become major leaguers is tee ball. The ball is placed on a tee, every kid gets a hit, and the score isn't as important as the chance to chew gum, dawn some flashy spikes, and swing the latest Louisville Slugger bat. Somewhere, however, between A-Rod making 30 million a year and the average parent losing their mind, tee ball has become a factory for the latest prodigy and the rise of a coaching dynasty. It has lost its "fun". Hopefully, we are going to outline a number of ways to put the "fun" back into FUNdamentals.

First and foremost, don't keep score. For heavens sake, why? My son is playing tee ball this year and he thinks they are undefeated (when actually they have only won one game all year if you are tabulating). There are leagues in our area that actually post the scores, keep the standings, and have an end of the year double elimination tournament to crown a champion. Are you kidding me? Tee ball is about laughter, the encouragement of the parents, and teaching kids the proper etiquette of baseball. Everyone is a winner in my league. They will get enough of the competitive nature when they get older.

Many leagues play three outs or a designated run limit. The game usually goes five or six innings. Play three innings, and you bat through the lineup. After about an hour, kids get restless (adults do for that matter!). Give each player an at-bat each inning, don't keep score, and clear the bases after three outs.

Another must is snack. Even more important than baseballs, you should always have a treat for the little people. Developing a sign-up sheet for parents is the best way to manage this activity. Each parent is responsible for providing a treat at a game. I won a championship every year in youth baseball...but don't remember one of them (trophies remind me)...but I sure do remember where we got ice cream after the game. The treats will be a hit with the kids!

Have a system. There is nothing more frustrating than a dozen five year olds with no supervision. There should be rules and guidelines in place for every aspect of practice. From throwing the baseball to where kids sit at games...for your own sanity, create a system. There are a lot of kids and parents who quit tee ball because another kid on the team was knocking hats off, hitting their kid, or the coach couldn't control the team. Create a system that works for your staff and the kids on your team. It will obviously change from year to year and need to be adjusted accordingly.

Smile. If you don't have one when you are at a game, you need to hand in your resignation. I love this game, and want to share it with anyone that will listen. Somewhere we forgot about enjoying the laughter, rolling in dirt, and chewing some gum. It is more about "advanced training", six figure contracts, and winning at all costs. Well...somebody forgot to teach me that about tee ball.

Use the K-I-S-S method. Keep It Simple Stupid. I have attended practices where coaches have tried to impress me with drills that are in my book, or games I do at clinics. When I ask what they are doing, they look at me with a "deer in headlights" gaze. At the tee ball level, it is about fun. When you can sprinkle some "fun"amentals in there with it... kudos. Teaching kids which base to run to, stepping and throwing to their target, and catching the ball with an "alligator" is about all you will be able to handle! Incorporating that with some games, drills, and activities that keep the kids moving is essential. I would also recommend playing a mock game before the first one actually arrives.

Choose a tee that is height appropriate. Many leagues use the Franklin tee with the tee in the middle of home plate. First of all, the tee is at the inappropriate contact point for the pitch down the middle. The tee gets set at a height around the player's shoulders...which is a ball according to the strike zone. Kids usually swing underneath the baseball, hitting the tee and slowing down the game. A tee that adjusts to the waist or knees is the best choice to promote proper swing mechanics. The player won't swing with an upper cut, and will generate a swing that will benefit them at the next level.

While these are just a few beneficial tips, common sense should always prevail. I only need to ask my son one question after a game...did you have fun? If the answer is yes...job well done by the coach. We are losing too many kids because the game is just not fun anymore. Providing a life-long love for the game, and giving kids a good first experience in baseball should be the goal for every coach this tee ball season. Get out there this season and create your own tee party!

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: 7.10 (d) NOTES. The appeal is still in order: the play on the runner at third is considered part of continuous action and does not nullify an appeal.

2: 7.09(g). The batter is out...and...the runner from third is out. This is a double play. All others return to their time of pitch bases.

3: 7.09(k)/6.08(d). The runner is out...the batter is awarded first base and the ball is dead.

4: 2.00 Strike. No, this is a dead ball. He/she was struck by a pitch while attempting to hit it. The count is now one ball...two strikes.

Andy's Myths by Andy Konyar, Umpire Consultant for Little League International

Taken from the Little League International Newsletter "The Coach's Box"

Overruns first base after fourth ball

Q. After a fourth ball goes to the backstop, the batter-runner entertains thoughts of trying for second base. As he/she reaches first, the coach tells him/her to "Hold up!" But the runner cannot stop, crosses first base and continues down the foul line. Can he/she be put out before he/she returns to first:

A. No. At this point, the rules make no distinction between a batter who has walked and any other batter-runner. Consequently, this batter has the same right to overrun first base.



Batter ducks, ball strikes bat

Q. While the batter is ducking away from a high, inside pitch, the ball accidentally hits the bat. The result is an easy tap down the first base line. The first baseman fields the ball and tags the bag. The batter, who makes no attempt to reach first base, argues that he's/she's not out because he/she didn't actually swing at the ball. Does the batter have a legitimate beef:

A. No. Even though the pitcher might have hit the batter had the batter not ducked, the unintentional hit is a legally batted ball and the batter is out.

Trademark Names And Logos

A message from Little League International:

May 29, 2008

Recently, we have received some inquiries at Little League International asking for advice on the use of trademarked names and logos, particularly those of Major League Baseball teams.

For more than six decades, Little Leagues have used the names of Major League Baseball teams. That tradition continues today, and will continue for many years to come. Major League Baseball has never restricted any Little League teams from calling themselves "Mets," "Yankees," "Cardinals," "Angels," or any of its other trademarked names.

However, we also recognize the importance to Major League Baseball of the protection of its trademarks. It is incumbent on any organization, Little League included, to protect its trademarks. To fail to do so can result in those valuable trademarks being lost.

We strongly encourage our leagues who wish to place any trademarked names on a uniform item, including those of Major League Baseball clubs, to use only those items authorized and licensed by Major League Baseball.

It is important to note that unauthorized use of any trademark, including those belonging to Major League Baseball, may result in civil liability by the manufacturer of items bearing those trademarks. So if a local Little League uses shirts with unauthorized Major League Baseball trademarks will not be held liable, it is likely that the business that provided the shirts would be.

We hope this helps to clarify this issue for our local Little Leagues.

As always, thank you for your service to the children and families of your community.

Little League Store

June is nearly here and in a few weeks you will be gearing up for tournament season.

Coaches donate a lot of time as Little League volunteers. Show your appreciation for their commitment by giving them a gift from the Little League Online Store.

We have polo shirts and windbreakers that have the "LL" Logo and "Coach" embroidered on the left chest, and 2008 Little League World Series merchandise, including T-shirts, baseballs, pins, hats and much more.

Orders for these specific items and 2008 Little League World Series merchandise will receive two (2) free 2007 Little League Baseball World Series T-shirts with a purchase of \$25 or more, Four (4) free shirts for a \$50 purchase, Six (6) free shirts for a \$100 purchase, and 12 free T-Shirts for a \$200 order. The free T-shirts are only available in Adult sizes (medium, large, and x-large).

The free T-shirts are only available in Adult M, L, and X-Large.

(Quantities of free T-shirts are limited, so place your order soon)

When ordering your free T-shirts, please put the size in the comments section of your order.

Order online www.littleleaguestore.net or call us at Little League Headquarters 1-800-874-2852.

As always, thank you for your service to the children and families of your community.



Keys To Writing A Great Batting Line-up For Your Team

By Michele Smith, Olympic Gold Medal Pitcher

Article taken from the Little League International Newsletter, "The Coach's Box"

Volume 4, Number 4

Each year, I do a series of player camps and clinics as well as coaching clinics. Most players and coaches recognize how important it is for the players to hone their skills by working and training with great teachers. It is just as important, however, for coaches to seek out opportunities to learn and grow. The coach is the leader and the better the leader, the better the troops. I can always pick out the better coaches in a crowd....they are the ones who ask the questions. They are the ones who want to be the best they can be so that they can, in turn, help their players to reach their greatest potential. Knowing that, I try to listen closely to the questions asked at my coaches clinics so that I can understand what information the coaches need the most.



One question I hear quite often is "How do I write a line-up?" Coaches, have you ever looked back over your scorecards after a tournament to see where a couple of shifts in your line-up might have yielded more runs? I believe in ALWAYS going back over the game, or scorecards, to fully understand and analyze what the team did and how the athletes performed in their roles. This month's article will cover some of the information I address in my coaches clinics about writing up a batting order and how to best utilize your athletes. While it is always a good idea to re-evaluate the line-up after each game, it is even more important to try to start out with the best line-up in the first place. So, let's take a look at how to do that.

Number 1 Hitter: The "lead off" should have speed—lots of speed! More than likely, she will be your fastest runner on the team. She should also have a good eye--be able to take walks and draw walks. There is a big difference between getting walked and drawing a walk; you get walked on balls due to poor pitching, you draw a walk by fouling off pitches, wearing down the pitcher and working the count until ball four is finally thrown. Your No. 1 hitter should also hit for an "above average" batting average and most importantly have an even better on-base percentage than her batting average. Your No. 1 and No. 2 hitters are often called "table setters" as they will, hopefully, be on base when your best hitters get up to the plate.

Number 2 Hitter: The No. 2 hitter should also have speed. Additionally, she should be a good bunter and have the ability to move runners into scoring position--which will hopefully include your lead-off batter. A lefty in this spot is a bonus. If you have an athlete who is an average or below average hitter but has great bunting skills--bunts well, slaps well, good at hit-and-runs -- then this is a good place to "hide" her; especially if you have a lead-off hitter that is on base more than 50-60 percent of the time. The last thing you want to do is sacrifice one of your best hitters just to gain a base. Best case scenario is to "give up" a weaker hitters" spot to move runners and then have your best hitters at the plate when those runners are in scoring position.

Number 3 Hitter: This player is usually the best batting average hitter on the team with an ability to hit for power as well. She should be "clutch," be able to hit with runners in scoring position, be able to work the count while still being aggressive and attack good pitches no matter when that pitch arrives during the count. Usually, she runs well when on base and is one of the best athletes on the team. She should have power, but be more of a "power for average" hitter who does not strike out very often. Your No. 3 should be one of the best hitters on the team with a reputation for drawing fear out of the opposing pitchers.

Number 4 Hitter: This should be the best “power hitter” on the team with the ability to hit for a good batting average as well. Typically, her average is not quite as high as your No. 3 hitter, but she should hit for more power than your No. 3. She should be able to perform well with bases loaded, but she should also know how to handle herself when a base is open. If a base is open and she is being “pitched around,” she should lay off bad pitches and take the bag. Your No. 4 hitter should help your No. 3 hitter get better pitches, because any smart pitcher will avoid walking the batter in front of the power hitter in the line-up.

Number 5 Hitter: Your No. 5 hitter should be a good “batting average hitter” and also have power...or you risk your No. 4 hitter being walked to get to this batter. In other words, she is protecting your No. 4 hitter. A weak No. 5 will cause your No. 4 to be pitched around -- and if your No. 4 is unable to take walks, then she will most likely find herself chasing pitches outside the strike zone. That scenario will make her entirely ineffective. Your No. 5 hitter should be able to be “clutch” and “thrive” in situations where opposing teams might walk the No. 4 hitter to get to her. This hitter is the one who takes it personally when a team walks the batter in front of her to get to her spot. This should be the hitter who will be determined to make them pay for that decision.

Number 6 Hitter: This hitter can be viewed more or less as a second lead off. She should have a good on base percentage and have some speed. She should have the ability to hit in the runners on base, but she should also be able to start an inning and run well once she is on base herself. The No. 6 hitter is also protecting No. 5, who is protecting No. 4. Good teams always have strength throughout the middle of the order.

Number 7 Hitter: The No. 7 hitter should be like your No. 2 hitter, a strong bunter, but she should also be able to maintain a good batting average. She should be strong at the “short game” as well as be good with “hit and runs.” This hitter must be aggressive on good pitches and be able to work the pitcher during the later part of the game.

Number 8 Hitter: Most of your “average” batting average hitters will hit in the No. 7 and No. 8 spots. If they can act like No. 1 and No. 2 hitters--or like the “table setters” -- this a bonus for the team. Specifically, your No. 8 hitter should be able to bunt well and work the pitcher into deep counts like the No. 7 hitter before her.

Number 9 Hitter: When the No. 9 hitter is proficient at getting on base, she is often viewed as a second lead off. Any time your No. 9 is getting on base, your team should be scoring lots of runs. A good No. 9 hitter is almost always a key member of any team that is explosive and has high scoring line-ups. She should be fast and able to run well and aggressively when on base in front of your lead off batter.

Some key points to remember: Always put strength behind strength or you will be taking the bat out of the hands of your strongest batters. Good pitchers will walk stronger hitters to get to weaker hitters. Don't be afraid to put a good hitter who is under performing in front of one of your best hitters. Many batters who are not performing to their expectations may not be getting good pitches to hit because of where they have been placed in the line-up. Often times, when these hitters are placed in front of the best hitters on the team, their pitch quality will go up because the opposing pitcher will prefer to go right at them versus pitching around them to get to the stronger hitter.

These are my general ideas on how to use a line-up to get the most out of your team — in other words, how to score the most runs during a game. Scoring runs is also the single best thing you can do for your defense. Even though I am acutely aware of the value of good pitching, I often say, “an explosive offense is a team's best defense.”

Remember, it is very important to re-evaluate each game after the fact. It will help you to get a clear picture of who hits the best out of which position and enables you to make any necessary adjustments to your line-up. The information is there, you just have to reflect on it. Enjoy teaching the game...but, don't forget to let the game teach you!

Good Luck, Michele



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.

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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 D4, July 19-27
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 D5, July 21-29
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 D2, July 23-30
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 D3, July 10-15
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