

The 7th Inning Stretch

L I T T L E L E A G U E C A N A D A

A N E W , F R E S H L O O K F O R T H E S T R E T C H



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Welcome to a brand new year of The 7th Inning Stretch! Year 5 sees a new fresh look for the newsletter. I was growing tired of the look of the last version, and thought it was time to shake it up a bit, and try to give it a bit of a different flavor.

As with the past edition, you will still find great tips from local and International Umpires and Coaches, as well as need to know information, such as rule changes, tournament news, and most importantly, news from the Leagues that make up Little League Canada.

Please remember that ANY underlined words on any page of the Stretch, if clicked on,

will take you to a web page that will give you more information about the article.

I am also still looking for articles by coaches, umpires, Little League followers, players, parents...anyone with a story to tell in Little League Canada. Photos are welcomed and encouraged and there is very little that will not be published if you send it to me. I am dropping the little blog I write every month on the front page to make room for more informative stuff. I may drop a note on the back page from time to time, or somewhere in the middle of the newsletter, but have no plans to continue writing on the front page.

Attached to the newsletter this

month will be a questionnaire for Little League players to fill out and send in...so, if you are a parent / player reading this, fill it out and email it back to me for inclusion in an upcoming issue.

And lastly...if you enjoy the newsletter, please encourage others to subscribe to it...our numbers are growing, and I'd love it if this could get to every registered player, coach and umpire in Little League Canada! A lofty goal, but we are certainly on our way there!

Thanks for reading the first 4 years, and the encouragement to keep going into a fifth!

Bob Taunton, Editor
The 7th Inning Stretch
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OPTION FOR RULE 5.07 FOR 2009

As a result of action by the Charter Committee in Williamsport, an option is available to local Little Leagues in regard to Rule 5.07 in Baseball and Softball, provided the District Administrator agrees to allow it.

Currently, in all levels of Minor League play, any half-inning ends when:

- 1- Three outs are recorded, or,
- 2- All players on the roster have batted once in that half-inning, or,
- 3- Five runs have scored.

The new option for 2009 provides that No. 3 above would not apply to the last half-inning of the game for either team, nor would it apply to any half-inning in an "extra inning." (No. 1 and 2 apply to all half-

innings.)

If a league wishes to adopt this option, and if the District Administrator agrees to allow it, it may be implemented for the 2009 regular season only.

At the conclusion of the 2009 playing season, Little League will determine if this option will be available to all leagues in 2010 and beyond.

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



THE UMPIRE'S CORNER

Article taken from the Little League Publication "Fairball"

This article was written by Doc Lantiere, Eastern Region Assistant Umpire in Chief

Game Control vs. General In Charge

The umpire is fundamental to the game of baseball. But, how the umpire presents himself or herself will go a long way in determining how the umpire is perceived and regarded. Imperative to an umpire is punctuality at the site, appearance on the field, demeanor towards players and coaches, and hustle and positioning on each call.

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

but, immeasurable in creating your persona. Starting the game on time, without rushing the teams, comes from being early for the game, disposing of the pre-game discussions in an orderly and concise manner, and giving the teams adequate time to warm up without overly delaying the playing of the game. Pre-game discussions at home plate should never be mini clinics. Accomplish what is necessary, exchange of lineups, particular or peculiar ground rules, a good eye contact handshake, and let's play ball.

Know your catcher's name. It builds respect for you, and his/her confidence that you are working with them during the game. It shows respect for them

If an umpire is to err on punctuality, be early rather than late. Managers and coaches develop opinions of the umpire based on all of these factors, particularly punctuality and appearance. Shiny shoes, believe it or not, go a long way in how you are perceived. It's a little thing,

and they, in turn, will show respect for you. Remember, the only thing between you and the 70-mile-an-hour fastball is Johnny or Sue. Be helpful and friendly, but don't chase the errant pitch for them. Some day, you just may chase the ball to the screen while someone is trying to score from third. Think it didn't happen. Guess again. You are speaking to the offender.

Positioning is most important. The call can be so much easier if you are at the proper angle from the throw to the base, and you are not moving while the ball, fielder, and runner are approaching the decision point. Emphasis on calls is also extremely important. There is no need to shout out or "Hollywood" a play where the runner is obviously out.

What are we going to have left when we do have the bang-bang play? Remember, perception is reality. Grandma sitting in the bleacher knows the grandson or daughter was out by a mile, but she doesn't have a clue on the close one. That's when you have to convince her that you were right. Sell that one and the Academy Award is yours.

The first line of the rule book states that Baseball or Softball is a game between two teams.... There is a third team out there - the umpires. If you forget this, it's going to be a long night and game. Work as a team, taking the calls that are yours, looking for help when needed. Remember, you make the call and change it, if necessary, after consulting with your partner or partners. The purpose is to get the call correct, but if you are sure, your call stands. Unless you need help, don't seek it, and if you have not made the call, do not interfere unless particularly asked by your partner. Every call that is changed, leaves you open for many more to follow. "You didn't get the last one right, Blue, what makes you think this one is any different." Ever heard that one?

Discussions with managers and coaches can be particularly trying. Our natural instinct when confronted with a question is to retaliate. This is when we are most vulnerable. Remember, take a deep breath, listen to the argument,

evaluate its content and decide its validity. Calmness on your part can eliminate many confrontations. Remember, managers and coaches have a vested interest in the resultant ruling. You, on the other hand, are only interested in getting it right. Use all tools in your arsenal to see that this happens, but never lower yourself to confrontation.

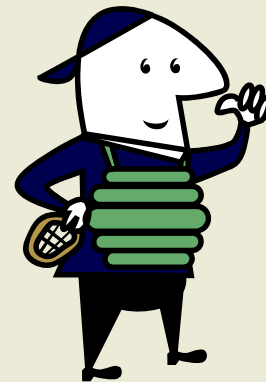
Let's not lower ourselves to this level. Remember, we are dealing with children. How they perceive our actions will go a long way in determining how they perceive the game of baseball, umpiring, and the rigors of everyday life.

Smile and enjoy yourself. Good Luck Blue.



Doc Lantiere

Eastern Region Assistant Umpire In Chief



LITTLE LEAGUE TIME CAPSULE PROJECT UNDERWAY

Taken from the Little League Publication "Little Leaguer"

By Communications Division
WILLIAMSPORT, Pa.
February 11, 2009

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of Little League, participants from around the world are invited to send a message to Little Leaguers and Little League volunteers of the future.

It was June 6, 1939, when Carl Stotz's idea from the previous year finally made its way onto a Williamsport ball field. Mr. Stotz was an oil company clerk who had the notion to provide a field, equipment and uniforms designed for pre-teen boys in the Williamsport area. Up to that point, younger boys mostly played sandlot games with adult-sized equipment.

But it was not just about baseball. Mr. Stotz saw his fledgling program as a way to instill the values of teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play into children. He also saw the opportunity for dedicated adults to volunteer their time to a community project that would pay dividends long after the children were too old to play on the small field – no matter what walk of life they chose later on.

Now, 70 years after Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy 23-8 in that first Little League game, the goals established by Carl Stotz, and the small group of volunteers he assembled, remain the same.

To celebrate that milestone, and in conjunction with the opening of the expanded Little League International Administration Building, a time capsule will be placed in the cornerstone this spring. The time capsule will contain digital messages from Little League players, volunteers and supporters who submit an essay.

All are invited to click on the link below, or paste the URL into the browser, and submit an essay before May 1, 2009. Each essay will be reviewed, and those found to be appropriate will

be added to a digital medium that will be placed in the time capsule.

<http://www.littleleague.org/media/LittleLeagueTimeCapsuleProject.htm>

The time capsule will be opened in 50 years, and the contents revealed to the leadership and participants of Little League in the year 2059.

It will be the second time capsule placed in the Administration Building at Little League International. Late last year, during construction, a severely rusted metal can was discovered inside the walls of the original building. Its contents provided insight into the direction of the organization that remains unchanged.

The can contained a message from the Little League Baseball Board of Directors from August 27, 1960, placed there at the dedication of the first headquarters building. The two pieces of paper that were inside, having been unprotected from temperature and humidity swings for nearly a half-century, are in poor shape and partially unreadable.

One paper contains a message from the Board, and its President and CEO, Peter J. McGovern, to the future.

In the text of the message, Mr. McGovern used "children" or "youth" instead of "boys," possibly foreseeing that girls would be permitted to play at some point in the future. In most of Little League's public communications at the time, the word "boys" was used, since the program was available only to boys until 1974.

"Little League has attempted to establish a goal of service to youth," Mr. McGovern wrote. "It has flourished through the dedicated efforts of countless thousands of volunteers, men and women of good faith, devotion and perseverance.

"It is the hope of its present officers and leaders that Little League may continue to grow in order to further the welfare of children, families and communities and that it will bring whole-

some constructive benefits for future generations in the expanding horizons of youth."

The other piece of paper lists all members of the Little League Baseball corporate Board of Directors who had served to that point in the organization's history.

Construction, which is on schedule, began on the Administration Building in 2008, to add 13,300 square feet of office space, and to refurbish existing areas of the structure. It is expected that Little League International personnel will begin moving back into permanent offices in May.

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**



PROPER STRETCHING AND WARM UP ROUTINES ARE VITAL IN AVOIDING INJURY

Article taken from the Little League Publication "The Coach's Box"

By Michele Smith, two time Olympic Gold Medalist

Children are naturally flexible. With young muscles still growing and developing, coaches may not think stretching is very important. Take it from two-time USA Softball Olympic Gold-Medalist Michele Smith, a proper pre- and post-workout routine can help care for the muscles that allow the players to take the field.

Dynamic Warm-Up

"I encourage coaches to begin any practice or game with a dynamic warm-up," Michele said. For younger players, 10 minutes total of blood-pumping, body-moving activity can help raise the body's core temperature and loosen up muscles for the practice or game. Older players may need 15 minutes of warm-up. These are not static stretching exercises, but active dynamic warm-ups.

Start by having players run from foul pole to foul pole, then do some agility exercises:

- High knees
- Butt kicks
- Karaoke run<
- Jumping jacks
- Arm windmills
- Neck circles

"The goal is to work on all the body

parts: trunk, arms, legs and neck," Michele said. "Muscles stretch more easily if the body is warmed up properly before you stretch."

If muscles are still tight after the dynamic warm-up, then do some specific stretching for the area. Pitchers especially, but all players need to really work on their shoulder muscles, to make sure they are loose before throwing. And coaches should be reminded to have their players do stretching and warm-up exercises any time they have been idle for a period.

Planning can help reduce the amount of stretching needed. Some coaches have players warm up their arms, do a few defensive drills, stand around waiting to hit and then start back throwing. Instead, start players hitting, then go to throwing drills, making sure they stretch out their arms before throwing. It saves time stretching and saves injuries to arms. Be sure to warm up and stretch the trunk before hitting, or players risk injuries like groin pulls.

Then Cool Down

After a practice or game, don't just send your kids home. Muscles need to be worked to get new oxygen in and remove the waste by-products of exercising. "Have players run a lap around the field, then sit in a circle and stretch muscles to get fresh blood in them, and help strengthen them," Michele said.

She suggests arm windmills, neck circles and hurdler's stretches for the quads and glutes (thighs and bottom).

Twisting exercises that stretch the side muscles and back also are good. As an example, sit on the ground, placing the foot of a bent leg on the opposite side of an outstretched leg's knee, and twist your torso across the upright knee. Then switch legs and twist the other way.

"A good cool down will help cool the muscles and slow the heart rate," Michele said. "It's important not to overstretch in the cool down phase," she noted, since the muscles are being relaxed. If any sore spots are found during stretching, apply ice.

Michele said warm ups are a good time for players to visualize what they will be doing: hitting, pitching, throwing out base runners, etc. Cool downs are a time to reflect on the practice on what went well, and what may need improvement. But above all, these tips can keep players playing, and not sidelined with muscle injuries.

"If you're injured, you can't play the sport you love," Michele said. "We need to warm up and cool down to prevent injuries. Young kids are so flexible, they don't realize they can pull muscles. So for younger players, this is as much about instilling good routines for the players for later life."

For more information on training for softball log on to: www.michelesmith.com.

P A S S P O R T R E M I N D E R

A VERY important reminder to all parents of ball players in Little League Canada who may have a child participating in the Little League World Series Tournaments at ANY level this coming summer, or simply participate in any cross border tournaments in the US:

Starting June 1, 2009, YOU WILL NEED A PASSPORT IF YOU WANT TO TRAVEL

INTO THE UNITED STATES. THIS INCLUDES ALL CHILDREN

Don't wait until its too late and be disappointed when your child cannot cross the border with the team! This must be done!

You can pick up an application at any Post Office, or to find a service location near you, call or visit:

www.passportcanada.gc.ca

Or call 1-800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)

This article will be repeated in the next few issues to make sure the word gets out to all who subscribe between now and tournament time.

K E E P I N G T H E G A M E F U N I N T H E M I N O R S

Article taken from the Little League Publication "The Coach's Box"

By Jamie Joy, Manager of Operations

When a new season opens, everyone from board members, managers, and coaches, to parents and players have re-invigorated hopes and ideas about how to keep Little League fun.

Remember, the Minor Divisions are about instructing, educating and making this a memorable experience. If this can be accomplished, the children will continue to play and enjoy this great pastime.

Once the season starts, it's the responsibility of the adult volunteers to keep in mind that Little League is for

the children. This is why we need to focus everything on them, and make each practice and game a positive learning experience. Too many times, the win-at-all-costs attitude seeps into leagues and what gets lost is the fun.

Little League has many resources in place that can assist any coach or manager regardless of experience. One of these teaching tools is www.LittleLeagueCoach.org. This FREE website is rich in content, including the latest drills and coaching tips.

I have coached in various levels of baseball and have seen many different coaching philosophies, but one constant is player instruction.

We are talking about Minors and these are players ranging in age from

7-11. If their first experience is not enjoyable, or they do not learn or get anything from playing, they probably will not come back to the program.

We need to do as much as we can to ensure this does not happen. In Minors, learning and fun need to be the priority. Yes, winning is nice, but through education, fun and hard work the "Ws" should take care of themselves.

Please visit www.LittleLeagueCoach.org; and www.LittleLeague.org for more information on the Little League Minor Baseball and Minor Softball Divisions.

Until next time, remember to keep Little League fun.

**F O U R T H A N N U A L W O R L D C H A L L E N G E R
J A M B O R E E S E T F O R S P R I N G 2 0 0 9**

By Communcations Division
WILLIAMSPORT, Pa.

This text has been edited for space

Virginia District 8 will host the fourth annual "Challenger Little League Baseball World Jamboree" May 8-10, 2009 at the Azalea Little League Complex in Norfolk, Va. The jamboree will include games, tours,

picnics and other special events.

All the details about the Jamboree, including information on how your league can take part, can be found in the [Worldwide Challenger Jamboree information packet](#). Teams are currently registering, and to date, four teams from outside the United States have committed to attending the Jam-

boree.

For more information on the 4th Annual Worldwide Challenger Jamboree download the [Worldwide Challenger Jamboree information packet](#). To register a team, contact Jake Hardison, Virginia District 8 Administrator, at: 757-497-0113; or e-mail: Challenger@va8ll.org.

**M I S S I S S I P P I L I T T L E L E A G U E (O N T . D 8)
L O S E S A F R I E N D**

Mississippi Little League lost a dear friend on Sunday March 1st, when Bill Lethbridge, an umpire in their Association lost a 10 year battle with cancer.

Albert Smith, Mississippi LL Umpire

Consultant, called Bill "one of the most dependable and practical umpires he had in his crew".

A Memorial was held on Friday March 6th at the Civitan Club in Almonte.



Click on the banner at the left to access the Coaches Resource Center



Click on the banner at the left to access the Little League Baseball Camp

LITTLE LEAGUE CANADA BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL 2009 TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Baseball

Major (Little League):

World Series: August 21-30 Williamsport, Pennsylvania
 Canadian Championship: August 8-15 Val D'Or, Quebec
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Quebec: TBD
 Ontario: Pembroke D8
 Prairies: TBD
 British Columbia: Little Mountain Little League D1

Junior:

World Series: August 16-22 Taylor, Michigan
 Canadian Championship: August 6-13 Langley, British Columbia
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Quebec: TBD
 Ontario: South Ottawa D6
 Prairies: TBD
 British Columbia: D5

Senior:

World Series: August 16-22 Bangor, Maine
 Canadian Championship: August 6-13 Saint John, New Brunswick
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Quebec: TBD
 Ontario: Orleans D6
 Prairies: TBD
 British Columbia: D3

Big League:

World Series: July 29 -August 5 Easley, South Carolina
 Canadian Championship: July 22-26 Location TBD
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Quebec: TBD
 Ontario: Windsor D5
 Prairies: TBD
 British Columbia: D3

Softball

Major (Little League):

World Series: August 13-19 Portland, Oregon
 Canadian Championship: TBD
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Ontario: TBD
 British Columbia: TBD

Junior:

World Series: August 16-22 Kirkland, Washington
 Canadian Championship: TBD
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Ontario: TBD
 British Columbia: TBD

Senior:

World Series: August 9-15 Lower Sussex, Delaware
 Canadian Championship: TBD
 Divisionals:
 Atlantic: TBD
 Ontario: TBD
 British Columbia: TBD

Big League:

World Series: August 6-12 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

LITTLE LEAGUE PLAYER PROFILE
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:
2. Little League Division: (example: Minor, Major)
3. Name of your Little League:
4. Province:
5. Position(s) played:
6. Favorite Position:
7. Favorite Major League Baseball Player and why:
8. Favorite Major League Team:
9. Greatest Moment In Your Little League Career:
10. Favorite Movie:
11. Favorite Band or Singer:
12. Favorite Food:
13. Favorite Video Game:
14. Favorite Book:
15. Favorite Subject In School:

In your email program, simply answer all of these questions and send it to me at thestretch@littleleague.ca and I will put you and your answers into an upcoming issue.

This is a questionnaire for players...if coaches or umpires wish to fill it out, feel free, although many of the questions may not be appropriate, feel free to tell us about yourself.

Do you want to add a picture of yourself to go with it? Sure...but try to make it a baseball picture...if you don't have a baseball picture, I will accept any picture you wish to submit of you.

I look forward to all of your responses.



**LITTLE LEAGUE
CANADA**

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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@littleleague.org.

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Give the Gift That Keeps On Giving

Give your 9 through 14 year-old player the gift that will keep on giving whenever they step on a baseball field; A week at Little League Baseball Camp. Whether they are just learning a new position or hoping to take their game to another level, our camps will give them the skills and drills they need to improve their games and have fun doing so!

Our Camp features:

- Qualified screened Instructors
- Latest Training Techniques
- Air Conditioned dorms

Please [visit our website](#) for more information and camp applications.

Provide your camper with a grand slam experience at one of Little Leagues finest camps! Be sure to forward this email on to any you feel would like to "Go Yard" in our yard!