

2009 WMLL Softball Parent Handbook

This League is Your League...Please Help Keep it Clean

Over the last several years, WMLL has invested heavily in facility improvements for the safety and enjoyment of everyone. Please take pride in the great facilities on which we play...both baseball and softball. Clean up after yourself and help maintain the beauty of these special fields. If everyone picks up their own trash, as well as a piece of someone else's, our facility will remain beautiful. Every person in the West Madison Little League family should take responsibility for making sure our sites stay neat, clean and safe for our children.

Please do your part! THANKS!

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NOTE:

Minimum playing time regulations, pitching rules and other local modifications to the official Little League rules can be found in the Local Rules section of our website (www.wmll.org) for each WMLL Softball league.

April 2009

Dear Parents / Guardians:

Welcome to West Madison Little League's 51st season. This Parent Handbook is designed to answer basic questions you might have, as well as to provide you with the names of the individuals to contact if you have other questions or concerns. For cost saving reasons and to avoid paper waste, your WMLL Board of Directors has chosen to make this handbook available only online this season at www.wmll.org. Feel free to print a copy.

The WMLL website is also a source for information about WMLL, and includes schedules, standings, highlights and announcements. We will send out periodic newsletters via eNewsletters with general and league information. Please let us know if you have any ideas for improving our communications.

WMLL provides participants the opportunity to develop positive lifetime attributes including sportsmanship, leadership, discipline and team work. Within structured programs of baseball and softball, WMLL strives to develop each participant's physical skills, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the game. We also try to provide a level of competition appropriate to age and skill, and to create an environment which fosters the enjoyment of the game and of the WMLL experience. We hope that you participate in and enjoy the "family atmosphere" that exists at your ball park. It is a place where friendships are forged and memories are etched in the minds of young and old alike.

We are very enthused about the addition of a Challenger Division of play for Children with Disabilities in 2009 as part of our Fall Ball program. If you know of anyone with a disabled child age 8 to 16 in Dane County, please have them check our website and contact us for more details. Registration will begin in June.

Your volunteer Board of Directors is dedicated to making the Little League experience a positive one for everyone and to assist you and your family in any way that we can. We have numerous opportunities for people who are interested in volunteering at WMLL. Please contact me or Bill Battista, our Executive Director, if you are interested in learning more. Have a great season, and most importantly, ENJOY YOURSELF!

Sincerely,

Tom Heneghan

Tom Heneghan
WMLL President

WMLL Board of Directors & Responsibilities

League Officers:

President	Tom Heneghan	256-9233	theneghan@merchantgould.com
VP-Baseball	Harry Miller	233-0866	hlmiller@wisc.edu
VP-Softball	Mike Metcalf	848-7639	mmetcalf12@charter.net
Sec./Treasurer	Maury Tomczak	271-5892	iextskis@sbcglobal.net

<u>Exec. Director</u>	Bill Battista	239-6161	eartags@aol.com
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Baseball League Coordinators:

Atlantic League	John Lubarsky	238-1880	lubarskyj@opd.wi.gov
“ “	Mark Wood	831-1313	wood13@tds.net
Pacific League	Mark Newburg	831-0334	newy@tds.net
Central League	Frank Leno	233-1483	1chester@sbcglobal.net
Major League	Bill Battista	239-6161	eartags@aol.com
Badger League.	Harry Miller	233-0866	hlmiller@wisc.edu
Senior League	Andy Chitwood	233-3521	ajcwood2@charter.net

Girls' Softball League Coordinators:

Minor & Major	Chip Hunter	833-3930	hunterfamily@charter.net
Junior	Randy Norton	288-9696	randaln@charter.net
Senior Lg	Mike Metcalf	848-7639	mmetcalf12@charter.net

Budget Planning/

<u>& Tracking</u>	Paul Zwaska	848-7236	pzwaska@beaconathletics.com
<u>Concessions</u>	Bill Battista	239-6161	eartags@aol.com
<u>Clothing</u>	Steven Smith	576-1466	ssmith1091@tds.net
<u>Future Planning</u>	Paul Zwaska	848-7236	pzwaska@beaconathletics.com
<u>Groundskeeping</u>	Paul Zwaska	848-7236	pzwaska@beaconathletics.com
<u>Pitching Clinics</u>	Greg Mueller	238-5907	madmem@charter.net
<u>Playing Rules</u>	Harry Miller	233-0866	hlmiller@wisc.edu
<u>Registration</u>	Nick McNamara	238-3615	judgemcnamara@sbcglobal.net
<u>Safety Officer</u>	Mike Metcalf	848-7639	mmetcalf12@charter.net
<u>Scholarships</u>	Bill Battista	239-6161	eartags@aol.com
<u>Skills Session</u>	Andy Chitwood	233-3521	ajcwood2@charter.net
<u>Sponsorships</u>	Jim Steeves	274-5422	jsteeves@sbcglobal.net
<u>Team Rosters &</u>			
<u>Photos</u>	Maury Tomczak	271-5892	iextskis@sbcglobal.net
<u>Umpires:</u>			
Baseball	Nick McNamara	238-3615	judgemcnamara@sbcglobal.net
Softball	Mike Metcalf	848-7639	mmetcalf12@charter.net
<u>Website</u>	Bill Battista	239-6161	eartags@aol.com

2009 WMLL Calendar

Although specific dates vary from year to year, the basic timing and sequence of events remains consistent from one year to the next.

Jan. 5	Registration Packets mailed to all former players
Feb. 8	Bowlathon fund-raiser at Ten Pin Alley
Feb. 28	Application due date for guaranteed spot on a team
Mar. 28	Baseball & Softball skill sessions at Memorial H.S. Field House
Mar. 29	Last day to request refunds (4/23 for Senior Baseball)
Mar.30-Apr. 2	Baseball & Softball drafts (except Sr. Lg. Baseball)
Apr. 18	Annual field clean-up day, 9 AM – Noon & Pitching Clinic, 7 PM
Apr. 25-26	Atlantic, Pacific, Central, Major & Badger League Opening Days
May 16-17	Baseball Team Pictures, except Sr Lg
May 16	Softball Opening Day & Pictures
May 29	Opening Day, Senior Lg. Baseball
June 15	Registration begins for WMLL Fall Ball season
June 20	Major Lg baseball teams play all games at Helfaer Field in Milw.
July 8-15	Minor Lg playoffs
July 9-15	Major Lg playoffs
July 13-15	Junior Lg playoffs
July 20	Fall Ball Registration ends
Aug. 17	Last Day to request refunds for Fall Ball
Aug. 31	Opening Day of Fall Ball season
Sept. 5	Inaugural Game of New Challenger Division for Children with Disabilities
Oct 10	WMLL annual meeting (tentative)
Oct 17-18	End of Fall Ball season

The WMLL Board of Directors generally meets the second Sunday of each month. See the website, or call any officer or Board member for specific times and location. Parents and guardians are welcome to attend.

Service Commitment

West Madison Little League is a people dependent organization. We need helping hands from everyone in order to be the best league we can be. Our greatest asset is the energy and enthusiasm that individuals bring to our association's activities.

To insure the success of West Madison Little League, we require that for every child participating in our program, a parent or guardian must perform service in the league.

A variety of opportunities exist for individuals to fulfill that obligation. Service options include:

- *League officer or board member
- *Head or assistant coach
- *Team representative
- *Spring or fall grounds or maintenance work
- *Concession stand worker (if your team plays at the Forward Dr fields)

Do you have any other special talents or skill not listed here that you would like to apply to satisfy your service commitment? Let a board member know what you can do and you are on your way to making WMLL a better organization.

Not everyone, however, has the time to help the association. In that case, a parent or guardian can pay an additional \$100.00 per child in the program to satisfy their service commitment.

League Coordinator's Duties

Each league or age level of play is overseen by a Board member who acts as the league coordinator. The league coordinators are very important to the operations of West Madison Little League. Their primary responsibility is to help manage the smooth operations of the respective age grouped leagues. Generally, this duty requires the individual to create the playing schedule, recruit coaches, chair coaches' meetings, distribute and monitor team equipment, print and interpret local playing rules, assist in tournament coach and player selection and serve as the day-to-day contact person and on-site administrator for a particular league. It is a major responsibility and time commitment.

In addition, a league coordinator facilitates the flow of information from the coaches and parents to the Board of Directors and from the Board of Directors to the coaches and parents.

Team Representative's Duties

The team representative assumes a variety of tasks designed to insure good communication within the team and the smooth running of off field team business. This individual works closely with the head coach and together they will determine the exact duties of that team representative.

Some suggested team representative responsibilities are

- Prepare and distribute a player and parent roster and phone tree
- Distribute team handouts, WMLL newsletters, schedules
- Assist the coach in distributing and collecting team uniforms
- Schedule parent / guardian service for the concession stand (for games at Forward Dr) and spring and fall field cleanup and maintenance
- Coordinate team snack schedule and payments (Forward Dr only)
- Organize the team's participation at picture day
- Plan team gatherings, such as an end of season party
- Facilitate communication between the parents and coach and/or WMLL directors
- Assist with distribution and collection of coaching evaluations

A team representative is a crucial component to the team having an enjoyable and successful season.

Coach's Duties

WMLL Little League managers and coaches must be leaders who recognize that they hold a position of trust and responsibility in a program that deals with a sensitive and formative period of a child's development. Although knowledge of the game is important, these men and women must be something more than just skill teachers. It is required that these individuals have the understanding, patience and capacity to work with children and the ability to inspire respect from their players. Above all else, managers and coaches must realize that they are helping to shape the physical, mental and emotional development of young people.

The heart of Little League is what happens between the adult manager/coach and the player. Children this age are strongly influenced by individuals whose ideals and aspirations are similar to their own. These adults and players share a common interest in the game, a desire to excel and a determination to win. Because of this unique bond, managers/coaches must be sensitive to the mental and physical limitations of each player and recognize that the game is a vehicle for training and enjoyment, not an end in itself.

Some Specific duties of these individuals are

- Teach players specific game skills and strategies
- Assure that players look like a team – wear the uniform properly and display appropriate team spirit and sportsmanship
- Work to provide a safe playing and warm-up environment
- Discuss in a professional and civilized manner disagreements with the umpires and not tolerate any abuse or intimidation of these umpires by the players and their parents or other spectators. Remember, our umpires are our own WMLL children!!
- Work with the team representative to maintain communication with the team's parents and WMLL league directors
- Play the game in accordance with national and local rules
- Distribute and collect equipment and uniforms

Any individual who wishes to be a manager/coach should contact the specific league coordinator responsible to indicate your desires and submit an application form which outlines qualifications.

Safety First

West Madison Little League believes in “safety first.” These are some specific safety reminders

- Players should warm-up away from crowds and traffic patterns and **MUST NOT** swing bats outside the fences of the playing field, unless they are in a batting cage or soft-toss station, where available.
- Parents should remind their children to not jump or run down the bleachers, not allow them to play underneath the bleachers and to be careful on the playground equipment
- Parents and children should always be on the lookout for foul balls and thrown balls
- Parents should take extra care in dropping off players and other children or upon entering the parking lot – small children are hard to see
- When threatening weather approaches, move to cover, but not under trees
- WMLL is an active participant in Little League, Inc.'s “A Safety Awareness Program” (ASAP). If you would like a copy of WMLL's full Safety Plan, check the WMLL website under local rules.

League Descriptions

Minor Girls Softball

The minor league program is for 8, 9 and 10 year old girls. The league is designed to develop the player's defensive and offensive skills and understanding of softball strategy from the perspective of different positions. A primary emphasis will be on the individual's enjoyment of the sport.

Major Girls Softball

This major league program is designed for 11 and 12 year old girls who will face live pitching. Players will hopefully advance their skill levels as the competition gets better. The coaches will draft their teams.

Junior Girls Softball

This junior league program is for 13 and 14 year old girls who want to further develop their skills in order to play high school softball. The league will generally follow high school rules with some modification and should be both competitive and entertaining. The coaches will draft their teams and positions will be determined by skill.

Senior Girls Softball

This senior league program is for 15 and 16 year olds. Most league players will have played on a high school team or will, in the future, be playing interscholastic softball. This league is designed to continue a player's preparation for a high school. Individuals will become more specialized in the positions that they will play and participation time will vary.

Big League Girls Softball

This league program is for 16-18 year olds. This is WMLL's highest level of competition and player skill development. It provides a high level of competition for players, most of who have competed at the high school level. This program is offered only if there is enough player interest (not planned for 2009).

Tournament Team Programs

WMLL sponsors tournament teams for 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 year old players in baseball and softball leagues. Selected players will represent WMLL in national or local tournaments. For more information on the process used to select these teams and coaches, see the section on the WMLL website under "Local Rules."

Philosophies of Participation

As players progress into higher leagues, the level of competitiveness increases. Throughout all the levels of WMLL, participation is insured by local rules which require minimum playing times. In the Atlantic, Pacific, and Central baseball leagues, and in the Minor, Major and Junior softball leagues, there are stated philosophies which guide the actions of coaches.

Girls' Softball – Minor, Major & Junior Leagues

Philosophy

There are four very important goals for the WMLL Girls' Softball Program:

1. To have volunteer coaches pass along their knowledge of the game of softball to the players,
2. To have equal participation for all players so they can have an opportunity to practice the softball skills they are learning,
3. To foster total enjoyment of the game. This goal is not easily obtained for all players. What is needed is constant encouragement by coaches and parents alike in times of failure. No one will catch every ball, hit every pitch or make every play. As human beings, the fire of competition burns in each of us. As parents, coaches and spectators, we must control our own competitive nature in order to build the proper atmosphere in which these young players can enjoy what we consider the greatest game in the world, and
4. To provide an opportunity for young girls to experience the camaraderie of being on a team, to meet players from other schools and other neighborhoods and to build new friendships.

Implementation

Coaches will be encouraged to give players the opportunity to learn several different defensive positions and to rotate into these positions throughout the season. Positions in the batting order should be rotated regularly to give players an opportunity to bat at different spots in the lineup. A coaches meeting will be held before the season to review their goals and guidelines. Coaches will be expected to have a minimum number of practices before the season opens.

Treatment of Umpires

1. The league will not tolerate any harassment of the umpires by managers, coaches, players or fans or any harassment / organized cheering against any opposing player or team.
2. The umpires will not tolerate any abusive language, equipment throwing or other violent behavior by managers, coaches, players or fans.
3. Any person guilty of participating in these actions will be warned once by the umpires. Second violation will result in ejection from the game and removal from the WMLL field areas. In severe instances the offending party will be immediately ejected. The umpire will report such ejections to the umpire coordinator who will notify the Baseball/Softball Operations Committee Chairperson. Unsportsmanlike behavior which results in a game ejection carries with it another one game suspension. For a second game ejection there will be an automatic three game suspension and for a third game suspension, the individual will receive a season ending suspension.
4. To question an umpire's ruling only the manager is to represent the team. He/she must call time out and calmly consult with the umpire. A manager must not run out of the dugout or yell objections. The manager should provide the players and fans with an exemplary model of sportsmanship.
5. During all consultations with umpires about their rulings, the manager must remain in foul territory. To check on an injured player's status, the manager/coach may be on the playing field after an umpire requests their assistance.

Weather

1. If inclement weather has occurred, the field manager will determine if and when the field is in playable condition. Messages on the answering machine (274-6556) and the website (www.wmll.org) will indicate when games are postponed because of weather.
2. If a field is not playable at game time, but might be playable in a short period of time, the game will be delayed no more than fifteen minutes. The conditions will be checked after fifteen minutes and, if the field is still unplayable, the game will be canceled and rescheduled by the coordinator. Do not ask for or expect preferential treatment in the rescheduling of games.
3. If a rain / lightning / lighting failure delay occurs after a game has started the first fifteen minutes of the total delay time does not count as part of the game time limit. When the game has been delayed for thirty minutes or more, the

- game will be considered either a suspended contest or an officially completed contest depending on the inning and the score.
4. When lightning is visible, the Board of Director(s) / umpires present will suspend the game for fifteen minutes and all coaches, players, spectators and umpires will take immediate shelter in the dugouts or in private vehicles to insure their safety. After this fifteen minute delay, if lightning continues the board of director(s) / umpires present will call the game.
 5. A game called after completion of two innings and before it is an official completed contest will be considered a suspended game. A suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point of suspension. The line ups and batting order of the teams shall be the same as the moment of suspension, subject to the substitution rules. A player who was not at the original game may be used as a substitute when the game is resumed. Prior to leaving the field of play, the coaches will verify the line ups, score and exact point at which play has been stopped i.e. outs, balls and strikes batter, runners score, etc. Any dispute should be referred to the league coordinator and/or VP-Softball Operations for resolution. The league coordinator shall attempt to reschedule the suspended game at the time when the two teams will be playing each other again. The suspended game will be played prior to the regulation game or another suspended game. All pitching regulations will be determined by the week during which the suspended game is being resumed.
 6. These rules will not restrict the Board of Director(s) present at the field from immediately canceling play at WMLL fields in order to insure the appropriate safety of coaches, players, spectators, umpires and concession workers.

2009 WMLL Softball Tournament Team Policies

WMLL Softball will field Tournament Teams in Minor (10U), Major (12U), and Junior (14U) Divisions. WMLL will field teams in each division for play in two post-season tournaments chosen by the Softball committee. Dates for the tournaments will be announced as soon as they are determined, and posted to the WMLL website.

WMLL Softball Tournament Coach Selection

1. To be eligible for selection an individual must be a current coach. Coaches in the age appropriate league have priority. League Coordinators should notify all coaches of the process by May 31.
2. Interested individuals must submit an application to the Softball Board by June 10 in order to be selected. The Softball Board will forward applications to the WMLL Board of Directors for approval.
3. The application must contain the applicant's responses to these questions:
 - a. Why do you want to be a Tournament Team coach?
 - b. What criteria would you use in selecting a Tournament Team?
 - c. What is your softball coaching and playing experience and how will that experience benefit the Tournament Team?
4. Each tournament team will have an officially appointed head coach (manager) and one officially appointed assistant coach. The Board will approve the head coach for each tournament team. After tournament team voting has been conducted (as described below), the head coach may select the 1 official assistant coach from among the parents of the top 11 players, by vote, on the list described in 3(e), below. The President and relevant league coordinator will approve the one official tournament team assistant coach that is requested by the head coach. After the tournament team roster is finalized, the head coach may select additional assistants.
5. Prior to the tryouts, all coaches must meet with the President to review WMLL tournament team policies and procedures and must agree to strictly adhere to these policies and procedures.

WMLL Softball Tournament Team Player Eligibility and Selection

1. A tryout date for each Tournament team will be set by the Tournament Team coaches and League Coordinator immediately when the coaches are selected. All league coaches will be informed of the tryout date and the date will be posted on the WMLL website. In all Leagues, eligible players must have participated in 60% of their regular season teams' games as of the league tryout date. Absences due to injury will not be considered as an absence if the player, otherwise, participates as a team member. Under National Little League rules a player must actually play in 60% of the team's games. Coaches should not recommend anyone who has not met these guidelines.
2. Players may only try out for Tournament Teams in the league age group to which they are assigned by birth date, "grandfathering," or tryout and draft. (In other words, a player who tries out for and is chosen to "play up" in an older league for the season, in order to balance league numbers, may play on a Tournament Team only in the league in which she actually plays.) A player may play on a Tournament Team in only one league. . *Exception: Because the Senior League does not field a Tournament Team, Senior League players who are 14U eligible may try out for and be chosen for the 14U team. Invitations to Senior League players to try out may be issued at the discretion of the 14U Tournament Team coach.*
3. The selection of tournament team players will be based on a combination of player votes, league division coach votes, performance at a try-out, tournament team coach evaluations from viewing regular season games, and additional player evaluations and ratings as provided by the other head coaches in the league's division. The player selection procedure is as follows:
 - a. Player Division Vote: In the Major (12U) and Junior (14U) League, players will vote for the 11 players from their league and division most deserving of being on a tournament team. Players may not vote for individuals on their own team for the purposes of this vote. Note: players will not vote in the Minor (10U) League, as many players at this age do not yet have enough knowledge of the other players in the league.
 - b. Player Team Vote: Players vote for the 4 players (6 players in the Minor League) on their own team most deserving of being on a tournament team (separate vote from #1 above). Players may vote for themselves.
 - c. Coach Division Vote: Head Coaches will vote for the 11 players in their league and division who they feel are most deserving of being on a tournament team.

- d. Coach Team Vote: Head Coaches will vote for the 4 players on their own team most deserving of being on a tournament team.
- e. The League Coordinator combines and totals the votes in numbers a, b, c, and d above and creates a list of the top 25 players, ranked by vote, from each league and division. Except for players who will not commit to the tournament schedule, these 25 players will be invited to the try out.
- f. The League Coordinator combines the votes in b and d above to create a top 3 list for each team. Except for players who will not commit to the tournament schedule, individuals on the top 3 list for each team will be invited to the try out if they are not already on the tryout list based on e above.
- g. After the try out, the head coach will evaluate all the information gathered, as noted in Item II above, and nominate a tournament team roster to the League Coordinator.
- h. If the nominated players for the tournament team roster include the top 8 players as defined in e above, and all players nominated are in the top 15 as defined in e above, the roster shall be considered final.
- i. If the nominated roster does not meet the criteria in h above, the coach will be required to meet with the league coordinator and league president to explain and justify his selections. This group of three will then finalize the roster.
4. The league coordinator will determine how many players are to participate in the tryout.
5. The player/child of the head and assistant coach are exempt from attending the try-out. All other players must attend a tryout to participate on a tournament team. Each player involved will bring a written note to the tryout from a guardian/parent indicating any family/individual plans, such as a vacation, that could or will conflict with the tournament. A supplemental tryout can be scheduled by the league coordinator if the individual's excuse is "reasonable" for missing the original tryout. This supplemental tryout must be held prior to the official tryout and must be attended by the tournament team coach and league coordinator.
6. Players invited to the tryout are not guaranteed a place on a tournament team. The tournament coaches with the advice of the participating Board of Directors – a minimum of 1 Board member will be involved in the process – will make the final player selections. The Board member(s) involved in the selection may

- not have a child participating. Each league team does not have to be represented on a tournament team.
7. Tournament Teams will take at least 11 players to each tournament. At the coaches' discretion players may be chosen even if they are not available for all tournaments or tournament games. Coaches will decide how many total players to choose, but a total of no more than 15 players will be chosen for any league's Tournament Team.
 8. If a tournament team player is unable to participate, a replacement player will be selected, if possible, from the individuals who have attended the tryout.
 9. A player selected to a tournament team will be required to pay a participation fee, the amount of which will be determined annually by the Board, to defray WMLL's expenses. If a player needs financial assistance to participate, he/she should make the request to the Board through their tournament team coach.

Financial Support by WMLL

1. WMLL will pay the entry fees to up to three tournaments.
2. To purchase jerseys (embroidered with WM and a number), shorts, hats or visors, and socks, WMLL will contribute an amount to be determined annually by the board.
3. For tournament competition within the state of Wisconsin, WMLL will give no financial support for meal and travel expenses. If a tournament team will be participating in national competition beyond the state level, the President and Treasurer will determine a "reasonable" amount that WMLL can contribute to defray coach, player & team expenses.

2009 Tournament Plans

Minors: Sun Prairie July 17-19, Columbus July 24-26

Majors: Kennedy July 10-12, Sun Prairie July 17-19

Juniors: Sun Prairie July 17-19, Columbus July 24-26