



Seventy-Eighth Precinct Youth Council

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April 12, 2010

Re: Your Kids and Pee Wee & Lions Baseball with the 78th PYC

Greetings and welcome to 78PYC baseball!

I am Gilda Mooney Dube, division director for the younger divisions, the 5 to 8 year olds (Pee-Wees, Lions, and Pony-Majors). For some of you this is your first season with us and I'm sure that it will not be your last.

Creating the Teams: One of my responsibilities is to place your children on their Pee Wee and Lions teams. It is a monumental task: 30 teams x 15 players each = 450 players x (we'll average 2) requests per player = 900 requests. I spend days looking at every request and do my best to try to place kids of the same school together but it is impossible to satisfy all requests, which is why we cannot guarantee any placement request. But it is not a good thing to have an entire kindergarten (1st or 2nd grade) class on the same team. One of the best things about playing with us is the opportunity to make friends from different schools and neighborhoods. Here I speak from my children's experience.

Mine are now 20, 18, and 16. They grew up playing ball and all made friends they would not have had otherwise. They still have those friends today. While it is nice to see a friend at that first team meeting, if your son or daughter is on a team where they do not know anyone be assured by their 2nd meeting they will now have a whole team full of new friends. Meeting and getting along new people are among the life lessons playing in our organization offer. Don't be anxious, show them meeting all the new friends is an exciting wonderful thing.

Some parents requests to have their child play down to a younger age group. Such requests are not permitted unless there is a true developmental or medical reason. In addition, if I were to place an older child in a younger division it would deprive an age appropriate child a team to play on.

Some parents request to have their child play up with older children. That serves no good purpose either. Your child will bond with teammates only to find when they are ready to move with the team to the Cubs division (9 & 10 year olds) we will not readily put an 8 year

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old on that team. Many 10 year olds are considerably larger than the average 8 year old. It becomes a matter of safety, not to mention a challenge to the fun that the game should be. What's the rush? As they age, the game gets faster, the ball gets hit harder, and the distances get longer – all good reasons for them to play with kids of their own age. In addition, it is best for your child to find an age appropriate team so that he or she can travel over the years with that team. This continuity will make it more fun for the kids and help our coaches continue to develop their players skills.

Measuring Success: A successful season is one in which the players have learned the game of baseball in it's basic form, had loads of fun, made new friends, and cannot wait to do it again next year.

Uniform & Equipment: Your player's uniform (jersey, pants and CAP) are for games or practice only. I know how much they want to wear the cap particularly out to school, friends or to dinner. Please say NO! They must wear their cap on the field. It is a requirement they should get used to now. We cannot get replacement caps. Because we have so many teams, the caps are custom made into many different color combinations. Also, now is the right time to have them get used to what a uniform consists of: Baseball pants, not jeans or shorts.

For boys, please purchase them a protective cup. I know you ask, why at this age, the ball is not thrown so hard? I do not know about you but I have every intention of being a grandparent one day. If you get them used to it now when they are older and really need it won't be a big deal. To ease the transition, you can buy sliding shorts, which look like biking shorts. The cup slips right into a front pocket. Much more comfortable I am told. (My 18 and 16 year old are sons). Besides wearing a cup gives them the opportunity to knock on it and laugh hysterically!

Baseball cleats are not necessary as we play on the grass. If your player also plays soccer don't waste money on a separate pair of baseball cleats, at this age soccer cleats are fine. The reverse is not true, however. Baseball cleats are not permitted in youth soccer.

Bats: It is advisable NOT to bring a bat of your own. We will provide 2 bats for the team. It has been our experience that injuries happen when someone is swinging a bat where and when they should not be.

Please write your child's name on anything not attached to his or her body (particularly the mitt and cap). Have them learn to always know where they are. Let them give it to you if they are not carrying it.

Game Time: Game time is not snack time or a picnic. Please resist feeding your player during the game. Take turns with the other parents, everybody choose a week to provide after game snacks to be had during the post-game wrap up. Yes, they should have a drink for when they are in the dugout.

The field is marked to indicate not only the baseball diamond but also dugout areas for the players and areas for the spectators. Please respect our markings and stay in the spectator

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area. Parents in the dugout area are a distraction to the kids and make the coaches' jobs considerably more difficult.

Help Your Coach: Please offer to help your coach(es). They are all volunteers. Please do not leave your child at a game or practice unless there is another grown-up (not the coach) left responsible for them. One way you can help is to offer to be responsible for covering the on-deck batting circle and to enforce the rule that only the batter and the on-deck can hold bats. The only injuries we have experienced over the years at this age are from the uncontrolled swinging of bats by the kids.

Your Role

We expect all parents to be positive role models. That means being unequivocal cheerleaders for all the kids and coaches and never to be abusive in any way to any child, coach, or umpire. The umpires are teenagers who have come through our organization and are learning a new skill while they are either paid or receiving community service credit. The coach is the only one authorized to discuss rules issues with the umpires. Your active support will help make them better umpires.

Do not coach the team, the kids should hear only the voices of their coaches. Otherwise it is confusing to the kids and frustrating for the coaches.

Do not argue with the umpires. They are our kids. Many were once Pee-Wees and Lions. Let your coach discuss difference of opinions of a call with them, not you. Teach your players by your actions to respect them.

Don't argue with your coach about your player playing outfield or infield or a specific position. If you feel that your player did not get enough of a chance to rotate through the positions call or email your coach so that he or she can take note for the next game. It is VERY hard to keep track of who plays where and most coaches write it up before the game.

If you are going to miss a game let your coach know at least 24 hours before (unless of course your player is ill, that is a legitimate short notice example).

Cheer for good plays – on your team or the other. Don't keep score – (we aren't). Don't mourn a game loss, by this time the players have turned back into just kids again and are more interested in the upcoming snack or play date.

Watch a baseball game together whether it is on TV or at the Yankees, Mets, or Cyclones. It will give them a good idea of the flow of the game (like running to first base after hitting the ball) don't laugh I kid you not, we have seen kids run into the outfield, or when told to run home they start chugging up the 9th street path!

Practice with your child – if you want your child to have fun, he or she must attain a certain minimal level of competence at the fundamental skills.

Schedules

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We try our best to move your games around in the day but some coaches also coach their older children's baseball teams. Those teams play in the Prospect Park Baseball Association. Our schedules must therefore yield to the PPBA schedule in order to allow a parent to coach more than one team.

Our Goals: Our program is built around a few basic concepts:

The fun of baseball is making plays and getting hits;

It takes teamwork to win – winning is only accomplished as a group;

While winning is the goal of the game, it is really the by-product of making playing and getting hits; for our purposes, winning is incidental to the main task of teaching the game in a fun way.

The most we ask is that try their best;

Mistakes are a normal part of learning and the emotional tank that is emptied when disappointment occurs must be quickly refilled via positive reinforcement by stressing and rewarding effort rather than results – that way self confidence is increased while anxiety is reduced;

The game, its participants, and the rules should be honored and respected; and

Finally, family participation is not only welcomed but an important ingredient to the joy of your child's experience. Your children look up to you and want to play with you. The more involved you are, the happier they will be. For that we gladly play the role of facilitator.

Positive Coaching: The 78th Precinct Youth Council is a member of the Positive Coaching Alliance. All coaches have been asked to complete a formal training session that introduces in detail many of the things just mentioned. From time to time you will also receive emails about the positive coaching process and the role of parents in the process. Your participation and feedback are important parts of this process.

Contacting Us:

We are always ready to answer your questions. But since there are so many of you, we created a very extensive FAQ section on our website that should answer most of your questions. So feel free to contact us, but please check the FAQ section first and don't be upset if our response to you is to check the FAQ section.

If your child is a Pee Wee, contact us at peeweesees@78pyc.org

If your child is a Lion, contact us at lions@78pyc.org

When writing to us you MUST please put your child's name in the subject line. This facilitates us being able to respond to you in a timely fashion.

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I know this was a lot to read, I thank you for taking the time to do so.
This is going to be our best season ever! See you at the parade and on the field!

Have fun! Play ball!

Regards,
Gilda

Gilda R. Mooney-Dube
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Division director, Pee-Wees, Lions, Pony-Majors



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