

Post-Season Play

The 2010 tournament season is here! It is Babe Ruth League's focus that every child is able to participate and have fun - not just during local league play, but also during tournament competition. We should always emphasize concern for the players and their safety, and a sense of fair play. All leagues should teach and live by the Sportsmanship Code during all levels of competition.

It is during this time of the year that our thoughts and thanks go out to the Host Parents. Host families play a major role in the success of our tournament at all levels of play. To every host family who will be welcoming our players into their homes and hearts this tournament season, we sincerely thank you. And to every player who will have the unique privilege of staying in a host family home, you are in for one of the best experiences of your lifetime.

It is also during this time of year that we realize that teamwork has led us to the success we enjoy today, and teamwork will help us achieve our dreams and goals for tomorrow. I would be remiss if I did not offer special thanks and gratitude to every volunteer in our program. We realize that the growth and success of Babe Ruth League is largely dependent on having dedicated and hard-working volunteers who go above and beyond the call. You are our unsung heroes and because of your unselfish efforts, we are able to provide a wholesome, educational and enjoyable outlet for the youth of our nation.

With this column, I would like to offer a few tips for success during the tournament trail. Remember, the essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concepts of sportsmanship, respect, fairness and good citizenship. We should all remember this is a youth program focused on player development rather than wins and losses.

Managers and Coaches

- Abide by and teach the rules of the game.
- Set a good example for players and spectators to follow. Refrain from arguments in front of them.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- Give as many players as possible the opportunity to participate during the tournament.
- Don't let coaching challenges stop you from placing 15 players on the roster.
- Always exhibit good sportsmanship, and never tolerate anything less from your players or their parents.

Participants

- Respect the game as much as you want to be respected.
- Follow the rules and control your emotions when calls don't go your way.
- Respect all coaches, players, league officials, umpires, spectators and opponents.
- Be a good teammate. Help your team win whether you play or not.

- Display good sportsmanship at all times.
- Give 100% - hustle at all times.
- Follow safety rules.
- Remember that giving it your best is the ideal way to eliminate mistakes in your game.
- You don't necessarily have to be a great athlete to be a good baseball or softball player. If you work hard at the game and learn the game and the strategy, you can be a very good player and have fun.

Parents and Spectators

- Keep it positive.
- Feel free to shout as much encouragement for your teams as you possibly can. But when your yelling shifts from encouraging to derogatory, that's when you have stopped playing a supportive role. Cheer all you want, but keep it positive.
- Children participate to have fun and the game is for youth, not adults.
- Respect the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
- Be a good role model and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect, courtesy for all players, coaches, officials and other spectators.
- Do not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
- Praise your child for competing fairly and trying hard. Make them feel like a winner every time.
- Promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire you have for your child to win.
- Respect the officials and their authority and never question, discuss or confront coaches at the game field. Take the time to speak with them at an agreed upon time and place.
- Refrain from coaching your child or other players during practices and games.
- Take pride in your kids, no matter how they or their team does. It is easy to get carried away when you see a call or action that seems to be unfair. Screaming does not work! The umpire is not going to change his call and the coach is not about to suddenly see things your way. The worst result from acting unsportsmanlike is incessant embarrassment for your child.

Men and Women in Blue

- Make sure you have the proper clothing and equipment to look official, and that you wear your uniform and equipment in a manner that shows you are serious about your professionalism!
- Attend all pre-tournament meetings. There will be discussion on the rules and ground rules.
- Re-acquaint yourself with the rulebook. Read it over and over.
- You represent the game, so act professionally.
- Be at the game early, not just on time.
- Have a pre-game meeting with your partner(s).
- Ump big! Sell every call.
- Do not become a *dictator in blue*. Do not over-umpire.

- RELAX! Let the game come to you. Allow players to make mistakes, and then react to them.
- Above all - USE YOUR HEAD AND EXPERIENCE. You will be surprised how *smooth* your games will go.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Headquarters Staff of Babe Ruth League, Inc., I want to sincerely thank the many communities throughout the United States and Canada who are hosting a Babe Ruth tournament this summer. Remember tournament games can be competitive. But if you keep it fun for all players, a happy and memorable time will be enjoyed by all.

Steven M. Tellefsen
President/CEO