



Promoting and Operating a Successful Little League Baseball® Program

1. Structuring the Board

Little League® International recommends that the local Little League appoint a Coaches Committee chaired by the Coaching Coordinator and including managers from each baseball division and the baseball vice presidents. A league may always add additional Board positions where it deems necessary.

Vice Presidents

Appointing Vice Presidents to oversee local league operations of each baseball division is an important task for any league. One of the primary goals of these position is to manage the operation of each respective baseball division and promote the program within the local community. The Vice Presidents act as a liaison between the league board and those involved in the baseball program.

Responsibilities of the Vice Presidents include:

- Coordinate baseball player, umpire, and volunteer recruitment and retention efforts in conjunction with the Marketing Manager.
- Organize and oversee education and training for managers, coaches, and umpires with the Coaching Coordinator.
- Work with the League President and District to arrange a schedule for baseball teams, including interleague games within the District and with neighboring Districts, if necessary.
- Assist the Player Agent with try-outs and player selection.
- Facilitate special events – Opening Day ceremonies, Special Game tournaments, etc.
- Provide the local Little League Board with updates on baseball activities at each board meeting.

Player Agent

This appointment allows for a separate Player Agent to oversee the league's baseball age divisions. A Player Agent conducts the tryouts, oversees player selection and reviews player eligibility of the baseball participants. Generally, this individual would be more familiar with the baseball participants, talent level, and rules and regulations.

2. Promoting the Program

Little League created and annually updates the [Local League Resource Guide](#), which is mailed each year to every local league and [available on Little League University](#). The League Resource Guide is designed to provide the local league Board of Directors guidance on improving their local league operations and assistance with marketing their league to the public. It also shares important information on local league finances, including tips on obtaining local sponsorships and driving fundraising efforts. Included inside is a list of important dates to help local leagues with Little League deadlines and to plan for the upcoming year. Leagues can also find supplemental information and customizable flyers at LittleLeagueU.org.

Leagues may want to consider reaching out to local media, especially if they are getting ready to offer Little League Baseball for the first time. Many newspapers, radio stations, and even local TV media will be interested in picking up a story about a league's new offering and the positive impact that the baseball program will have on the community. Leagues are encouraged to contact the local media through a press release, or even a phone call. [Helpful tips and customizable resources](#) can also be found at LittleLeagueU.org.

Leagues should encourage members and parents to [register for Little League newsletters](#) to allow officers, coaches, umpires, and parents to receive up-to-date information and relevant news stories.

Local leagues can utilize Little League Baseball promotional resources and publications found at LittleLeagueU.org for program and benefit introduction and development.

If there is a resource you think would be beneficial, but cannot find on Little League University or, please email Sam Ranck, Little League Assistant Director of League Development, at sranck@LittleLeague.org with your suggestion.

3. Structuring Your Baseball Program

Tee Ball

Tee Ball allows local leagues to start the baseball divisions from Little League's youngest age division offered and expand the baseball divisions in future years. If your league already has a Tee Ball program established, you can create a Tee Ball division. Offering Tee Ball will cultivate players learning baseball from the youngest age while involving their parents and allowing players to participate with friends who will advance together in future age divisions. Please remember that Tee Ball programs must use the must use the Baseball age determination date.

Teenage Divisions

The teenage divisions of Little League can provide another path to starting or increasing a league's baseball offerings. Whether coordinating Junior League or Senior League divisions, be sure to work with the local high schools within the league boundaries to explain how Little League can provide a second season, tournament opportunities, and fall instruction for their players under similar playing rules. To maximize participation, the Senior division may be offered by local leagues or as a District-wide program.

Age Structures

The Little League Baseball age structure allows for flexibility within the divisions to help increase participation while maintaining a safe and competitive environment. All age divisions overlap, providing leagues the opportunity to utilize a 2-year or a 3-year (or 4-year when possible) age structure to allow advanced players to play up or to increase the number of available participants within a particular division. Another option leagues may want to implement, depending on participation numbers and feedback, is structuring age divisions according to school grade.

Player Pools

Throughout the season, some teams are faced with a shortage of rostered players for regular season games. In this situation, the local league may opt to create a player pool [Regulation V(c)], or a pool of players from existing regular season players that are willing to participate in extra games during the regular season (within their respective division). The Player Agent will manage the Player Pool and assign players on a "rotating basis" to specific games when teams do not have enough players. This allows a local league to play through scheduling conflicts and gives participants additional playing

experience. If the local league would like to create a player pool of participants to supplement a different division (i.e. Minors to Majors), a Charter Committee waiver is necessary.

If teams are consistently short players in the Major division and above, leagues may apply Regulation IV – dual rostering – with players they have assessed capable and want to participate in additional games.

Combined Teams

Combined Teams is a useful option for leagues who are just starting a baseball program or offering all age divisions. This allows leagues the ability to combine with other local Little Leagues (maximum of three leagues total may combine) when registration numbers are low within certain age divisions. Little League recommends offering baseball programs for players ages four to 16, assessing registration numbers, and then determining which age divisions can be offered in-house and which divisions need to be combined. Under Combined Teams, local leagues retain the rights to their players from year to year. Combined Teams, for Regular Season and Tournament, is now managed and submitted through the [Little League Data Center](#).

4. Finding Facilities

Some leagues are fortunate to have their own field space and resources, however, many leagues need to coordinate with the city and community for fields and facilities. We would recommend contacting your local Parks and Recreation department for their 'Field Use' policy. This will outline their allocation procedures, fees, insurance requirements, curfew, etc., and can help explain how your league can sign-up to use the facilities.

Another resource your league can utilize is the local school district. Many times, local school districts will allow the community and non-profit organizations to use their indoor and outdoor facilities. Since the facility use policy will differ between schools and districts, we would recommend contacting the district offices first.

NOTE: A combination of facilities sometimes works best, especially as leagues begin to grow.

5. Manager and Coach Education

There are many different education and training avenues your league can explore for managers, coaches, umpires, and parents within your local community as well as through Little League International.

Little League University – Established in 2015, Little League University is a free, online educational and training database for Little League coaches, managers, and parents. Filled with baseball and softball articles, videos, and tutorials, parents and volunteers can learn the about the basics or game situations from the comfort of their home. To access these resources, visit Little League University at LittleLeagueU.org.

Tee Ball Program - In 2013, Little League launched the [Tee Ball Program](#) which provides a 10-week practice plan focused on fun, fitness, and fundamentals. Whether coaches are beginners or experienced, the program offers coaches and parents a series of lessons utilizing up to 40 activities that include skills, drills, and plenty of physical activity. Leagues can access the information, including video tutorials of each week of the program, as well as the full program, at Little League University or by visiting LittleLeague.org/TeeBall.

Organizing Coach Clinics – Local leagues are encouraged to coordinate coach clinics for their parents, coaches, and managers. Many times, leagues will have volunteers equipped with prior baseball

experience who can assist with teaching the basics or specific skills. Local high school and college coaches or players may also be willing to volunteer their time or instruct a clinic for a small fee. High school and college coaches have a wealth of knowledge and can be a great resource for your league. Once a relationship is established, it can also lead to other opportunities for your baseball program.

Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) – PCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring a positive, character-building experience for young athletes. In coordination with Little League, PCA provides additional educational resources and tools to coaches, parents, and local volunteers about teaching life lessons through sports. Learn more about how PCA can help your coaches at LittleLeague.org/PCA. You can also take a self-assessment of yourself as a coach [here](#).

6. Umpires and Umpire Education

Little League recommends that local leagues recruit, educate, and retain volunteer umpires in a similar fashion as other positions needed to operate a local league. Many districts and leagues have found successful ways to operate volunteer umpire programs, which help to defray the costs that might normally be passed onto a league.

Additionally, Little League offers a variety of umpire training materials, clinics, and seminars for training, as well as the [Little League Umpire Registry](#). Additionally, Little League offers a variety of umpire training materials, clinics, and seminars for training, as well as the [Little League Umpire Registry](#). The registry allows volunteer umpires to receive regular eNewsletters with rule interpretations and updates, the Little League Umpire online presentation, and 60- and 90- foot Field Mechanics manuals for free. Umpires may also purchase the Umpire Essential bundle for \$19.99 which includes Rulebooks or eRulebooks, the Rules Call, a Bat Ring, an Umpire Patch, and indicator.

Umpires are also encouraged to visit Little League University for free, educational content and video tutorials on plate and base mechanics, relevant news stories, and updated rule and regulation interpretations.

7. Parents and Parent Expectations

Provide your parents with a plan. Once the league has developed a strategy for the season, update parents about everything the league is organizing, including draft procedures, facilities, game schedules, initiatives, education and training, etc., so that they will have a better understanding of what to expect. Be sure to also encourage ideas and suggestions from your parents, as well as welcome volunteers.

Additionally, Little League University strives to provide education and information for parents by offering a one-stop platform where they can learn rules and regulations, best practices for supporting players and the local league, and provide feedback directly to Little League International.

8. Scheduling the Season

Each year, the local board prepares a regular season schedule. The number of teams within each age division will determine if the league can play their schedule in-house or if they will need to add interleague games with surrounding Little League programs. A league may opt for a combination of the two as well.

An interleague schedule benefits small programs looking for teams to play, leagues wanting to increase excitement during the Regular Season, or programs looking to build skill level. It may also help to improve and promote awareness of your baseball program within the community. Your District Administrator (D.A.) should be able to inform you about baseball programs and divisions in other leagues within the district or neighboring districts and what opportunities may exist for interleague play.

A completed interleague form should be submitted prior to the start of the season via the [Little League Data Center](#). Leagues may play any other local Little League program, in the appropriate age division, with appropriate approvals.

9. Post-Season Review

While most leagues take a short break after their Tournament season, we would recommend the membership gather for one last meeting to review the concluding season. It's at this time that the membership should discuss everything from manager and coach training, opening ceremonies, the overall season, marketing plans and strategies, closing ceremonies, etc., to determine which aspects of the program worked well and which ones need improvement. The membership should feel comfortable giving recommendations and suggesting ideas for the upcoming season. This should allow for enough time to plan and organize committees, if necessary.