



Welles Park Parents Association Youth Baseball

Coaches Manual

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## **I. The Purpose of this Document**

This document is meant to guide and assist WPPA coaches in fulfilling their roles as leaders, instructors, and role models in the WPPA Youth Baseball Leagues. The procedures stipulated in this book are binding and must be followed. Although some rules are referenced in this document, this is not a rule book. For definitive answers on rules, consult the WPPA Rule Book and the NFHS Rule Book.

## **II. The Welles Park Parents Association**

### **A. History**

The Welles Park Parents Association (WPPA) is a parent volunteer organization that operates in cooperation with the Chicago Park District to provide baseball instruction to neighborhood children. In 1990, the Chicago Park District and Welles Park chose to discontinue their baseball program ending the direct involvement of Chicago Park District personnel in the administration of youth baseball at Welles Park. The WPPA was formed in order to continue to offer baseball to our kids in the spring and summer months. The association has obtained both Federal and State tax exempt charitable organization status. The program has expanded and we now use the fields and facilities at Welles Park, Winnemac Park, Legion Park, Rogers Park, River Park, Mather Park and Hollywood Park. Volunteer parents organize and operate the league and field any and all inquiries about youth baseball at these parks.

In 2015, WPPA began hosting a fall season on weekends from early September to late October with games held at Winnemac Park and other local parks.

### **B. Philosophy**

#### **1. Instructional League**

Our program is primarily an instructional league. The goal of our program is to teach baseball fundamentals to the kids in a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. Each age group has variations in the rules designed to match the skill level of the participants. This enables the children to experience success while developing the skills needed to compete at the next level. Please refer to the rulebook for a complete explanation of rule variations at each level.

The WPPA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion/creed, gender, gender expression, national origin/ancestry, disability, or sexual orientation in any of its activities or operations. We are an inclusive baseball and softball community.

## **2. Coach's Role in Practice and Preparation**

WPPA Coaches are expected to be leaders, instructors, and role models. By WPPA Rule, for division Rookie through Senior, all coaches are required to hold regular practices. Most of your time as coach will be spent at practice. Practice is essential to develop the skills needed to succeed in game situations. No coach should put kids in situations in which they will fail. It is each coach's responsibility to give all players an opportunity to play multiple positions and to teach and prepare each player to play good fundamental baseball at each position.

## **3. Opportunities to Play Various Positions**

Teaching players to play all positions is essential to the development of our young ballplayers. It is expected that, in the Rookie and Junior divisions, players will be rotated through several positions during the course of a game. Coaches in these divisions should strive to give every player the opportunity to play at least 2 innings in the infield in each game. In the Minor and Major divisions, players should be rotated through multiple positions during the course of a game. Coaches in these divisions should make an effort to play each player in the infield at least once in each game. Coaches who unnecessarily limit opportunities for certain players in specific positions violate the core philosophy of our association. Such practices will not be tolerated.

## **4. Playing Time**

Rules regarding the number of times a player may sit out in regular season and playoff games are included in the WPPA Youth Baseball Rules Book. Coaches in the Rookie, Junior and Minor divisions are strongly encouraged to not sit out any player a third defensive inning before every player on the team has sat out at least one defensive inning.

## **5. Instruction AND Competition**

We believe that our goals as an instructional league are consistent with the spirit of competition. In our program we keep score. Also, except in the Rookie League, we publish standings, organize a season-finishing playoff structure and crown a champion. We believe that these are important measures of success and improvement. Teamwork and sportsmanship are an integral part of all good competition. These values are what we hope the kids will take with them when they complete a season in our program. We expect our coaches to set a strong, positive example and to be role models in this regard.

## **C. Organization**

All parents who enroll their child in the program become members of the WPPA. A Board of Directors determines the general policies that govern the operations of the WPPA and also manages the operations of the WPPA. The Board consists of an Executive Committee comprised of the following positions: President, Treasurer, one or more Vice Presidents, and Secretary. The Board is also comprised of members who chair various committees such as: Baseball Operations, Equipment, Fund Raising, Fields and Maintenance, Sponsorship, Registration, and Communication. League Commissioners for each of the 6 baseball age divisions as well as softball and Fallball are also members of the Board. All Board members must submit to a background check.

Board meetings are typically held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the Welles Park field house. Anyone affiliated with the WPPA in any way is encouraged to attend and participate.

## **D. Age Divisions**

### **1. Spring/Summer Season**

The spring/summer season league is divided into 6 age divisions. They are:

- Liberty ages 15 - 18
- Senior ages 13 - 14
- Major ages 11 - 12
- Minor ages 9 -10
- Junior ages 7 – 8
- Rookie ages 5 – 6

### **2. Fall Season**

The fall season league is divided into 4 age divisions. They are (subject to revision):



- 14U ages 13 - 14
- 12U ages 11 - 12
- 10U ages 9 – 10
- 8U ages 7-8

### **III. Sportsmanship**

The goal of our program is to teach baseball fundamentals to the kids in a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. We believe that success in this goal is directly related to having coaches that teach, emphasize, and practice good sportsmanship at all times.

#### **A. Show Respect for the Umpires**

Experience has shown that one of the keys to the success of the league is the quality of umpiring. Each year the league invests time, money and effort to ensure that the umpiring is consistent and fair. The Liberty division uses IHSA recognized umpires. The Senior, Major, Minor, Junior, and Rookie divisions use umpires that have completed our in-house training program that is conducted by IHSA and NCAA certified umpires. The league has also instituted a second level of optional training for more experienced umpires.

No matter how much training umpires have had, even the best umpires make mistakes. Similarly, so do coaches and administrators at the highest levels of competition. Our point is – no one is perfect.

But that in no way excuses inappropriate behavior in WPPA games. Just as we do not tolerate anyone berating **players**, we do not tolerate coaches, players, or parents baiting, berrating or confronting **umpires** under any circumstances. We consider appropriate conduct towards umpires an important part of sportsmanship and we are not tolerant of abuses in this regard.

#### **B. Protests**

Everybody makes mistakes – deal with it! More importantly, teach your players and parents to deal with it! This succinctly expresses the attitude of our program towards “blown calls” by the umpires. Win or lose, your team will look to you for guidance. The way coaches handle all situations will leave lasting impressions. Take these as opportunities to show your team how to deal with adversity in a calm, rational, and dignified manner. Set a good example. To underscore this point, the league has eliminated protests during the regular season.

A special set of procedures for protests are allowed during the playoffs under certain circumstances. Refer to your rulebook for details and procedures.

### **C. Coaches and Parents**

#### **1. Parental Conduct**

Each head coach is responsible for the conduct of the assistant coaches and parents associated with their team. Head coaches should make their assistants and parents aware that their conduct is subject to the same guidelines set out for our head coaches and players.

#### **2. Child Safety**

Child safety is essential to providing a good youth baseball experience. Coaches need to make sure that while the players are in their care, the players are never in harm's way.

All coaches – both head and assistant – are required to submit to a background check. No individual practices or coaching sessions are allowed. Instruction should always be done in a group setting. No coach should put themselves in a position where they are alone with a child other than their own. One-on-one instruction should only occur within a group practice setting with other players or a parent present. Parents cannot give permission to waive this rule. Coaches may not provide transportation to a child unless there are additional players or parents in the vehicle.

## **IV. Sponsors**

### **A. Lifeblood of the League**

Sponsorships are the lifeblood of our league. Local businesses and families within the league supplement the annual budget by donating monies to support the program in exchange for recognition of their support. These donations are a major part of the WPPA income and allow us to keep fees at a reasonable rate so that baseball is accessible to all families.

For details regarding sponsorship, please see the sponsorship page on the WPPA website. If you would like to sponsor your team, see the sponsorship page on the website for details.

## **B. Your Team Sponsor**

After the Player Draft, your team will be assigned one or more Sponsors. It is extremely important that your team's Sponsor(s) be treated as team members and included in your season. The WPPA recommends that coaches invite sponsors to games and introduce them to players. Coaches should compose a team "thank you for your support" note at the end of the season.

## **V. Spring/Summer Season**

### **A. Operations**

#### **1. Player Rankings**

##### **a) Coach's Responsibility to Enter Player Rankings**

At the end of each season, the WPPA asks each head coach to enter player rankings. Entering player rankings is part of your responsibility as coach. The WPPA relies on the player ranking to enable the next year's coaches to assess players' abilities so that they can draft a well-rounded team and so that the leagues can be competitively balanced.

##### **b) Player Ranking Review**

Players who have played in the league the prior year are evaluated by their coaches using a standard ratings grid created by the league. Approximately two weeks before the draft, preliminary player ranking sheets are distributed to the current year's coaches. Much time and effort is spent to ensure that the rankings are reasonable. Coaches are asked to attend a pre-draft meeting to adjust any obvious anomalies or inaccuracies in the cumulative player rankings. At this time we hope that coaches can volunteer any information they have regarding players that are not rated correctly. After this meeting, at the discretion of the league commissioner, adjustments may be made and the final player ratings lists are distributed. **These documents are for the current year's coaches and their assigned assistants' eyes only. These documents are not to be sent to anyone else.**

#### **2. The Draft**

In all divisions except the Rookie League, players are allocated to teams by way of a pre-season draft. The draft gives coaches an opportunity to choose players with whom they have developed a rapport in past years, while maintaining the spirit of fairness and equitable distribution of talent. Each year, the

board reviews draft procedures and makes adjustments that it feels best serves the mission of the association.

The draft is typically conducted in each division in February. Draft order is typically determined in advance of the draft date, at the discretion of the league commissioner. Once draft order is determined, coaches pick team names in reverse draft order. Only coaches and/or their assigned assistant coaches are allowed to attend the draft. If neither coach can attend the draft, with the commissioner's approval, a proxy can attend the draft in their place.

**a) One Official Assistant Coach**

Each coach can assign one official assistant coach. Obviously, many more than one person will need to act as your assistants at practices and in games -- we ask that you name one official assistant coach. This one person will be able to reserve their children to be allocated to your team at the draft.

**b) Reserving Players**

A head coach may reserve **their children (or grandchildren) and the children of one predetermined assistant coach**. Unless a coach (head or official assistant) has more than one child in that league, a team may reserve no more than two players.

Reserve players are identified before the draft. Reserved players must be taken in the round that their ranking dictates. For example, in a 10 team draft: if the reserved player is ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, they must be taken in the 1<sup>st</sup> round; if ranked 18<sup>th</sup>, they must be taken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round; if ranked 35<sup>th</sup>, they must be taken in the 4<sup>th</sup> round; etc. If two reserved players appear in the same round, they must be taken in consecutive rounds. For example, in a 10 team draft: if the reserved players are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, the first reserved player is taken in the first round, and the second reserved player is taken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

No coach may draft a player that they coached/ranked the previous year more than one round before the ranking of that player. For example if Coach John Smith was the head coach of the team that David Jones played with in last year's spring season and David Jones was ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in a 10 team league (5<sup>th</sup> round), Coach Smith could not select David Jones until the 4<sup>th</sup> round.

**c) Be Aware of Siblings, Vacations, and other sports obligations**

Coaches must be aware of additional information provided about the players as they draft. Unless otherwise requested, siblings in the same division will always be placed on the same team. In the summer, players may go away for vacation or camp. We request that parents inform the league of their

plans – to the extent they are known – so that coaches know when they might be without a player. Similarly, coaches should be aware of whether players are participating in sports that may conflict with the WPPA season such as spring hockey or baseball in a non-WPPA league.

#### **d) Assignment of New Players**

Players new to WPPA may be randomly assigned to teams at the end of the draft or, at the commissioner's discretion, may be incorporated into the draft sheets or made available during pre-determined rounds of the draft and selected by teams along with players returning to the WPPA.

### **B. Commissioners**

#### **1. General Information**

Division Commissioners have a crucial role in the operation of the league. Commissioners are responsible for the overall operation of their divisions. They not only bring to the board's attention concerns of the coaches, they also have a voice in the policy decisions made by the board that affect the entire league. A head coach, assistant coach, parent or other interested party can be a commissioner.

#### **2. The Commissioner's Duties**

The Commissioner's duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Attend all Board meetings.
- Act as a liaison between the coaches in the division and the Board, communicating coach concerns to the Board and enforcing Board rules and policy in the division.
- Monitor the condition of the diamonds used by the division. Report, coordinate and if necessary participate in needed repairs to the diamond.
- Be available to assist in a determination of field playability when rain is an issue.
- Reschedule games cancelled by rain.
- Make sure coaches enter game scores and periodically check the posted standings to make sure they are correct.

- Make sure coaches enter pitch counts and abide by pitch count limits, as documented in the WPPA Youth Baseball Rules book.
- Schedule use of practice fields assigned to the division.

### **3. Rescheduling Games**

The Commissioner's priority is to make sure that all scheduled games in the division are played, if possible. While an effort should be made to accommodate coaches when possible, the priority is that the games get played. Failing to play a scheduled game may unfairly affect regular season standings and playoff brackets.

### **C. Facilities**

Please note that due to the size of the league and the demand for fields at Welles Park, practices and games in all divisions can be held at parks other than Welles Park such as Winnemac Park (Damen and Argyle), River Park (Foster and the River), Legion Park (Bryn Mawr just east of Kedzie), Hollywood Park, Revere Park, Lincoln Park, Rogers Park (on Washtenaw northwest of Touhy and Western) Mather Park, Green Briar Park or other Northside parks.

#### **1. Practice Field Availability**

The WPPA expends a great amount of effort working with the Chicago Park District obtaining the rights to, and scheduling Chicago Park District baseball fields for use by WPPA coaches/teams. Due to high demand for use by other youth baseball organizations and neighborhood adult leisure/athletic clubs, baseball facilities in general are scarce. The Commissioner from each division will assign the fields to the teams in his/her division in as fair a way as possible. Please Note – More fields are available between 4:00pm-6:00pm than between 6:00pm-8:00pm. If at all possible, please arrange for practices at the earlier times. You will be provided a copy of the permit to use the field. Be sure to have the permit with you at all practices.

### **D. Equipment**

#### **1. Issuance, Requirements and Deposits**

Each coach is issued equipment before the beginning of the season. The equipment issued varies based on the age division.

The equipment issued will be a size that should fit most kids in the age division but if a coach has a problem with any of the equipment fitting properly, they should request an exchange. It is important that all protective gear fit properly.

## **2. Protective Cups**

In the Minor, Major, Senior, and Liberty divisions, all male catchers must wear a cup. We encourage all coaches in these divisions to discuss and recommend the use of a protective cup for all male players regardless of position.

## **3. Baseballs**

All coaches will be issued two dozen baseballs. Coaches are required to provide the umpire with a new, unused game ball for each regular season game. Umpires will note on their cards if a game ball is not received from a coach. The WPPA will provide game balls to the umpires for use in the playoff games.

## **4. Gloves and Bats**

The WPPA does not provide gloves (except catcher's mitts) for any age division.

For the Rookie, Junior, and Minor divisions, the WPPA does not provide bats. Players must provide their own bat and/or share their bats with team members when needed.

For the Major, Senior, and Liberty divisions, the WPPA provides two wood bats at the start of the season. Please see the WPPA Rule Book for specifics about allowable bat materials, weights, and sizes.

## **5. Helmets**

Each player is responsible for bringing their own helmet. The WPPA has a limited number of helmets available for families that cannot afford a helmet. If that need should arise, you can contact your commissioner. Please consult the WPPA rule book regarding requirements for helmets based on the different divisions.

## **E. Regular Season and Playoffs**

### **1. Schedule**

Regular season game schedules will be posted on the WPPA website. Coaches may not change the time or date of scheduled games without specific approval of the division Commissioner. If a need to change a game date, time, or location arises, please address this need with the appropriate division Commissioner. The Commissioner will consult the rules and follow the proper procedures.

Most games are played on Saturday and Sunday, but there will be games on weekdays. Coaches and players are expected to be at the field at least one half hour before game time.

### **2. Pitch Counts**

Coaches are responsible for entering their players' pitch counts throughout the regular season in a timely manner. Please see the WPPA rule book for details.

WPPA requires both house team and travel team coaches to be proactive in communicating recent pitch counts and their intentions for playing players at the pitcher position in upcoming games -- to ensure that WPPA pitch counts limits and rest periods are followed – for both house games and travel games. House team coaches and travel team coaches share this responsibility.

### **3. Time Limits**

The time limits rules are in place to maximize the number of games for WPPA teams. They are not to be used strategically to win games – in other words we consider stalling to be unsportsmanlike. Please refer to your WPPA rule book for further explanation of time limitations, speed up rules and per inning run limitations.

### **4. Rainouts**

Prior to the start of a game only the division Commissioner or the Board President has the authority to call a game. Coaches do not have the authority to cancel a game because of weather or field conditions. Once the game starts, the authority to end a game lies solely with the umpire. The umpire may consult with the league Commissioner, the Board President or another disinterested Board member.

On game day, refer to the WPPA twitter feed or website for determination about whether a game has been cancelled or not. If it is not clear that a game has been cancelled, assume that the game will be played as scheduled. Please have your team members and their families do the same.



## **5. Playoffs**

Except for the Rookie division, all divisions have a playoff series. See the WPPA website for playoff schedules. The rainout procedure for regular season games applies to the playoffs as well.

Please Note – The playoffs are ripe for contention. WPPA expects and requires that all coaches are on their best behavior for the playoffs as this is the greatest opportunity to display good sportsmanship under pressure. Please prepare accordingly.

Please Note – While protests are NOT allowed during the regular season, protests are allowed during the playoffs. Please see the procedure for handling protests in your WPPA rule book.

Please Note – Playoff games are often scheduled in a small time period and the dates and times are contingent on the prior game results. As such, in the event of cancellation due to weather, it is imperative that you make yourself available for correspondence by phone or text during the playoff periods.

Please Note - Once the playoff schedules are posted, the game dates and times will not be changed due to scheduling conflicts (player, parent or coach). Once posted, only under extreme circumstances can playoff games be rescheduled (game date and/or time). Such rescheduling will require the approval of the Board President or a vote of the Executive Board

## **F. House and Travel**

### **1. Travel Team Offering**

The WPPA will typically offer at least one travel team at each age level from 8u (8 and under) through 14u.

### **2. Scheduling and Priority Guidelines**

The initial house schedule will not have house games scheduled on Sunday mornings or the day of the week that the Chicago Park District allocates the Baseball Stadium at Devon and Kedzie (formerly Thillens Stadium) time slots to WPPA (typically Wednesday evenings). Travel coaches should use best efforts to schedule all games and practices on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. Any house vs. travel scheduling conflicts will be resolved based on the following guidelines:

- Sunday morning and Wednesday evening travel games and practices have priority over house team games and practices. Travel coaches should schedule any Sunday morning games such that games conclude in time for players to arrive on time to Sunday afternoon house games.
- House practices have priority over travel practices at all times other than Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.
- Scheduled house games have priority over regular season travel games.
- Travel league playoff games have priority over regular season house games. Travel playoff games are defined as post-season league playoff games. They do not include games played to determine positioning for playoffs, “must-win” regular season games in advance of the playoffs, or any non-league tournament games.
- 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u and 12u...House playoff games have priority over travel league playoff games.
- 13u and 14u...Travel league playoff games have priority over house playoff games. To maintain the integrity of house league playoffs, the Senior Division Commissioner will use best efforts to structure and schedule house playoffs such that conflicts with 13u and 14u travel playoffs are minimized.
- Scheduled travel games that are recorded on a travel team’s schedule on the WPPA website have priority over house rescheduled games, makeup games, practice games, and consolation playoff games.
- Travel games not scheduled on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings have priority over house practices with the following caveat. A player may skip only three (3) primary house practices in order to participate in a travel game. A travel coach that would like a player to skip any house practices beyond the third must obtain the approval of the Board President or the Executive Committee.

Travel coaches should not schedule participation in tournaments for the first week of house playoffs. Thereafter they are cleared to schedule tournaments or games but should not pitch players that are still in the house playoffs unless the house coach agrees to it. Any conflict between travel tournament games and house games will be resolved based on the above guidelines.

### **3. Pitching**

House and travel coaches are expected to work closely together to ensure travel players have the opportunity to pitch and develop in both house and travel games. Neither house teams nor travel teams have priority with respect to pitching, unless a player has been reserved for the week to pitch in travel games only. Travel coaches can “reserve” each travel player for two weeks (Tuesday through Monday) per season to be used as a pitcher. The travel coach must give prior notice to reserve a player. Notice should be given in the form of email and must include the relevant house coach, travel coach, league commissioner and the travel coordinator. This notice should be given no later than the Tuesday prior to the the game(s) for which the player would be reserved. Unless otherwise agreed, the reservation will be effective through the calendar week (Tuesday through Monday). Unless exceptional circumstances exist, as determined by the Board President or the Executive Board, a house team may not have more than one travel player reserved during any single week.

Travel and house coaches shall communicate and work together regarding pitchers’ pitch counts when a travel player is not specifically reserved for travel pitching.

House or travel pitching conflicts or disputes should be raised to the travel coordinator and the league commissioner as soon as they arise.

House and travel coaches need to go above and beyond the league rules and guidelines concerning pitch counts by utilizing the web site AND emails, texts, or phone calls to stay abreast of a pitcher’s availability. During house games that are blowouts house coaches should refrain from using travel players as pitchers.

## **G. Events**

### **1. Opening Day Rookie Parade**

The start of every WPPA season includes a gathering of all Rookie teams, ceremonial first pitches, and a parade around Welles Park by the Rookie teams. For many, this is their first official event with the WPPA, and so coaches are encouraged to encourage attendance and participation.

### **2. Fundraisers**

WPPA depends on fundraising events during the season. All coaches are responsible for notifying their teams of the times and dates of WPPA fundraisers and of actively promoting the events.

### **3. Picture Day(s)**

Players receive a complimentary picture package as part of their registration fee. Please make every effort to promote participation by your entire team on your scheduled picture day. Early in the season, you will receive the picture day schedule, which will indicate the date for your team's pictures. Please advise your team's parents of the date and distribute the picture day forms to them at your earliest convenience.

Limited make-up dates will be offered for individual player photos, but team photos cannot be rescheduled. Please note that team and individual pictures are mailed to the coaches. It is your responsibility as coach to distribute the picture packages to your players. Please distribute them as soon as you can and bring the remainder to the picnic to be distributed in your picnic area after the trophy ceremony.

### **4. Thillens (Baseball Stadium at Devon and Kedzie) Day**

Every team in the Minor, Junior, and Rookie divisions may enjoy a regularly scheduled game played at the Baseball Stadium at Devon and Kedzie ("BSDK") (nee Thillens). This annual event provides a "big league" atmosphere for the players, with manicured fields, scoreboards, a concession stand and loudspeaker announcements of players. Parents, relatives, friends, neighbors and sponsors are invited to attend and experience this WPPA showcase event, which is a special experience for the players.

### **5. Picnic**

The WPPA plans a celebration of the season, scheduled for the last Saturday of our league's season. Welles Park generously provides WPPA families access to the entire park for this day. Coaches, players, parents, relatives and friends are invited to picnic with us on the park grounds. The coach for each team must coordinate their picnic for this day. We recommend that you enlist the help of some team parents to assist with setup, provisions, and cleanup. Please use good judgment and remember Park district rules prohibit alcoholic beverages on park grounds.

The Liberty division has a separate dinner function to celebrate the end of their season and distribute trophies and awards.

### **6. End of Season Trophies and Awards**

Every player receives a token of recognition for participation at the end of season picnic. The ceremonies are held at the Welles Park Gazebo. They will start around 9:00am with the Rookie division

and progress toward the Senior division around noon. Each Commissioner will act as master of ceremonies for their division.

Each year at the picnic, the President makes a presentation of the following baseball and softball awards.

- The Gene Sims Award pays tribute to a current baseball coach for setting an example of leadership and sportsmanship, consistent with the goals of the WPPA.
- The Jim Price “BASH Award” pays tribute to a current baseball player and current softball player for setting an example of leadership and sportsmanship, consistent with the goals of the WPPA.
- The Andy Lowenthal Award is awarded to the most outstanding WPPA baseball umpire.
- The Ray Owens Award pays tribute to a current softball coach for setting an example of leadership and sportsmanship, consistent with the goals of the WPPA.
- The Paul Thompson Award is awarded to the most outstanding WPPA softball umpire.

The WPPA supplies each coach with two plaques for recognition of players. These plaques are:

- Coach’s Award
- Most Improved Player Award

The Coaches Award can be used as a Most Valuable Player award but some coaches use it to recognize qualities such as hustle, perfect practice and game attendance, team spirit, sportsmanship, etc. We leave this choice up to the individual coaches. The Most Improved Player Award is self-explanatory. These plaques are meant to be awarded at the picnic after the division ceremonies. If additional plaques are desired, the coaches must make this request by the end of June.

## **H. Evaluating Coaches**

Coaches are observed and evaluated throughout the season. In November, the board will conduct a review of all coaches in executive (closed) session. Information received from parents, players, other coaches, umpires or umpire coordinators, park personnel, and board members may be considered. Based on this information, the board will discuss any disciplinary action (demotion, temporary suspension, permanent suspension or reprimands) deemed necessary against coaches. Coaches may be informed in writing of any disciplinary action against them. If a coach wishes to protest the board’s

action, he or she may appear before the executive board at a mutually-agreed time. For more information, consult the WPPA rule book.

## **II. Fall Season**

### **A. Registration**

Registration for the fall season is held in late July/early August. Full teams, partial teams and individual players are eligible to register. Players need not have played with WPPA before.

### **B. Operations**

#### **1. Player Assignment**

In all divisions players are allocated to teams by way of player assignment by the Fall Season Commissioner.

### **C. Fall Season Commissioner**

#### **1. General Information**

The Fall Season Commissioner has a crucial role in the operation of the league. The Commissioner is responsible for the overall operation of all fall season divisions. They not only bring to the board's attention concerns of the coaches, but also have a voice in the policy decisions made by the board that affect the entire league. A head coach, assistant coach, parent or other interested party can be the Fall Season Commissioner.

#### **2. The Commissioner's Duties**

The Commissioner's duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Monitor the condition of the diamonds.
- Be available to assist in a determination of field playability when rain is an issue.

- Reschedule games cancelled by rain.
- Make sure coaches enter game scores and periodically check the posted standings to make sure they are correct.
- Make sure coaches abide by pitch count guidelines

### **3. Rescheduling Games**

The Commissioner's priority is to make sure that all scheduled games are played, to the extent possible. While an effort should be made to accommodate coaches when possible, the priority is that the games get played. Failing to play a scheduled game may unfairly affect regular season standings and playoff brackets.

#### **D. Facilities**

Games will be played on weekends at Winnemac Park, Legion Park, and Welles Park (and occasionally at other parks if necessary for scheduling or weather reasons).

##### **1. Practice Field Assignments**

If available, the WPPA will offer field assignments for fall ball practices to coaches. Otherwise, Coaches are free to schedule practices when and where it is convenient for them, however, WPPA will not obtain any permits for practices and will not administer any allocation of fields for team practices.

#### **E. Equipment**

##### **1. Issuance, Requirements and Deposits**

Each coach is issued equipment before the beginning the fall season. The equipment issued varies based on the age division.

The equipment issued will be a size that should fit most kids in the age division but if a coach has a problem with any of the equipment fitting properly, they should request an exchange. It is important that all protective gear fit properly.

##### **2. Protective Cups**

In all divisions, all male catchers must wear a cup. We encourage all coaches to discuss and recommend the use of a protective cup for all male players regardless of position.

### **3. Baseballs**

All coaches will be issued two dozen baseballs. Coaches are required to provide the umpire with a new, unused game ball for each regular season game. Umpires will note on their cards if a game ball is not received from a coach. The WPPA will provide game balls to the umpires for use in the playoff games.

### **4. Gloves and Bats**

The WPPA does not provide gloves (except catcher's mitts) for any age division.

Also, WPPA does not provide bats. Players must provide their own bat and/or share their bats with team members when needed.

### **5. Helmets**

Each player is responsible for bringing their own helmet. The WPPA has a limited number of helmets available for families that cannot afford a helmet. If that need should arise, you can contact your commissioner. Please consult the WPPA rule book regarding requirements for helmets based on the different divisions.

## **F. Season and Playoffs**

### **1. Schedule**

Fall season game schedules will be posted on the WPPA website. Coaches may not change the time or date of scheduled games without specific approval of the Fall Season Commissioner. If a need to change a game date, time, or location arises, please address this need with the Fall Season Commissioner. The Commissioner will consult the rules and follow the proper procedures.

All games are played on Saturday and Sunday. Coaches and players are expected to be at the field at least one half hour before game time.

### **2. Time Limits**

The time limits rules are in place to maximize the number of games for WPPA teams. They are not to be used strategically to win games. In other words, we consider stalling to be unsportsmanlike. Please



refer to your WPPA rulebook for further explanation of time limitations, speed up rules and per inning run limitations.

### **3. Rainouts**

Prior to the start of a game only the Fall Season Commissioner or the Board President has the authority to call a game. Coaches do not have the authority to cancel a game because of weather or field conditions. If the Fall Season Commissioner or Board President are not available to make the decision, another disinterested Board member may make the decision. Once the game starts, that authority lies solely with the umpire. The umpire may consult with the Fall Season Commissioner, the Board President or another disinterested Board Member.

On game day, refer to the WPPA website for determination about whether a game has been cancelled or not. If it is not clear that a game has been cancelled, assume that the game will be played as scheduled. Please have your team members and their families do the same.

### **4. Playoffs**

All divisions have a playoff series. See the WPPA website for playoff schedules. The rainout procedure for regular season games applies to the playoffs as well.

Please Note – The playoffs are ripe for contention. WPPA expects and requires that all coaches are on their best behavior for the playoffs as this is the greatest opportunity to display good sportsmanship under pressure. Please prepare accordingly.

Please Note – While protests are NOT allowed during the regular season, protests are allowed during the playoffs. Please see the procedure for handling protests in your Rulebook.

Please Note – Often the playoff games are scheduled in a small time period and the dates and times are contingent on the prior game results. As such, in the event of cancellation due to weather, it is imperative that you make yourself available for correspondence by phone or text during the playoff periods.

Please Note - Once posted, only under extreme circumstances can playoff games be rescheduled (game date and/or time). Such rescheduling will require the approval of the Board President or a vote of the Executive Board.

**a) End of Season Trophies and Awards**

Championship winners and runners up receive trophies.

**G. Evaluating Coaches**

Coaches are observed and evaluated throughout the fall season. In November, the board will conduct a review of all coaches in executive (closed) session. Information received from parents, players, other coaches, umpires or umpire coordinators, park personnel, and board members may be considered. Based on this information, the board will discuss any disciplinary action (demotion, temporary suspension, permanent suspension or reprimands) deemed necessary against coaches. Coaches may be informed in writing of any disciplinary action against them. If a coach wishes to protest the board's action, he or she may appear before the executive board at a mutually-agreed time. For more information, consult the WPPA rule book.