

## Things Every Parent Needs to Know

### Uniforms

Shortly before Opening Day each player will be issued a full jersey. Players are required to wear the complete league issued uniform to play in a game including the hat. In addition uniforms must be worn properly; for example shirts tucked in, hats on straight, etc. Undershirts are permitted but can not be white in color for pitchers. Light weight jackets or sweatshirts may be worn over the jersey as weather conditions require. Families are encouraged to wear team colors at games to show their support.

### Equipment

#### Gloves

Each player must provide their own glove. For Tball I recommend a very inexpensive-soft glove because they are easy to open and close for small hands. For the older kids I recommend spending the money on a good glove. Realistically this will be one of the few pieces of equipment that will actually last several years. Girls should also look for a softball specific glove as the web is larger than a baseball glove. Be sure to mark your player's glove with name and phone number.

#### Bat

A bat to practice with at home is highly recommended. League rules regarding bat length maximums vary by age group: Tball/Peanut- 28", Juniors- 33", Seniors- 34". The barrel of a bat may not exceed 2.25" in any division. All bats must have a tape or rubber wrap for grip. I highly recommend purchasing an inexpensive wooden bat to practice with. They are very heavy and difficult to hit with making them an excellent practice tool. However if you are looking to purchase a nice aluminum bat please talk to me and I could recommend a few.

#### Cleats

A well fitting pair of cleats are highly recommended (but not required). Studs or cleats made of metal **are not** allowed. Nike has a great shoe for kids with the Expand-It system. The system allows you to remove a pad in the back, making the shoe ½ size bigger, for that growing child. Also for those of you that play soccer; keep in mind that soccer cleats can be worn for baseball but baseball cleats cannot be worn in soccer. The main difference is that baseball shoes have a toe cleat.

#### Ball

Tball/Peanut Boys/Junior Boys use a 9" safety ball. Peanut Girls/Junior Girls use an 11" safety ball. Senior boys use a 9" hardball. Senior Girls use an 11" hardball. The league provides approved practice and game balls so please do not bring yours from home.

#### Safety

All boys participating in Juniors or Seniors must wear an athletic supporter to all games and practices. Sliders are recommended for all players in the Junior and Senior divisions. Any sunglasses worn must be OSHA #Z87 or higher. Prescription glasses are okay. Any players with braces should wear a mouth guard.

#### Misc.

A water bottle is mandatory for every single practice regardless of the weather conditions. Batting gloves, wrist bands, and additional helmets (juniors and seniors) may be purchased if desired. Such items are decorative more than anything but many kids like to look like the pros.

#### Jewelry

Jewelry cannot be worn by players participating in games and practices. The only exception is jewelry that can't be removed due to medical or religious reasons. Approved exceptions must be securely taped to prevent injury to the wearer or others. Hard objects—such as barrettes, bobby pins, hair clips, stretch bands with plastic balls, etc. should not be worn by players in their hair during games and practices.

## **Playing Time**

All players present for the game will be included in the batting order. Any players showing up late will be placed at the end of the batting order. Tball- all players will take the field. All other divisions- no player may sit a second inning until all players have sat at least one (with the exception of injury, disciplinary action, or late players).

## **Drinks and Snacks**

Each player is responsible for bringing their own water to games and practices. We will create and distribute a snack schedule for our team for a post-game snack. Snacks should be healthy food—no carbonated drinks or sugary snacks. Please bring a few extra servings to share with players' siblings, coaches and umpires.

## **Snack Bag**

In addition to post-game snacks, I like to reward kids for their efforts and take a moment to acknowledge their individual accomplishments. Along with this, you may notice that I hand out items such as gum, baseball cards, stickers, etc. Donations of such items are greatly appreciated.

## **Opening Day**

Opening Day is at Deer Valley High School on Saturday, April 14, 2007. Usually we meet there around 8am...exact time to be determined later. Players will march with their coaches in the opening ceremony. Please be in full uniform (baseball cleats are optional).

## **Pictures**

Pictures will be taken all day long and all at Deer Valley High School on Opening Day. Please be in full uniform. The entire team must be there on time before scheduled picture can be taken. The specific times will be given to us at a later date.

## **Team Socials and Player Awards**

We may have pizza parties throughout the season. I like to have them at Aladino's pizza because they donate thousands of dollars to the community, help our league with many events, and they donate free pizza to the kids. We will also have a large party at the end of the season. During this party we will distribute trophies to each of the players. These trophies will be a separate fee which will be collected by the team parent later on in the year.

## **Banners and Medals**

The league will provide banners for every team in the league. A separate fee will not be collected for them. In addition the league will provide a medal for each of the kids that participate in the 2007 season. The medal will be presented by a board member at our final game.

## **Communication**

If your player is going to be late or miss a practice or game, please call the coach. Also, please bring up concerns early so we avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings. A player may want to play in a particular position or perhaps does not get along with a team mate. Often these things may be brought up at home but not to us. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the coach first. If you are unable to resolve issues with the coach, contact a DBL Board Member. Points of contact for DBL are (925) 706-1994 and [www.deltabaseballleague.com](http://www.deltabaseballleague.com).

## **The DBL Website**

The website is a great place to find valuable information. You can look up important dates on the league's calendar, see our team's schedule, check out player stats, and learn more about the rules of the league. During the rainy weather it is also a great way to check if games or practices have been cancelled. Please visit the site when you get a moment and register your email address. You will get up to date notifications from the president regarding the DBL.

## Positive Coaching Alliance

I have been certified through the PCA to coach youth sports. The PCA was developed at Stanford University to develop environments where children look forward to practices and games. I plan on using lessons from the PCA but need your help as parents to accomplish this goal. To do this we must promote three themes:

1. Redefine Winner
2. Fill the Emotional Tank
3. Honor the Game

### Redefining a Winner

In professional sports there is only one goal- to have the most points at the end of the contest.

However in youth sports we are trying to teach these young men and women to be winners in life. To help our children get the most out of competition we need to redefine what it means to be a "winner."

Winners are people who:

*Make maximum effort*

*Continue to learn and improve*

*Refuse to let mistakes stop them*

Think of the acronym ELM- **E**ffort, **L**earning, and rebounding from **M**istakes. By focusing on these things players will develop habits that will serve them throughout their lives. Athletes that focus on these key areas tend to have less anxiety and increased self-confidence. They will have more fun and play better. You can help by focusing on effort rather than stats. Let your child know it is okay to make mistakes. Ask them about their game instead of telling them what you thought about it. Finally, and most importantly, let the coaches criticize your child's play; tell them you are proud of them regardless of the outcome of the game.

### Fill the Emotional Tank

Research shows that the home team wins over 60% of the time because of the emotional support a team receives in front of its own fans. Like gas tanks in cars, our young athletes have "emotional tanks" that need to be filled to do their best. Of course as coaches we may need to correct a mistake. Research has shown that the "magic ratio" of **5:1** (praise to criticism) is ideal. The criticism is also thrown in the middle of these five items of praise called the sandwich technique. Help us fill your child's emotional tank by encouraging them regardless of what happened in a game, try not to give your child a lot of advice (we will handle that), and remember the magic ratio if you feel you must comment on a mistake.

### Honor the Game

If a coach and his or her team have to dishonor the game to win it, what is this victory really worth, and what sort of message is this sending young athletes? At PCA they say that Honoring the Game goes to the "ROOTS" of positive play. Each letter in ROOTS stands for an important part of the game: **R is for Rules.** Rules allow us to keep the game fair. If we win by ignoring or violating the rules, what is the value of our victory?

**O is for Opponents.** Without an opponent, there would be no competition. Rather than demeaning a strong opponent, we need to honor strong opponents because they challenge us to do our best. Athletes can be both fierce and friendly during the same competition.

**O is for Officials.** Respecting officials, even when we disagree with their calls, may be the toughest part of Honoring the Game. We must remember that officials are not perfect just like all of us.

**T is for Teammates.** It's easy for young athletes to think solely about their own performance, but we want athletes to realize that being part of a team requires thinking about and respecting one's teammates. This respect needs to carry beyond the field, into the classroom, etc.

**S is for Self.** Athletes should be encouraged to live up to their own highest personal standard of Honoring the Game, even when their opponents are not. Athlete's respect for themselves and their own standards must come first.