

This book instructs coaches on the duties and responsibilities of coaching Little League baseball, including maximizing practice efficiency, teaching the basics of the game, and effectively handling parents. It answers some of the questions you're afraid to ask.

How To Coach Little League Baseball: A Short Easy To Follow Guide On How To Begin Your Little League Coaching Career

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Coaches give
How to Coach Little League Baseball
Two Thumbs Up!

**Straight shooting approach that
makes baseball fun again for the
players, coaches and the parents!**

Jake Patterson has been coaching youth athletics for over twenty years. He holds a Graduate Degree in Education and has a background in youth counseling. He has coached every level of baseball from Tee-Ball to high school and has published several books on coaching youth athletics. The book, *How to Coach Little League: A Short Easy to Follow Guide on How to Begin Your Little League Coaching Career* has been used at some of the largest coaching clinics in Northeast United States.

"Being the Webmaster of Baseball Almanac means I see a lot of coaching books over the course of a year. Jake Patterson's *How to Coach Little League* was easily the best of the lot during 2005. It was unique, informative, extremely valuable and easy enough to understand that I found myself in the back yard with Erika (My 9-year-old daughter who plays coach pitch) practicing actual techniques from the book minutes after I opened it."

- Sean Holtz, C.E.O. of Baseball Almanac, Inc.

"Great job on *How to Coach Little League Baseball*. It's the first easy reading instruction manual I found that helps me, the coach, deal with the not often talked about responsibilities of coaching youth athletics."

**-Ed Charlton, President, Thompson Little League
Thompson, CT**

"...The more information you get to the parents the fewer questions you have to answer during the season. Love the schedules and the letters home, great section."

**-Lisa Lindstrom., President and Coach, Woodstock Little League
Woodstock, CT**

How to Coach Little League Baseball

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Jake Patterson

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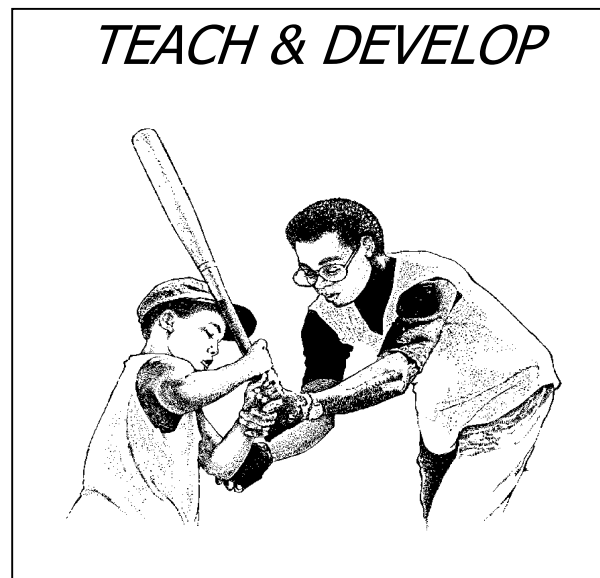
Section 1. The Little League Coach



The Little League Coach's Job

1. YOUR MISSION AS A COACH

Coaching Little League can be a very rewarding experience. It is very important however, that you keep a proper perspective of what your priorities and mission should be at this level of competition. Your primary responsibility is NOT to win! The pressure of winning will come soon enough for these young athletes. Your primary mission as a Little League coach is to:



Unfortunately, many coaches live their adult athletic lives through their young players. Visions of days gone by cloud their judgment, and teaching and developing young players takes a back seat to their own personal athletic gratification. While your personal experience, as a *former* player will be very important throughout your coaching career, it is imperative to remember that you are no longer a player, you are a coach. Knowing how to do something is much different than knowing how to teach it. The later being a much more difficult endeavor.

2. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A COACH

It is important to remember that your players look up to you. You set the example. You should always act like a coach when on the field and be aware of your actions when you are off the field.

Other responsibilities include:

- a. Safety.
- b. Learning the game.
- c. Being polite, kind and approachable.

- d. Being fair by providing ALL players the opportunity to learn.
- e. Making every player feel they are a part of the team regardless of their talent level.
- f. Dressing like, and looking like a coach.
- g. Setting reasonable goals and expectations.
- h. Teaching the fundamentals of the game.
- i. Being positive no matter what the outcome.
- j. Knowing and supporting Little League Baseball and Softball rules and programs.
- k. Being honest and not afraid of admitting your own mistakes.
- l. Being open-minded.
- m. Being a role model for the children.
- n. Understanding that growth and progress come one small step at a time.
- o. NEVER yelling at a child.
- p. Setting rules and following them (See Rules section).
- q. And remembering the game is *for the children*.

3. *SUCCESSFUL COACHING*

Determining whether or not you were successful at the end of the season is not as difficult as some may think, and it does not only include your win/loss record. Evaluating your success at the youth level can be determined by asking yourself the following questions:

- a. Was I able to get the absolute best out of the athletes?
- b. Did I leave the athletes feeling more confident about themselves as people, and more confident in their abilities as athletes?
- c. Did they enjoy themselves, and did they feel comfortable being an active member of the team?
- d. Did they excel in the concept of good sportsmanship and treating opponents, teammates, fans and officials politely?
- e. Did they learn the skills we taught them?
- f. Did I leave them a little more prepared for life's challenges?

4. *ESTABLISHING YOUR TEAM PHILOSOPHY*

Every coach is different and therefore his or her philosophies will vary. There are however, basic expectations that should be required from the players. Establishing how you are going to run the team and informing the players and parents on the first day is important for a successful season. Your team philosophy should include:

- a. Be the absolute best you can be at every practice and game.
- b. Improve in your skills through practice.
- c. Work hard at becoming physically fit.
- d. Learn as much as you can about the game.
- e. Always support the team and your teammates.

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- f. Always conduct yourself in a respectful manner and represent the town and your team with pride.

5. *TEAM RULES*

Team rules allow you run the team effectively and efficiently. They insure every participant gets the most they can from the Little League experience by preventing the waste of the team's most precious resource; *time*. The following items should be reviewed with both players and parents at the beginning of each season:

- a. When the coach speaks everyone listens.
- b. When you do not understand something, ask questions.
- c. Stay focused.
- d. Always use good sportsmanship.
- e. Follow instructions.
- f. No one leaves the field until all the equipment is stored and the field and dugouts are clean. I sometimes tell the players, "I'm your coach, not your maid." Their mess, their responsibility.
- g. Whistle blows, everyone stops.
- h. When on the bench always yell encouragement, never yell instructions or criticism.
- i. Always work hard.
- j. Learn the game.
- k. No horseplay.
- l. No one starts practice until the coach arrives.

Johnny Unitas

Many years ago I had the privilege of meeting one of America's greatest athletes, Johnny Unitas. Johnny and I were paired off as partners in a golf tournament. During the match I found that Johnny was one of the most unpretentious guys I have ever met and we quickly fell into, "a bunch of regular guys just playing golf and talking routine." I asked Johnny: "What was the most rewarding part of your career?" He replied without batting an eye, "Teaching kids football. Of all the things I accomplished, I enjoyed coaching kids the best."

6. THE QUESTION OF WINNING VERSUS TEACHING AND DEVELOPING

Winning is a hotly debated topic in youth sports. Many sports psychiatrists feel that we have gone too far, placing too much emphasis on winning. We developed the following table several years ago with the help of college and professional coaches, and a sports psychologist. It may help address your questions concerning this subject.

Table 1.1: Winning Versus Teaching and Developing

Categories	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
Coaches' Emphasis	WIN	WIN / DEVELOP	WIN / TEACH / DEVELOP	DEVELOP / TEACH / WIN	TEACH
Description	Primary function is to WIN at all costs. Jobs are on the line.	Primary function is to win while further developing. Athlete is looking at playing at a higher level.	Primary function is to teach the finer points of the game. Winning IS becoming a priority.	Athlete has a basic knowledge of the game. Teaching and developing is the key. Winning is NOT the priority.	Athlete has little to no knowledge of the game. WINNING and LOSING does not matter. Teaching the game to all members of the team is the priority.
Team Types Level	Professionals College Olympic Team National Teams	College Semi-Pro's Olympic Development Teams	High School American Legion Babe Ruth Little League All-Stars	High School JV High School Freshman Middle School Junior League Senior League	Tee Ball Minor League Little League Recreation Leagues
Typical Age Group	Adults	Young Adults	Teenagers (15-18)	Teenagers (12-15)	5-12 Year Olds
Type of Training	Training is very hard and vigorous. Those that can't keep up are cut. Athletes are selected based on their talent. Expectation to win is very high.	Training is hard and vigorous with emphasis on development. Athlete knows the game and is expected to develop the finer points.	Training is somewhat hard. Teaching is still a key coaching priority.	Training is NOT hard and somewhat fun. Coach is teaching and developing the athlete by improving basic skills. Coach's primary job is to prepare the athlete for a good season of play. Player effort should be rewarded with playtime regardless of skill.	Training is FUN and fast moving (game-like). Coach's only concern is teaching the game. Everyone should have an EQUAL opportunity to play.
Commitment	Work is year-round. Hard work	Seasonal Hard Work, year round conditioning.	Work is seasonal. Athletes typically play other sports.	Seasonal and fun. Athletes sometimes play other sports.	Seasonal and always fun.
Fun Factor (1= Hard Work, 10= Fun Play)	1	2	3	7	10

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7. TRYOUTS

Conducting tryouts is a very difficult process for a coach. Deciding who plays and who does not, always results in broken hearts. While most Little Leagues provides guidelines for this process, there are those instances where tryouts are necessary. Middle School teams, AAU teams, and other non Little League teams can be used as examples. Keep in mind that most Little Leagues are able to accommodate all players that want to play. Those players that don't make a Little League team are usually assigned to Minor League team.

There are several guidelines that can make the tryout or assignment process easier.

- a. Establish standards prior to the tryouts. Ask yourself, "What are the criteria I will use to select my players?" Avoid, at all costs the, "*I know a good player when I see him,*" approach. The good players will not be your problem.
- b. Communicate your standards via written letter to both parents and players. Ask the parents to review the standards with their child at home. This helps both the parent and the player understand what is expected and helps prepare the child for their big day.
- c. Do not allow parents on the field where tryouts are being conducted, unless they are part of the coaching staff. It is unfair to both their child and to the other players.
- d. Review the tryout schedule and expectations with the players on the first day. Tell them what you will be looking for and when you expect to make your cuts.
- e. Plan for players that either cannot make tryouts or who are sick. The options of how to handle this can range from special tryouts to no show/no play. The key is to be prepared.

8. TRYOUT LETTER

The following is an example of a tryout letter I use. Please note, this letter would be appropriate for players trying out on a school team and would have to be modified and adjusted for the level you coach. It is best to get this letter out during a parent/player meeting prior to tryouts. If this is not possible then I would suggest handing them out the first day of the tryouts.



Babson Tigers Baseball Tryouts

What To Expect And, What Is Expected

First and foremost welcome to the 2006 baseball tryouts. The reason for tryouts is simple; we have more players trying out than there are team positions. If you do not make the team and want to play DON'T get discouraged. KEEP PLAYING! The town has a great Little League program.

We've listed three areas we are looking for during tryouts. Please remember that a spot on last year's team doesn't necessarily mean an automatic place on this year's team. We expect returning players to work as hard as new players.

What we're looking for:

#1.) ATTITUDE: Our coaching and playing philosophies puts attitude as the key ingredient for having a successful team. We would rather work with a player with a good work ethic and attitude than a person with exceptional skills that demonstrates poor sportsmanship and is not willing to learn. Baseball is a team sport.

#2.) ABILITY: There are six key areas that you will be rated on. They are:

1. **Long and Short Distance Running:** This gives us an idea of your speed, and endurance, both essential elements of the game.
2. **Catching**
3. **Throwing**
4. **Hitting**
5. **Overall Knowledge of the Game**

#3.) POTENTIAL: Athletes develop at different rates. Some players demonstrate marginal abilities but have exceptional talent. We will be looking at potential for future school teams. This category however, will not count as much as attitude and abilities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE ASK!

Coach Patterson
pattersonsports@yahoo.com

9. TRYOUT TALLY SHEET

To keep tryouts as fair as possible, it is necessary to develop measurable criteria. Do not go into tryouts with preconceived notions on the player's ability. Players develop at different rates and there are always those that will surprise you.

I use a simple system that has helped me greatly over the years. Bear in mind it is not the most talented players or the least talented players that present the challenge when selecting your squad, the challenge usually lies in selecting those players from the middle of the group. Having quantitative data helps. The following is an example of a tryout sheet. You may have to adjust it to better fit your particular needs.

Table 1.2: Tryout Tally Sheet

Item	Player 1 Name:	Player 2 Name:	Player 3 Name:	Player 4 Name:	Player 5 Name:	Etc
RUNNING						
Long Distance Running						
Shuffle Step						
Cross Step						
Back Step						
Base Running Speed						
FIELDING THROWING						
Ground Balls						
Fly Balls						
Throwing						
HITTING						
Hitting						
Bunting						
OVERALL						
Attitude						
Potential						
TOTAL						
RANKING						

I usually conduct school tryouts for three days, with the first cut being made on day two. This gives me ample time to observe the player's skills and abilities, and it gives the players time to relax and demonstrate to the coaching staff what they can do. Little League tryouts are usually held on one day, requiring heavy preparation from both the coaches and the players.

When ranking the players I issue a tryout sheet to all my assistant coaches. They are each tasked with scoring the player's skills on their own. These sheets are kept with the coach and are not reviewed with other coaches or players. Upon completion of the tryouts the coaches meet to discuss their findings. Once the decision of who stays and who gets cut is made, the sheets are destroyed and are not discussed with players or parents. I will not answer the question, "Why did he make the team and I didn't?" I will however, always take the time to answer the question, "What do I need to work on in order to make the team next year?"

The scoring system I use is fairly simple and can be modified to suit your individual needs. The scores are posted to each individual item and tallied at the end of the tryouts. The top scores make the team. The scoring I use is as follows:

Table 1.3: Tryout Scoring

Points Awarded	Criteria
3	Player exhibits excellent mastery of this skill for this age group.
2	Player exhibits basic skills for this age group and can become proficient with further training.
1	Player exhibits fair skill level for this age group and is trainable.
0	Player does not exhibit skills required for this level. Further development will be needed before playing at this level.

10. A WORD ABOUT ATTITUDE AND POTENTIAL

As coaches we must recognize that attitude and potential are important elements when selecting a team. I always reserve the right to award points to marginal players because they exhibit exceptional attitude and potential. While these two elements are important, I do not rank them above abilities. I will use them as a tiebreaker for the last few positions.

11. THOUGHTS ABOUT TRYOUTS AND YOUR CHILD

Having tryouts with your own child as a participant can be difficult. Drawing the lines as to what is fair for your child and what is fair to other children is not always easy. There are several reasonable guidelines I use that have helped me through this very difficult issue. They are:

- a. *Paid Position.* If you are a paid coach, you have the responsibility to be fair to all children who participate. These positions are usually school teams. Your child needs to be placed on the tryout squad with everyone else and they need to make the team on their own abilities. Here, you are paid to do a job and are expected to do it well.

- b. *Volunteer Position.* Examples of volunteer positions include Little League, recreation leagues, Pop Warner Football, etc. Here you are a volunteer and you volunteer because of your child. I have always felt that certain latitude should be given to the children of those willing to give their time. This does not mean however, that your child should be given special treatment once the teams are established and tryouts completed.
- c. *All Star Teams.* Many coaches that do well during their regular seasons are asked to become part of the All Star team coaching staff; this is especially true in Little League. In this case your child should not be afforded special privileges. An All Star team represents the league you belong to and must be made up of the league's best players. Most league volunteers have children that play, not all are good players. If your child makes the team fine, if not, you will have to decide whether or not you can coach the team without your child. I used my son as a team manager one year and he loved it.

12. THOUGHTS ON PLAY TIME

Table 1.1 hopefully places some perspective to the topic of winning. Winning is important in athletics. We don't play to lose and I am not a big proponent of the, "Let's not keep score," mentality, except at the Tee-Ball level. Children learn from winning, losing and playing. The lessons they learn however are up to us as parents and coaches.

There are numerous books written by experts that explore the need for social acceptance, and a sense of belonging in children. I won't even attempt to go there. The important thing is to recognize that a sense of belonging is critical to proper child development. Many young athletes are made, or more importantly broken, by insensitive coaches that lose track of individual playtime, or lack thereof. The Little League has guidelines for substitution and playtime. Remember they are only guidelines and represent the *minimum* amount of time each player should play.

Another important item here is that most coach-parent arguments are due to playtime. Parents hate to see their children sit the bench and become angry when it happens too often. Many headaches can be avoided by managing individual playtime well. Here are several guidelines I use when coaching children.

Table 1.4: Playtime Guidelines

Level	Typical Age	Items to Consider
Junior League Senior League Middle School Varsity AAU Travel Teams Little League All Stars	12-16	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start your best players.2. Establish a role for everyone on the team, i.e. back-up infielder, reliever, pinch runner, etc.3. Try players at different positions during practices and regular season games.4. Include everyone during huddles.5. In games that are clearly won or lost use everyone on the bench6. Rotate bench players so that the same players do not sit game after game.7. When ever possible, play everyone.
Little League (Regular Season) Minor League Tee-Ball Town Recreation Leagues Church Leagues	12 and under	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rotate starters. Give everyone a chance to shine during the regular season.2. Everyone plays. Stay away from token playtime (See article on Token Playtime).3. Allow players to play various positions.4. Include everyone during huddles.

Remember, the Little League also has guidelines concerning the amount of playtime each player should receive per game. Keep in mind these are minimum guidelines and may not necessarily represent the *right* amount of time for each of your players.

13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Well-established roles and responsibilities can be an important element to a successful season. These roles include the head coach, assistant coach, team captain, manager and players, and in some cases, a team mom or dad. This section will explain these roles and their associated responsibilities.

It is important to note that I am not suggesting you utilize each of these roles for every youth team. Every team's needs are different and younger children may not possess the skills necessary for the job of team captain or manager. I usually recommend using the roles of team captain and manager at the middle school, high school, Junior League, Senior League, AAU, and American Legion levels.

The following is and overview of each role and the associated responsibilities.

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Table 1.5. Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Overview	Responsibilities
HEAD COACH	The head coach has the ultimate responsibility for the team and team activities. He/she is responsible for the overall development of the team and insuring every player has a positive experience.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Season master schedule 2. Daily practices schedules 3. Team's Mission Statement 4. Establish team line-up 5. Discipline and counseling
ASSISTANT COACH	The Assistant coach is there to assist the head coach. They do not make teams decisions or create situations that are in conflict with the head coach. They work at the discretion of the head coach.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist with practices 2. Advises head coach of problem areas. 3. Learn specific functions assigned by the head coach such as hitting coach, pitching coach, etc. 4. Perform duties required by the head coach. 5. Learn the game. 6. Fills in for the head coach when necessary. 7. Supports the head coach with parent conflicts.
TEAM CAPTAIN	<p>Being selected Team Captain is an honor. Coaches and players recognize the Team Captain as a leader on the team. Their main responsibilities include leading warm-ups, exercises, and performing other job functions deemed necessary by the head coach. It is important to note that the position of team captain is a position of responsibility, NOT a position of authority. Team captains are part of the team and NOT part of the coaching staff.</p> <p>Team Captain Selection Process: Selection can be made in one of three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coaches select captains based individual performance and leadership ability. 2. Players select captains based on individual performance and leadership ability by voting. 3. Combination of 1 and 2. 	<p>A Team Captain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shows up early for practice to assist with equipment set up. 2. Secures equipment after practice or game. 3. Helps insure all players have proper equipment. 4. Notifies coaches of problem areas. 5. Notifies coaches of potential safety problems. 6. Leads warm-ups and exercises. 7. Motivates through example. 8. Assists teammates with problem areas 9. Learns each position to the best of their ability. 10. Insure team integrity is maintained by including all players in all activities. 11. Assists with maintaining field after practices and games. 12. Assists with pre-season field clean up and the development of an, "our field, our job" mentality. 13. Insures uniforms are properly worn. 14. Insures dugouts and buses are cleaned after a game or practice.

<p>TEAM MANAGER</p>	<p>Team Manager's primary responsibility is team statistics, books and records. They assist with administrative duties assigned by the head coach. The position is an appointed position that reports directly to the head coach.</p> <p>Team managers are selected based on their ability to perform the necessary assignments. Managers must have a good working knowledge of baseball statistics.</p>	<p>Team manger Is responsible for scorebooks and team and individual statistics. They include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Batting averages 2. Hitting percentages 3. Slugging percentage 4. Stolen bases 5. RBI 6. ERA's 7. Pitch counts <p>Other responsibilities can include:</p> <p>Pre game:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify the coach if the team needs water. 2. Insure game balls are available. 3. Insure medical kit is in the dugout and available. 4. Report any absences (if known) to coach. <p>Pre game (Book):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain starting lineup from head coach and neatly fill in scorebook, lineup card, and umpire's card. 2. Insure all player numbers, playing positions and batting positions are accurate, reporting any problems to the head coach. 3. Obtain starting lineup from opponents and insure both scorebooks agree. <p>During the game:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep the book tracking strikes, balls, hits, errors, stolen bases, RBI's etc. 2. Stay available to coaches for lineup questions. 3. Inform players of the batting order at the beginning of every inning. 4. Insure the batters hit in sequence announcing the next on-deck batter. 5. Inform coaches of opponent's previous at bats. 6. Insure all substitutions are recorded properly and insure players are aware of all changes. 7. Inform opponents of changes. 8. Cross check scorebook with other team after the second, fourth and sixth innings to insure they agree. 9. Insure the umpire's count is well kept reporting any problems to the head coach.
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		After the Game: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insure the book is complete and ready for statistical analysis. 2. Report scores and highlights to school for school Website and/or newsletter.
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Keep in mind the above are guidelines only. You need to adjust the roles and responsibilities you use based on your team's specific needs.

14. RUNNING UP THE SCORE – WHEN IS ENOUGH, ENOUGH

We have all heard the stories of coaches that have gone too far with score management. Unfortunately, games of 15-0 are not uncommon in all levels of baseball. I have even witnessed a game with a score of 23-0, and that game was called in the fifth inning because the league utilized a mercy rule. These games are going to happen; how you manage this type of game is extremely important for the players on both teams. An easy way to avoid doing the wrong thing is to ask yourself the question, "What are the children, on both teams learning?"

While there are considerable dynamics working in such a lopsided game, one thing is certain - the children learn little when playing a game like this, if it remains unmanaged. An unmanaged game is defined as a game where the winning coach does little to control the game and his/her intent is to run the score up.

On the other hand, regardless of the score, I have never told a player to strike out, make an error, or blow a play intentionally. There are many ways to curb a large score differential while still winning or losing a game. There are several guidelines I have used over the years that may be helpful. They are:

Table 1.6: Lopsided Games

League Level	Score	Items to Consider During a Lopsided The Game
Tee Ball	Score is not a priority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure everyone plays everywhere. 2. Move players around each inning. 3. Do not allow players or parents to emphasize score. 4. These games are strictly for fun and learning.
Minor League	League playoffs make score somewhat important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The intent of Minor League is still to learn. 2. Make sure everyone plays everywhere. 3. Put bench players in early. 4. Try new pitchers.

Jake Patterson

Little League	Playoffs make score important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure everyone plays everywhere. 2. Put the bench players in early. 3. Use different players at different positions. 4. Try different pitchers. 5. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 6. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 7. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 8. Avoid using better pitchers when not necessary.
Little League All Stars	Winning is the priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Try new pitchers.
Junior League, Senior League	Playoffs make score important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Try new pitchers.
Junior League, Senior League All Stars	Winning is the priority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Avoid using better pitchers when not necessary.
Middle School Varsity	Winning is the priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Avoid using better pitchers when not necessary.
High School Junior Varsity	Playoffs make score important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Avoid using better pitchers when not necessary. 7. Try new pitchers.
High School	Winning is the priority Note: Possible college careers may hang in the balance. This does not however, override your responsibility to the game and all the players.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use bench players early. 2. Use relievers early. 3. Avoid stealing for the sake of stealing. 4. Hold runners from taking extra bases. 5. Avoid bunting on weak defenses. 6. Avoid using better pitchers when not necessary. Note: the level of pitcher you use controls many of these games.

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Both coaches also need to use common sense here, even the losing coach. I have had games where, when up a considerable amount of runs, I replaced all my starters with bench players in an effort to make the game better for both teams. The losing coach seeing an opportunity began a relentless pounding on my inexperienced bench players. This resulted in me re-entering my starters when there was only a one run difference, sealing the other team's fate. I was not about to lose a game we were easily winning.

In another incident I had a coach have his players steal third and home when he had a fifteen run lead in the top of the last inning. I had already burned through, my now completely demoralized pitching staff and there was no hope for us winning the game. I quietly asked him to ease up, to which he replied, "Welcome to the big leagues coach." His comment epitomizes how some coach's view coaching young players; they think they're coaching in the big leagues.

Most of the lopsided games I have witnessed or have participated in during my career occurred simply because one team dominated the other team, this will inevitably happen during each season. Most coaches do the right thing. I have however, seen those coaches that will simply run the score up. They accomplish little more than placating their own egos. Players, on both teams, learn little during an unmanaged lopsided game. Again, the best way to avoid this is to ask yourself the question, "What are the players on both team learning?" Most of all remember, they're just kids.

This book instructs coaches on the duties and responsibilities of coaching Little League baseball, including maximizing practice efficiency, teaching the basics of the game, and effectively handling parents. It answers some of the questions you're afraid to ask.

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