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| C:\Users\neste\Documents\FYB\little league\Logo\FYB Logo.jpg  **65th Aniversory** |
| FORT YOUTH BASEBALL PARENT MANUAL |
| *Fort Youth Baseball Mission Statement-♦ Fort Atkinson Youth Baseball provides youths, in grades 2-9, an opportunity to learn and develop baseball skills in a supervised, competitive team environment. Decisions made or guidelines developed will reflect the needs and interests of a majority of the players, families, and coaches, and the health and safety of all participants.* |
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GREAT PEOPLE = GREAT PROGRAM. While Fort Youth Baseball is giving the kids of Fort Atkinson a place to experience the game of baseball, the main success for the league falls on the shoulders of the adults involved. Without the many men and women who volunteer their time to coach, to the young people who umpire for a little extra spending money during their “off-season” from sports or school, to the parents and fans that support the players and the program, FYB would not be as great an organization as it is. The board has come to understand that to help the young players, they need more than just guidance from their coach; they need help from their parents. This manual should help clarify any questions that you may have to help your child get the maximum enjoyment out of playing baseball.

**Important Dates to Remember**

♦– Practices may begin April 22rd.

♦– Opening Day! All teams will play. Opening day is Saturday, May 19st.

♦– Regular Season schedule should be available by May 8th.

♦– Picture Day is May 11th and everyone needs to participate.

♦– Combined Season Tournament July 9th thru July 14th.

♦– Fort Only Tournament July 16th thru July 18th..

**Board of Directors**

There will be a board member at each league game. Any questions about umpires not showing up, or disagreements that cannot be settled can be brought to the Directors attention. Also, the Directors may deal with any unruly spectators.

Name

Don Neste 920-650-1878 fortyouthbaseball@gmail.com

Joel Winn

Jason Hartman

Brian Maxwell

Aaron Underwood

Mark Riggs

Adam Larson

Stephanie Petrie

Alsion Miles

Dale Alexander

Barry Heederik

Steve Rottmann,Jr

Patrick Roth

**Levels of Play**

**Age/Grade Program Who runs it**

9th, 8th, & 7th, Major League Fort Youth Baseball

6th & 5th Minor League Fort Youth Baseball

4th & 3rd grade AAA Fort Youth Baseball

2nd grade 2nd grade Fort Youth Baseball

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**CANCELLATIONS**

Q – How will I know if practices will be cancelled due to bad weather?

A – It is the coach’s decision on whether or not to hold practice.

Q – How will I know if games will be cancelled due to bad weather?

A – Plan on playing, however, a decision to play will not be made until **4:30 p.m**. 90% of the time, it will be a game-time decision. Check our Face Book page or web site at [www.fortyouthbaseball.com](http://www.fortyouthbaseball.com). Our fields drain water very well, so expect to play even if the outfield grass is soaked. Also, plan on playing if it is sprinkling or drizzling during the game.

**LEAGUE ORGANIZATION**

Q - What is the philosophy of Fort Youth Baseball?

A – Fort Youth Baseball provides youths, in grades 2-9, an opportunity to learn and develop baseball skills in a supervised, competitive team environment. Decisions made or guidelines developed will reflect the needs and interests of a majority of the players, families, and coaches, and the health and safety of all participants.

Q – How is Fort Youth Baseball governed?

A – FYB is governed by an 8-12 member volunteer Board of Directors. The Board meets several times a year to set rules and policies. For more information, please contact Don @ fortyouthbaseball@gmail.com.

Q – How are teams formed?

A –FYB uses the “blind draft” method. Coaches evaluate the players during their evaluation night. If there are 5 teams – we will start with the highest grade and place players on the draft grid from left to right, the best player through the 5th best player. Then they will snake it around and take the 6th player and go right to left. They keep doing this process until all kids in that grade level are taken. Then they start at the far right spot, and go to the lower grade level, and snake their way right to left. When all the players are placed on a team, a number is drawn from 1-6 for each coach. That number corresponds to the column. That is their team.

Q – Why do you do the draft this way?

A – One of our goals is to get equal teams. Most of the times this happens, but then injuries or other factors take their toll on a team. Doing the blind draft is the best way to have this happen.

**PRACTICE & GAMES**

Q – What is an “event”?

A – An event is any practice or game.

Q-When is my kids practice?

A-Your players practice is determined by the head coach of the team. Each teams selects one week day (Monday-Wednesday) and one weekend practice (Friday or Sunday). Being that we only have one diamond per age level practices are not easy to change once they have been selected on “Draft Night”.

Once your players is placed on a team your coach will contact you with their practice schedule.

Q – What should I do if my child will miss an event?

A – You should contact one of the team’s coaches as soon as possible. It is important that you get a hold of a coach for many reasons. One – these volunteer coaches may spend a considerable amount of time writing a practice plan with groups of X amount of players in them. When a player does not show up, this coach is sometimes forced to change certain drills or maybe even the entire practice. Two – If a player is unexcused for an event, a coach may eliminate the minimum playing requirements. Three – If the player is missing a game, the coach’s inning by inning chart of where each player will play will be obsolete, and they may have to start from scratch. Four – coaches like to know their players are “accounted for”, and do worry about their safety. If a parent doesn’t call but a player doesn’t show, the coaches worry about the child having had an accident (bike, car) on the way, etc.

Q- What will my child need for every practice?

A – This may differ from coach to coach but, your player will need a glove, hat, spikes and a water bottle. Some coaches may require some form of pants that the player can put on if they practice sliding.

Q – What is one of the biggest pet peeves of coaches when they have to deal with parents?

A – Either not calling them to let them know that your child will not be at an event, or not getting to the park to pick your child up right away after the event is over.

Q – I want to buy a bat for my son, are there any regulations, or what should I look for?

A –Any bat stamped “Youth Baseball Approved” would be a good place to start. Big barrel bats are NOT allowed in the AAA league or USABat for minors 2 5/8 is allowed but must be stamped USABat, failure to not follow this rule has repercussions. A good way to tell if a bat is too heavy is to have your child hold the bat near the knob with a straight arm, parallel to the floor. If they cannot hold it without the bat head getting closer to the floor, it is too heavy. {SIDE NOTE - Be prepared if your son does have his own bat, that many other players may want to use it}

Q – What kind of spikes may my child wear?

A – All leagues can wear any rubber spikes, as long as there are no spikes on the toes. Major Leagues can wear metal spikes.

Q – Can I have my player be on that coach’s team or play with his best friend because we share a ride?

A-The only two people that have a guaranteed spot on a team are the two head coaches. If we can make it work we will do what we can but there are NO guaranties

Q – Can my son ride his bike to the park?

A – Yes, there is a bike rack at the top of the hill we recommend them using. For the safety of the fans and players using the park and the walkway, any reckless bike riding may result in making kids leave their bike at the top of the hill, or leave them at home all together.

**CHEERING & COMMUNICATING & WITH YOUR PLAYER**

Q – How can I be the best spectator?

A – Remember this – one day, all these kids may be on the same team. It could be next year, it could be many years when they are playing High School ball. CHEER FOR EVERYONE. Applaud effort, not results. Please don’t yell at the umpires or coaches, they are all doing the best they can. You are not the coach, encourage, and don’t coach from the stands. Please stay away from the dugouts before during and after practice or a game. Wait to talk to your child once the event is over

Q – What should I say to my child who may have been on that losing team that lost in the last inning?

A – There are no magical words. Sometimes it is best to not say anything at all but let the child start the conversation. Most kids don’t want to be told it doesn’t matter, or that it does matter. Players should learn from your reaction to a loss that: (1) you feel they played their best, which just wasn’t good enough on this particular day. (2) They should hold their heads up high, there is no shame attached to honest effort. (3) There is always something to learn from the loss. (4) There is nothing gained from brooding. Players should be encouraged to put the game behind them and look forward to the next opportunity. (5) Seeking scapegoats (officials, teammate…), is not a mature or healthy reaction to the loss.

Q – What can I say to my child after games?

A – Try to get your child to focus on the process and not on the end result. In youth baseball, a great hitter will still fail ½ the time. Instead of concentrating on the player going 0-3 with 2 strikeouts, watch his swing to see if it was quick, or level, or that he may be stepping at the pitcher instead of bailing out. Maybe he went 0-3 but hit the ball hard every at bat. Even though he didn’t reach base, he did all he could, the other team just made the plays so he should be proud that he “ripped” the ball in his at-bats. Research has shown that elite athletes focus on tasks, not on trophies. Always find the silver lining.

**COACH’S CONDUCT**

Q – What would be acceptable behavior of a coach as far as having members of his team over to his house?

A – Only you as the parent can truly answer that, but our coaches have been advised that it is OK to have a team function at your house, as long as it is the entire team that is being invited. We have advised our coaches that they should not have just some of the team invited. If you have any concerns, you could call the coach or another parent on the team.

Q – Is it OK if the coach is swearing or doing unsafe drills?

A – Any of the above by a coach should immediately be reported to a member of the Board. Since many of you will not be at every event, it is good to talk to your child about the event. Try not to ask general questions like: “How was practice?” These kids are great at one-word answers. Instead, try to ask “What was the best part of practice?” “Any different drills?” Probably the best one is “What did the coach have you, personally work on?” Each kid should be able to get at least a couple of minutes of personal instruction from a coach each practice, even if it is just about throwing.

**ABUSE**

Q – What is abuse?

A – Children can be abused in a variety of ways – emotionally, physically, or sexually.

Q – What are signs of emotional abuse?

A – Name calling (“hey fatty!”, threatening (“if you don’t win, you can forget about that new CD you want”), insulting (“you’re stupid”), criticizing (“you’re a loser”), yelling at a child for not playing up to the adult’s expectations, hazing, shunning or withholding love or affection (not speaking to your child after they play poorly)…

Q – What are the signs of physical abuse?

A – Slapping, hitting, shaking, throwing equipment, kicking, pulling hair, shoving, grabbing, hazing, punishing poor play by denying fluids…

Q – What are the signs of sexual abuse?

A – Sexual touching is when touching, instead of being respectful and nurturing, is done in a sexual manner.

Q – What kind of damage can these abuses cause?

A – According to the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, abuse could: Affect a child’s ability to learn; Increase the likelihood that the youth will engage in unhealthy behaviors, including suicidal behavior, and delinquent and aggressive behaviors; Has been linked to mood and anxiety disorders and diseases; Turn off the child to exercise and participation in sports, preventing the development of a healthy adult lifestyle.

Q – What should I do if I suspect any of the abuse going on?

A – If it is an emotional abuse problem with a coach, you can contact any board member. They will help the coach change the style of coaching, or take further measures. If you suspect, physical or sexual abuse, you should contact the police immediately.

**IF I HAVE A PROBLEM…**

Q – What complaints will a board member listen to?

A – Pretty much anything, except playing time & position choice. Since we are not at all the events, we cannot tell you that your child should be a pitcher, or that your child should be the starting second baseman. Everyone needs to trust the coach’s opinion and reasons for his decision. You should attempt to talk to the coach before talking to a board member.

Q – I have a problem with the way the coach uses my child. How should I handle the situation?

A – The worst time ever to speak to a coach will be right after a game. Emotions on both sides will still be high. Plus, there are no private places to hold such a conversation. It is best to sleep on it, and then if it is still bothering you, find out when you can talk to the coach. Each coach has been advised to let parents know when they will be available to talk about such matters. If and when you have such a meeting, remember to stay calm. Sometimes, the coach may have simply overlooked the situation. Sometimes, the child had been a problem at practice by not listening or misbehaving. If you are still not satisfied after the meeting, you can call a board member.

Q – I don’t want to seem like a “complaining parent”.

A – Quite the opposite. We would rather hear from a parent that may have a concern than find out 3 games or a year later. The worst that will happen is that we do nothing, but we still would keep an eye on the situation. The best thing would be a change in someone’s behavior or actions, whoever that may be.

Q – Will my name be used in any conversations with a coach?

A – Your name will not be given to the coach.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BASEBALL SPECTATORS**

1. *Follow the Golden Rule* – Treat others (coaches, umpires & players) the same way that you would want to be treated.

2. *Act your age* – Youth baseball is for the kids. If you find yourself too emotionally involved in what’s happening on the field, take a step back and relax. Remember, your childhood is over. Give the young players the freedom to enjoy theirs.

3. *Be responsible* – Get your kids to practices and games on time, and be there to pick your kids up after the events.

4. *Be seen, not heard* – Nothing is better for a young player than to see their parents in hand to watch them play. Nothing is worse for a young player than to see their parents boo, or yell or make negative comments. Offer applause and cheers of encouragement for both teams following a good play OR keep quiet.

5. *It’s supposed to be fun* – Keep smiling. Encourage enjoyment and participation over results. If it’s not fun, something’s wrong.

6. *Motivate through confidence* – Try to identify a positive from every game and practice to help build confidence. A young player’s sense of achievement is the greatest motivator.

7. *Don’t question an official’s call*– You may not agree with a call, but consider that the umpire may have had a better view, or you may not know the full list of rules. Never should an umpire’s call be argued. Remember some umpires have limited experience and formal training and do the best job they can, given these limitations. Accept the call and move on.

8. *If you must talk to the coach after the game* – You should only talk about current events, or to congratulate them on a nice effort. Any other forms of conversation should be held after the heat of the moment has passed.

9. *Put winning and losing in perspective* – Games have winners and losers. Sometimes the other team is just slightly better. In fact, you can learn a lot more about losing to a good opponent than beating a lesser matched opponent.

10. *Avoid the post-game analysis* – Let your children come to you for advice. It will have more of an impact.

“The message for adults involved in youth sports is this: You can play. You can coach. You can officiate. You can be a fan. But pick one, because you can’t do two at once, much less four.” Bruce Brown

**Fort Youth Baseball Coaches Expectations**

1. Communicate effectively with both parents and players. Communicate, practice times and dates for all team functions.

2. Run an effective, safe practice. Have a plan.

3. Be on time for all team activities. Make sure all kids are picked up before leaving.

4. Your coaching philosophy will put learning and skill development as the formula to being successful, not winning.

5. There will be no arguing with the umpires during the games. This will not be tolerated.

6. Be positive. Give constructive feedback to your players during practices and games.

7. Be a role model for both your team and parents watching. This means being a role model with language, dress, and behavior.

**Coach / Parent Communication**

1. Contact parents /child as soon as possible after the draft. A sample letter is provided. All highlighted areas need to be covered.

2. Early in the season, give or email each family a list of kids on the team, along with parent names and phone numbers.

3. Let parents know your practice times and the expectation they should let you know about missing practice and games ahead of time.

4. If a player misses a game/practice without you knowing, give the parent a call.

**Fort Youth Baseball Parent Expectations**

1. Communicate absences with coaches ahead of time.

2. Have your child to all events (practices, games) on time.

3. Make sure child is prepared for practices and games, this includes bringing their hat and gloves.

4. Please encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game and practice. Please cheer for your player during games, but try to keep from yelling instructions to them. Remember this is their opportunity to enjoy playing in the game. Much of the fun is lost if their parents are always yelling instructions.

5. Safety is a primary concern for Fort Youth Baseball. Unfortunately, we can't watch every player every second. If you see any situation that you believe is a safety concern, please take notify someone immediately.

5. Handle any problems with coaches/players through the coach 1st, board member 2nd.

6. **All Fort Youth Baseball events are smoke-free, thank you for respecting this policy.**

We hope all parents, coaches and players enjoy the upcoming season.