



White Plains Little League

8 Helpful Tips for WPLL Coaches/Managers

You stepped up and volunteered to coach/manage a WPLL team. First, thank you! Without committed volunteers like you, WPLL would not be able to provide kids with the opportunity to have fun with their friends and play the game they and we love. Second, if you have little experience in running a youth baseball or softball team, we're sure you will have questions. Below are some simple, yet helpful tips to make sure you understand your role as a coach/manager, as well as ideas that will ensure your coaching/managing experience is the best possible for you and WPLL.

Rulebooks

To be a successful WPLL coach/manager, you must know the rules and regulations of the game. Not every rule, but more than your players. WPLL makes official Little League Int'l rulebooks available for each team. We highly recommend reviewing the rulebook before and during the season. Rulebooks clearly inform coaches/managers of the official regulations and playing rules, which will help you manage your team. From [pitch count regulations](#) to mandatory play to definitions of terms to safety procedures, Little League Rulebooks provide you what you need to know.

Player Drafts

WPLL conducts a draft of players prior to the spring season. At the draft you will be provided a list of registered players and their ratings from prior years. Assuming your son or daughter is on your team, you will want to build a team that includes players who can play skill positions (pitcher, catcher, shortstop), as well as players who you and your son or daughter know. If you have never participated in a WPLL draft before, contact your Division VP and ask him/her to give you an overview of how the draft is conducted, and what suggestions they have for you to make the draft as productive as possible. Ultimately, the draft process is designed by the WPLL Board to create balanced teams in each division.



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Practice Plans

When your team is formed and the season nears, it's important to put together practice plans. Keep in mind, Little League is a developmental program. Be sure to structure each practice to include fundamentals – throwing/catching, proper hitting, fielding, base running, etc. Try to structure your practices with little down time in order to keep the players' attention. And, be sure to have fun and allow for plenty of water breaks. For those volunteering at the Tee Ball or Coach Pitch levels, Little League has created easy-to-implement curriculums that will be made available to you. WPLL conducts a Coaches Clinic at the beginning of each season which provides coaches/managers with tips on how to run a practice, drills to develop skills, etc.

Parents/Guardians Communication

Your first communication to your parents/guardians is important. Introduce yourself, the names of your coaches, the name of your team, and include a list of players on the team. Then highlight the next few steps – first practice, uniform distribution, first game, etc.

After the first week of practice, schedule a meeting with or send an email to your team's parents to share your goals and rules for the team. Be sure to explain that Little League is not a win-at-all-costs program, and that your responsibility is to develop players and for those players to have fun. Also, mention that if there are any concerns during the season to address those with you directly. It's also a good opportunity to remind parents that their role is to show their support from the stands, and to let the coaches coach and the players play. Alert parents to your preferred means of communication – phone, text, email. Be clear that you'd appreciate knowing if a player cannot attend a game/practice well ahead of time and communicate the importance of Little Leaguers making as many practices as possible in order to develop their skills and build team camaraderie. Remind parents to provide timely pick-ups after each practice and game and encourage them to volunteer as part-time coaches or for snack duty!



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Ask Questions

As your first practice or game approaches, reach out to Board members and fellow coaches/managers to address any questions you may have. You've probably been so focused on practicing and developing your players that you may not have thought about how to fill out and submit a lineup card, what team takes batting practice and when, who's best to handle the scorebook, when to clear the field when a storm is approaching, and who is responsible for field prep before the game or tidying up post-game.

Team Rules for Games

It's good practice to put team rules in writing for players and parents. Be sure to list all important subjects so everyone is on the same page. Explain what time you want players at the field pre-game (e.g. 30 minutes), proper uniform appearance (jerseys tucked in, hats on), your philosophy about food in the dugout, and the importance of sportsmanship toward umpires, opposing players, and teammates.

Games

Remember to have fun! Please DO NOT get overly caught-up in winning or losing. Your main responsibility is to provide an environment and level of instruction that will develop your players not just on the field, but off the field as well. Recognize solid play, and critique mistakes in a supportive way (ideally 1:1), while offering ideas on how to improve. Little League has partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) to provide a framework and tools for local Little League volunteers to develop a culture of positive, character-building competition. Use the PCA information to create a nurturing environment where Little Leaguers can thrive in, learn, and have fun! Go to <https://devzone.positivecoach.org/> for more information.

Once again, thank you for volunteering to coach/manage in White Plains Little League! You've taken the first step in providing kids in your community an opportunity to build memories that will last a lifetime.