



2013
Parent/Player Handbook

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Little League Pledge:

**I trust in God.
I love my country
And will respect its laws.
I will play fair and strive to win.
But win or lose,
I will always
do my best.**

He pulls on a helmet, picks up a bat, he walks to the plate thinking
“gotta get a hit and that's that”.

The crowd starts to yell, “the game's on the line,
last inning, two outs, the score's nine to nine”.

Dad yells “keep your eye on the ball”. Mom wrings her hands,
coach hollers “swing level”.... but alone there he stands.

Heroes are made in seconds such as this,
but he's just a little boy, and what if he should miss?

Years after this game's ended and he's little no more,
will he remember the outcome or even the score?

No he'll have forgotten if he was out, got a hit, or even a run,
he'll only look back on his friends, his teammates and the fun.

So cheer this boy on, alone with his fate;
help him remember with fondness this stand at the plate.

Spend your time wisely and help in his quest
to be hitter with confidence and always his best.

And when the game's over, this boy can stand tall,
for you've helped him prepare to give it his all!

MABA is a recreational league intended to promote and facilitate a traditional community based style of league play. MABA accepts any child regardless of race, color, religion, sex or athletic ability. The program focus is on open participation and player development while allowing for a variety of skill levels among its players.

1. Introduction

Welcome to Midlothian Amateur Baseball Association Little League (MABA) and the 2010 season. We hope that you will find your experience with MABA to be exciting and rewarding this year.

MABA was incorporated in 1979 (although baseball was played here for many years before that) and is governed by the rules and regulations of Little League Baseball, Inc. of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The MABA Board of Directors will provide a supervised program that is compliant to these rules. All Directors, Officers and Members shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skills or the winning of games is secondary, and the molding of future citizens is of prime importance.

Little League's goals for the players are:

- 1) Develop sportsmanship, teamwork, responsibility, fair play and safety.
- 2) Learn the skills, rules and strategy of Little League Baseball.
- 3) Have fun!

Last Spring over 300 children, ranging in age from 4 – 18 years, participated in MABA baseball. It took a plethora of volunteer hours to provide a program that promoted these goals. Success depends upon your willingness to volunteer and to work with Managers, Coaches, Officials, and Board Members in serving as a positive role model for behavior and attitude. To that end, please read this handbook thoroughly.

The rules, regulations and suggestions throughout this book are presented to you to help all of us make MABA successful, fun and rewarding for everyone associated, especially this community's future, the children.

For additional information, the MABA Constitution, By-Laws and Safety Plan will soon be posted to our website.

2. Parent/Guardian Role in MABA

- 1) Please read the Parent/Player Handbook before the first scheduled practice. Please read this handbook to your player(s) as well. If you have any objection to the League's rules and policies, you must discuss your objection(s) with the Player Agent, Vice President and President prior to the first practice.
- 2) Objections to the Manager's policies or actions must be submitted to the Player Agent or Field Commissioner within one week of the incident. If the parent and/or guardian does not raise the matter within one week, it suggests that the parent's objection was not strong enough to warrant a review by the League's Board of Directors
- 3) Only the Manager and 2 Coaches are allowed on the playing field before or during games, as stipulated by Little League rules. Parents are welcome to assist at practices as allowed by the team Manager. Please fill out the Volunteer Form (at the back of this handbook). **NO ADULT IS ALLOWED TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THE CHILDREN UNTIL A BACKGROUND CHECK HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND APPROVED.**
- 4) Spectators are not allowed to confer with the Manager during a game unless it involves a SAFETY issue or the WELL BEING of a player. The Manager is Supervising 10-12 players and it requires all of his or her attention to watch for safety problems while orchestrating the game.
- 5) Do not distract participants from concentrating on the game. This includes the players, coaches, managers or umpires.
- 6) Do watch for safety problems during games and practices to help prevent injuries. This includes watching your other children in the stands or on the surrounding grounds.
- 7) Do let your Manager know if your player has any kind of injury, illness, an ache or pain, is unusually tired or does not feel well before a game or practice.
- 8) Please pick-up trash in the dugouts, grandstand and other park areas. We are responsible for the cleanliness of the park.
- 9) MABA is a Drug-Free, Tobacco-Free and Alcohol-Free environment. This is for the well being of all the participants and spectators and enforced by the laws of the City of Midlothian.
- 10) The safety of your children is the primary concern for this organization. This rule may seem harsh but we feel that it is important to help us insure the safety of the children. **Children under 10 years of age must have a parent, guardian or responsible adult appointed by the parent/guardian to be at the field or practice facility for the duration of the game or practice. The Manager or Coaches must be made aware of the adult who will be responsible for your child when you are not there. Violators will be required to appear before the Board of Directors. We have a the responsibility and obligation to refer repeat offenders to the Midlothian Police Department and CPS.**

3. Parent/Guardian Commitment

MABA asks that every parent participate in the activities that bring success to our children and the league. Volunteer Forms are available in the back of this handbook, online at midlothianbaseball.com or in the Concession Stand. By contributing to the league, your children will benefit from your time together, you will have more input and understanding as to the League's operations and you will be contributing to a stronger Midlothian community. Please fill out the Volunteer Form to indicate your ability to fulfill one or more of the following functions;

- **Manager (head coach):** With help from other coaches, directs practices and games. Experience not required. Training is provided. Must be over 18 years old.
- **Coach:** Assists manager at practices and games. Experience not required, training is provided. Must be over 18 years old.
- **Team Parent:** Using phone or email, makes sure all parents on the team are notified of games, practices and other events. Organizes snack schedule, team party, etc.
- **Scorekeeper:** Keep record of each play. Training is available. You can keep score while watching your child(ren)'s game.
- **Umpire:** Makes rulings on the field. Flexible schedules available. Experience not required, training will be provided. Ages 13 and up.
- **Special Events:** Work at evaluations, Opening Day and other events. Help set-up, parade staging, parking help, check-in and clean-up.
- **Administration:** Help with recruiting volunteers, uniform and fundraising distribution.
- **Concessions:** Become a manager or help call team moms to remind of team work schedule.
- **Publicity:** Help with communication to the community of MABA events. Create fliers, news articles....
- **Board Position:** If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact the League President at mabapres@gmail.com to discuss opportunities.

We all lead busy lives, many of these opportunities require only a few hours during the year or can be performed while attending your child's games and events. Please help this season.

4. Spectator Conduct

Please share this with family and friends that are attending your child(ren)'s game.

Players and spectators are allowed **ONLY TO ENCOURAGE** players through cheering.

Chants or comments that are derisive, distracting or derogatory to ANY player are prohibited. Umpires have the authority to halt play and if necessary, eject players, managers, coaches or spectators who are derisive, distracting, derogatory or engage in other unsportsmanlike conduct.

Parents, Managers and Coaches are expected to set an example of good sportsmanship at all times by positively encouraging players and not verbally questioning or criticizing umpire calls or manager decisions.

Alcoholic beverages, all tobacco products (including chewing, snuff) and other drugs are prohibited by MABA, Little League Rules & Regulations and ordinances of the City of Midlothian. If you must smoke or chew, you must do so in the gravel parking lot away from all children and spectators.

5. Player Commitment

Team Managers may establish rules consistent with MABA's goals.

Players must pay attention to their Manager and Coaches, take an active part in games and practices, and follow instructions provided by the Manager and Coaches.

Players must attend practices. Managers give most instruction at practice(s), and this gives the Manager an opportunity to determine a player's strengths and weaknesses.

By joining a team, a player makes a commitment to the team for the full season.

As a player, you also make the commitment to do your best to work at being the best athlete you can be. To display good sportsmanship, play fairly and safely and to help others enjoy the game.

6. Player Discipline Policy

MABA hopes that disciplinary measures will not be necessary. Managers will however, establish a policy to follow in case it does become necessary. The Manager's disciplinary policy will have been submitted and approved by the appropriate Board personnel. The policy will follow these general guidelines:

- The Manager will explain team objectives, rules and disciplinary policy to players and parents at the beginning of the season.
- Discipline may not be applied arbitrarily or capriciously. It must be imposed evenly to all team members.
- Discipline must be imposed progressively. Manager's must first counsel the player, explaining what is expected and why. If a player continues to be a problem, the next step could mean less play time. Frequent and continuing problems can lead to suspension from a game. NOTE: Before a player can be suspended from a game, the Manager must follow the procedure outline in the MABA By-Laws.
- Player issues in T-Ball and Coach Pitch will be handled in an age appropriate manner.
- Behavior that results in serious injury to another player or a serious infraction of the safety rules is grounds for immediate suspension from a game and/or possibly the League.
- Players and parents have the right to appeal any decision on suspension or removal from a team. Submit such appeals in writing and addressed to the Player Agent.

7. Safety

All participants of MABA must work together to make Little League Baseball a safe and fun game.

Serious injuries can occur when players are careless about throwing balls or handling bats at games and practices. These activities should be done only under the direction of the Manager and Coaches.

Players are to be ready for practices and games.

Players must strive to be in good physical condition. They should have adequate rest and be mentally ready for baseball. If they are not, parents/guardians should notify the Manager or coach before a game or practice.

The MABA Safety Plan will be available on our website midlothianbaseball.com. A few important points are as follows;

- During practice and games, ALL PLAYERS should be alert and watching the batter on each pitch.
- At no time will “horse play” be permitted on the playing field.
- Coach Pitch, Minor, Major and Junior male players MUST wear a protective supporter and cup.
- Players will not wear jewelry, unless it notes a medical condition.
- The on-deck circle is prohibited for all divisions except for the Junior Division.

NOTE: Please be alert and watch younger children during the games. Foul balls often drop into the stands and surrounding area and could cause serious injury. Little League is not liable for injuries to spectators.

8. Injuries and Insurance Coverage

Player Injury

Children participating in any athletic activity may suffer injury. If a child sustains an injury while participating in an MABA activity, The Manager MUST be notified immediately and an Injury Incident Report must be filed with the Safety Director. Most injuries will only require some rest, ice and care.

If the injury occurs on the playing field, unless you are an approved Manager or Coach on that team, you ARE NOT allowed onto the field. The Coaches are instructed on basic first aid and will follow the procedures outlined in the Safety Plan. If an injury is serious enough and requires a doctor, do not hesitate to seek out medical attention.

Insurance Coverage

MABA carries an accident insurance policy that covers each registered child for injuries incurred while participating in scheduled games, practices and other scheduled League activities. This policy is an **excess coverage policy**; that is, it affords up to \$1,000 coverage per accident for any medical bills **not paid by other existing medical insurance** carried by the family or through an employer's group policy.

Claim Procedures

If a child incurs an injury, parents need to first file the claim with their medical insurance carrier. When no other coverage is available or whenever any medical expenses are not paid by the primary policy or when deductible results in an unpaid charge, these unpaid bills will need to be submitted to the League Safety Director.

Liability Coverage

MABA carries general liability insurance. However, damage to parked cars by errant baseballs is expressly excluded.

The Safety Director is responsible for following up on serious injuries, claims and injuries reports submitted to the League.

9. Practices and Season Play

Practice

The Manager will have at least one practice per week and will have a tentative date by the time the players are notified. All players should attend at least one scheduled practice in any given week.

Practices are important. Managers and Coaches will be working on baseball fundamentals, help players with early conditioning and explain team rules. In addition, the players have the opportunity to get to know their teammates and build a sense a team unity.

If a player is unable to attend a practice, please notify the Manager prior to practice start time.

Season Play

During the regular season, teams will usually play two games a week. A season will typically be 8 games for T-Ball 4 and 12 games for all other divisions. The League will do everything to insure this number of games but this can be affected by the weather. **It is very important to notify your Manager in advance that your child(ren) will be late or not attending a game. Minor fields and above will be unable to play if a minimum of 9 players are not available. Managers also need to have a lineup prepared in advance of game start time.**

Minimum Playing Time

Little League has a minimum playing time regulation that requires every player to play in each game. Exceptions to these regulations are allowed only when a player is being disciplined. For the definitive rules at each Division, please contact your Team Manager. The minimum play time rules do not imply equal game time for each player nor are they intended to remove the strategic choices of the manager.

10. MABA Divisions/Leagues and Team Structure

The division structure for MABA is created to establish a guideline to place players in their respective divisions by age and skill level. The evaluation will determine which division the player plays in based on those criteria. It may be necessary in the lower divisions for an inexperienced or undeveloped player with lack of skills to be placed in a lower division or an exceptional player to be placed in a higher division. The evaluator(s) will recommend with the approval of the Player Agent, Commissioner and Vice-President for the player to be placed in that division that best meets the player's abilities. The placement group will discuss the player placement with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the player if so required. Age and skill level notwithstanding the safety and success of each player are of the utmost importance to MABA.

Developmental and Competitive Division Differences:

Developmental:

In developmental divisions, the focus is on the training and enhancement of the player's skills first and foremost. Scores and rankings are not maintained in the developmental divisions. The emphasis is on player and skill development and not in competition for the top ranking or divisional championship. All teams will receive trophies and / or medals in the developmental divisions.

Competitive:

In competitive divisions, scores and rankings are maintained. While player development is still emphasized in these divisions, teams compete to be the best team in the division and for the overall division championship. The level of officiating is also increased in these divisions. Trophies are awarded to the first and second place teams, other awards may be given at the Board's discretion.

T-Ball Divisions

T-Ball is a developmental division. This is a players introduction to "organized" baseball. The primary goals of T-Ball are to instruct the children in the fundamentals of hitting, throwing and fielding, in addition to allowing them to experience the value of teamwork in an enjoyable environment. There are no player evaluations.

T-Ball 4

- Teams shall be comprised of players who turn four (4) by April 30th of the current season.
- The Player Agent and Commissioner will select teams.
- Ideally teams will have a minimum of 8 players and a maximum of 10.

T-Ball

- Teams shall be comprised of players whose league age (age as of April 30th) is 5, 6 and 7.
- Seven (7) year olds who have not completed at least one year of T-Ball or are developmentally not prepared for Coach Pitch will be allowed to play T-Ball with the approval of the T-Ball Commissioner, Vice President and the Player Agent.

Coach Pitch Division

Coach Pitch is a developmental division. The players are introduced to more advance practice drills and fundamental baseball strategy. Coaches pitch to the players. Scores are kept in order to facilitate when an inning is officially over (five run rule). No "official" final scores are maintained by the league as there are no standings kept.

- Teams shall be comprised of players whose league age is 6, 7, 8 and 9.
- Six (6) year olds must have played at least one full season of T-Ball, attend player evaluations and must be recommended by the evaluation group and have the approval of both the T-ball and the Coach Pitch Commissioners, the Vice President and the Player Agent.
- All players are drafted each season.
- Teams will be selected by coaches as explained in Article 12 of the MABA By-laws.
- Ideally teams will have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12.

Minor League Division

The Minor League Division is designed as a bridge between the developmental divisions and the competitive divisions. More advanced skills of hitting, pitching, throwing and fielding are emphasized with the goal of reaching a skill level that prepares the child for the Major Division. Pitching is also taught in this division. Scores and standings are kept with a division champion determined at the end of the season. There is the possibility of "Inter-League" play.

- Teams shall be comprised of players whose league age is 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.
- All players are evaluated and drafted yearly.
- Eight (8) year olds must be recommended by the evaluation group and have the approval of the Minor Commissioner, the Vice President and Player Agent.
- Minor Commissioner, the Vice President and Player Agent.
- Ideally teams will have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12.

Major League Division

The Major League Division is the most competitive division. Emphasize will be on the players improving the fundamental skills learned in the lower divisions. Scores and standings are kept with a division champion determined at the end of the season. There is a possibility of "Inter-League" play.

- Teams shall be comprised of players whose league age is 9, 10, 11 and 12.
- All players are evaluated each season.
- Nine (9) and Ten (10) year old players must be recommended by the evaluation group and have the approval of Major League Commissioner, the Vice President and the Player Agent.
- This is the only division where returning players are frozen on returning teams, unless a request has been made in writing from the Parent(s) or Guardian(s) of said player requesting that player be allowed to re-enter the draft. Such request must be turned into the Major League Commissioner or Player Agent Prior to the evaluations.
- Players are drafted based on evaluation scores and to fill the empty spots on established teams.
- Ideally teams will have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12.

Junior Division

The Junior Division is an extension of Little League to provide a transition between Major League Division and the High School Division (18U). When there are not sufficient players within the MABA boundaries MABA may draw players from the surrounding area, with Board approval. The Junior Division plays on a regulation diamond. This division will participate in "Inter-League" play.

- Teams shall be comprised of players whose league age is 12, 13 and 14.
- Twelve (12) year olds must have the recommendation of the evaluation group and have the approval of the Major League and Junior Division Commissioners, the Vice President and the Player Agent.
- All players are evaluated and drafted each season.
- Ideally teams will have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12.

18U Division

MABA does not have the appropriate facilities to host an 18U Division. Players from Midlothian participate in the 18U League hosted by Waxahachie Boys Baseball. Their season begins in April and ends mid July. Information can be found at wybonline.org.

Special Requests: MABA will not recognize special requests for team placement. Special consideration will be given in very exceptional circumstances. If you believe this is your situation, please speak with a Board Member.

11. Evaluations

All players who wish to be placed on a Coach Pitch Team or above MUST attend Player Evaluations. Evaluations will be conducted by qualified baseball coaches. Each year MABA attempts to recruit High-School and College Coaches for this task. Evaluations are important as it provides the League with the information needed for team placement. All players will be evaluated at the pitching position. Any player that does not attend evaluations, will be drafted "blind" (name not showing) in the division based upon his/her birth date and will not be allowed to pitch.

The placement of each player is at the discretion of Board and all decisions are with the child's safety and success in mind.

12. Uniforms and Equipment

Personal Equipment

Each player must provide a suitable fielders' glove and protective cup. MABA provides a catcher's mitt, catcher's protective equipment and protective helmets with throat guard. Baseball cleats or soccer style shoes with rubber cleats are required in all divisions. Metal cleats that are not altered in any way are allowed in the Junior Division. **Shoes with screw-in cleats are not allowed.** Tennis shoes or sneakers are not considered adequate except for the 4 year old division. **For safety, no player shall wear leather soled shoes or boots to games or practices.**

All personal bats and catchers equipment must meet Little League specifications and be inspected by the Equipment Manager. If you have any questions, please contact your field Commissioner.

Uniforms

MABA will provide a uniform jersey and baseball cap. These become the property of the player and does not need to be returned to the League. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to provide baseball pants, socks, and belts (if needed). Teams will determine the color of these.

NOTE: All players must be in a complete uniform in order to participate in a game.

13. Income and Expenses

MABA is a non-profit 501c(3) organization, incorporated in the State of Texas. Our income is received from registration fees, annual fundraiser, concession stand profits and sponsor donations. Operating expenses include association fees, uniforms, equipment, field maintenance, insurance, awards, baseball support services and umpires.

Sponsorships

Local businesses, fraternal organizations and individuals demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of Midlothian's youth by providing donations to help offset expenses. We are currently seeking a Fundraising Coordinator to assist us in this effort. If you are interested please contact the League President at mabapres@gmail.com.

Registration Fees

Registration fees are based upon the budgeted expenses. The Board makes every effort to keep fees as low as possible. The larger our volunteer base the less the League has to pay outside businesses and individuals to perform services and thereby decreasing our operating expenses. Please help keep baseball an affordable sport.

No child will be denied the opportunity to play due to economic hardship. Scholarships are available to families who cannot afford the registration costs. Please see a Board Member and complete the Scholarship Application Form if requesting a scholarship.

Concession Stand

The Concession Stand is a source of revenue for MABA. The League strives to keep prices affordable as this is also a service to our participants and their families. Each team is required to serve a shift in the Concession Stand, please take a turn and volunteer. The Manager and Coaches are already dedicating their time and they should not have to be the only ones fulfilling the team's obligation in the Concession Stand.

Fundraiser

To minimize our registration fees, MABA will be having several different fundraising opportunities to be involved in. In 2012 this no longer a mandatory requirement but we are asking for participation from each family. Details will be provided throughout the season.