

Manager/Coach (Coaching Staff) Handbook
Indian Wells Valley Youth Baseball, Inc. (The League)

The purpose of this document is to provide information and resources to aid new Managers and Coaches in understanding the expectations of The League and ultimately to aid the Coaching Staff in providing a safe, positive experience to the youth playing our sport.

Communication

Communicate with your parents as soon as possible. The number one complaint for the season, that will carry forward until Opening Day, is the Manager or Coach did not communicate with the parents soon enough for them to make adjustments. This applies to notifying parents of their child's team assignment and first practice, to changes in the practice schedule, communicating picture time slots and the timeline for Opening Day. All of these issues will sour a parent's attitude toward the child's coaching staff.

Ensure you take a proactive approach in notifying parents early and often. If you find that communication is not your strong suit, please delegate this task to another coach/team mom. If you have questions about league communication or how to communicate with your team or need help dealing with problems within your team, please see your Division VP.

Organization – Being Prepared

Get organized prior to the season starting, otherwise it won't happen. A large consumption of time will occur just trying to perform simple tasks like retrieve uniform numbers, parent phone numbers, complete roster, etc. You will find yourself attempting to create a roster by trying to remember all of the names or filtering through a stack of signup sheets.

Create a team binder. The Team Manager / Coach responsible for the team at any given outing should have complete roster information with emergency contacts and medical information on-hand at all times, required by The League. Whether you create a printout with all information or have a signup sheet for each player, all appropriate information should be available in a team binder, along with extra copies of schedules, lineup cards, etc. A good example would be to have the roster and medical information per child if printed separately, but also a single sheet that maintains the following information, in a slip cover 3-ring binder, placed in the outside cover:

Last, First Number Contact Contact Phone Primary/Backup Positions

For Shetland through Mustang, you might find it valuable to create this sheet in a spreadsheet, and place six columns afterwards, labeled with 1st through 6th innings. This is for prior planning such that you can plan your rotations ahead of time and maintain your roster within the rules of rotation provided in the rulebook. Plan your rotations and play by the rules.

Keep your communications, handouts, a zip lock bag (for monetary collections), schedules, roster, etc all in one location and stay organized. The responsibility of the team binder can be assigned to the Team Mom, and along with the use of a dry erase line-up clipboard, the dugout can be run efficiently. While actual line-up cards are not required, for games the official scorekeeper requires a copy of the line-up in some form, and it is customary for the opposing team to receive a copy as well. The League does not provide line-up cards but they can be purchased at the local sporting goods store inexpensively and can save time and hassle.

Being prepared can be essential to your players' experience at the end of the season. Telling your parents to ensure the players show up to practices/games with water does not necessarily ensure that every child has enough water to last for 2 hours when the temperature exceeds 100 degrees and the parents are not present. Providing a team water source can make the difference for any child on any given day and for the team as it relates to level of play. A 5-gallon water jug with a push-button tap at the bottom can be purchased on sale at various local retailers and can be filled with water sources from the facility. Cups are not required as long as players have some water container present, but they are a good idea. A permanent marker to put names on each cup, with the Team Mom keeping the dugout organized will provide a more positive experience.

Additionally, the team should never be on the field participating in an official outing (on or off official league locations) without the presence of or access to a First-Aid kit. While good practice in most cases, sanitary wipes (water is useful most times) and bandages are required during games when a scrape occurs in a visible area to the extent the umpire will prevent further play time for the player until the scrape is covered and/or no longer bleeding. The league makes every attempt to provide such First-Aid support at the fields at all times, but in the middle of an inning during play, when time is of the essence, the team will fare better if the coaching staff is prepared.

Other items to consider in being prepared: a length of extra glove lacing, a glove lacing tool, a roll of electrical tape for when bat handle grip begins to peel (umpire will disallow use), a multi-tool, extra pens, dry erase markers (if using a dry erase line-up) and a permanent marker.

Field Preparation / Maintenance

There are multiple reasons to maintain our facility to high standards, none as important as for the safety of our youth. Other reasons to maintain our facility include cleanliness, respect for ourselves and others and pride in our facility. While some aspects of facility maintenance are the responsibility of The City, The League is responsible for the condition of our infield playing surfaces and the general state of the facility during the seasons.

Infield playing surfaces are one of the most important and most time consuming aspects of maintaining the safety of our youth and the perception of The League by the community; perception is everything. The infield playing surface is defined as any dirt/clay area (non-grass) within the boundaries of a field fence from the dugout perimeter in a solid line to the extended outfield perimeter in a contiguous field perimeter.

For safety reasons alone, our infields should be free of holes, divots, debris, soft/loose sand and general un-evenness. Debris is defined as rocks, gravel, chunks of clay, trash, glass and any un-smooth non-dirt or clay substance not normally found in the playing area or any substance that may create the impression of a hazard to a player. This requires that dirt/clay areas within the perimeter be watered, smoothed and policed for debris before and after every session. A session is considered a group of consecutive practices or games meaning maintenance should occur before the first practice and after the last practice. However, good practice is also to perform a minimum level of maintenance between games, watering and smoothing out all surface irregularities after the prior game.

Normal Process:

1. First and foremost, all debris should be removed.
2. Bases should be removed (if post-game) and base plugs installed.
3. High traffic/usage areas should be raked first, to ensure that the playing surface is filled in and smooth to the extent that can be achieved with a rake. This means, the catcher's box, batter's boxes, to and from slide-in and lead-off areas from each base, returning built up surface content

to their respective areas away from the bases, player positions and pitcher's mound build-up, shape and slope on all sides. For younger divisions, certain playing positions get torn up and should be raked as well.

4. It may be helpful in the rake process to water these areas first, lightly on the mound, but heavily around bases and the catcher's / batter's boxes.
5. Once complete or during if enough Coaching Staff is present, lightly watering the field to prevent dust prior dragging is preferred.
6. Dragging the field requires a speed slow enough such that the drag itself is not sliding outward of the drag vehicle path and is not moving surface outward from the drag pattern. This keeps surface in the playing area and not against the backstop or in a mound at the edge of the grass. Drag the field in a circular pattern to the right, starting around the pitcher's mound. DO NOT DRAG THE PITCHER'S MOUND. Continuing to the right until reaching the base plug areas, make one pass inside each base plug and home plate and one pass outside each base plug and home plate. NO NOT DRAG OVER THE BASE PLUGS OR HOME PLATE. Continue the drag pattern to the perimeter of the backstop and grass and return the drag pattern internally until you are sure you did not leave a buildup of surface at the edge of the grass or backstop.
7. When the drag is complete, smooth out surface left at the completion point and remove any debris brought up by the drag at the completion point and throughout the field.
8. Provide additional water on the field more heavily than prior to the drag. The surface of the field being misted is not enough to harden the loose pack on the top and maintaining a firm playing surface is important. Again, deep and soft areas should receive more water.
9. Avoid over-watering the mound. The mound should receive enough water to keep the sides intact and the rubber to plate ramp firm. It may be helpful to water the mound lightly but multiple times as the water is soaked up. If available per field, cover the mound.

High Wind Process:

1. During high winds, when watering and dragging the field may create a hazard to other fields or become more detrimental than beneficial, Steps 1-4 and Step 9 should be performed ALWAYS.

No Water Process:

1. In the event there is no water available from either the traditional water source or the hose bib at drinking fountains, Steps 1-4 and Step 9 should be performed without water ALWAYS.

Session After High Winds:

1. After high winds, there is typically a buildup of surface content in very soft form against backstops or grass edges, this surface content needs to be brought back into the playing area regularly.
2. Initially, with the smooth side of a rake from the backstop or raked side from the grass will achieve some progress, heavy water will aid in keeping the content clumped.
3. Surface content should be brought back to either low areas, hard exposed areas or close to the mound where the drag can be used to return the infield playing surface to normal.
4. This may happen two or three times per season, do not avoid the process. Get as many volunteers involved as possible and it can take as little as 30 minutes.

The entirety of the field maintenance process should not take more than 20 minutes if all volunteers pitch in. Alone, it can take up to 40 minutes depending on field condition. On school nights, good etiquette is to aid your fellow volunteer in the field maintenance process.

Equipment Locations

Most equipment is located in the 40 foot storage container just inside the entrance gate between the dirt parking lot at the West end of the facility and the fields. You should be given a code to open the container if not already open. Equipment items needed for field maintenance include field rakes and a drag vehicle with drag. This location is where items should be returned when complete. Leaving items at the field can result in theft or vandalism which costs the league money. Equipment items like chalkers, chalk buckets, string and batter's box outlines are also kept here or in the chalk shed attached to the side of the storage container. Not returning these items to the proper location results in other fields having to search them out or not having them available prior to a game when time is of the essence and also theft / vandalism which again, costs the league money.

Not maintaining our facility and equipment, which includes returning equipment timely and appropriately results in more volunteers finding it harder to follow the rules and do the right thing for their team. Be courteous to your fellow volunteer by following these general guidelines:

1. Maintain your field before/after every session (even if not your responsibility).
2. Return equipment to its proper location (the drag vehicle can be returned to the center of the fields when it is certain other teams will require use)
3. Do not leave any equipment items at your field to start a game or practice even when you plan on returning it afterwards, odds are that someone else needs it prior their game/practice as well.
4. If the chalk drum is empty, fill it; do not just open a chalk bag and fill your chalker. This leaves multiple open chalk bags and the same problem for the next individual. If you can't, have someone fill it.
5. If you fill the chalk drum, take your trash with you. Trash bags are in the storage container and there are multiple trash cans (probably near your field), use them.
6. If something is broken or falling apart, say something either to your manager, Division VP, Board Officer of the Day or snackbar. If you see something, say something!

Issues

Another common complaint throughout the season will be that issues during games or within teams whether between parents and coaching staff, umpires or any combination thereof, are not addressed appropriately by the board. The only comment here is again; if you see something, say something. The board cannot address issues it is not aware of. Even if the issue or complaint may involve you and you think someone else might say something, bring it up. The only way for the board to get all of the facts involved is to be aware.