RIVER FALLS

YOUTH BASEBALL ORGANIZATION



TRAVELING LEAGUE HANDBOOK

For Metro Baseball League rules please visit their website at:

[www.mbl.bz](http://www.mbl.bz)

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To Parents, Coaches, Managers and Players,

We welcome you to another season of traveling youth baseball and to the River Falls Youth Baseball Organization!

Your involvement in the past as a parent, coach, team manager, volunteer or player is admirable, and we would like to ask for your continued commitment to the development of youth sports in our community. Opportunities to volunteer your time and talents are available and the success of our organization is not possible without it!

Traveling teams compete in the Metro Baseball League (MBL) and have the opportunity to participate in tournaments ran by the MBL (Metro Baseball Tournament State Qualifiers) and Gopher State Qualifiers).

It is our mission to provide every boy in the River Falls area with the opportunity to play organized baseball in a safe and protected environment. Our main objective is to teach the fundamentals of baseball and good sportsmanship, while having fun and building character. Each family with players is considered a member and will be encouraged to participate at the level they are interested in being involved.

In keeping with this mission, it is our desire to keep registration fees to a minimum. Volunteer hours are minimal but necessary to assist with keeping these costs down. Throughout the season we ask that parents assist with concessions and field maintenance.

Board meetings are currently scheduled as necessary to complete the organization’s business. Typically, the RFYBO meets at least once per month. Feel free to reach out to any board member at any time if you wish to raise an issue or concern.

Attached you will find a handbook that outlines the operation of our organization. Please take some time to review this document with your player(s). Additional information is available on our website.

If you are interested in coaching, being a team manager or becoming a board member, please contact one of the current RFYBO board members. The current roster of board members can be found on our website.

We look forward to another great season of baseball!

RFYBO

 **MISSION STATEMENT**

The RFYBO exists to teach and promote the game of baseball in an environment that fosters competition and individual development, instills the importance of being part of a team, readies players for Legion and High School baseball, and enhances the enjoyment of youth baseball players in the River Falls community consistent with the core values below.

River Falls Youth Baseball believes in the following core values:

 • We believe that the lives of the individuals of all ages and abilities should be enriched by their

 experience in baseball.

 • We believe that we can contribute to the development of baseball by promoting teamwork,

 sportsmanship, honesty, and loyalty.

 • We believe in fairness on and off the field of play, as characterized by equality, integrity, and

 trust.

 • We believe in respect between players, coaches, spectators, and officials.

 • We believe in the development of coaching and athletic leadership capabilities for the

 advancement of the organization.

 • We believe that all who participate in River Falls Youth Baseball should be responsible and

 accountable for their actions and decisions.

River Falls Youth Baseball strives to achieve the following goals:

 • To provide a safe learning experience in conjunction with our partnership with the City of

 River Falls, Troy Township, River Falls Baseball Council and the River Falls School District.

 • To enhance community interest in River Falls Youth Baseball Organization and the benefits

 the organization provides for our city's youth.

 • To build healthy bodies and minds of all participants.

 • To develop skill and proficiency in baseball and related activities.

 • To continually improve and add to existing baseball fields and facilities in River Falls.

 • To keep in perspective that the focus of youth sports is on developing youngsters first and

 foremost, without adult ambition for personal glory.

* To provide effective, high quality training for players and coaches at all levels.

As an organization, our success is measured upon the individual experience of each child, and the lessons and values that will remain with him for years to come.

**ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

To ensure a safe, enjoyable and positive experience for all who use the City's and school district's recreational facilities, this policy was adopted by the RFYBO, and is fully enforceable by the City of River Falls, Troy Township and the School District of River Falls.

This policy addresses inappropriate or disruptive behavior that interferes with the pleasure and peaceful atmosphere at all City, Town and school recreational facilities by parents, participants, officials, spectators and employees. The policy emphasizes respect for others and responsible, mature behavior when responding to emotional or stressful situations.

It is our policy that inappropriate or disruptive behavior will not be allowed or tolerated on the grounds of City and/or school recreational facilities or fields.

Inappropriate or disruptive behavior shall include, but is not limited to:

 A. Using obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous, combative or confrontational manner.

 B. Taunting of individuals, coaches, officials, employees or spectators by means of baiting,

 stalking, ridiculing, or threatening physical violence.

 C. Exhibiting behavior detrimental to the physical and/or emotional well-being of youth

 participants.

 D. Use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco by any player.

 E. Any use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco on school grounds.

Our staff has been instructed to contact 911, as necessary, when inappropriate or disruptive behavior occurs. Violators will be escorted from the facility and will not be allowed to return until approved by the City, Township or School District, as applicable.

Penalties will vary dependent upon severity of infraction and could include written warning, temporary suspension or permanent suspension from facilities and programs. Additionally, police reports and criminal charges may be filed.

Please enjoy our facilities and program. Please support and respect players, coaches, officials, staff, and all attendees in a positive, productive, and mature manner.

**FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP**

Fundamentals of Sportsmanship:

 1. Show respect for the opponent.

 2. Show respect for the officials.

 3. Know, understand, and appreciate the rules of the game.

 4. Maintain self-control.

 5. Recognize and appreciate skill in performance regardless of affiliation.

 6. Be no party to the use of profanity, obscene language or improper actions.

 7. Instruct participants and spectators in proper sportsmanship.

 8. Set a good example for players and others to follow.

 9. Refrain from arguments in front of players and spectators.

 10. Abstain from throwing any objects.

The lessons of good sportsmanship: playing the game hard and fair; being a good winner and loser; developing respect for discipline and authority; playing and living by the spirit of the rules. These lessons are not confined solely to those who play the game.

Coaches, spectators and officials are expected to abide by these tenets, or become subject to the enforcement actions indicated in our Zero Tolerance Policy

**PARENTING PHILOSOPHY**

The emotions that a parent feels when watching their child play in organized sports can range from pure joy and pride to anger and disappointment. Most parents don't realize how emotional they may become until they get caught up in the moment while watching their child participate in a competitive environment. The majority of parents start their children in sports for a number of great reasons, including:

 • An opportunity to spend time with their children.

 • To help their children form friendships.

 • To provide a safe supervised activity.

 • Provide regular exercise.

 • To develop skill and confidence.

While not a comprehensive list, these are a few of the myriad reasons to get a child involved in youth athletics. Parents deeply love their children and have a strong emotional bond. The RFYBO understands the inherent parental desire to help their child when they fail, and stick up for them if they believe their child isn't being treated fairly. While these intentions are good, this strong emotional bond can also lead to parents not behaving in a manner consistent with good sportsmanship or complying with our Zero Tolerance Policy.

**EXPECTATIONS**

 **Check Your Behavior**

  -  Good sportsmanship should be the rule. By demonstrating positive support for all

players, coaches and officials at every game and practice you’ll be influencing how your child reacts in stressful or unfavorable situations.

   -  Please refrain from yelling instructions to them.  Be mindful that this your son’s opportunity

 to enjoy playing the game; use this as your opportunity to enjoy watching him play the

 game.

 - Please refrain from discussions about playing time, baseball philosophies, player

 positioning, batting order, etc. during, directly before or directly after games. All things

 have a time and place, and at the ball field IS the wrong time.

 **Emphasize Effort and Attitude**

 -  Kids gain confidence and a love for the game through positive feedback from parents,

 coaches and other players.  Skill level develops at different rates for kids, but it is always

possible to put in “an honest day’s work” and to have fun.

 - Let your child know that you are proud of the effort they give on the field. This can be done

 whether they played a good game or made a couple of errors and didn’t get a hit. If you

 only compliment your child when he plays well, that’s how he will judge himself also.

 **Dealing with Coaches**

The RFYBO has developed the following criteria for dealing with conflicts that may arise with the coach(es) of your son’s team. It is our philosophy that most issues can be readily fixed if dealt with “head-on”.

 - First, discuss the situation with your son. What you see as a parent and what your son

 sees may be dramatically different.

 - Talk to your son’s coach(es) to get his/their viewpoint on the situation.

 - Only after exhausting each of these previous avenues should the RFYBO board be

 contacted.

Please remember that coaching is not an easy job, and be mindful of the difficult situation the coach is in. It is impossible to make every parent happy. The fact is, many coaches cite “dealing with parents” as the number one reason why they quit coaching. As a parent, try to get involved and volunteer to help out when needed. By helping out from the beginning, you will have an opportunity to talk with the coach on a regular basis and develop a relationship. That relationship is invaluable when providing feedback when discussing things that aren’t going well and could be improved.

As a final point, it is important to understand that these coaches are VOLUNTEERS and are doing the very best they can. Feel strongly about how your son is being taught the game? Consider volunteering as a coach; we never have too many.

**CODES OF CONDUCT**

**Coaches Code of Conduct:**

 • Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every player, coach and

 official, and treat each equally within the context of the sport.

 • Coaches must place the well-being and safety of each player above all other

 considerations, including the development of performance.

 • Coaches must adhere to all rules as listed in the NFHS Baseball Rule Book.

 • Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on

 mutual trust and respect.

 • Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibilities for their own

 behavior and performance.

 • Coaches must ensure the activities they direct are appropriate for the age, experience and

 maturity of each player.

 • Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the player (and, where appropriate, their parents) what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach.

 • Coaches must cooperate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports

 scientists, doctors, physiotherapists) in the best interest of the player.

 • Coaches must always promote the appropriate aspects of the sport to players, parents and

 spectators alike. Never condone any violations of the rules of the game.

 • Coaches must consistently display high standards of behavior and be a role model for

 players, parents and spectators.

 • Promote this Code of Conduct.

**Players Code of Conduct:**

 • Play for the "fun of it" not just to please parents or coaches.

 • Play by the rules of the game.

 • Never argue with the Umpire.

 • Control your temper and use your energies for playing better baseball.

 • Play well for yourself and your team; your team's performance will benefit and so will your

 own.

 • Be a good sport. Recognize all good play, whether by your team or your opponent's team.

 • Treat all players as you would like to be treated.

 • Remember that the aim of the game is to have fun, improve your skills, and to support your

 team and club.

 • Cooperate with your coach, teammates and opponents, for without them you will not have a

 game

 • Learn the rules of the game and you will be a much better player.

 • Promote this Code of Conduct.

**Parents/Guardians Code of Conduct:**

•Good sportsmanship is the rule**.** Applaud good play by your team and members of the

 opposition.

 • Do not force an unwilling child to participate in baseball.

 • Remember children are involved in baseball for *their* enjoyment, not yours.

 • Encourage your child to follow the rules of the game.

 • Do not argue with coaches, umpires, other parents, opponents or other officials.

 • Teach your child that an honest effort is more important than victory.

 • Help your child work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship. Never ridicule or

 yell at your child for making a mistake

 • Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's baseball.

 • Recognize the value of coaches and other volunteers who give their time to provide baseball for

 your child.

* Do not yell instructions to your son or son’s teammates during games.

 • Promote this Code of Conduct.

**RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

The River Falls Youth Baseball Organization (RFYBO) is serious about the safety of and any potential abuse of children. We will screen our volunteers by requesting that each volunteer complete a volunteer disclosure statement, which is processed through the State of Wisconsin's Department of Justice Crime Information Bureau. In accordance with the Volunteers for Children Act, Public Law 105-251, RFYBO reserves the right to submit Wisconsin, or any other State or Federal criminal history requests, as deemed necessary to protect the RFYBO participants. All information in the CIB's criminal history data base is based on submission, by police departments, or arrest finger printing cards.

The RFYBO will distribute and collect the Disclosure Statements and perform the necessary background checks. At registration for any RFYBO program, if a person is interested in volunteering for a coaching position, the Disclosure Statement must be filled out and signed (attached to this form). Failure to do so will cause a delay in the consideration of the person for a coaching position, until such time that the necessary Disclosure Statement is completed and turned into the RFYBO. The RFBYO will take the necessary precautions to keep the Disclosure Statement confidential.

If the background check reveals that a person has been convicted of a crime or crimes listed on the Disclosure Statement, the person's candidacy shall be rejected or he/she shall be dismissed from any position he/she then holds in RFYBO. Any such convictions preceding the date of the Disclosure Statement by more than (15) years may be considered by the RFYBO in determining the applicant's suitability for a RFYBO position.

In the event a RFYBO Volunteer receives a complaint of physical or sexual abuse of an RFYBO Participant by another RFYBO volunteer or player, it shall be reported to the President of the RFYBO (or any RFYBO board member), the local child protection authorities, and to the RFYBO Participant's parent(s)/guardian(s).

After a physical or sexual abuse complaint concerning a RFYBO Volunteer has been formally lodged with the local child protection authorities, the RFYBO shall inform the alleged offender, in writing, that he/she is suspended immediately from all activities within the organization until the complaint is dismissed/withdrawn. Persons found to have violated the RFYBO Participant/RFYBO Volunteer Protection Guidelines are subject to discipline, including but not limited to, warning, sanctions, suspensions or termination or the RFYBO participation/volunteering.

If any complaint is made regarding a violation of the RFYBO Participant/RFYBO Volunteer Protection Guidelines, other than physical or sexual abuse, the RFYBO shall speak to all parties involved, make a written report of the complaint, and report their findings to the RFYBO President to present to the board. The RFYBO Board shall meet with the complainant and the accused. The RFYBO shall make any decision regarding discipline. Decisions by the RFYBO Board are final.

**PARTCIPANT / VOLUNTEER PROTECTION POLICIES**

Sexual contact of any kind or type between RFYBO Volunteers and the RFYBO Participants is prohibited, regardless of whether or not such contact is agreed upon.

RFYBO Volunteers should not socialize with RFYBO Participants, except at games, practices, or team functions. RFYBO Volunteers should not spend time alone with RFYBO Participants that are not their children or that they have legal guardianship over.

RFYBO Volunteers must be aware that physical contact with players may be misinterpreted. Physical contact should be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach skill, treat injury, or console/congratulate a player.

Offensive and vulgar language by RFYBO Volunteers or RFYBO Participants is unacceptable. Language that is denigrating in nature, content, or tone, or that refers to one's gender, race, national origin, disability, or religion is prohibited.

RFYBO Volunteers should avoid being in a one-to-one situation with an RFYBO Participant. RFYBO Volunteers should avoid situations, such as driving alone with a RFYBO Participant. In some circumstances, such as when an RFYBO Participant remains on a field waiting for his/her parent/guardian to arrive, the RFYBO Volunteer should wait with the RFYBO Participant on the field until the RFYBO Participant's parent/guardian arrives.

A non-parent/non-custodian RFYBO Volunteer sharing a bedroom, alone, with an RFYBO Participant is prohibited.

RFYBO Volunteers should respect the privacy of RFYBO Participants. Separate shower facilities or changing rooms for RFYBO Participants and RFYBO Volunteers, or scheduling times for use of such facilities, so the RFYBO Participants and RFYBO Volunteers have separate use if necessary.

If an RFYBO Participant reports physical or sexual abuse to a RFYBO Volunteer, the RFYBO Volunteer must report this information immediately to the RFYBO Board.

Violations of these guidelines by RFYBO Volunteers or RFYBO Participants will subject them to discipline, including, but not limited to, warnings, sanctions, suspensions or removal by the organization.

Anyone witnessing a violation of these guidelines should report the violation to the board.

**RFYBO BOARD DESCRIPTIONS**

**RFYBO Board President**

Oversight over the Traveling League (U9 - U15) Program. The first line of contact for any issues involving River Falls Youth Baseball.

**RFYBO Vice President**

Responsible for assisting the President preside over all league matters. Oversees registration and the player assessment process.

**Director of Coaches Development**

Responsible for assisting all coaches in their personal coaching development for the betterment of RFYBO. Ensure that all coaches are in compliance with criteria in the coaches’ handbook. Manage/organize coaches' clinics throughout the year and make that information available to all coaches. Responsible for maintaining a "Coaches Corner" subsection on the RFYBO main web page. The River Falls High School baseball coaches serve as advisors to this position.

**Director of Player Development**

Responsible for searching for area camps throughout the year and make that information available to RFYBO Participants. Lead the winter and spring player clinics. Responsible for maintaining a "Players Development" subsection on the RFYBO main web page. Work with coaches to ensure to assist with age/skill appropriate practice plans and drills.

**Director of Fields**

Responsible for maintaining and doing what you can to improve the overall condition of fields and facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, making sure that the fields are safe and free of any potential hazardous objects, fencing has been properly placed for player and spectator protection, the infield and outfield have a good level surface without holes to prevent injury, and the infields are free of weeds. Maintain inventory of current field maintenance equipment to ensure all fields have proper equipment during the season. Ensure that all fields are properly prepared for tournaments and tryouts.

**Umpire Director**

Responsible to schedule the appropriate umpires for every home game within the Traveling League. Work closely with the treasurer to ensure the proper umpires are paid the correct amount. Responsible to schedule the appropriate training to train our local umpires and recruit an adequate number of individuals to make sure we always have umpires available and maintain a roster of qualified umpires for respective age groups.

**Tournament Director**

Responsible for the organization and management of all RFYBO hosted tournaments. Advertise and recruit teams for RFYBO tournaments. Assist RFYBO clubs in finding state qualifying tournaments.

**Equipment Coordinator/Field Maintenance (Vacant)**

Required to keep record of all RFYBO equipment. Distribute equipment in the spring and collect it at the end of season from every team. All equipment will be appropriately cleaned and labeled. Coordinate the purchase of new equipment for all teams based on funds approved by the Board.

**Uniform Coordinator**

Responsible for design, ordering an issuance of uniforms annually

**Concessions Coordinator**

Oversees the organization of concession sales throughout the season.

**Registration / Sign-Up Coordinator**

Responsible for coordinating all registration procedures each season. Collect all registration forms and money, track and report data to the RFYBO.

**Communications Director / Public Relations / Fundraising**

Responsible for keeping the information on our web page current. You will also assist with any notifications or publications that promote RFYBO to the public. Maintain relationships with donors/sponsors. Responsible for the recruitment of all sponsors and coordinating fundraising activities for the RFYBO.

**Treasurer**

Manages finances and RFYBO financial records.

**Team Manager**

Every team is required to have a team manager. It is the role of the Team Manager to assist

the head coach with the administrative tasks of running the team. The specific responsibilities of the team manager are determined by the Head Coach. Some example may include, but are not limited to: dealing with any uniform issues that arise after registration, make sure each team has a team photo taken, etc.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Commitment**

The Traveling baseball division requires a significant time commitment from players, coaches, and parents, especially during the months of April through July. Players are expected to attend all practices, league games, and tournament games unless they are ill or have received their coach's approval for the absence beforehand. Remember, baseball is a TEAM sport, and the TEAM needs to be present to be successful.

**Registration Fees And Uniforms**

The registration fee per player will be set forth on a yearly basis. This cost includes, but is not limited to, league fees, umpire costs, entry fees for up to two out-of-town tournaments (or as allowed below), player’s hat, one player’s jersey, field supplies, insurance and team equipment. Uniform costs for jerseys, pants, belts and socks are separate from this registration fee, and will be held as low as practical, while providing durable, quality player apparel. Registration Fees are due at registration in order to be considered registered. All registration fees will be returned, minus the $50 non-refundable assessment fee, if the player is not selected for a team.

There is no discount for children of parents who volunteer, including coaches.

If this registration fee is a hardship to any player who wishes to participate, please inform one of the Board Members. The Board will review all hardship issues in a closed meeting and will take the appropriate action.

**Additional Fees / Tournaments**

The RFYBO will provide funds for each team to participate in two out-of-town tournaments, and the home River Falls Tournament. There is a maximum tournament allocation of $800 per team for the two non-River Falls tournaments. In the event a home tournament is not offered at an age group and level, the team will have the option to register for an additional out-of-town tournament with a maximum allocation of $400.

**State Tournaments**

Teams that qualify for State Tournaments (MBT, GSTC, MSF, etc.) may participate in as many tournaments that they qualify for. However, RFYBO will provide funds for registration and gate fees for ONE state tournament if the team qualifies as a result of being in the Championship game (1st or 2nd place) of the tournament. If a team qualifies by taking 3rd or 4th place and a bid is handed down, or accepts and “at-large” bid, the cost of registration and gate fee will be the responsibility of the team.

**Games and Practices**

Weather permitting, practices will take place shortly after tryouts and the team(s) have been chosen. League play begins in May and continues through early July with approximately 16 league games. Usually 8 games are in River Falls and 8 games are away. Playoffs begin in early to mid-July for the league regardless of league record. All game locations, times, and results are posted on the MBL web site.

**River Falls Parks and School District**

The Park and Recreation Department and River Falls School District provide us with the use of baseball diamonds with only minor expenses. Please be considerate of the residents living adjacent to the playing fields. Park and drive your vehicles appropriately and safely, use sidewalks, pick up your trash and keep your children off of other people's property. If possible help the team fix up the fields at home games before leaving. Leave it better than you found it! Home teams are responsible for dragging the field before/after the game.

**Equipment**

Each player should provide his/her: practice outfits, spikes/cleats, helmets, gloves and bat. We do not furnish the teams with a team bat (which would be a major expense to our program) as bats need to be fitted to the individual player. Parents can receive league bat rules and size suggestions from their coaches. Barrel size, length to weight ratios and bat certification can be at issue. Metal spikes are prohibited until the 13U and older age groups. Helmets are available upon request.

**Umpires**

While we have expectations of the quality of umpiring, remember that umpires like fans or players or coaches must begin umpiring their first game and that they usually improve with experience. Their quality, like our players, will vary. As long as the player's safety is not at risk nor has the umpire decided who the winner of the game will be, all participants and spectators should be patient and first class behavior is expected by all involved. The character of our players, coaches, fans and community is gauged by the message the umpires carry out into the baseball community. There is no room for poor behavior and problems in this area will be dealt with quickly and fairly.

In 2021, the RFYBO is initiating a umpire mentor program. Players that are 12U, and older, and are interested in umping will be paired with experienced umpires to assist with games.

**TRYOUT POLICIES**

**Eligibility**

A player is eligible to try out and participate on an RFYBO traveling team subject to the following:

• Must complete a registration and waiver form prior to try out

• Must live in the River Falls school district or plan to attend River Falls High School as a 9th grade

 student

• Must have paid all required league fees

• Out-of-town players are eligible to try out and participate for a RFYBO team given all of the

 following scenarios:

 - Their home town does not offer a traveling baseball opportunity at the age and level of play requested.

 - These players are first to be cut, in favor of River Falls school district players, should this

 necessity arise.

 - A waiver from the league must received and on file.

**Birth Date**

**\*Players must be 8 years old at the time of the Fall tryout to participate (the primary tryout date occurs in September)**

Players Birth Date cut-off date is determined by the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services Gopher State League or Metro Baseball League. Generally, players will play with their grade level, i.e. 5th grade is 11A, unless the player must play up as a result of age cut-off. A player eligible to play down an age group can request this of the RFYBO board. Likewise, a player can petition the RFYBO board to play up an age level. Either of these requests must be made in writing to the RFYBO board at least two weeks prior to evaluations for the subsequent season. Any exceptions to this general policy will be dealt with at the discretion of the RFYBO board.

A player petitioning to play up or down MAY NOT displace a capable player at an age/class level; this will be determined at the discretion of the RFYBO board.

**Participation**

A player must participate in a Board sanctioned try out session. Attendance will be taken at the start of each scheduled tryout. A minimum of four board members must be present for the try out to be sanctioned. Two try out dates will be determined prior to registration. All players will be strongly encouraged to attend the primary try out session. A secondary try out session may be scheduled if the Board deems it necessary due to scheduling conflicts or injury/illness of a player. Injured players must have a medical clearance prior to a try out being scheduled. If an injured player cannot try out due to the injury they may still be placed on a team by the Board. Consideration will be granted for the level of placement based upon the prior year competition level and record of the team. If a player misses both primary try out dates they may still have the opportunity to play but at the A-level based on: roster space, coach concurrence and board approval.

**Player Identification**

Each player will be identified by an RFYBO issued tryout number at the try out session.

**Player Evaluation**

Each player's baseball skills will be evaluated objectively by a group of impartial evaluators. The evaluators will be selected and approved by the River Falls Youth Baseball Board. Prior year performance will be evaluated by each coach and the post season player evaluation will be weighted against the current year try out evaluation. The Board recognizes that a youth's physical and emotional development varies at different rates from year to year. Thus, the joint evaluation score will be used as the criteria to place players on the appropriate level team.

For ages 12-15 the top 12 players in each age group will be selected as the top team. The next 12 players will make up the second team for that age level. A player may elect to play on a lower skill level team and should communicate this interest to the Board in writing before tryouts.

Note: Please refer to post season player and try out evaluation forms.

The RFYBO Board strives to field teams at the AA and AAA level at each age group.

**Player Selection**

Players will be placed on a team based upon their own merits (baseball skills, athletic ability, hustle, enthusiasm, coachability, and attitude). If players have played for a RFYBO team the prior year, a post season player evaluation will be weighted against the try out evaluation for proper team skill level placement.

Each team will have no more than 12 players on their roster The Board may make exceptions to roster size based upon total number of players in an age group.

**GENERAL POLICIES**

**Player Attendance**

Once assigned to a team, a player should be allowed to remain on that team UNTIL one of the following situations exist:

a) A player has 3 unexcused absences from games or practices.

b) A player has a combination of 6 excused and unexcused absences from games or practices.

c) A player has a combination of 9 excused, unexcused and planned absences from games or

 practices

The Head Coach is allowed to keep a player on his team if extenuating circumstances exist but may consider removal if these conditions are met.

**Definitions**

• Unexcused absence: Player is missing and the HEAD COACH is not notified by the player (or his parent/guardian) prior to the game or practice.

• Excused absence: Player is missing and the head coach is notified by the player (or his parent/guardian) at least 1 hour prior to the game or practice

• Planned absence: Head Coach is notified of absence by the player (or his parent/guardian) at least 1 week prior to game or practice.

**Playing Time**

9-11 Year Old Teams: A minimum of 4 innings defensively per game is recommended. 12-13 Year Old Teams: A minimum of 4 innings defensively per game is recommended. 14-15 Year Old Teams: No playing time is guaranteed but coaches will attempt to play everyone.

Note: Some game situations (e.g., 10 run rule, shortened games, weather stoppage, etc.) may prevent this from happening in a specific game. **Coaches**: Playing time in league play should be equitable (not necessarily equal). Players should be given the opportunity to play in the infield and outfield in every game (league play). In tournament play players must play at least 50% (ie 3 out of 6 innings - barring shortened games) of the innings available defensively. In tournament play coaches have full discretion as to where a player plays in the field (IN or OF).

Note: Metro State Rules state that the 9-13 year old teams must use a continuous batting order. That means every player on the roster will bat in the specified order for the duration of the game.

**Player Removal**

Players may be removed from a team following violations of the Players Code of Conduct or for violations of attendance expectations. The coach has some discretion regarding removal from a team, but there must be strong documentation of the rationale for removal.

**Removal Procedure**

1) If a head coach determines that removal is warranted, he should discuss it with his full coaching

 staff before taking action.

2) If the full coaching staff determines that removal is the correct course of action, the head coach

 should discuss the circumstances of the situation with the RFYBO Board before

 taking any action.

3) If removal is still agreed to as the best course of action, the head coach should contact the

 parents with the details of the situation (of course, the parents should be involved in the

 communication along the way as the player is missing games and practices or has conduct

 violations).

4) Once removed from an RFYBO team, the player MAY NOT join another RFYBO team under any

 circumstances and the full registration fee will be forfeited. Prior to being allowed back into the RFYBO in following years the player and parents will be required to meet with the Board.

**Coach Selection**

Coaches need to apply each year for a head coaching position. Head coaches are assigned for one year only. There is no guaranteed right to the position in following years. A Board Committee will select a head coach for each team based on any of the following:

• experience and other information provided in the application

• past record with RFYBO

• parent feedback

• an in-person interview (when possible)

The best qualified coach for each age group will be selected. Priority will be given to a non-parent coach if skills and abilities are equal to or better than that of a parent coach.

Assistant coaches will generally be selected by the head coach. However, the Board Coach Selection Committee reserves the right to assign an assistant coach when there are well qualified persons seeking coaching positions.

**Coach Removal**

Coaches are expected to adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct as put out by RFYBO. Violations of the code can result in removal of the coach. Parents, Assistant Coaches or others can file a grievance against the coach if there are noted conduct or other concerns. The process for reviewing and acting on grievances will be followed.

**Grievance Procedure**

Even the best of coaches will occasionally have a parent who disagrees with his/her actions or decisions. Usually these can be resolved with an honest discussion between the two. However, sometimes additional steps need to be taken. RFYBO has developed a step by step procedure for these situations. If differences cannot be resolved between the coach and the parent, an impartial grievance committee will review the situation and decide on a course of action.

Step #l: 48 Hour Rule-Wait 48 hours before acting. This "time out" should be taken to allow

 emotions to cool.

Step #2: Talk to your Team's Coach- Try to find an appropriate time, away from the team, to

 discuss the problem.

Step #3: If a question is not answered satisfactorily and the parent and or player feel the need to

 pursue the matter further, they may contact the RFYBO Board in writing. They

 should do so only after exhausting all efforts with the coach and the assistant coaches.

Step #4: The Board will gather information and decide on a course of action to resolve the

 issue.

**Equipment Abuse**

Under no circumstances will the abuse of equipment be tolerated. Umpires and coaches are instructed that each instance of equipment abuse will result in that player sitting on the bench for the remainder of the game. At the umpire or coach’s discretion, one warning may be issued.

If the abuse of the equipment results in any damage to the equipment, that player and/or their parents will be held responsible for reimbursing the replacement cost of that equipment. The player is suspended from further play until reimbursement is made.

**Inclement Weather**

In case of inclement weather, the coach will determine if there will be practice and contact all those involved as soon as practical. At games, the home team coach is responsible for determining whether the game will be started. Once the play begins, the umpire is responsible for determining whether play should be halted.

In all cases, unless you've received a call from your team's coach, appear at the site of the practice or game scheduled. Weather conditions can vary widely even over short distances, so our policy is to make the decision at the field site. Games and practices will be suspended when lightning is visible. If you (parent/guardian) are not able to be present during an event, be sure that the child knows another parent who will be present and with whom they can take shelter if bad weather threatens.

**PLAYER / COACH POLICIES**

**Coaches' Code of Ethics and Guidelines**

**Coaches' Code of Ethics:**

• I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of any personal desire to

 win.

• I will remember to treat each player as an individual, remembering the large spread of emotional

 and physical development for the same age group.

• I will do my very best to provide a safe play situation for my players.

• I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

• I will lead, by example, in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

• I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the rules, and that I will teach these rules to my players.

• I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.

• I will remember that I am a youth coach, and that the game is for the children and not the aduits.

• I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.

**Coaches' Guidelines:**

• Coaches shall actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship by their spectators.

• Before and after games, rival coaches should meet and exchange greetings to set the correct

 tone.

• Coaches or players will not display profanity or verbal abuse during games or practices.

• Coaches should ensure they are aware of the rules and regulations in which the River Falls Youth

 Baseball Organization programs operate.

• All head coaches will attend a field maintenance in-service. Dates will be provided prior to the

 season start.

• All head coaches will attend at least one RFYBO sponsored coaches clinic, and at least one non-

 RFYBO sponsored coaches clinic each year. Assistant coaches are strongly encouraged to attend

 clinics also.

• It is encouraged that each team practice at least twice per week, which may include pre-game

 practice times.

• Head coaches will conduct a preseason parent meeting to distribute practice and games

 schedules, team rules and expectations, and set the tone for the upcoming season.

• Head coaches will choose up to three assistant coaches and a scorekeeper. The scorekeeper

 may be one of the three assistants or an individual outside of the playing field.

• The head coach will be responsible and accountable for the actions of his assistant coaches.

• Head coaches and assistant coaches must be willing to cooperate, promote and encourage

 participation in activities associated with the River Falls Youth Baseball Organization Program.

• Coaches should be properly prepared for games and practices.

**Player Relations:**

• Coaches should treat each player with dignity and respect.

• Coaches should treat umpires with dignity and respect.

• Coaches should ensure that dugouts and team area are clear of equipment and trash at the end

 of the game.

• Coaches should ensure that the equipment and facilities are not abused.

\*NOTE: Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in disciplinary action decided by the River Falls Youth Baseball Board of Directors. The River Falls Youth Baseball Board of Directors reserve the right to take appropriate action to rectify any situation, which is deemed detrimental to a specific player, team, or the River Falls Youth Baseball Organization program in general.

**Coach Development**

If coaches can expect their players to learn and develop their playing skills, then it's only fair that the players can expect their coaches to learn and develop their coaching skills as well. As stated above, all head coaches will be required to attend a minimum of two coaching clinics a year, and one field maintenance in-service. Head coaches should make their assistant coaches aware of clinic opportunities and should strongly encourage them to attend.

RFYBO will host a field maintenance in-service which all head coaches are required to attend. If the head coach cannot attend they must send an assistant coach to represent their team. Every level must be represented before their team will receive authorization to use the fields.

RFYBO will sponsor multiple coaching seminars each year, primarily in the spring months leading up to baseball season. The River Falls High School Varsity Coach will conduct these in-house clinics with varsity players on hand for drill demonstrations. These clinics are free of charge for all RFYBO coaches.

There are numerous baseball clinics throughout Western Wisconsin and the Twin Cities metro area. Most clinics start over Christmas break and run into the summer, and fees range anywhere from $20-$100. Clinic information will be made available to choose from on the "Coaches Corner" section of the RFYBO main webpage. Coaches can seek out and attend clinics not posted there as well.

River Falls High School Baseball practices are open to any RFYBO coaches for observation. Practice times vary while indoors, just contact Coach Bishop for indoor practice times. Outdoor practices are generally run from 3-5 pm on the RFHS varsity field.

**Player Development**

RFYBO supports multiple levels of baseball for each age group, the traveling league being the highest level offered. Hence this level requires the greatest amount of player development, along with individual talent.

There are numerous player camps and clinics throughout the area each year. Some camps focus on specific skills (hitting, defense, tryout prep skills, etc.) and fees can range from $20 to several hundred depending on whether it's a one-day camp or week-long camp. The recommended time for players to attend camps is during the winter and spring months leading up to the season. Camp information will be made available on the "Player Development" section of the RFYBO main webpage. Players can seek out and attend camps not posted there as well.

**Skill Development**

It is the philosophy of RFYBO to provide a program that emphasizes fun, development of sound baseball skills and healthy competition. At the younger ages, the emphasis will be on development of sound baseball skills, moving toward a more competitive program at the older ages. Ages 9-11 are considered "Developmental", ages 12-13 "Transitional" and ages 14-15 "Competitive". Some guidelines for each group are as follows:

Developmental (ages 9-11):

• Stress sound baseball skill development over competition.

• Coaches should attempt to get players a minimum of 3 innings of play in every league game.

• Coaches should attempt to give players exposure to both infield and outfield positions in game

 situations (not necessarily in every game).

• There should be more emphasis on practice and less focus on games and tournaments.

Transitional (ages 12-13):

• Focus on skill development with increasing competition each year from 12 to 13.

• Coaches should attempt to get players a minimum of 2 innings of play in every league game.

• Players should be given opportunities to play many positions, especially early in the year,

 with increasing position specialization each year from 12 to 13.

• Game and tournament focus increasing from 12 to 13 but practices should still play a major role in

 overall season activities.

Competitive (ages 14-15):

• Players earn the right to get playing time, but coaches should make every attempt possible to play

 each player if the situation arrives.

• Skill development focused on primary position(s).

• Finer points and refined skills taught in practices. Practices are still critical to player and team

 development!

Note: playing time suggestions may not be met in all games but coaches are urged to use the above guidelines as best they can. Exception: if games are shortened due to run rule, bad weather, etc., playing time suggestions are not practical. For example, if a game is called after 4 innings, it is virtually impossible to play each player for 3 innings that game.

**9-11 Skills Development and Philosophy**

9-11 League Philosophy (To Have Fun, Prepare Kids For 12/13 League)

A. Learn: baseball skills in organized, safe, FUN environment; sportsmanship and teamwork

B. Instructional and competitive! Game scores/standings are kept; skills emphasized

C. Complete baseball concepts (strikeouts, walks, stealing bases, etc.) taught

D. Equal playing time emphasized; all players bat in each game, develop multiple positions each

E. Pitching - managers and coaches will use good judgment re: who pitches and who doesn't

Teaching "The Big Three" Fundamentals (Throwing, Catching, Fielding)

A. Throwing the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should Improve Throwing & Proper Mechanics)

 1. Improve proper throwing mechanics; hand on top of ball, lead with elbow, follow through

 2. Emphasize balance, "power position"; kids on "balls of their feet"; should hit their target

 3. Emphasize that throwing is done with LEGS! Emphasize OVERHAND throwing skill!

B. Catching the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should be able to Track and Catch the Ball Better)

 1. Improve 6 "proper catching steps": (1) See where ball is going; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Catch

 ball with TWO hands; (6) look ball in, with "soft hands"

 2. Emphasize balance, "power position"; kids on "balls of their feet"; should catch ball well

 3. Emphasize that catching is also done with LEGS! Teach moving to the ball, chest to ball!

C. Fielding the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should be able to Move into Position to Field Ball)

 1. Improve 6 "proper fielding steps": (1) Ready position, see ball; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Field ball

 with TWO hands; (6) look ball in, with "soft hands"

 2. Emphasize balance, "power position"; kids on "balls of their feet"; should make a play!

 3. Emphasize that fielding is also done with LEGS! Teach moving to the ball, chest to ball!

D. Pitchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn and Improve on Pitching, Proper Mechanics)

 1. Have most of them start from the stretch, windup discouraged at this age; NO curve balls!

 2. Teach the "proper pitching steps": (1) Rock/set; (2) Balance; (3) Power; (4) Throw; (5) Finish

 3. Emphasize balance (leg bent at 90 degrees), the "power position" (elbow above the

 shoulder, also bent at 90 degrees), always finish on the ball of leading foot, finish "long"

 4. Emphasize body positions during the throwing steps; head level, body vertical until finish

 5. Emphasize OVERHAND throwing motion! Throw across the body, finish past lead knee

 6. Teach pitchers to field their position after they finish their follow-through; ready position

 7. Get kids used to covering first base on any ground ball to the right side! Do it right away!

E. Catchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn and Improve Catching & Proper Mechanics)

 1. Receiving position; balls of feet, feet shoulder-wide, back forward, balanced, extend arm

 2. Elbow in, thumb out; relaxed, subtle movements; catch "around" ball, in glove webbing

 3. Emphasize balance, and the "power position"; always get kids on the "balls of their feet"

 4. Teach blocking balls in the dirt! Starts with LEGS; shift/move to the ball, chest to ball!

 5. Teach kids to give pitchers a good target with catcher's glove; teach proper depth in box

 6. Teach kids to give pitcher a good return throw! Pitcher comes toward catcher to help out

F. General Issues - Throwing, Catching, Fielding (Season End Goal: Improve Situational Skill)

 1. Place the kids in fun, competitive, team situations while teaching baseball fundamentals

 2. As their skills progress over time, practice drills and games will be more game-situational

 3. Teach kids simple force plays, double plays, simple cutoffs, etc., improve communication

 4. Kids will STILL always be practicing "the big 3" - throwing, catching, and fielding skills

Hitting Fundamentals (Teach "Aggressive" Hitting and Mechanics)

A. Bat Selection and Grip/Depth and Distance from Plate (Season End Goal: Comfort as Hitter)

 1. Choosing a bat: hold bat straight out to one side, one arm; hold easily for 30 seconds, OK

 2. Hold bat loosely in fingers, knuckles in line. Depth: front foot is at midpoint of the plate

 3. Distance: batter can easily touch outside front corner of the plate holding bat in lead hand

B. Power Stance/Bat Angle/Location (Season End Goal: Kids Have Balanced, Prepared Stance)

 1. Pigeon toes, balls of feet, feet slightly wider than shoulders & lined up straight to pitcher

 2. Hands high (at ears), knees bent, shoulders level, head up/still

 3. Emphasize balance and "power position"

 4. Bat angle 45 degrees, not fiat across back or straight up; hands back comfortably & loose

C. Hitting Steps (Season End Goal: Kids Know Strike Zone and Develop a Good Sound Swing)

 1. Five steps of hitting: (1) Power Stance; (2) Load - Inward Rotation; (3) Small Step - Stride;

 (4) Rotation; (5) Swing - EXPLODE!

 2. Should be balanced from start to finish; do balance checks on players during all five steps

 3. Teach kids to swing at strikes; know the strike zone! If pitch is a "strike", be aggressive!

 4. Hitting drills at practice: start kids on some tees; soft toss and live hitting; balance drills!

Base Running Fundamentals (Base Running Mechanics and Stealing)

A. Home to First (Season End Goal: Kids Should Master "Running Through", "Making Tum")

B. First to Third/Second to Home (Season End Goal: Kids Should Know How to Properly Run the

 Bases Mechanically, and Should Understand Proper Situational Base Running Approach)

C. Stealing (Understand proper lead-offs if applicable; Proper Sliding)

**12/13 Skills Development and Philosophy**

12/13 League Philosophy (Have Fun, Teach Skills, Prepare Kids For 14/15 League)

A. Learn: baseball skills in organized, safe, FUN environment; sportsmanship and teamwork

B. Instructional, MORE COMPETITIVE! Game scores/standings are kept; skills emphasized

C. Complete baseball concepts (positioning, stealing bases, situations, etc.) taught at this level

D. Develop multiple positions each

E. Pitching - managers and coaches will use good judgment re: who pitches and who doesn't

Teaching "The Big Three" Fundamentals (Throwing, Catching, Fielding)

A. Throwing the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should Master Proper Mechanics of Throwing)

 1. Improve proper throwing mechanics; hand on top of ball, lead with elbow, follow through

 2. Good balance, use legs working forward through throw; "balls of their feet"; overhand!

B. Catching the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should Now be able to Track and Catch the Ball)

 1. Master 6 "proper catching steps": (1) See where ball is going; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Catch

 ball with TWO hands; (6) look ball in, with "soft hands"

 2. Good balance working through the play; work on forehand & backhand (one-handed) too

C. Fielding the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should be able to Move into Position & Field Ball)

 1. Master 6 "proper fielding steps": (1) Ready position, see ball; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Field ball

 with TWO hands; (6) look ball in, with "soft hands"

 2. Good balance working through the play; work on forehand & backhand balls in the holes

D. Pitchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn & Improve on Pitching Mechanics, Strategy)

 1. Teach locations, changing speeds, and pitches to throw in specific counts; no curve balls!

 2. Teach the "proper pitching steps": (1) Rock/set; (2) Balance; (3) Power; (4) Throw; (5) Finish

 3. Emphasize balance (leg bent at 90 degrees), the "power position" (elbow above the

 shoulder, hand on top of the ball); always finish on the ball of leading foot, OVERHAND

 4. Learn to hold base runners on, vary looks over to runner, throw over

E. Catchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn and Improve Catching Mechanics, Strategy)

 1. Good receiving position; balls of feet, balanced; catch "around" ball; learn calling pitches

 2. Good target with catcher's glove, proper depth in box; work on blocking balls in the dirt!

 3. Work on throwing out base-stealers; good balance & footwork, quick release; overhand!

 4. Primary and secondary (2 strikes and runners on base) stances.

F. Specific Issues - Throwing, Catching, Fielding (Season End Goal: Improve Situational Skill)

 1. Teach special infield situations: slow rollers, high choppers, rundowns, double plays, etc.

 2. Work on communication/priority on balls in the holes; converging infielders, calling off

 3. Work on communication/priority on pop-ups behind bases; converging fielders, call off!

 4. Teach kids bunt coverages, steal plays, 1st & 3d situations, etc.; improve communication!

 5. Teach special outfield situations: fly balls, ground balls, angles to ball, cutoffs/relays, etc.

 6. Work on communication/priority on balls in the gaps; converging outfielders, calling off

 7. Work on communication/priority on pop-ups behind infield; call off converging infielders

 8. Teach outfielders "sliding catch" for sinking line drives hit right at them, shallow pop-ups

 9. Teach special offensive situations: sacrifice bunts, drag bunts, hit-&-run plays, steals, etc.

 10. Teach kids to always be moving & covering, back up appropriate bases on infield plays

 11. Work on pitchers covering first base on ANY ground balls to the right side! Practice it!

 12. Kids will STILL always be practicing "the big 3" - throwing, catching, and fielding skills

Hitting Fundamentals (Teach "Aggressive" Hitting and Mechanics)

A. Bat Selection and Grip/Depth and Distance from Plate (Season End Goal: Comfort as Hitter)

 1. Hold bat loosely in fingers, knuckles in line. Depth: front foot is at midpoint of the plate

 2. Distance: batter can easily touch outside front corner of the plate holding bat in lead hand

B. Power Stance/Bat Angle/Location (Season End Goal: Kids Have Balanced, Prepared Stance)

 1. Pigeon toes, balls of feet, feet slightly wider than shoulders & lined up straight to pitcher

 2. Hands high (at ears), knees bent, shoulders level, head up/still

 3. Emphasize balance and "power position";

 4. Bat angle 45 degrees, not fiat across back or straight up; hands back comfortably & loose

C. Hitting Steps (Season End Goal: Kids Know Strike Zone and Situations, Refine Good Swing)

 1. Five steps of hitting: (1) Power Stance; (2) Load (Inward Rotation); (3) Small Step (Stride);

 (4) Rotation; (5) Swing-EXPLODE!

 2. Should be balanced from start to finish; do balance checks on players during all five steps

 3. Teach kids to swing at strikes; know the pitch count! Learn situational hitting approaches

 4. Hitting drills at practice: work on hitting high strike & low strike; hitting to opposite field

Base Running Fundamentals (Base Running Mechanics and Stealing)

A. Home to First (Season End Goal: Kids Should Master "Running Through", "Making Turn")

B. First to Third/Second to Home (Season End Goal: Kids Should Know How to Properly Run the

 Bases Mechanically, and Should Understand Proper Situational Base Running Approach)

C. Stealing (Understand proper lead-offs; proper sliding)

**14/15 Skills Development and Philosophy**

14/15 League Philosophy (Have Fun, Teach Skills, Prepare Kids for High School Ball)

A. Learn: baseball skills in organized, safe, FUN environment; sportsmanship and teamwork

B. Instructional, MORE COMPETITIVE! Game scores/standings are kept; skills emphasized

C. Complete baseball concepts (positioning, stealing bases, situations, etc.) taught at this level

D. Playing time is earned, no guarantees in playing time for anyone

E. Skill development focused on primary position(s)

F. Pitching - managers and coaches will use good judgment re: who pitches and who doesn't

Teaching "The Big Three" Fundamentals (Throwing, Catching, Fielding)

A. Throwing the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should Master Proper Mechanics of Throwing)

 1. Improve proper throwing mechanics; hand on top of ball, lead with elbow, follow through

 2. Good balance, use legs working forward through throw; "balls of their feet"; overhand!

B. Catching the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should Now be able to Track and Catch the Ball)

 1. Master 6 "proper catching steps": (1) See where ball is going; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Catch

 ball with TWO hands; (6) look ball in, with "soft hands"

 2. Good balance working through the play; work on forehand & backhand (one-handed) too

C. Fielding the Ball (Season End Goal: Kids Should be able to Move into Position & Field Ball)

 1. Master 6 "proper fielding steps": (1) Ready position, see ball; (2) Move to ball, get chest to

 ball; (3) Be in power position, get SQUARE to ball; (4) Extend both arms to ball; (5) Field ball

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 2. Good balance working through the play; work on forehand & backhand balls in the holes

D. Pitchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn & Improve on Pitching Mechanics, Strategy)

 1. Teach locations, changing speeds, and pitches to throw in specific counts; can throw curve

 balls!

 2. Master the "proper pitching steps": (1) Rock/set; (2) Balance; (3) Power; (4) Throw; (5) Finish

 3. Emphasize balance (leg bent at 90 degrees), the "power position" (elbow above the

 shoulder, always finish on the ball of leading foot, OVERHAND

 4. Hold base runners on, vary looks over to runner, throw over, work on pickoff moves

E. Catchers (Season End Goal: Kids Should Learn and Improve Catching Mechanics, Strategy)

 1. Good receiving position; balls of feet, balanced; catch "around" ball; learn calling pitches

 2. Good target with catcher's glove, proper depth in box; work on blocking balls in the dirt!

 3. Work on throwing out base-stealers; good balance & footwork, quick release; overhand!

F. Specific Issues - Throwing, Catching, Fielding (Season End Goal: Improve Situational Skill)

 1. Teach special infield situations: slow rollers, high choppers, rundowns, double plays, etc.

 2. Work on communication/priority on balls in the holes; converging infielders, calling off

 3. Work on communication/priority on pop-ups behind bases; converging fielders, call off!

 4. Teach kids bunt coverages, steal plays, 1s'& 3rd situations, etc.; improve communication!

 5. Teach special outfield situations: fly balls, ground balls, angles to ball, cutoffs/relays, etc.

 6. Work on communication/priority on balls in the gaps; converging outfielders, calling off

 7. Work on communication/priority on pop-ups behind infield; call off converging infielders

 8. Teach outfielders "sliding catch" for sinking line drives hit right at them, shallow pop-ups

 9. Teach special offensive situations: sacrifice bunts, drag bunts, hit-&-ran plays, steals, etc.

 10. Teach kids to always be moving & covering, back up appropriate bases on infield plays

 11. Work on pitchers covering first base on ANY ground balls to the right side! Practice it!

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A. Bat Selection and Grip/Depth and Distance from Plate (Season End Goal: Comfort as Hitter)

 1. Hold bat loosely in fingers, knuckles in line. Depth: may vary according to pitcher's style

 2. Distance: batter can easily touch outside front corner of the plate holding bat in lead hand

B. Power Stance/Bat Angle/Location (Season End Goal: Kids Have Balanced, Prepared Stance)

 1. Pigeon toes, balls of feet, feet slightly wider than shoulders & lined up straight to pitcher

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 1. Five steps of hitting: (1) Power Stance; (2) Load (Inward Rotation); (3) Small Step (Stride);

 (4) Rotation; (5) Swing-EXPLODE!

 2. Should be balanced from start to finish; do balance checks on players during all five steps

 3. Teach kids to Swing at strikes; know the pitch count! Learn situational hitting approaches

 4. Hitting drills at practice: work on hitting all areas of the zone; hitting to opposite field

Base Running Fundamentals (Base Running Mechanics and Stealing)

A. Home to First (Kids Should Master "Running Through", "Making Turn")

B. First to Third/Second to Home (Kids Should Know How to Properly Run the Bases Mechanically,

 and Should Understand Proper Situational Base Running Approach)

C. Stealing (Fight for Good Leadoff, Go on Pitcher's First Move to Home; Slide)

2021 RFYBO Board

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