



NWLL
COACHES HANDBOOK
2020 SEASON





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Introduction

Welcome to the NWLL 2020 No-Frills baseball season!

Thank you for volunteering to be a coach. Without you, the season could not happen. NorthWest Little League is a baseball association in District 3. We operate under the Little League International umbrella and are governed by Little League rules, practices and regulations. NWLL is a grass-roots organization providing baseball opportunities to boys and girls within our association boundaries. Communities within our boundaries include:

- Arbour Lake
- Bearspaw
- Bearspaw Ridge
- Bearspaw Ridge Estates
- Church Ranch
- Citadel
- Crestview Estates
- Dalhousie
- Edgemont
- Hamptons
- Hawkwood
- Nolan Hill
- Ranchlands
- Rocky Ridge
- Royal Oak
- Royal Vista
- Sherwood

Any child living or attending school within the above communities is eligible to play baseball with NWLL.

Our goal and focus is to promote physical development through the game of baseball by providing a healthy environment in which children of various levels of ability find pleasure in learning baseball. As coaches you are tasked with developing baseball skills and strategies for players and parents, teaching and developing sportsmanship in a context of healthy competition, teaching basic rules and promoting self-esteem among players.

NWLL provides baseball opportunities to a wide range of ages and skills, from 5 years of age through to and including 16 years of age.



LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

NWLL subscribes to a philosophy of athlete development which is a systematic approach to maximize a participant's involvement in our sport. This framework aims to define optimal training, competition and recovery throughout an athlete's career to provide them the opportunity to reach his/her full potential in baseball and as an athlete. Tailoring a child's sport development to suite basic principles of growth and maturation enables them to reach their full potential and increase lifelong participation in baseball as well as other physical activities.

This model is divided into stages in which participants will move from simple to more complex skills. It is based on a combination of scientific research and knowledge of coaches and is focused on common, key principles of individual development which many sporting organizations consider to be best-practice.

During the initial stages of this program, the emphasis is on physical literacy. Time is spent on learning the basics of athleticism (Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed). This teaches the participants how to control their own bodies. In these stages, you may incorporate activities and drills which may not "look" relevant to baseball but are supporting the child's development. During these initial stages, it is important you work also work on developing a participant's **Baseball IQ**. Each year of participation from T-Ball through to the Senior program builds and adds to the child's development and provides them the opportunity for life-long participation.

10 Key Factors for LTAD

1. **Physical literacy:** the cornerstone of both participation and excellence in physical activity and sport. Individuals who are physically literate are more likely to be active for life
2. **Specialization:** Sports can be classified as either early or late specialization. Well-known early specialization sports include artistic and acrobatic sports such as gymnastics, diving and figure skating. These differ from late specialization sports such as baseball in that very complex skills are learned before maturation because they cannot be fully mastered if taught after maturation.
3. **Developmental Age:** Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation.
4. **Sensitive periods:** A broad timeframe of opportunity when the learning of a specific skill or the development of a specific physical capacity is particularly effective. The entire period of childhood is viewed as a sensitive period for mastering fundamental movement skills.
5. **Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development:** these are essential factors to each participant's development.
6. **Periodization:** A framework for arranging the complex array of training processes into a logical, scientifically based schedule to bring about optimal improvements in performance.



7. **Competition:** Appropriate competition calendar planning is critical to participant development. At certain stages, developing the physical capacities takes precedence over competition. At later stages, the ability to compete well becomes the focus.
8. **Time:** It takes 10,000 hours of training and competing for an athlete to reach the top of their game. This is 8-12 years of practice. There are no shortcuts.
9. **Alignment and Integration:** The relationship between all level of sport and physical activity between schools, sport clubs, and provincial/national sport organizations from policy to program delivery.
10. **Continuous Improvement:** Always seeking improvement in our understanding and application.

For more information on LTAD, please visit www.ltad.ca

Practice plan ideas for T-Ball and Coach Pitch have been provided in the coach bag for the coaches specific to these age groups. Coaches at the Minor level and up, if you would like assistance in developing additional practice plans, please contact the NWLL Coaches Coordinator.



WHY COACH?

As any coach why they coach and you will get a number of reasons. It can be anything from wanting to give back to the community or to spend quality time with their child. But, if you look closely, it is because they enjoy it. As coaches, if we do not enjoy it, we will not be doing our best and our coaching career will be short.

There are some coaches who truly enjoy coaching, but measure their success as a coach by how successful the team is in the win/loss column. For these coaches, winning becomes the primary goal. Although winning and losing are part of the game, this must not be how we as coaches measure success. Any coaches who have this as their primary measure of a successful season has no place in NWLL.

Some coaches do it because “someone had to step up and do it” and others volunteer because they really want to help out. Either way, this is how many of us start our “coaching career”, but we continue because it is fun. Sure there are “those parents”, the headaches of developing appropriate practices, managing a dug-out after the kids have had one too many Slurpees or a sudden water fight breaks out. But we keep coming back!

As a coach, you are now responsible for the day to day running of your team. Whether it is T-ball, a travel or all-star team or a spring season interlock team, the buck stops with you. You develop the practice schedule, plan the practices, create line-ups, ensure the diamonds are ready for home games, make sure pitch-counts and scores are submitted and ensure the games have umpires. The following pages outline your role as a coach, your administrative tasks and responsibilities, rules for each level, and resources for you to access.



THE FIRST DAY!

You have just received your roster. Now what? Take a look at your practice and game schedule provided by NWLL.

COACH TO-DO NEXT

1. review practice and game schedule
2. email your team
3. secure a parent volunteer as manager ASAP
4. email Registrar with your manager's name and contact info ASAP
5. identify your assistant coaches and begin practice planning

Sample Introduction Email (Minors and up)

Greetings,

My name is [name] and I will be the head coach for your child in this 2019 baseball season.

I have assembled a knowledgeable and experienced coaching staff that will allow us to have success. Our coaching staff has over 10 years experience in baseball plus many more years of experience in coaching other sports. If you are interested in helping out on the field at practices, let me know.

Weather in Calgary in April is an adventure. This year, more than ever. If the snow ever melts, we will begin practice outside. In the meantime, I have booked an indoor practice at ABA (where evaluations were held). It will be on [date,time]. I have a pitching lane and a batting lane booked. I would like to have a couple of more indoor sessions and will schedule as I can (they are very busy at this location). I am asking for parents to contribute towards the cost of these sessions (\$10-20).

All practices will be at [location]. All players should bring a hat, glove, helmet, bat, cleats, pants that might get holes in them, etc. Let me know if there is an issue with equipment as we do get some equipment supplied. I am also asking each player to bring one brand new baseball (Rawlings with the blue labelling). You can get this at SportChek or Source for Sports. Practices will usually be on Sunday night at 6 pm.

Games will be on Monday and Wednesday (with the occasional Friday or Sunday for a rain-out games). Games are at 6:30 pm. I ask players to arrive 45 minutes before each game so that we can have a proper warm-up and also get in some much needed practice. We will play approximately 14 games plus playoffs against teams from our own association. The season starts Wednesday, April XX and ends June XX.

Volunteer opportunities for the team are available, more info to follow once I have it finalized. The first position we need to identify is a team manager. This person(s) will be responsible for getting our deposit cheques collected and uniforms picked up on April 20. Please respond to me ASAP if you are interested in being our team manager.



We will be sending you an invite for TeamSnap in the next couple of days. It will be our primary form of communication. I can also be reached at [phone]

All the best,

[name]

The first thing is to send an email to all parents/players on your roster. This email should introduce yourself, provide a brief outline of your coaching philosophy/experience and provide the upcoming practice schedule. Your email should also inform the parents of the parent meeting you will be holding at the first practice. You should also ask for volunteers for the following parent positions for your team:

- Assistant Coaches (2)
- Team Manager (1)
- Safety Coordinator/Spotter (1)
- Equipment cleaners (2)
- Field crew (3)
- Pitch counters (minors and up)
- Score keepers (minors and up)
- Alternate umpire (1)

Assistant Coaches

These are coaches who will help you coach the team. Rules allow a maximum of **three** coaches in the dug-out during game play at the Minors level and above. You and the two assistants you have selected will be rostered as “official” coaches on the team charter and submitted to Little League. You can have as many helpers during practices as you feel you need. However, only three coaches are allowed in the dug-out during games.

Team Manager

This is your right arm! The person in this role must be organized and able to communicate effectively. The person in this role is responsible for acting as liaison between the coaches and the parents, ensure all team paperwork is correct and submitted on time and ensuring/tracking volunteer commitments for your team. Note that the team manager may choose to delegate some of these duties to other team parents:

The team manager is responsible for Uniform Pick Up & Jersey Tracking, Pick Up and Return (Minor to Senior ONLY). They are also responsible to collect Jersey Deposit Cheques (Minor to Senior ONLY) & submitting these Cheques to NWLL. Uniforms and Jerseys will only be released with Jersey Deposit Cheques.



The team manager ensures the pitch-count, and score sheets are signed by both teams and submitted to age-group coordinator and both the age-group coordinator and district if applicable (all interlock teams) after each game. The team manager is responsible for maintaining the team pitch-count log book, which must be at every game and made available for review upon request by any opposing team, umpire, or NWLL Division Coordinator/Director.

Safety Coordinator/Spotter

New for 2020, this individual will be responsible for ensuring all participants, volunteers and spectators are signed in (Team Snap or paper) to allow for covid-19 contact tracing if required. As well, during practices and game play, they will identify potential safety issues regarding physical distancing, respiratory etiquette or equipment cleaning. They will communicate with the coaches primarily, and may be called upon to also support the umpire or game officials as required. More detailed information is found in the NWLL Return to Play Safety Plan.

Equipment Cleaners

Also new for 2020, these individuals are responsible for ensuring all shared equipment is appropriately cleaned and disinfected between use. As well, they will be frequently cleaning and sanitizing baseballs throughout the practice/game. More detailed information is found in the NWLL Return to Play Safety Plan.

Field Crew

These three individuals are responsible for diamond preparation and set-up/take-down for each practice and game. During the regular season Coach-pitch and Minors, and Majors, the home team is responsible for diamond prep and set-up, visitors are responsible for take-down after the game. For Minor level and above, the home team is responsible for ensuring there is a sufficient amount of chalk for the next game. If there is not enough chalk, obtain a new bag of chalk from the NWLL shed and place it in the equipment field bin at the diamond.

Pitch-Counter

For all teams Minor level and up, a pitch-counter is required. This person must accurately count every pitch thrown by each pitcher during a game, and track it accurately on the pitch-count sheet. They also track the number of innings a player catches behind the plate. During game play, the visiting team is the “official” pitch counter and this is the count sheet submitted to the coordinator and district after each game. The Pitch-counter is to ensure the head coach from both teams signs the form at the end of each game and provides it to the team’s Off-Field Manager for submission. The pitch-count must be accurate as it dictates the numbers of rest days required for the player between mound appearances. This is the pitch count tracked by the association to monitor pitcher rest days to ensure proper arm care guidelines are followed. Errors in



pitch counting risk injury to players and can result in sanctions against the head coach if proper rest days are not adhered to for each age.

Score Keeper

For all teams Minor level and up, a score keeper is required. This person must be able to keep score accurately, ensuring the batting order is followed and tracking all substitutions. During game play, the home team is the “official” score keeper and must ensure the score sheet is correct. Score keepers are to ensure the score sheet is complete and signed by both coaches at the end of each game for submission to the age group coordinator (and district for interlock play). The score keeper should sit in a location so they can easily communicate with the umpire. It is recommended the score keeper also keep score when visiting.

Alternate Umpire

In the event of an umpire absence, the visiting team is responsible for providing a base ump, and the home team will provide a plate ump. Each (Minors and above) team must provide the name and contact information for their alternate umpire to the Umpire in Chief.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

Once you have established the volunteer positions for your team, it is time for some paperwork. As the Head Coach, you are responsible for ensuring the following paperwork is completed for each player/parent and submitted to the registrar:

- Sport Parent Code of Conduct

These documents must be completed and returned to the registrar no later than July 4 2020 to ensure each player is properly chartered. Any player who has not submitted the required documents by this date will not be permitted to participate in any NWLL activities until they have been received by the registrar.

All coaches should review the 2019 Little League rule book and become familiar with all rules. Additionally, all coaches should review the NWLL rules exceptions for their age group. Copies of the rule book and exceptions are included in the coaches' package. The rules exceptions can also be found on the NWLL website.

After reviewing your team's schedule, visit the diamond scheduler and schedule your practices for the season.

- **Coach-Pitch:** twice weekly games will include ~45min to practice prior to the game.



- **Minors:** coaches may have one 90 to 120 minute practice per week in addition to games. Often asking players to practice for an hour prior to games is preferred by families to scheduling a separate day.
- **Major, Junior, and Senior:** coaches are expected to have at least 2 practices of 90-120 minutes per week in addition to games.

PRACTICES

All practices are scheduled by NWLL based on diamond permits and availability. A shared google doc will be provided to you.

Any available diamond is open to be used for practices by any team. Coaches can also book time in the Batting Cage at Arbour Lake for their team.

Practice structure

At NWLL we subscribe to the philosophy of warming up to throw. Throwing to warm-up has shown to have an increased risk of elbow and shoulder injuries because the small structures in these joints have not been properly prepared to perform the throwing actions.

Practices should consist of:

- Warm-up
 - A dynamic whole-body general warm-up
 - A dynamic whole-body specific warm-up
 - A throwing warm-up
- Fielding
- Batting
- Game play instruction
- A scrimmage or other fun game

Season Training Plan

When developing your season plan, please refer to the NWLL Player Development Skills Analysis to ensure you are designing a season training plan that provides the players the ability to progress and develop the skills required to successfully progress to the next level.

SAFETY

Safe Playing Areas



Managers, coaches and umpires **MUST** walk the field before the start of their game. Any hazards or risks identified will be resolved before the start of the game, or before the game can continue if a hazard is identified during play. All hazards must be identified by the home team and submitted to your division coordinator ASAP.

Safe Equipment

At the beginning of each season, all NWLL teams will be provided with equipment that has been examined by the Equipment Coordinator to ensure it complies with all Little League rules and regulations. Any equipment that becomes damaged beyond repair or falls below the standards outlined in the Little League Rule Book during the season must immediately be returned to the Equipment Coordinator for replacement.

Coaches should inspect all bats and other equipment on a regular basis. Cracked, dented or broken bats must never be used.

COVID-19 Safety

NWLL will abide by all direction and guidance from Alberta Health. A comprehensive return to play safety plan is available on our website and will be updated as guidance changes.

Weather

In Calgary, weather changes quickly during the spring season. A decision to postpone a game shall not be made more than 1 hour prior to the scheduled start time. **NWLL will use social media (Twitter, Facebook) to communicate whether all league play will be cancelled for the evening due to inclement weather.**

At game time or later, playability is to be determined through discussion between the head coaches of each team. The Home Team Coach is responsible for notifying both the UIC/Umpire Scheduler and the Division Coordinator of any games postponed due to rain for Minor Division and above. Interlock Division teams must follow District procedures as set out by the D3 administrator. The Home Team is required to notify the Division Coordinator only. For Minor Divisions and above, the game will be rescheduled at the earliest opportunity as each team must play a minimum of number of spring-season games for players to be eligible for summer All-Star play. All efforts must be made by both teams to re-schedule the game at the earliest opportunity. Should it be determined by the Division Coordinator, a team is uncooperative in rescheduling the game, a forfeit will be applied to the offending team with a score of 20-0 over 4 innings play (maximum of 5 runs per inning X 4 innings).

Rain

If it begins to rain during a game or practice:

1. Determine the direction the storm is moving



2. Evaluate the playing field as it becomes more saturated
3. During practice, if the playing conditions become unsafe, stop. During game play, consult the opposition head coach and the umpire to make a determination.

Lightning

The average lightning strike is 8km long with up to 30 million volts at 100,000 amps flowing in less than 1/10 of a second. The average thunderstorm is 10km wide and moves at a rate of 40km/hr. **Once the leading edge of a thunderstorm is within 16km, you are in immediate risk of a lightning strike.** This fact is the reason many lightning deaths and injuries occur with clear skies overhead.

If you hear thunder, the storm is within 5km of your location. Halt your activities immediately and seek shelter. Safe shelter is ideally any substantial building. A hard topped metal vehicle with the windows rolled up is a second option. Dug-outs, sheds etc. are not safe.

Concussions

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury caused by the brain being shaken around in the skull after a direct blow. Loss of consciousness does not have to occur to have a concussion. Some will have signs of a concussion immediately, others will not.

The risk of complications such as bleeding or swelling in the brain is higher during the first 24-48 hours after the injury. However, complications can occur weeks later. Call 911 or go to the hospital right away if:

1. The player becomes more confused, restless or agitated
2. The player becomes less alert
3. The player has the worst headache they have ever had.
4. Blood or fluid is coming out of the nose or ears, or there is bruising around the eyes or ears.
5. Loss of vision, blurry vision, double vision.
6. Slurred speech or difficulty speaking
7. Sudden weakness on one side of the body
8. More than 2 episodes of uncontrolled or forceful vomiting that will not stop
9. Seizure activity

COACH DEVELOPMENT

The Coaches Coordinator is an individual available to assist coaches in technical, tactical and theory of coaching baseball. The coordinator can assist coaches in practice planning, player development and understanding how to manage dug-outs, rosters, line-



ups and pitching rotations. The Coaches Coordinator is not available to assist in matters of equipment, diamonds, scheduling, umpires etc. For these challenges, please contact your Division Coordinator, UIC or the Equipment Coordinator. If you are unable to obtain assistance from these individuals, please contact the VP Operations or President.

In addition to emphasizing long term athlete development, NWLL has a mandate to provide development opportunities for coaches. NWLL will be offering coaching clinics to all NWLL coaches. The Coaches Coordinator will provide updates as these sessions become scheduled.

In addition, NCCP coach certification programs are available and encouraged. To enroll in this program, coaches are required to register with NCCP at www.nccp.baseball.ca, pay a small fee and complete the Coach Initiation in Baseball Online Module.