

BLOORDALE BASEBALL  
LEAGUE



COACHES  
MANUAL

2004

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**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome, or welcome back, to Bloordale Baseball League for another great season of fun and baseball learning. The Bloordale Baseball League (BBL) prides itself on being one of the finest baseball leagues around. Your contribution as a coach is undoubtedly one of the most important roles in the league, as you are the front-line contact with the children. As such, you are in a position to ensure that every child on your team has an enjoyable and fulfilling season.

We at Bloordale consider the happiness and growth of the players to be our prime concern. As you teach and supervise these children, it is paramount that your actions are always positive and encouraging, and that you preserve and enhance the natural enthusiasm and excitement that these children have for playing on a baseball team. Statistics clearly indicate that of our hundreds of current players, not one, or possibly one, might have a chance at a professional baseball career. Hence, to bolster a child's self-esteem, confidence and happiness is far more important than winning the game.

This manual has been developed to assist house league managers and coaches to be as effective as possible in their critical role as team leaders and role models for the children. The manual contains no actual practice drills or game plans. Rather, the primary focus is on the role of each member of the coaching staff, events to prepare for over a typical season, as well as general ideas of coaching philosophy.

For practice and training aids, the coach or manager has several options. The Executive of Bloordale Baseball will have members that can point you in the right direction, including Skills Development Representative, Vice-President and your Division Convenor. The Bloordale website has a section devoted to Coaches Resources that will contain, from time to time, valuable coaching information. The internet also contains a wealth of information about more detailed coaches manuals. When coaches clinics become available you should take every opportunity to attend.

We thank you very much in advance for your time and efforts on behalf of the children of Bloordale.

**OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF BLOORDALE BASEBALL**

To provide an organized baseball program for the young people from the Bloordale community in Etobicoke, through voluntary support.

To foster good sportsmanship, fellowship, teamwork and achievement among both players and parents.

To instill a sense of community spirit, pride and responsibility, while having fun playing baseball.

To provide a common ground through the BBL baseball program to nurture a bond between a player and his / her parents.

To promote a positive appeal for a wholesome and rewarding team activity to youngsters and parents who might otherwise not find or not participate in any such program.

To promote recognition of the league with schools, civic and business leaders, and the community in general; as well as an outlet for participation by these groups.

To be a responsible force for young people in and for the community.

To provide general stewardship to those young people who become our participants.

To recognize and promote human rights, by example, in our department of playing and coaching activities.

To provide open participation which is not determined by the ability to play, other than for reasons of safety to the player.

To honour our official motto: “ Anyone can play, all you need is a glove and enthusiasm”.

To remember that baseball is a GAME and to try our best to assure that every player has FUN!

## ***THE MAIN ROLES***

### **THE MANAGER**

Each team will have one manager. This person is in charge of and accountable for the operation of his/her team. The manager also serves as the contact between the league and his/her team via the division convenor. Additional specific functions of the manager will be listed later. The manager should be a leader who is able to make decisions, delegate tasks and organize the team in all necessary ways.

### **THE COACH**

While the manager often serves as a head coach, each team should have at least one, preferably two or more, additional people whose prime function is to work with the children at practice and coach in some way at the games (ie. coaching a base, organizing the bench). To address any concerns or problems, the coach's first contact should be the manager of his/her team.

### **THE DIVISION CONVENOR**

As a coach, your greatest ally is the convenor of your division. He or she is charged with the overall running of your division and will spend a large amount of time "behind the scenes" to ensure that schedules are done, equipment is available, etc. This will allow you to concentrate on running your team to the best of your ability. The convenor's role is to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the children can simply go out and have fun playing ball under your supervision.

**\* Good communication between the manager and the convenor is essential \***

***DUTIES OF A MANAGER******TO START THE SEASON***

- ⇒ Attend the draft where you will select your team and receive equipment bag, schedules, coaching manuals, equipment box key, etc.
- ⇒ Make phone call to all players on your team to introduce yourself and provide your name, phone number and 1st practice.
- ⇒ Create an introductory letter for all parents / players, to be handed out at first practice. (see sample in the appendix to this manual)
- ⇒ Hold regular practices and perhaps exhibition games over the course of the season.
- ⇒ Once you have the division schedule from the convenor, prepare a schedule with just the games that your team is involved in with possibly a schedule for snacks included. (see sample in the appendix to this manual)
- ⇒ Call players to remind them of an upcoming game. (this is optional if you have handed out a good team schedule)

***ON GAME DAY***

- ⇒ Players should arrive 20 - 30 minutes before game time and every effort should be made to start the games on time.
- ⇒ Arrive at the park at or preferably before the scheduled player arrival time.
- ⇒ Make sure you have the game ball(s) if you are the home team.
- ⇒ Have one of your coaching staff prepare the line-up form or do it yourself.
- ⇒ Ensure that all players receive their due playing time and that the line-up does not contravene any rules for your division. ( see sample line-up in the appendix to this manual)
- ⇒ All players leaving from the park must be accounted for at the end of the game. Do not leave the park until all young players have been taken by a parent or know guardian. If a parent is late, you may wish to phone them but under no circumstances should you escort a young player to his or her home without proper accompaniment. Take one of your coaches along if you will be driving someone home! If a parent is late more than once, speak to them about it and if the problem persists, speak to your convenor. We do not provide a babysitting service.
- ⇒ If the game is rained out, the home team manager is to call the convenor for rescheduling.
- ⇒ The winning team manager is responsible for contacting the convenor with the game result.

***DURING THE SEASON***

- ⇒ Sponsors are very important to the league, so be sure to invite your sponsor out to attend at least one game.
- ⇒ Be vigilant in handing out any league information such as newsletters, banquet tickets, etc.
- ⇒ Make every effort to have your entire team present when photographs are taken. Photograph day will be scheduled some time during the season and the convenor will provide you with dates and times. A copy of the team photo goes to the sponsor and we want it to look as good as possible.
- ⇒ Fill out and give to the convenor the rating sheets for your team. Rating sheets are an evaluation of the skills of each of the players on your team and are helpful for the coaches and convenors who will be making up the teams during the following season.
- ⇒ Hold a few pre-playoff practices in August. (or better yet, hold regular practices during the summer when the teams will not be playing games)
- ⇒ Be sure to contact the players on your team to notify them of upcoming playoff practices and games.
- ⇒ **Remember that good coaching means that every team wins during the playoffs!**
- ⇒ Ensure that all players are given league information concerning the end of season banquets. Tickets should be distributed and sold during the playoffs and attendance results forwarded to the convenor.

***DUTIES OF ALL MANAGERS AND COACHES***

- ⇒ Attend the coaches social night in March and the coaches appreciation night held in November in conjunction with the AGM.
- ⇒ Attend coaching clinics or training sessions where possible. The league will make known to the coaches some of the options available.

***ON GAME DAY***

- ⇒ Coaches not making the line-up before the game should lead the players through a warmup routine. It is essential that the children get an organized pre-game warmup, even if this just involves throwing the ball back and forth. Keep them all involved. For example, while infield drill is going on, have another coach work with the outfielders.
- ⇒ Coaches are expected to be role models at all times. How you handle situations such as the inevitable bad umpiring calls (hopefully with grace and sportsmanship) is critical to the 12 or 13 young spectators who look up to you and will be watching your every move.
- ⇒ Ensure that all players are orderly and mannerly while on the bench. Accidents happen when children are running around. They should be following the game at all times.
- ⇒ Have the players ready to bat, with helmets on and straps attached. Make sure that the on-deck batter is waiting, ready to bat, so as not to delay the game.
- ⇒ Swinging bats must be done far from the player bench where there is no chance of a player walking into a swinging bat.
- ⇒ Ensure that all your team equipment gets back into the bag and that all league equipment is returned to the box. Always watch for safety hazards and report them to your convenor immediately. Report any broken equipment to your convenor for replacement.

***MANAGER / COACHES TIMELINE******BEFORE THE SEASON***

- ⇒ With the convenor, put together a coaching group. (manager, 2 or 3 coaches)
- ⇒ Attend the coaches social night in late March.
- ⇒ Attend ALL coaching clinics.

***DRAFT NIGHT***

- ⇒ Attend the draft night in early April.
- ⇒ Contact your players within a week of the draft.

***PRE-SEASON***

- ⇒ Hold pre-season practices from mid to late April.

***REGULAR SEASON***

- ⇒ The regular season runs from the 1st weekend in May until the end of June.

***SUMMER DIVISION MEETING / SOCIAL***

- ⇒ At the convenor's discretion, a pre-playoff meeting will take place usually in mid to late August.
- ⇒ The objectives of the meeting are to discuss the regular season, plan for the playoffs and to have a good time.

***PRE-PLAYOFFS***

- ⇒ Hold pre-playoff practices in late August and early September. Even better, hold regular practices over the summer for players that are interested in working on skills development.

***PLAYOFFS***

- ⇒ The playoffs begin the day after Labour Day and run until late September. Many divisions choose to play weekends only at this time of year due to diminishing daylight.
- ⇒ Banquet tickets are to be sold and distributed during the playoffs.

***POST-SEASON***

- ⇒ Managers are to hand over to the division convenor all equipment bags, keys, rating sheets and banquet ticket information.
- ⇒ Attend the post-season banquet which is usually held in mid October.
- ⇒ Attend the coaches appreciation night held in conjunction with the AGM in November.

## ***STRUCTURED BASEBALL PRACTICES***

Teams that have well organized, meaningful and enjoyable practices have a better chance of success on game day. There are two basic objectives of a practice:

1. To present fundamentals in a way that the learning process is not only instructional but enjoyable.
2. To provide each player the opportunity to better himself as an individual in coordination with the preparation of a team.

Below are guidelines that will help coaches prepare practices that are beneficial and enjoyable.

**1. Planning** Practice plans should be based on available facilities, the season's schedule, weather conditions, practice time and the player's needs. A coach should keep track of what is being accomplished at each practice so that she / he makes sure that all the fundamentals have been covered and that enough time is spent on each. At the beginning of each practice, the players should be made aware of the objective of that practice, the skills they will learn and the different drills they will participate in that day. This is also a very good time to review skills introduced in previous practices.

**2. The Throwing Arm** There is nothing in baseball that will set a player back any more than a sore arm. That is why adequate time must be spent teaching the players how to warm up and cool down their arms properly.

- Avoid any kind of throwing until the players have finished their proper stretching.
- Players must be discouraged from throwing full speed without a gradual build-up.
- Players should always start throwing short distances and gradually increase the distance as their arms warm up.
- In cool weather, a player should be strongly encouraged to wear a long sleeved shirt or sweater under their jersey to protect the throwing arm.
- Once a pitcher has finished pitching for the game, she / he should throw 5 to 10 pitches at three quarters to one half speed on the side lines to gradually cool down the arm.
- It is strongly suggested to never let a player pitch twice in a single game if she / he has been sitting on the bench or playing another position in between pitching assignments.

**3. Warm Ups:** By requiring the players to warm up as soon as they come on the field, it ensures that they are physically ready for any activity they take part in. Start off with something like running the bases, stretching a bit, jogging to a tree and back, etc.. They should then spend 5 - 10 minutes warming up their arms by throwing the ball. During these throwing sessions, players should be encouraged to work on good throwing mechanics. It is so important that a baseball coach impress upon his / her players that these warm-up sessions can be used to help themselves not only strengthen their arms, but also, to work on their mechanics and throwing accuracy.

4. *Station Drills:* Involve as much activity as possible at one time (use all of your coaches as often as possible). Break the team up into two or three groups (depending on drill and coaches available) to work on separate skills. While one group is working on infield play, others can be catching fly balls and returning ball to simulated 2nd base.

**DON'T** - line children up and have them waiting up to 10 minutes while others individually take turns learning proper batting stance.

**DO** - demonstrate to all once and check individual skills in groups of five (or less) at a time.

Keep drills short and active. Rather than do a drill (ie. running to 1st base) for 15 minutes, do it three successive practices for 5 minutes. Make your drills fun. Use short competitions to add motivation. Review and repeat (with modifications) drills introduced the previous practice as you see the need. Take a small group of players who are weak at a particular skill aside with one coach to get extra practice.

5. *Communication:* Involve children in demonstrations, helping out with the drills. Question children on things, involve them mentally, don't let them tune you out when you are explaining something. Be prepared!! Children respond well to an organized coach; they tune out a disorganized one.

6. *Positive Reinforcement:* Coaches need to understand how to use positive reinforcement. If they use too much or not enough, players' development can be slowed. When players show good reactions, reflexes, quickness, speed, hustle or skillful execution of any fundamental, coaches should praise them alone or in the teams' presence. Proper reinforcement facilitates learning and helps develop a closer rapport between coaches and players.

***COACHING PHILOSOPHY THOUGHTS***

- ◆ HAVE fun as a coach and your players will have more fun.
- ◆ REINFORCE good playing positively.
- ◆ IMPROVE on weak play with positive suggestions, encouragement.
- ◆ MAKE a big deal about improvements that you see.
- ◆ DEMAND good behaviour, attention, sportsmanship, 100% effort and you will get it.
- ◆ You are a pseudo parent while the child is at your game or practice. You may discipline a child (not physically, of course) if it is necessary and should do so if his / her behaviour is interfering with the rights of others (including yourself). Sit out a boy or girl who will not cooperate or is disruptive. If a child does not respond to your discipline, speak to the parent. Major discipline problems are unlikely but if they occur, they should be discussed with your convenor.
- ◆ SAFETY always comes first!

You are a very significant person in this child's life for the next few months.

**Make the most of it for both of you**

## SAMPLE INTRO LETTER

Welcome to the team!

The 2002 season at Bloordale Baseball will be in full gear very soon. The coaching staff of Milano's Pizza is looking forward to a fun year at the baseball diamond and we hope all the players are too.

For all you first year players, baseball is about to become a sport that looks like the baseball you watch on television. The mosquito division means the start of real pitching. There will be other new things to learn as well and the coaches will explain them as the season moves along.

This year we will be playing a 12 game regular season schedule. The schedule is attached along with the name of the player that is responsible for snacks and/or drinks for each game. A practice schedule has not been worked out yet but we will let you know when it is available.

Also attached you will find a list of our team roster. Study those names because they will be your team-mates (and hopefully new friends) for the whole season. We will be playing as a **team** and that means whether we win or lose.

We would also like to mention a couple of important things before the season gets started.

First, it is very important that you let the coach know as soon as possible if you aren't going to be able to play a game.

Second, it is also very important that you have your parents bring you to the games and practices at least **15 minutes** before the official start time. As we get bigger and stronger it is important that we warm-up and stretch our muscles before we start playing or practicing.

Third, the coaches would highly recommend that you wear a proper athletic support and protective cup for every game and practice this season. This is absolutely necessary for any of you that will be playing back-catcher but we would like all of you to wear them.

During our time at the park, don't be afraid to talk to your coaches or ask questions. Together we can make Milano's Pizza a great team!

**SAMPLE TEAM SCHEDULE**

**MILANO'S PIZZA 2002  
SCHEDULE**

DATE	TIME	HOME TEAM	VISITING TEAM	SNACK DUTY
Wed. May 01	6:00	Markland Auto	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Brendan
Sat. May 04	9:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Smart Printing	Gage
Mon. May 06	6:00	Mama Martino's	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Michael F.
Sat. May 11	11:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Guardian Drugmart	Michael G.
Mon. May 13	6:00	Smart Printing	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Tyler
Sat. May 25	9:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Markland Auto	Bryan
Mon. May 27	6:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Mama Martino's	Brett
Mon. June 03	6:00	Guardian Drugmart	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Kulmiye
Mon. June 10	6:00	Smart Printing	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Kevin
Mon. June 17	6:00	Guardian Drugmart	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Jamie
Sat. June 22	11:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Markland Auto	Daniel
Mon. June 24	6:00	<b>Milano's Pizza</b>	Mama Martino's	Adam

Please take note that a coach will be at the park thirty minutes prior to game time. Players are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes before game time to allow for a proper stretch and warm-up. This is very important for the pitchers; especially the starting pitcher for the game.

**SAMPLE TEAM ROSTER**

MILANO'S PIZZA 2002		
TEAM ROSTER		
PLAYER		HOME PHONE
Brendan Badham		???-???-????
Gage Benham		???-???-????
Michael Ferracuti		???-???-????
Michael Glinski		???-???-????
Tyler Harding		???-???-????
Bryan Harrison		???-???-????
Brett Kinkley		???-???-????
Kulmiye Kulmiye		???-???-????
Kevin Laakso		???-???-????
Jamie Lindsay		???-???-????
Daniel Nunes		???-???-????
Adam Poirier		???-???-????
<b>COACHING STAFF</b>		
	Paul Badham	
	Stephen Benham	
Bill Harrison		
	Stephen Poirier	

**SAMPLE GAME LINE-UP**

	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
ADAM	P	SIT	SS	LF
ALICIA	SIT	RF	1B	3B
MARIE	1B	CF	SIT	C
JOSHUA	CF	2B	3B	SIT
GAGE	2B	C	SIT	CF
JESSICA	C	P	CF	SIT
MICHAEL	SIT	1B	LF	SS
BRETT	SS	SIT	RF	P
SEAN	SIT	LF	2B	2B
COREY	LF	SS	SIT	1B
JACQUELINE	3B	SIT	C	SIT
BRITTANY	RF	3B	P	RF