Thank you for coaching and participating in LMYA baseball this year. My goal for our players and coaches is to have fun! Remember everyone plays, everyone fields, everyone hits, everyone has fun!

Please always remember LYMA’s mission statement, which is to build self-esteem, sportsmanship, well rounded players, and to foster community.

I would like the fundamentals of baseball taught at each grade level. I hope my visions for each grade level helps you met LMYA’s goals and my goal of having a fun, relaxed atmosphere that happens to play baseball.

**Kindergarten- T-Ball**

Objective- Introduce the game of baseball in a fun manner. At the end of the season, players should know each base, positions, when to switch sides, and to throw to 1st base for an out. Playing catch is difficult at this age since it is likely to be throw and fetch. Emphasis with parents that players tend to develop faster if he or she plays catch with a parent or guardian on a regular basis.

Suggestions:

* Water balloons
* Kickball
* Tennis balls or whiffles balls for catching and throwing (reduce fear of ball)
* No gloves
* Hot potato
* Large net at first base- throw into the net runner is out

 **1st Grade – 2nd Grade (T-ball and Coach pitch)**

Objective- Reintroduce the game of baseball in a fun manner. At the end of the season, players should know a batting order, field grounders, throw and catch, and round the bases independently. Playing catch should be improved but still likely to be throw and fetch. Emphasis with parents that players tend to develop faster if he or she plays catch with a parent or guardian on a regular basis.

Suggestions

* Water balloons
* Kickball/Whiffle ball (Whiffle ball encourages catching with hands)
* Hitters that struggle with coach pitch/hit off tee to gain confidence
* Soft pitch next to hitter to improve coordination
* Start to develop stations for practice- hitting off tee, fielding, playing catch

**3rd and 4th Grade- (Coach Pitch)**

Objective- Emphasis on baseball itself- the game should resemble a normal game of baseball. At the end of the season, players should field grounders and throw to the appropriate base, catch pop ups, and the run the basepaths aggressively (take second or home). Players should be able to play catch with a teammate independently.

Suggestions

* Water balloons
* Softball for confidence in hitting moving ball
* Soft pitch next to hitter to improve coordination
* Practices should be broken down into stations for practice- hitting off tee, infield practice, outfield drills
* Coaches can burrow pitching machines if desired

**5th to 7th Grade- (Player Pitch)**

Objective- Baseball with some fun- the game will resemble a little league baseball game. At the end of the season, players should field grounders and throw to the appropriate base, catch pop ups, and the run the basepaths aggressively (take second or home). Players should be able to play catch with a teammate independently.

Suggestions

* Water balloons
* Coach pitch to develop confidence
* Practices should be broken down into stations for practice- hitting off tee, infield practice, outfield drills
* Coaches can burrow pitching machines if desired for hitting clinics
* Arrange for a professional coach to assist or run a practice
* Play a game of kickball in the season- remind your players this is fun, break up the season

I deeply encourage coaches to “think outside” the box to develop a fun, entertaining curriculum. The use of water balloons was never given to me as a coach idea or suggestion. I simply wanted to get my players to aim better. I pitch small candies and whiffle golf balls to hitters. I have done soft toss with eggs. Anything to keep the kids motivated and wanting to come to practice. I even encourage you to mix up the uniform. Wear inside out. Your team can wear their favorite major baseball team(s) or comic book characters. Have fun.

Finally, I am here to support you. I know the baseball season tends to be long, and this sport can be boring for all grade levels. I also understand that it is hard to manage parents and players expectations. When a difficult situation arises between a coach, a player, and/or parent, I will always listen to the coach’s perspective first. **You can reach me via email at** **clark5097@yahoo.com** **or mobile phone, 415.694.9963**. I am so thankful you have dedicated your time and energy to LMYA baseball. **Our community and I appreciate your sacrifice of time and energy**.

Play ball,

Steve Clark

LMYA’s Baseball Commissioner