



**Ridgefield Little League  
Coaches Handbook  
T-Ball & Pee-Wee Baseball**

# **Ridgefield Little League**

## **Coaches Code of Conduct**

The sport of Baseball embodies the discipline of teamwork. The sport challenges players to improve skills, and bring into play the excitement of strategy. Every player will eventually strike out, or is on the losing end of the score, but baseball always gives another chance for success in the next at-bat or game.

With this in mind, the Ridgefield Little League expects each manager and coach to follow the following Coaches Code of Conduct:

### **Sportsmanship**

- ✓ I will promote good sportsmanship, teach good baseball skills and have fun in the process.
- ✓ I will not overemphasize the value and importance of winning.
- ✓ I will respect the coaches, players, and spectators of the opposing team before, during, and after the games, win or lose.
- ✓ I realize, accept and will practice the principle that a team and leagues reputation is built not only on its playing ability but also in its sportsmanship, courtesy and manner.

### **The Parents and the League**

- ✓ I will maintain open communication with players and their parents. When approached by parents to discuss any issue, I will interact and respond in a courteous manner.
- ✓ I will support in fundraising efforts, field improvement efforts, and Snack Shack concession assignments along with other duties that may be assigned to teams from time to time.

### **The Team**

- ✓ I will conduct practices in an organized manner, with a planned agenda that focused on skill development appropriate for the skill level of their players
- ✓ I will maintain open communication with players and parents to inform them of practices, games, and other responsibilities in an efficient timely manner.

# Guiding Principles for Ridgefield Little League T-Ball/Pee-Wee Coaches

The main objective of T-Ball & Pee-Wee Divisions is to teach the concepts of the game, and to improve every player on your team, not to win games.

*“Games won or lost are soon forgotten, the type of person you are will not”*  
– Pete Doumit

*“If you are successful in improving the skill level of All your players, you will be successful at coaching (the winning will take care of itself).”*  
– John Wooden

**Publicly praise and encourage. Keep constructive criticism and correction for private individual conversations.**

No one knows better than the player that just made a mistake. Encourage them to get ready for the next ball and save the instruction and correction when they come back to the dugout. Keep in mind that, as a Little League coach, you are one of the most influential people your players will ever have in their lives. Don't fall into the trap of always criticizing failures without recognizing achievement and effort. If a kid is giving something his all, recognize that fact, even if he is failing. Support him, and he may amaze you - and himself - with what he can do.

**Be inventive, and reward your players.**

Turn drills into contests - give points to different teams within your squad, and watch the intensity level rise. Raise the stakes by offering a small reward; a stick of sugarless gum will motivate a player like you wouldn't believe.

**Keep them busy!**

- ✓ Plan practices that keep things moving
  - ✓ Minimize lines and lecture
- ✓ Use small group stations to maximize involvement
- ✓ Batting practice not reserved for 1 player hitting and 11 others standing

Teach Safety – to be aware of swinging bats, thrown balls, how to get out of way of pitched balls.



# RIDGEFIELD LITTLE LEAGUE

## RLL Goals and Vision

- ✓ Provide players with playing time at multiple positions throughout the season.
- ✓ Dedicate practice time each week for continuous work on the 'little things.'
- ✓ Take away playing time for poor sportsmanship, disrespect, poor choices and explain why.
- ✓ Promote thought and encourage passion. Be open to feedback and listen to your players.
- ✓ Consistently promote self-evaluation/reflection. Ask your players questions and look for feedback.
- ✓ Rotate pitchers consistently in major/minor levels. Ensure they're consistently developing/refining their delivery.
- ✓ When mistakes are made, focus on positive first. Rebuild their confidence and send them back onto the field.
- ✓ Excellence in areas of sportsmanship, respect, leadership and positivity need to be created by the coaches. Don't create a division amongst players, parents, and coaches where one group of players is treated differently than another group of players due to talent, skills, and/or who their parents are.
- ✓ Create a team full of future leaders, FLOR (Future Leaders of Ridgefield) –yes, I made that into an acronym. Some of these kids may end up being your future boss. Let that one sink in.
- ✓ Lead by example. Motivate, inspire, and encourage these young kids to act as leaders among their peers, their opponents, the umpires, ALL fans, away from the field, at home, and in the classroom. We have the responsibility to show them this behavior every time we're together whether practicing or playing a game. Be a great example of how to carry yourself in moments of adversity and moments of greatness. These kids will hopefully not only remember but cherish these times the rest of their lives!

# Guiding Principles for Ridgefield Little League Parents & Players

- ✓ Players must be in full uniform for all Games. Shirts are to be tucked in and hats worn at all times. Parents and Coaches are responsible for the appearance of their Players and should make every effort to ensure that the uniforms remain in good condition and show up to games with ALL their uniforms and gear.
- ✓ Field Prep on Game Day - The coaches will be busy preparing the team, so if you can arrive early and help rake and chalk the fields, put out the bases, it would be appreciated. When your team is the “home team” you are responsible for pre and post-game field prep, and all field equipment and bases returned to the storage shed.
- ✓ Snack Shack Concession Stand Duty. Each family and/or parent will be assigned a time to serve at least one session, or hire a worker to cover their assigned shift.
- ✓ A Parent/Player must contact their Coach if they are unable to make a practice or game. If a Player cannot reach the Coach, that Player should attempt to make contact with another Player on the team roster to communicate their absence.
- ✓ A Player who missed the previous game and/or practice shall be played as usual. However, after a player misses consecutive games and/or practices without giving notice to a Coach, the Player may be subject to disciplinary measures (i.e., sit out a game).
- ✓ The Speed Limit is 5 mph in roadways and parking lots while attending any Ridgefield Little League function. Watch for small children around parked cars. Players - No playing in parking lots or on and around lawn equipment.
- ✓ No swinging bats or throwing baseballs at any time in the dugouts, within the walkways and common areas of Ridgefield Little League. Bats in the dugout need to be stored in the bat holders until it is time for the player to use it on the field. If there is a bat in a players hand, proper safety helmets need to be worn at all times.
- ✓ No throwing balls against dugouts or against backstop (catcher or a net must be used for all batting practice sessions held on the field).
- ✓ Spectators shall not be permitted to stand behind the backstop.
- ✓ Players shall remain calm and attentive to the game in progress while in the dugout, not climbing on/over fences or onto the top of a dugout at any time. No “roughhousing”.

- ✓ Not behaving in the dugout could result in a loss of an at bat or the entire team losing a privilege, based on the Coaches choice.
- ✓ No throwing rocks, dirt, grass or other object not in use by the team for practice or a game.
- ✓ A Player may not leave the field area without receiving permission from his/her manager or coach.
- ✓ Only players, coaches, the team mom or assigned duty parents are allowed in the dugout/bench area during games, no exceptions.
- ✓ No food will be allowed in the dugouts or bench area, other than food provided by/for the team.
- ✓ The presence of pets is governed by local ordinances. Pet owners are responsible for immediately cleaning up and disposing of their pet's waste and controlling their pet at all times. It is highly recommended to leave your pet at home.
- ✓ A player who throws equipment in anger or frustration, or uses obscene or indecent language, or behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner, may be ejected from the game. The use of profanity by player, coaches, parents or spectators will not be tolerated.
- ✓ Players, managers, spectators and coaches may not intentionally agitate or distract any player on the field or in a dugout. Any coach or player in violation of this rule is subject to removal from that game.
- ✓ Our coaches are volunteers. Verbal abuse of the coaches, players or parents will not be tolerated. Violation of this code will result in possible disciplinary action, to be decided by the Board of Directors.
- ✓ Observe all posted signs. Players and spectators should be alert at all times for foul balls and errant throws.

# Ridgefield Little League

## Planning and running practices

**Objective of practice** – Have clear objectives for what you want to accomplish in each practice

**Equipment** – Know ahead of time what special equipment you will need and when you will need it.

**Time** – Establish a timeline for the practice and follow closely as possible

**Routine** – have a standard routine for each practice (example: warm up, throwing/catching) so the players always know what to expect  
**Skills** – know what skills you want to teach and how you plan to teach them

**Small Group Work** – The best way to keep the players busy is to utilize small groups. Engage assistant coaches or willing parents and divide the team into 2 or 3 smaller groups to work with on skills.

**Game Situations** – Build practices around actual game conditions. This allows players to perform the skills under pressure of the game.

**Closure** – End practice on positive note – Ask players to review what they learned in today's practice. Let them know what to expect for the next practice or game.

### Example Sample Practice

**Warm up – dynamic – run around bases, be creative**

**Throwing and Catching** – This time is very important in the development of your teams. Have players pair up according to skill level and toss to each other. One partner should be on the foul line and the other in the outfield.

**Skills – Start Simple, create success based on individual skill level**  
**Game situations/Small Group Sessions Hitting**

**Closure** – Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands. Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.

# Ridgefield Little League T-Ball 5-6 Year Olds

**Throwing Mechanics** – Turn body so that the front shoulder points toward the target; keep elbow above the shoulder, step toward the target with non-throwing foot and release.

**Catching** – Follow ball with eyes into the glove, whether on the ground or in the air, use two hands to catch and field; try to catch the ball in front of your body.

**Learning Positional Play** – If the ball is hit to your buddy let him or her field it.

**Hitting** – How to hold and swing a bat, batting safety; hitting off tee; hitting softly tossed balls.

## Baseball Skills to teach

- ✓ Play to have some fun
- ✓ Follow the instructions of the coaches
- ✓ Learn to be a part of a “team” respecting other players, coaches and parents
- ✓ Identify the bases and the order in which they should be touched
- ✓ Identify the nine field positions
- ✓ Throw infield ground balls to first base, throw outfield ground balls to second base
- ✓ Make solid contact with the ball when hitting off the tee
- ✓ Run straight through the first base bag – No little league turn
- ✓ Warm up in outfield grass prior to game
- ✓ Proper throwing technique
- ✓ Catching the baseball

**Tip:** Break the team in half – 5 kids working on fielding/catching/throwing drills. The other 5 kids doing hitting/base running drills. This increase the volume of repetitions for each player and keeps them from being non-active for too long.

## Ridgefield T-Ball Practice Plan #1

Main Objectives – Fielding, Throwing, Hitting

Warm up – (5 minutes) Running / Warming up – Always have the kids run first. If the kids just jump into throwing before they have properly warmed their bodies up. Discourage ever picking up a ball without properly running and stretching.

**Tour of the bases** – (15 minutes) Gather the players at home plate, have them take imaginary swings and run the bases. This can be used to teach base identification. Have player call out bases as they pass them.

**Throwing** – (10 minutes) Players pair up and throw to each other. Quickly identify player’s skill level and pair accordingly.



**Fielding Ground balls** – (10-15 minutes) Teach and demonstrate fielding a ground ball using two hands – start with no gloves and force the action of two handed fielding – graduate to gloves

**Hitting** – (10 minutes) Players practicing mechanics of swing as whole group – players practicing hitting off tee or soft toss. Not throwing the bat when leaving the batter's box. Teaching to put it down, before running. All players need to be wearing a batting helmet.

**Game Situation** – (Balance of practice) Set up a regular defensive infield. Have players as base-runners Coach hits ground balls to various positions to simulate game conditions. Rotate players around regularly

**Closure** – Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands. Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.

### **Ridgefield T-Ball Practice Plan #2**

- ✓ Warm-up and Stretching – Quick and Simple
- ✓ Run the bases. (Tie into the Warm up)
- ✓ Explain that first is the only base you can run past.
- ✓ Explain that you must touch the bases in order or be called out.
- ✓ Play Follow the leader

Practice in Stations – 7-10 min per and rotate

- ✓ Hitting off tee and tossed balls
- ✓ Fielding and catching
- ✓ Throwing
- ✓ Play a scrimmage or other instructional game Run the bases and review skills and baseball concepts
- ✓ Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands.
- ✓ Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.

# Pee-Wee Baseball 7-8 Year Olds

**Learning basic rules** – Force outs, Base running (knowing when you don't have to run; not running past teammates on the bases)

**Throwing Mechanics** - Turn body so that the front shoulder points toward the target; keep elbow above the shoulder, step toward the target with non-throwing foot and release; introduce the four seam grip point the shoulder, step and throw introducing the concept of momentum toward a target. Player Pitching.

**Catching and Fielding** – Thrown and hit balls – fingers up versus fingers down - “Ball high, fingers to the sky” “Ball down, fingers to the ground; fielding with two hands – teach drop and cross-over steps

**Hitting** – Choosing the correct bat, proper grip, stance.

## Baseball Skills to Teach

- ✓ Warm-up in outfield grass prior to a game, including running warmups.
- ✓ Play to have fun
- ✓ Follow the instructions of coaches
- ✓ Learn to be part of a “team” respecting other players, coaches, and parents
- ✓ Identify bases and order in which they should be touched
- ✓ Identify and play the nine field positions
- ✓ Understand the “Force Play” in base running
- ✓ Fielding Ground Balls with two hands
- ✓ Catch ball in the air with two hands, fingers to the sky
- ✓ Run straight through the base at first on infield hits
- ✓ Take a turn at first base on outfield hits, watch and listen to first and third base coach
- ✓ Slide into bases (exception being 1st base) on close plays – teach proper sliding technique
- ✓ Make contact with a pitched ball
- ✓ Catching the baseball
- ✓ Pitching to a player

## Ridgefield Pee-Wee Practice Plan #1

Main Objectives – Fielding, Throwing, Hitting

Warm up – (10 minutes) Running / Warming up – Always have the kids run first. If the kids just jump into throwing before they have properly warmed their bodies up. Discourage ever picking up a ball without properly running and stretching.

**Base running** – (15 minutes) Gather the players at home plate, have them take imaginary swings and run the bases. This can be used to teach base identification. Teach running straight through the base at first on infield hits. Base Running Station to Station - 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> and then 3<sup>rd</sup> – home.

**Throwing** – (15 minutes) Players pair up and throw to each other. Quickly identify player's skill level and pair accordingly. Incorporate pitching techniques.

**Fielding Ground balls** – (15 minutes) Teach and demonstrate fielding a ground ball using two hands – start with no gloves and force the action of two handed fielding – graduate to gloves

**Hitting** – (15 minutes) Players practicing mechanics of swing as whole group – players practicing hitting off tee or soft toss. Not throwing the bat when leaving the batter's box. Teaching to put it down, before running. All players need to be wearing a batting helmet. Use plastic whiffle balls (bucket) to create a drill of repetitive hitting.

**Game Situation** – (Balance of practice) Set up a regular defensive infield. Have players as base-runners Coach hits ground balls to various positions to simulate game conditions. Rotate players around regularly

**Closure** – Have a warm down of some running and then light stretching. Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands. Bring attention to needs or problem areas, ask team for solutions to correct these items. Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.

## **Ridgefield Pee-Wee Practice Plan Example #2**

- ✓ Dynamic Warm Up – skipping, high knee jogging, backwards running
- ✓ Base-running – controlled follow the leader
- ✓ Stretching – Quick and simple
- ✓ Throwing and Catching Stations

Hitting – Tee work, soft toss, pitched ball

Infield and throwing – rolled ground balls with throwing after the catch

Outfield – throw fly balls

Controlled game, game situations, or teach rules

Base-running drills – Emphasize running hard – be creative and make it fun!

Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands.

Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.

# Recommended tips to parents and coaches:

Video Tips and a great site committed to Baseball development.

<http://baseballdudes.com> - Signup for free tips and downloads.

<http://baseballdudes.com/video-tips/> - These videos are a good visual.

**TIP:** When young, don't create drills where there is throwing and catching by the kids. Use parents to catch at first base when doing fielding and throwing drills. Way too much time wasted when chasing on both sides of the drill.

- ✓ Example: The shortstop (rotating kids) fields the ball and throws to a parent at first base.
- ✓ Example: The parent fields the ball and throws to a player at first base (rotating kids).

This allows for the drill to move forward without continued distractions of chasing the ball on each side of the drill.

**TIP:** Break the team in half – 5 kids working on fielding/catching/throwing drills. The other 5 kids doing hitting/base running drills. This increase the volume of repetitions for each player and keeps them from being non-active for too long.

**TIP:** Set the tee even with the player's belly button and have them extend their arms fully. Say, "measure up," and explain to the batter how hitting the ball on the fat part of the bat makes the ball go further. This helps each batter stand the appropriate distance away from the ball, and swing level.

**TIP:** Have players work together – Ask them during a game "How many outs do we have?" Keep the attention on the game by asking them "Where is the next play?" Keep them involved and focused on the game.