



EXPECTATIONS



PLAYERS

PARENTS

COACHES

ORGANIZATION

ARM MANAGEMENT



INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges to becoming a productive and happy person: learning how to master complex tasks, building self-confidence and self-respect, building relationships based on trust and performance, learning how to be an effective group member, learning how to compete, learning how to overcome fear and anxiety when performing before valued people, and so on.

Everyone faces these challenges from an early age. However, the six year span from ages 9 through 14, from youth to adolescence, is among the most change-filled and challenging because it is when dependence on family is being tipped toward self-sufficiency in relation to peers in a rapidly growing body in the throes of new and potent hormones and a brain capable of making new and more sophisticated connections. This individuation is further complicating because it occurs in a highly complex, fast moving, and open-ended social environment.

The growth of the social sciences has radically revised our understanding of what motivates behavior and has, in many ways, influenced what is considered appropriate. The emphasis on positive coaching is but one example. However, patterns of behavior change slowly: Youth sports events are still riddled with screaming, demeaning, and other inappropriate parental behavior.

We neither create nor manage teams of adults. We are a youth sports organization. As such, we believe that it is our role not only to provide the opportunity to play games in a safe, fun environment and to prepare our travel players for high school ball, but also to provide a positive context within which life lessons supporting maturity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and respect can be reinforced.

To accomplish that, we believe that we must not only provide the means to convert talent to skills but also to provide guidelines that make behavioral expectations clear.

What follows is our attempt to clarify everyone's roles and responsibilities in our travel baseball program. Please read them and discuss them thoroughly with your child. We do not claim to have a monopoly on understanding parenting concepts and styles, so please feel free to email us any comments or suggestions you might have to bulldogs@78pyc.org.

Eddie Albert,
Bulldogs Director
78th Precinct Youth Sports Baseball Commissioner



EXPECTATIONS FROM PLAYERS

THE MENTAL GAME

You must try your best at practices and games and when preparing for them. That means to **Anticipate** what's required of you, to **Act** by trying your best and to **Adjust** to the new situation by resetting your thoughts, feelings, and body. Always be ready to play.

Examples: 1/ Try your best includes preparation, such as coming rested, properly nourished in advance, warming up properly, having your shoe laces tied and shirt tucked in, and bringing the things in the list below; 2/ you run hard to the base every time you hit the ball; 3/ you run hard to get batted balls; 4/ you quickly shake off a mistake by your or your teammates to fully concentrate on the next play; and 5/ you learn more about baseball by watching and studying other games and what professionals have to say about the game and its strategies.

Comments: Practices and games are not like lunch time at school or after school play dates. It is not a time for socializing. It is a time for focusing on the manager's plan for the practice or game and trying your best to follow their directions. Being prepared also includes looking at and knowing the signs and the situation to anticipate the next play.

Life Lessons: Learning how to learn and create habits appropriate to the task. Learning to take measured risks to improve.

Show respect for yourself and the team, if you don't understand something about what you should be doing, you must ask the manager or a coach for help.

Examples: You don't know the count; or you don't know where to throw the ball if it comes to you

Life Lessons: Respect for your body and your team (by not putting yourself in a position to make a mental error that can cost your team)

Pay attention to your coaches and the situation. Be thinking and talking about what you are doing and what you are about to do with your coaches and teammates. Do not be talking to non-players (friends, family, spectators) during practices and games. If you have to speak to them, get permission from one of your coaches first.



Take criticism positively.

Comment: Your coaches want everyone to improve. Since no one is perfect, there will be things every player will have to work on. Be accepting of your coach's evaluation and suggestions for improvement. It does not mean that the coach thinks you are a bad person or that you cannot do it. Make sure you understand what is being said. If you are confused or have another explanation, you must explain that to your coach.

Life Lessons: No one is perfect; Not being open to criticism closes opportunities for you to learn from your experiences and to improve

Treat mistakes and loses as a chance for learning and improving. If you tried your best, you may feel disappointed in the outcome but you should feel good about your effort.

Comment: Crying, blaming, and making excuses are not mature responses to disappointment. They do not help you to reset for the next play and get in the way of understanding what went wrong and how to correct it.

Life Lessons: Mistakes are opportunities for learning. Even if your goal has not been achieved, all is not lost if you've tried your best, which is something you should feel good about. Learning to accept circumstances realistically.

Understand and accept that playing time and playing certain positions are earned, and that your talents may make you suited for some positions and not others.

Comment: If you want to play a position other than where the coach has been playing, ask your coach before a practice, not at a game. You must prove you can play a position in practice before being allowed to play it in a game; and once in a game, you must get outs. No one can become a pitcher without having had pitching lessons.

A player who plays many positions well and makes hard contact as a batter is very valuable to the team and will naturally get more playing time. Playing is not required to be equal. In addition, sometimes the plans of the manager are cut short by the circumstances, such as cancellation due to the weather or one of the teams being mercied.

Eventually most players settle into one or two positions. It is important to learn which positions suit you best and then to dedicate your practice to those positions. In the long run it will give you a better chance to play at higher levels and will be best for your team. But everyone must be dedicated to improving their batting.

Life Lessons: Learning how to compete and reach goals. Acquire realistic self-knowledge and learn how to use that to satisfy your desires and the needs of your team; learning how to be an effective role player in a group.



All positions are important.

Comment: Younger players like to play the infield because there is more activity there than in the outfield (which is generally true). As a result, more skilled players tend to be placed in the infield. But a ball that goes past an infielder is usually a single; a ball that goes past an outfielder can be a triple or home run. Soon many more balls will be hit to the outfield and games will be won or lost on outfielders' play.

Life Lessons: Learning to accept and excel at a role within a team; being a team player.

BE READY TO PLAY

Come prepared to all practices and games well rested and after having eaten food no less than ninety minutes earlier.

- Bring:**
- Your brain
 - Your enthusiasm
 - Your patience
 - Your attention
 - Your mitt (first basemen's mitt if you play first, catcher's mitt if you play catcher)
 - Your bat
 - Your helmet
 - Your catching equipment (if a catcher)
 - A proper ball
 - Your uniform
 - A drink (water or sports drink only)
 - A snack of fruit or other healthy food if you are playing a doubleheader
 - Sunglasses
 - Athletic supporter and protective cup
 - Baseball shoes
 - Jacket or sweatshirt, in cooler weather
 - Bat bag to carry all the above

Life Lessons: Learning to be prepared and self-sufficient

Your equipment and uniform must be labeled with your name.

Examples: Your equipment, hat, mitt, water bottle, and equipment bag must have your name on them.

Life Lessons: Respect for and protection of your personal belongings.



You must tell the manager or a coach if you are feeling ill, hurt, tired, thirsty, or hungry during a practice or a game. To avoid potential arm damage, tell your parents and coach of any throwing you have done or want to do that is outside team practices and games.

Life Lessons: Respect for your body and your team (by not reducing the team's effectiveness)

School comes first. Study hard and get your studying and homework done before your practices and games.

Comment: If you are not doing well in school, you will not be playing on the team.

Life Lessons: Setting and committing to appropriate priorities, planning ahead, and following them through.

Practices are mandatory. If you miss practices without an acceptable reason, expect to play less. If you miss practices often, expect to be dropped from the team. Acceptable reasons include observing family, school, and religious functions and illness. Plan your schedule so that you have ample time for homework, practices, and games. Do not wait until the last minute to tell your coach; give your coach plenty of advance notice.

Life Lessons: Learning about commitment and making and balancing different priorities; being responsible and keeping promises; learning how to plan ahead.

Follow your coaches' instructions about what to do and what equipment to use.

Examples: The manager has full control and responsibility for what occurs at practices and games. The manager decides what bats can be used, the offensive and defensive lineups, what signs will be given, how players will communicate with each other to avoid collisions, how the dugout is to be setup and kept orderly, and how to warm up before practices and games. All players (except the pitcher) should run on and off the field, the first baseman should go onto the field with two warm up balls, bench players should help the catcher put on his equipment, and so on.

Comment: There is a purpose to everything: warming up, for example, gets your body ready to play, helps to prevent injury, and fosters team unity. Coaches do not have time to do their job and answer such questions as who is batting when, what drill will they be doing next, who will pitch next, is there another inning, etc. Please do not ask those kinds of questions.

Life Lessons: Respect for authority, their teaching, and rules.



BE A GOOD TEAM PLAYER & A MATURE PERSON

Be honest, fair, keep your promises, take responsibility for your commitments and actions, and do the right thing.

Life Lessons: Developing personal integrity and a good reputation; learning how to build a good reputation and the value of the resulting trust.

Accept responsibility for your own actions, especially mistakes. Do not blame others or make excuses for not winning, not making a play, striking out, or missing a sign.

Example: No one is perfect, everyone makes mistakes. Don't blame umpires calls, the rules, or teammates for their mistakes. If you make an error, tell your teammates "My bad."

Comments: Everyone feels bad when making an error. Find a way to accept and release your negative feelings quickly, privately, and without crying.

Life Lessons: Be accountable for your decisions and actions; accept that no one is perfect and that others are trying their best; learn self-control that allows you to understand the problem and move forward positively.

Help and encourage your teammates.

Examples: If a teammate makes an error, tell him that he will do better next time and the team will pick him up. If he makes a good play, let him know that too. If a teammate misses some instructions or seems confused about what to do, help him if you know or tell him to ask a coach. Never demean or exclude any of your teammates.

Life Lessons: Success as a team relies on each player to understand their role, to try their best at it. The most effective support is with positive reinforcement.

Show appreciation to your coaches for their efforts to improve you and the team.

Comments: In addition to running your practice and games, your coaches spend many hours preparing lineups, setting defensive positions, devising game strategies, preparing practices, and preparing individualized help.

Examples: Shake all of your coaches' hands before a practice or game (saying "hi coach") and after a practice or game (saying "thank you coach"); help your coaches carrying team equipment to and from practices and games; know these expectations and pay attention to and follow your coaches' instructions.



Life Lessons: Showing appreciation to others who are helping you, your team, and the game.

Exhibit good sportsmanship.

Comment: Accept winning and losing as part of the game. Show respect for the feelings of others. Live the Golden Rule: Put yourself in their place and treat them with the respect you would want given to you.

Win with humility and lose with grace. Humility is showing that you do not think you are better or more important than other people. It means not bragging, boasting or retaliating. Grace is acting dignified, polite, and respectful of others feelings.

Life Lessons: Being sensitive to the feelings of others is an important part of being a person who is respected by others, of being a mature person.

Follow our Rules of Courtesy:

If the coach calls for attention, stop what you are doing and look the coach in the eyes. If the coach wants you to come to him, come immediately to him in rows of four.

To speak, raise your hand and be called on by the coach in charge.

One person speaks at a time.

When someone is speaking listen carefully to what is being said while looking into that person's eyes to show that you are listening.

Always act and speak respectfully. Foul language, negative comments, fooling around someone is talking, talking back and using sarcasm are disrespectful and not acceptable.

Be at meetings, practices and games on time.

Shake all of your coaches' hands before a practice or game (saying "hi coach") and after a practice or game (saying "thank you coach").

Help your coach by carrying all the team equipment from and back to your coaches' cars



Life Lessons: Being respectful to others and their property.

Do not use another player's equipment unless that player and a coach agrees to allow it. If a player breaks another player's equipment, he must pay to replace that equipment.

Life Lessons: Respect for and protection of your personal belongings



EXPECTATIONS FROM PARENTS

SUPPORT OUR GOALS AND VALUES

Many Goals and Opportunities are being Balanced: Please accept that this experience is a complex mixture of talent, skill, and strategy with learning how to become a positive, contributing member of a team. It is a gradual, long term process that occurs over years where the coaches must strike balances on many different levels in which many different life lessons will be in play.

This balance includes:

- each player's desire to play particular positions and the ability to play them and the needs of the team;
- the need to produce success on the field and the need to develop individual players' potentials;
- the need to reach specific goals and the need to make the experience fun;
- the age, personality, and maturity of the players, and
- the commitment to respect, responsibility, and resolve.

The coaching staffs will challenge each player to improve; improvement is expected. We must set the bar high but still within reach and expect that the players will work to improve. Additional outside practice is important as well as actively watching live baseball games to understand its nuances.

Playing Time and Positions: Please understand that the allocation of playing time and playing positions will tip towards development for exhibition and regular season league games but will shift towards success in league playoffs and tournaments. This is consistent with the application of a merit-based approach in the context of our goals.

Support these Expectations: Please accept and value these Expectations and the Arm Management guidelines and support their implementation by your child and the coaching staff. Remember that teaching baseball skills and strategies is one thing, getting youngsters to become positive, mature team players is quite another.

Examples: Help them pack their equipment bags running through a checklist of items they must bring; Avoid heavy, fried foods, like hamburgers or sugary treats before or between games; get them to practices and games on time; make sure they have eaten in advance and are well rested;



practice with them independently and seek lessons for particular skills; Lessons are required for pitchers. Make sure they are dressed warm or come with long sleeve tops in the early spring.

First priority must be given to our team over other sports teams and non-educational activities. The parent must disclose any such possible conflicts prior to the selection of the team, preferably during tryouts. As a condition of accepting the player on the team, our manager has the right to restrict a player from participating on any other sports team or may allow it with specific qualifications. The player and parents must abide by the restrictions or qualifications if they were made a condition of acceptance. Playing on a travel sports teams is a significant commitment that whose benefits are in direct proportion to the effort applied.

Appreciate & Respect the Efforts of the Coaching Staff. (And, where a parent is a manager, the fact that you have chosen to delegate this job to others). One way to achieve this is to volunteer to assist the coaching staff if they make such a request. Another is to help the coaching staff by self-policing these Expectations among all the team's parents. Let the coaches deal with all aspects of practices and the game but offer assistance, and show appreciation for their commitment with early contact and positive reinforcement.

Examples: At games, parents may be needed to setup a batting net and tee or to get water for the field or to add clay to the mound or the batter's box. At practices parents may be requested to assist running a drill. Participate in carpooling efforts so that all players can be at all the practices and games.

Be a Positive Spectator: Unless otherwise requested, during practices and games please be a spectator who only roots positively for the team and sits in the area set aside for spectators (not on the field, not behind the backstop, and not in the dugout). Parents' anxiety can be felt and can adversely affect individual and team performance. (A basic tenet we teach the players is that "tension is the enemy.") Reach a relaxed frame of mind; let your child play the game without interjecting yourself into the mix. Do not sit behind the backstop unless there is no other view and it is permitted by the league. At the very least it can distract our pitcher. Please remember that youth sports is not adult entertainment, practices and games are not play dates, and you are not a coach.





Examples: Shouting instructions to batters and fielders can cause confusion and possibly undermine the coach's strategies. Telling a pitcher that the team needs strikes is NOT positive rooting and only adds tension to an already stressful situation. The pitcher is the one person who certainly knows that and who must learn to conquer tension to throw effectively. Only the coaching staff should be communicating instructions. Positive rooting is saying positive things after a play or encouraging things before a play. Giving batting advice during an at bat is also not effective, if anything it increases tension and makes it more difficult to focus and feel confident.

Let the Manager Manage and Instruct. Many people have ideas about how the game should be taught. A parent that asks his player to play in a manner different than the manager causes confusion and potential conflict. If you feel it necessary to question a manager's instructions, please do it privately with the manager and do not insist on your player do it in a manner contrary to the manager's method. The manager will be left with no choice but to tell the player to do it his way or sit on the bench. We are open to suggestions, but in the end you will have to trust that we will do the right thing for all the players.

Do Not Interject Yourself into the Game:

The only person who may address the umpire and opposing coaches is the manager. Do not question calls or yell comments to or enter into any conversation with an umpire or an opposing coach or player immediately before, during, or after a game.

Comment: Do not let the umpire know that you think he made a bad call. They are human and make mistakes. No need to get them mad at you (and, as a result, the team).

Unless it is an emergency, do not have contact with any player during a practice or game without first getting permission from the manager. If the manager is unavailable, obtain permission from a coach. Offering food and discussing the game is not an emergency.

Comments: Think of it as if your child were in school; once you turn your child over to the school, your access is limited so that the teacher can be effective. Conversations with a coach should be private and out of earshot of the players, the other coaches, and the spectators

Do not have contact with or distract any of the coaching staff before or during a practice or game unless it is an emergency. Please move side conversations with other parents away from the players and coaches.



Honor the rules of the game and our conduct rules steadfastly.

Be respectful when you disagree, particularly when others are not. Thank the coaches and umpires for their effort after the game.

Abide by all the rules of the league and the fields on which the games are played. If there are no rules posted, assume that they prohibit smoking and the consumption of alcohol and outside food.

Comment: Most organizations fund their field maintenance costs through their food concession. That is why we ask that you respect their policy not to bring in outside food (unless there is no food proper to eat).

Respect and Support our Responsibility under the Permits for Field and Gyms: Help make sure that the gyms, bathrooms, and fields are left clean, that the equipment is put away, that everyone is in the gym and not in the hallways or other areas of the facility, that, if requested, to help with letting people in and out, and so on. If security personnel is absent, please volunteer to sit security until one arrives.

Arm Management and Protection. Pitchers and catchers throw the ball more than any of the other positions. While it is a responsibility of the coaching staff to make sure players do not overthrow while at practices and in games, parents may not abdicate that responsibility. If a players' arm is feeling stressed, the parent must inform the coaching staff immediately. Refer to the Arm Management section herein for a fuller explanation.

Model the Basic Positive Coaching Tenets that Apply to Your Role as a Parent. Remember that "Youth sports is not adult entertainment." Take your role seriously:

Be a positive influence. Avoid negative comments about anyone involved in the game. Do not demonize the other team – support an intense but friendly attitude. The opposing team is not the enemy; it is made up of children like yours.

Be careful what you say in front of your child and the other players and parents. Talking behind the back of players and coaches to other parents or your own children is poor role modeling and is counterproductive to team unity and the authority of the coaching staff. Raise concerns in private and directly with the manager

Example: Shouting to your son the pitcher not to worry because the runs that were scored were "unearned" or saying to another parent "your son finally got a hit" are passive aggressive means for achieving the same negative result.



Be unconditionally supportive of your child and the rest of the team. Cheer for good plays made by both teams.

Keep your non-verbal reactions consistent with your positive verbal interactions – avoid sarcasm and inconsistent body language (head shaking, throwing hands in the air, and so on).

Support our goals that focus on the process and learning life lessons (effort over results, viewing mistakes as a means to improving, and learning to reset mentally and emotionally quickly and effectively)

Try to model our expectations (and the attendant life lessons) consistently.

Stay abreast with other Positive Coaching advice set forth in the Positive Coaching area of the organization's website.

Suggestions for interaction with your Child

Before each game reinforce the ideas that you are proud of him or her for participating, that he or she should try his or her best to get the most out of the experience, and not to worry about being nervous or making mistakes – that no one is perfect and that learning from mistakes are part of becoming a better player (errors are a normal part of the game – “E” is on the scoreboard in every major and minor league park).

Keep your child emotionally balanced using praise and being an objective listener that waits for the right moment to discuss the game and your child's performance. Resist the temptation of initiating a post-game analysis. Let that come naturally from your child. Ask don't tell (avoid trying to “fix” the situation), speak as equals using open-ended questions, and be an engaged listener using eye contact and head nods.

Please take digital pictures of the team and their play and submit them as we use them for the annual awards dinner booklet and our website.



COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR MANAGER AND US

Provide availability information when requested by the coaching staff and understand that plans of the coaching staff and the rest of the families on the team will be made based on your commitment. Changing availability due to non-emergency situations is inappropriate and unfair to the other players and parents because it can cause a team to have insufficient players or pitchers and, in the case of tournaments, cause parents to lose vacation time and a substantial amount of money. It is highly disrespectful to those families who honor these commitments and contrary to what are expecting from all the players.

Please respond promptly and completely to communications from the coaching staff.

Inform the coaching staff immediately:

- If there are any changes in availability (only unforeseen emergency situations are acceptable);
- If there are any important changes in your child's mental, physical or emotion condition; or
- If there are any family, school, or social situations worthy of note (such as the serious illness or death of a family member).

Resolving Issues:

When appropriate have your child try to resolve issues with the coach before intervening.

Issues you might have regarding the operation of the team and your child should be taken up with the manager in private - not before, during or after a practice or a game. Never confront the coach in an emotional state. Wait a day to give yourself time to cool off and then, if necessary, contact the coach in private, away from any team gathering, to calmly discuss the situation.

However, if the issue relates to your child's health (including mental stress), it should be raised with a member of the coaching staff immediately.

While your manager should be open to discuss all issues relating to your child, it is against our policies to engage in comparisons with other players.



If the issues are not resolved to your satisfaction, you should promptly contact the director. If you are not satisfied with the director's decision, raise the issue with the President of the organization. Do not wait until it is too late, help us resolve issues quickly. Please be mindful of how you phrase the issues and your responses. Passive aggressive comments and behavior are not effective means to resolving issues.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please pay your fees on time. Please be considerate of our limited resources, we are not staffed to chase receivables nor do we want to impose late fees. Distracting us to chase down fees takes us away from the more important work at hand – providing your children with the best possible youth sports experience.

Parents are required to pay the fee of non-parent coaches and all out of pocket expenses incurred by non-parent coaches.

Do not buy any equipment without first contacting the manager.

Comments: This especially applies to bats and catcher's equipment. Bat size and weight will be monitored by the coaching staff; certain colors will be required for equipment, etc. In addition, in many cases we can obtain the equipment at a discounted price.

There are no refunds if a player is removed from a team based on the failure of the player or his or her parent to abide by these Expectations and any of the relevant rules.



EXPECTATIONS FROM THE COACHING STAFF

Plan the use of players balancing development with both individual and team success.

Comment: Everyone will play. Not everyone will play the same or equal amount of time. That is the nature of travel baseball. The manager must balance development and success on the field. During the regular season the balance tilts towards development. In playoffs and tournaments the balance tilts toward success on the field. It is great that all the players want to play all the time, but that is not a reality in any team endeavor. It is a very difficult balance to attain and is never perfectly achieved. This is part of the life lessons they must learn. Coaches should communicate this to their players and stress that learning how to be a supportive team player is an important part of being a Bulldog.

Prepare and execute structured practices to teach and reinforce important skills, tactics and strategies.

Prepare game plans and lineups in advance and execute in accordance with overall goal to balance development with success.

Work as a unit to support the various functions of the coaching staff – maintaining an accurate scorebook, providing situational awareness, preparing the pitchers and batters for game entry, and so on.

Give all players the opportunity to play positions they want to play by allowing them to prove their skills in practices. The decision should be based on objective criteria approved by the director, such as throwing six of ten pitches as strikes in order to pitch in a game (for a 9 or 10 year old).

Apply the basic principles of positive coaching as endorsed by our organization, including rewarding effort, refilling the tank, and being consistently positive in the delivery of criticism. Be a positive adult role model to the players, the parents, the spectators, the opposition, the umpires, and the league and tournament officials.



Never put a player or coach in physical or emotional harm's way and follow our arm management guidelines.

Know the rules of the game and those particular to the league and tournaments in which the team is participating.

Know and enforce our Expectations from the Players and the Parents, and all other organization policies and rules.

Be available for private discussions with parents whether initiated by the coaches or the parents. Conversations should be at a mature adult level. Passive aggressive behavior, whether verbally given or through emails, are not appropriate. Coaches are never permitted to enter into conversations comparing one player with another.

If issues cannot be resolved in accordance with our rules and policies, the situation must be referred promptly to the director, either by the coach or the parent.



EXPECTATIONS FROM THE ORGANIZATION

To give guidance to the coaching staff to help them fulfill the player and parent expectations.

To objectively consider issues raised by coaches, players and parents in the context of these expectations and the organization's goals; and to resolve issues fairly and without retaliation for raising them.

To communicate further expectations and related comments and examples when appropriate.



ARM MANAGEMENT

Much has been written about arm damage and proper means for protecting youth baseball players' arms, and rightfully so. Arm protection is not just an issue for the coaches, but also for the players and the parents. It is not only an issue for pitchers, but also a consideration for all players, particularly catchers, shortstops and third basemen (especially when they get older and play on the larger diamonds). That is why we are addressing the topic separately, but awareness and responsible action is necessary from everyone involved: the organization, the coaches, the parents, and the players.

Leagues and tournaments struggle with pitching rules and policies, many of which are inconsistent. Some limit the number of pitches, some limit the number of innings, and some require a certain number of days rest between outings.

We do not subscribe to a fixed formula because there are many factors to consider, such as:

- size and strength,
- age and previous pitching experience,
- proven endurance,
- the quality of the actual mechanics,
- the types of pitches in the pitcher's arsenal,
- the number of actual pitches thrown recently and throughout the season,
- how well the pitcher is actually performing in the current game (laboring or throwing fluidly),
- preparedness (pre-season, between games, and pre-game),
- how often pitching lessons and team practices occur,
- specific evaluations and recommendations from the pitching coach,
- current physical health (including complaints about strain anywhere in the body), and
- participation in other sports activities (school teams, camps) at the same time, and so on.

Disclosing Possible Injury & Approved Response

Playing time is ultimately a judgment call of the coaching staff UNLESS discomfort or pain is specifically reported by the player or the parent or the coach sees something in the motion that might indicate a problem. It should be understood that arm problems can arise from problems in other areas of the body: a leg injury can distort the throwing motion and result in arm injury as well. At the same time it must also be understood



that some discomfort is normal in the process of building muscle strength and endurance.

Where there is a report of arm-related or any other physical discomfort or pain, there is no discretion: The coach must remove the player and not permit re-entry until the coach is satisfied that there is no problem and that the parent has unequivocally confirmed that the player is fit to play. This is true even if it is suspected that the complaint is really motivated by the game situation or growing lack of confidence.

Some players will not report discomfort or pain because they don't want to be removed from the game. That is short term thinking with long term consequences AND it is not being a team player to lose effectiveness due to discomfort or pain. Parents must insist that their player immediately tell the coach if there is any discomfort or pain.

Preventing Injury

Pitching lessons to Attain Proper Mechanics:

Learning the proper mechanics based on the players' body type and natural throwing motion is the first step to arm protection. No player is allowed to pitch for a Bulldog travel team unless he or she has had pitching lessons with an approved pitching coach. The purpose of this rule is to prevent injury and to teach pitchers how to hold runners on base without balking and to learn techniques to increase the ability to throw out runners (such as the slide step).

Training and Conditioning:

Throwing is a full body motion that starts with the legs and ends with the release of the ball from the hand. Training and conditioning must thereafter address the whole body and, to be effective, it must be gradual. Throwing many pitches is also a matter of building endurance. Since the coaches see the players for only a few hours a week, setting and monitoring a year round training and conditioning program is essential and rests primarily with the parents.

Warm Up and Cool Down Techniques

Pitchers must learn and apply warm up and cool down techniques to prepare themselves to pitch effectively and to avoid injury.

Monitor Non-Team Activities

Many players participate in other sports, on school baseball teams, in sports camps, and in pickup games in the neighborhood. Do not rely on those coaches or counselors or your child to monitor arm use. Communicate to our coach those activities and any such planned activities (such as when a school coach is



planning on pitching or catching your player in an upcoming game) so our coach can take that into account when making the lineup.

Pitchers who are also Catchers

When a player plays both positions, we advise our coaches to use caution and treat the work played as a catcher similar that of a pitcher.

While it is a responsibility of the coaching staff to make sure players do not overthrow, parents must not abdicate that responsibility.



PLAYER AND PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

I have read and understood these expectations and the arm management policy, discussed them with my parents and pledge to comply with them, and all other rules and policies communicated to me from the organization:

Player:

Signature
Printed Name: _____
Date: _____

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I have read and understood these expectations and the arm management policy, discussed them with my child and pledge to comply with them, and all other rules and policies communicated to me from the organization:

Parent:

Signature
Printed Name: _____
Date: _____

Parent:

Signature
Printed Name: _____
Date: _____