

# FORT VANCOUVER LITTLE LEAGUE

## COACHES HANDBOOK



In this handbook, we cover the “unwritten rules” of Fort Vancouver Little League (FVLL). This is an attempt to share everything we know, so that each one of us can be our best selves while serving our kids through the commonly taught rules of baseball.

# 2025

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## **Managing a Team in FVLL**

Welcome to Fort Vancouver Little League. If this is your first year coaching in FVLL, we hope this helps explain some of the things

We are a volunteer organization. We have decided to keep our player fees lower by mandating that everyone volunteers in some way. That means, each of your parents **MUST** volunteer, and thus you (as the manager) get to help them decide how they want to volunteer.

As a coach, the first expectation of you is to contact all your parents (by phone) and invite them to a **team meeting**.

### **The Team Meeting**

You can decide where to host the meeting, but you must communicate to parents that they are expected to volunteer in some way. The best way to do this is to use Appendix A (Page \_\_\_\_ ) and allow parents to sign up for how they will help the team. You may make your own sign up form in place of Appendix A, but the idea is this: These roles must be filled, so decide how you want to help.

#### -Candy distribution and collection

This parent goes to the Candy meeting, collects all the candy for those players who are selling candy, and then distributes the candy out to those families who are selling. They also collect the money from the team families, and then turn all the money to the league (Dave Wallace). No Candy returns. Can return beef jerkey

#### -End of year party organizer

#### -Snack Shack Liazon

4 persons (from families) must volunteer from your team to work in the snack shack during the season. The Snack Shack Liazon is in charge of communicating with Karen in the snack shack, and then with the other 3 parents who also will volunteer in the snack shack. This will be during a night when your team does not have a game, so this family member does not miss their players' game.

#### Snack Shack Parent 2

#### Snack Shack Parent 3

#### Snack Shack Parent 4

#### -Score Book

This parent is responsible for being the official book for the game, when the team is playing @ HOME (FVLL) and at away games, is responsible for taking book as a backup if the home team book is wrong.

-Game Snack organizer                      If you want to offer this up to a parent, (at T-ball and Coach Pitch, we recommend doing this, some Majors and Minors teams choose to do this as well, but is not required or recommended).

## Important Dates and Events

<b>Intro to Fort Vancouver Little League Coaching Clinic</b>	Feb 22 6-8pm
Tryouts (for 9-12 year olds) (Skills Assessment)	Feb 8
The Draft (for 9-12 year old Minors and Majors)	TBD (last week in Feb) in evening (2-3 hrs)
<b>Coaches Clinic: Coaching, the Basics</b>	Feb 29 6-8pm
First practices (after you have a team meeting)	tbd
Uniforms Info due to Heather!	March 3
Work Party (no practices until after 3pm on work party day)	March 1 9am-1pm
Work Party (no practices until after 3pm on work party day)	March 8
Candy Meeting	March 21 6-6:30
Little League Day at Bay	TBD
Games Begin	April 8
Picture Day	TBD
Opening Day	April 13
Opening Ceremonies	April 12
Memorial Day Weekend NO GAMES	May 24-27
All Stars Selection (for 9-12 yr olds, Minors Majors)	June 1 (TBD)
All Star practices start	June 5
Last Game	June 18
All Stars practices daily start	June
District All Stars	TBD
Little League Day at Mariners (2025)	June 1

# Important Links & Contacts

Fort Vancouver Little League <http://fortvancouverlittleleague.org/>

T-Ball Start Guide: <https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-quick-start-guide/>

RULES: <https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/> (Get a digital copy to have during games)

Mariners Little League Day <https://www.mlb.com/mariners/tickets/specials/little-league>

How to keep a scorebook <https://youtu.be/XtmtVHXQpD0>

Example of data collection for position tracking (email or call Erik if you would like explanation)  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SRseiALhAILmcu\\_p51wZD1Bh29iZgUMz38kRqWJZlcs/copy](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SRseiALhAILmcu_p51wZD1Bh29iZgUMz38kRqWJZlcs/copy)

Baseball Knowledge test (will be given at beginning of season at tryouts), can be given again at end of season to see overall if players knowledge of baseball grew

-9-10 yr olds Minors [\(link\)](#)

-11-12 yr olds Majors [\(link\)](#)

(feel free to make your own, fun, quizzes for kids on “rain out days” ....

[https://www.help4teaching.com/questions/Baseball/Grade\\_6](https://www.help4teaching.com/questions/Baseball/Grade_6)

We need something like this : (this is not FVLL, but is an example of a great 1-pager on basic LL rules)

<https://www.jcparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-Little-League-Baseball-League-Rules-Summary.pdf>

## Important Contacts

President: Dave Wallace

Umpire Coordinator James Barber

Safety Officer: Ben Malm

Snack Shack Coordinator: Farron Dowdy

# Practice and Game Expectations

For all teams with ages under 11, a parent must stay at practice at all times. No “drop & pickup”. Inform parents of this. This is a Little League requirement. It is about safety. It helps you (the coach) with having helpers and assistant coaches.

For Majors & Juniors (ages 11+) there is no requirement that each player has a parent who stays during practice.

For coaches

Plan for practice. Don't wing it. Develop a plan and make every practice consistent. Make 2 other parents help you with practice.

If you are unsure what to do, look at LINKS on page 5 so you can get some ideas.

Expect your players to show up on time.

Do not make players run if they are late. This is the parents' fault, not the kid. Talk to the parent if you want to get kids there on time. Parents will respond and get kids there on time.

Practice Infield and Outfield. Regularly.

For Players: Need a glove, hat, and bat/ helmet if they have them.

Do Infield / Outfield if you have time before games. (Majors and Minors) Coach pitch too if you can swing it.

Game Day : To be discussed

For the coach: Keep it simple.

Hitting: Keep the same batting lineup every game, but rotate who leads off, and then after they lead off, the next game they bat last. (this is for T-ball, Coach Pitch & Minors). Majors - it is up to you.

Write the lineup down on lineup cards, post them in the dugout in 2 different locations. Give the lineup card to

For your players: Keep it simple. Require players to be present 30 minutes prior to a game start.

**Tryouts (Skill Assessments)** Tryouts are for Minors (8- 10 yr old), Majors (11-12 yr olds), Jrs (if needed) & Seniors if needed.

**Purpose:** In Majors, coach requests will not be honored. Please tell parents & players that the skill assessment is a little league (international) requirement to ensure equal teams. We want players playing for new coaches & new teammates. Tryouts evaluate baseball fundamentals: running, throwing, catching, hitting. President furnishes a player list to all coaches (players names will be assigned letters A-Z, then AA, BB etc if +26 players in a division). Info: Name, Age. Kids will tryout (get skills assessed) in order they arrive at field.

Each player brings a hat & glove & athletic shoes. Optional: helmet & bat (league will furnish).

Minors coaches MUST conduct the Majors tryouts, and Majors coaches MUST conduct the minors tryouts. [These sheets are optional & useful](#) All coaches (including T-Ball and Coach Pitch) are highly recommended to help run the tryouts so the Minors and Majors coaches can evaluate the players.

**Schedule Order: Juniors, Majors, then Minors**

**8:30: Juniors (if need 2 teams)**

**9:30am - 11:00 Majors (sign in by 9:30)**

**11:30-1pm Minors (sign in by 11:30)**

**Format:** Kids shall arrive 30 minutes early before tryouts begin to sign-in. **Kids will stretch before entering the field. After stretching, they enter left field and play catch.** At beginning of tryout, first ⅓ of players go to infield. Approx 20 min later, next ⅓ of players go to infield, ect.

[Purchase these](#) for making tryouts run smooth (if lost from last year) [and these](#)

**LField** Running/Pitching rotation (pure data). 2 adults (or Jrs) needed: Record: time to run bases. Record # of pitches caught/ if pitcher knows basic pitching Y/N. Order of arrival to field. Start w/#10, go up, then 1-9 last. While playing catch, players take turns running bases around a 60' diamond laid in the grass (time recorded). Any player may run twice if he/she wants to get a better time, if time allows. After playing catch, players step up to the mound, and show their knowledge in pitching, if they choose to. They can choose to throw 3 pitches, or just step up to the mound. If they have no pitching knowledge, record so. The first ⅓ players will not do pitching station first. Once first ⅓ of players return to LField, they get timed and pitching assessed.

**Infield** first ⅓ of players go to infield. They shag balls, coaches assess their ability to catch ground balls or fly balls. First player steps up to Tee. Hits 3 balls off tee. Then picks up glove and heads to SS position (marked on grass with painters tape).

In groups of 5, starting with 1-5, players will be called over to the North field where they will have their fundamental skills tested.

4 players await with their helmets on in the dugout. Gloves and hats lined up on the field in front of them. Players will show their offense, then defense.

Player 1 heads out to the batters box. Player 1 yells out his number. All scoring coaches make sure they know who they are evaluating.

- Player will hit 3 balls off the tee. (must wear helmet).

Hat and glove sit behind him at home plate. After hitting 3 balls, batter swaps glove and hat for helmet, and now is ready.

- Player 1 takes the infield position between Home & first. (next batter comes out of the dugout and is ready to hit off tee when previous player is done showing defense)

- Player 1 accepts 3 ground balls, and throws to 1st base.

- Player 1 accepts 3 fly balls. When Player 1 is done, they move to outfield, and shag balls for the next 5 players. Player 2 is ready to bat. When player 5 bats, players 6-10 are called over and enter the dugout.



## **THE DRAFT**

**FVLL** will follow LL rules on the Draft. You will find these rules in the LL Handbook, but feel free to ask coaches who have been a part of the draft for details.

**Each player must try out in order to be assigned to a team.**

**The draft is more of an “evening out” of our players into equal teams.**

**<https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/player-selection-a-proved-draft-methods/>**

**NO technology is to be used during the draft to communicate with ANY PLAYER FAMILY or PARENT. PERIOD. The draft shall be kept secret. No telling families how their player was drafted, where the player was drafted, nor that a coach tried to get a player.**

**Players from one season HAVE NO PRIORITY to remain with a coach from year to year. Setting an expectation that they will, only results in disappointment and resentment for the coach and team a player ends up on if it is not with a players’ original expectation. If a player has a coach preference, that shall be submitted in writing when the player signs up, and if absent in the original sign-up notes, NO “THIS PLAYER WANTS TO PLAY FOR ME” shall be honored at the draft.**

## **Pre and Post Game Field Preparation**

### **Pre-Game Field Preparation:**

- Check field to determine if playable; especially if it's been raining that day
- Unlock home and visitor dugouts and under the score tower
- Uncover pitcher's mound
- If needed, add Turface to wet and muddy areas of field (no more than 3 bags)
  - If more than 3 bags needed, field is unplayable
  - Located in small door to the left of double-doors
- Chalk the field – base paths and batter's boxes
  - Located in small door to the left of double-doors
  - Batter's box template located in double-doors
- Put in bases
  - Located under the score tower
  - Put plugs in corner of dugout so easy to find after game
- Unlock score tower for score keeper/score board

### **Post-Game Field Preparation (if last game of the day on that field)**

- Remove bases
  - Store under score tower & Put plugs back in the holes in the field
- Rake the field
  - Rakes located under score tower
  - Rake up and down the base line (base to home plate) (Not side to side)
  - Rake dirt out of the grass (to mitigate a hump in the grass, next to the dirt)
- Cover the mound
- Clean out dugout (all garbage and equipment)
- Turn off all equipment in the score tower (if used); Lock up score tower
- Lock under score tower
  - Make sure all bases and rakes have been put away
- Check garbage cans and dump in dumpster if full
- Lock both dugouts

### **Post-Game Field Preparation (if game following yours)**

- Rake the field
  - Rakes located under score tower
  - Rake up and down the base line (not side to side)
- Clean out the dugout (remove all garbage and equipment)
- Check garbage cans and dump in dumpster if full

# Field Maintenance

## GAME DAY Pre-Game

- Give yourself an hour before the game.
  - Get a 2nd person to help do the chalk line
  - Assign kids to get the bases out on the field after you chalk the field.
    - There is a special shovel to get the dirt out of the accepting square hole
    - Save the base peg covers off to the side of your side of the field so you can easily replace them after the game
- NO PLAYERS go in the infield dirt until Infield/Outfield (or the start of the game) after it is chalked
- Your team plays catch in the outfield by your side of the field (at least 30 minutes prior to game time)
- Helmets and bats must be out for the umpire to check 20 minutes before game starts.

With 15 minutes to game time, Home Team takes Infield Outfield. This is the first time a player is to be on the mound or the infield dirt (baseball unspoken rule).

No Food In the dugout. Make a point to tell your parents to feed their kids on the way to the game, or after the game, but NOT at a game.

## Field Maintenance **AFTER GAME**

- The game is not over until the HOME Team gets the field back in order.
- Assign 3 kids to replace the plugs and return the bases to the ScoreTowers.
- Assign 3 other players to rake their positions on the infield
- Assign a Catcher and Pitcher to rake their positions
- Have other players get a broom and sweep out the dugout once empty.

FIELD MAINTENANCE: (in general) (show these things to players who dont know how)

Rake dirt out of the edge of the grass (not towards the grass). Rake the baseline 3' paths in the direction players run.

Mound: Fill in holes on the mound. Pull dirt up to top of mound, do not rake towards grass.

Our fields are our responsibility. We must mow our fields. Pick a time,

# Team Communication

FVLL has determined that each coach is to use Game Changer as a communication tool to families. We have many families with 2 -3 kids on multiple teams, and this way all communication is consistent for those families.

[www.GC.com](http://www.GC.com)

This is free.

Designate a parent (who is signed up to do the Scoreboard in your team meeting) to run this during the game. They will have fun, learn more about baseball, and it will build your team chemistry.

See Erik, Josh, or Rich for help setting it up.

## League Expectations (game day)

- Both teams take the field together
- Good sportsmanship
- No negative talk about opponents
- No throwing the bat or glove or etc.
- 

We all take care of our facility / dugout / field

Our fields are a place of pride for our kids. Please keep this in mind.

In T-Ball, Coach Pitch, and Minors (everything under 11 years old), parents/ family is EXPECTED to stay at the field during practices. PERIOD. This is not advisory, this is MANDATORY. Set this expectation with your families. This is not baby-sitting. Parents are to be at the field during practice. See Josh Day if you have questions about our insurance or this mandate from Little League of America in setting this expectation.

When the game is over, ALL PLAYERS grab a rake, and clean up the field. Do not leave this for the coach to do. Coaches, set this expectation ahead of time. Make it fun!

## **Work Parties**

These are mandatory, since we do not have maintenance from the city. WE (the coaches, the parents) are responsible for the fields.

Encourage your families to come help. It is mandatory for you, and we hope you can encourage your team families to come help, but the more hands the easier the work.

Bring your own shovel, wheel barrel, weed eater, pressure washer, rake, or whatever you want to bring. The league has many, but not enough for every person to use a league shovel or rake.

Other community members (students who need to do community service for school etc) are encouraged to come help as well. Older siblings or neighbors, or babysitters are HIGHLY encouraged to come help

“Many hands make light work”... and this day is a

## **Beginning of the year**

There are notes you might want to take, or ask seasoned coaches. They are happy to help.

A good idea is to ask your players, on day 1, what number they want (at Minors and older, T-ball and Coach pitch shall be given numbers without choice). This helps our ordering of jerseys later down the road] (as a 2nd preference, 3rd also, incase lots want the same number)

## **Pictures**

See Important Dates.

## **Candy Sales**

Designate a parent to be in charge of this. They must attend the Candy Sale meeting. Some players “buy out” and do not participate.

## **Dugout**

No parents (other than the designated Dugout volunteer (background check) may enter the dugout. No players may leave the dugout during the game \*except to go to the bathroom. No eating in the dugout. No players going to the stands to eat dinner or sit with family. Period.

## **Data Collection / Keeping Book**

Every year, Little League of America tries to pass a rule that mandates players rotate every inning, through all positions. Keep that in mind. It fails (not by much) each year. We believe this is because this is how we will continue to fan the love of the game in kids at a young age.

Do your best to move players around every inning. In T-ball, this may be just rotating through 1->2, 2->3, etc by the inning. In Coach Pitch, this means if a player is safe to play 1st base, get every kid the opportunity to play all positions.

Here is an example of a data collection strategy.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SRseiALhAILmcu\\_p51wZD1Bh29iZgUMz38kRqWJZlcs/copy](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SRseiALhAILmcu_p51wZD1Bh29iZgUMz38kRqWJZlcs/copy)

If you do not know how to manage a book, please watch the video or get a parent who does know. <https://youtu.be/XtmtVHXQpD0> You as the manager (Minors and Majors) are responsible for an accurate book

There are specific rules for Majors and Minors players with mandatory play time. See rule book. (for Minors & Coach Pitch, implement a strategy where everyone gets to play all positions (with exception of catching and pitching if it is not safe, and if player can not throw 45').

## **All Star Selection**

No All Star selection at T-Ball or Coach pitch. (under 8 year old)

Minors (8-10 yr old) and Majors (11-12 yr old) All Star Selection is a decision by the coaches of that league. This is not a vote by players. This is done by June 1. Good book keeping gives you data to back your selection to the All Star Team. The league shall determine the best 12 players in the league to be on the all star team for that age group. This is not often an even split of equal players from each team. Team is determined by All Star Coaches, determined by League

President. There is no guarantee the team is made up evenly of each team.

## TEEM MEETING Parent Sign Up

GameChanger \_\_\_\_\_

Score Book \_\_\_\_\_

Music / Score Board (not necessary at T-Ball) \_\_\_\_\_

Candy \_\_\_\_\_

Snack Shack (need 4)      Liazon \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

End of year celebration \_\_\_\_\_

*(need background check for all below)*

Help at practices(2)    1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

Extra \_\_\_\_\_

Extra 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Help during game (2)    1) \_\_\_\_\_ (1st base coach)

2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Dugout)

Mow field    1) \_\_\_\_\_

“    2) \_\_\_\_\_



## Coaching Clinic 2.0: Skills / The Practice / The Game

### During a game:

-Come to the field with your lineup & player positions ready. Give lineup to your assistant & dugout parent, so they have it with them. You will need a copy of your lineup for the umpire and for the opposing coach (Minors and up). Your lineup card will go to your parent who is “keeping book” (the official scorebook), the umpire, and the opposing coach, and your pocket for reference.

-Lay out your positions for the game before you get to the field

-some find it easier to use software (like <http://www.cranstonsports.com/game-sheet/> ) to help you print a neat copy to print and post in the dugout for players to see. Print 3 copies of this. Post two in the dugout, keep one one your own.

-No food in dugout. Communicate this with players and family: Eat before or after the game. Games can be long. Plan ahead

-Dont “Over coach” during a game. Let the kids play.

-Remember, a negative comment needs 6 positive comments to undo the negative effects of a negative comment that is not given in a constructive way. So keep the “coaching” to practices, and attempt to keep the language positive during the game.

-Ask the umpire for Time Out if you want to go talk to your infield or pitcher. Do not Yell at them from the dugout repeatedly.

Agenda: 6:00-6:15 Introductions again. Explain format of meeting. We have 4 rotations. Pitching, Hitting, and Fielding (infield, then outfield). Each group of coaches will start at one station, and then after 20 minutes, will rotate to the next rotation. We put coaches in like groups (t-ball, coach pitch, minors, majors).

Links to the handouts provided are here:

[Hitting](#) (pg 19)

Pitching

Outfield (pg 20)

[Hitting \(Link to other page\)](#)

# Outfield

## Catching a Fly Ball

Centerfield is always the general

Call it (mine, mine, mine) – once is not enough  
Best throwing angle should take it when two players are at the ball  
If it's not yours, you are the backup

### Tracking

Eyes should always be on the ball  
Don't turn your back if possible  
All verbal communication  
Don't look at your teammates  
Chest facing ball whenever possible  
Come through the ball  
Ball should be caught on the throwing shoulder whenever possible  
Throwing hand

## Drills

### Bare Handed Catch (make it a competition)

Tee Ball  
Whiffle Balls and maybe tennis balls  
Start small/short and work up

Coach Pitch

Tennis Balls  
Start short and work up

Minors  
Tennis Balls  
Use tennis racket

Majors  
Tennis Balls

### Find the Fence

- Outfield
- Left & Right
- Works for 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and catcher as well

- Hips & Footwork

- o Ready position

- § Drop steps

- Left
      - Right
      - No false steps

- § Side to side (gaps)

- § Zig Zag + over the shoulder catch (with partner)

- Relays

- o Use several players at short distances

- § Footwork

- § Move body to catch ball on glove side

- § Catch and throw motion

## **Fielding Ground Balls in the Outfield**

- On balls without a throw, moving the feet to get in front of the ball, catching it with two hands just like an infielder.
- On balls with a throw, players will want to be more aggressive in their movement towards the ball and where the throw is headed and possibly even fielding the ball off to the side.

Resources:

<https://baseballtrainingworld.com/the-top-11-outfield-drills-for-youth-baseball-players/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUIM8NqNETg>

# Coaches Clinic 2024 Schedule:

6pm-6:15 Introductions (Dave Wallis)

6:15-6:20 Safety Officer Ben Malm

6:20-6:30 Snack Shack Duties (Farron, Kristen & April)

6:30-8pm Stations (15 min station, 3 min break in between)

## Stations

1. Umpiring: (FVLL UIC James Barber) \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes:

2. Hitting (Skyview coach Trevor Mueller) \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes:

3. Running a practice (FVLL coach Erik ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes:

4. Throwing/ Pitching (FV Head coach Cody Farris) \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes:

5. Fielding / Defense (Bay coach Cody Cook) \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: