

SYB – COACHES HANDBOOK

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THE SHELBY YOUTH BASEBALL & SOFTBALL ORGANIZATION:

Shelby Youth Baseball & Softball (SYB) is a volunteer organization. Since its inception, SYB has relied on its able-bodied volunteers. A group of parent volunteers, from the south side of La Crosse, teamed up with parents and board members from the Town of Shelby to form Shelby Youth Baseball. It has undergone many changes and has grown and evolved to an entity that now involves kids from all over the surrounding community. Over the past 30+ years, this organization, along with some strong community support and the ever-standing guidance of the Town of Shelby, has allowed SYB teams to compete with some of the best teams nationally and even internationally. Please take pride in your program and represent it well while in competition. Remember this organization was put together for the kids.

Athletics play a vital role in the education of young people. While participating in athletics, young people develop their bodies, learn physical and mental discipline, learn to operate as a member of a team, acquire self-motivation and self-esteem, and learn to win and lose with dignity. These attributes will be vital to their success in life beyond school.

What we should bear in mind at all times is that only a few students will go on to become professional or Olympic athletes. A greater number will be able to earn scholarships to colleges or universities because of their athletic achievements – but even that number is small compared to the vast number of students who participate in sports in our schools. Therefore, coaches must focus on instilling good values and building character through sports opportunities.

Every coach must take the absolute and unequivocal stance that “Sports are for kids,” and all coaching actions should stem from this stance.

Author Unknown

Volunteers: Thank you for your interest in coaching. Shelby Youth Baseball & Softball needs volunteers. The SYB Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers. Volunteers raise all SYB funds, staff all Committees, make all phone calls and perform this work on a daily basis. Please consider joining a SYB committee or volunteering your services in another capacity to help the program.

Committees: SYB has many different committees to do the work within the organization. Everything - the Registration process thru the SYB Grounds Maintenance; from organizing Practice Schedules to ordering Uniforms; from running the Concessions to organizing the Booster book - needs the people who spend the time to get SYB to be the smooth running organization you have come to expect.

Many who are now heading up a Committee did not think they had the know-how to be committee's chair a year or two ago. There are plenty of knowledgeable people within the organization – however, more are needed each year. Each fall, the program naturally suffers a large turnover resulting from the children who turn 15. If you are lucky enough to find the time to work within the organization, SYB guarantees you will make many lifelong friends.

SYB Board of Directors: Shelby Youth Baseball & Softball is overseen by a group of four individuals that make up its Board of Directors. They are elected volunteers who go above and beyond the duty of serving on committees (see SYB Board of Directors on the attachment entitled SYB Coaches Contact List for the list of names and phone numbers). There is a board meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month to discuss the issues facing the organization. All are welcome to attend these meetings. Committee chairs give reports, and this provides the opportunity to ask questions about the organization and its policies, procedures and guidelines. These meetings vary in location but are very casual and friendly in nature. Voting rights can be gained relatively simply - by regular attendance.

Age-Group Coordinators: The SYB Board assigns individuals to be a liaison between the coaches and the Board during the season – the Age-Group Coordinators. Age-Group Coordinators often are coaches themselves and should be your first line of contact to answer questions or if you have any concerns. Age-group coordinators typically set-up the in-house practice and game schedules. They also work along side SYB Tournament Chair, they help set-up and run the SYB tournament that involves their age group. See the attachment named SYB Coaches Contact List for the name and phone number of your age-group coordinator.

Team Parent: SYB has traditionally allowed the Head Coach to assign a Team Parent to share in the organizational duties of running a team. The Team Parent can be placed in charge of many things to ease the time constraints on the coaching staff. Whether it is making the phone calls for a re-scheduled practice, or arranging post-game gatherings, or calling motels for a block of rooms for away tournaments, Team Parents can make your coaching experience much easier. Filling your Concession Stand obligations is another thank-less job that can and should be performed by a Team Parent. The Head Coach is responsible for recruiting a Team Parent.

Fund Raising: Over the years, SYB has done a variety of different activities to raise funds for the program. The raffle tickets and SYB Fun Night go hand-in-hand to raise the bulk of the money generated each year. Over the years, SYB Chicken Q and some other promotions have generated significant revenue for the organization. Once again, only through the efforts of volunteers and donated goods, do these promotions work. Many hours are spent in requesting and gathering the donated goods to be raffled off on SYB Fun Night. The Booster Book - which contains team photos and has been a part of the program for the past 20 years - is on the verge of being eliminated because of the lack of volunteers who can put it together each year. The booster book used to be a significant contributor to the revenue of the program. Donating a couple hours a week (to make phone calls, etc.) can result in significant improvements to the health of our organization.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST DETAIL:

SYB Board Meetings: There is a board meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month to discuss the issues facing the organization. These meeting typically begin around 7:00pm (sometimes later during the season). All are welcome to attend these meetings. Committee chairs give reports, and this provides the opportunity to ask questions about the organization and its policies, procedures and guidelines. These meetings vary in location but are very casual and friendly in nature. Voting rights can be gained by regular attendance.

Registration: SYB allows players to register with the program from March to May. Due to Uniform Ordering and League Scheduling requirements, the registration period must be closed in early May. Please remind players to sign-up early and to get the word out to friends and other potential participants. Registration is conducted at Central High School on selected dates in March or players can register at the Shelby Town Hall during regular business hours. Do not allow kids to practice if not registered with SYB.

Field Cleanup Day: SYB designates a day or weekend for getting the fields ready to play. Many times this involves various building or maintenance projects as well. Volunteers are greatly appreciated and the work will vary. Rumor has it this is the unofficial opening day for the icehouse.

Coaches Clinic: Currently conducted as part of a players' clinic put on by the Central High School Baseball Program. In the future, plan on this to become a staple of the program and a prerequisite for coaching in SYB. All persons requesting to coach must complete and submit a request to coach form to the executive board of SYB (typically done on Registration Day). The executive board of SYB will give the final approval for the head coach of all teams.

Tryout Warm-ups: Currently held within a week prior to the actual SYB tryouts. This is simply used as an opportunity for the kids to get out on the fields prior to the tryouts. In the future, SYB is looking at turning this into a full-fledged baseball clinic. The clinic will become a prerequisite for playing on any traveling team within SYB. Volunteers are welcome as the kids are grouped by age and put through similar drills as what will be done during the Tryouts.

Tryouts: SYB conducts tryouts for its traveling teams. By definition, the traveling teams will be allowed to attend out-of-town tournaments and will play league games in cities in the surrounding area. These teams also get priority over in-house teams in regards to uniforms, equipments and practice scheduling on SYB baseball fields. The tryouts are performed over a 2-day period (Saturday & Sunday) and attendance is mandatory. The SYB Board may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis and may also require players to conduct an individual tryout on a date prior to the scheduled tryouts.

As you might expect, many volunteers and their un-biased opinions are needed during this time. Currently, parents / coaches are not allowed to be a "grader" within the age group their child is participating in. A Tryout – Age Group Coordinator, four Grading Captains, and nine Graders are needed for each age group. Players are graded and receive a score during four separate activities: infield, outfield, hitting, and pitching. There are two sessions scheduled for the 10 & under on Saturday, and three sessions scheduled for the 12 & under and 14 & under tryouts on Saturday & Sunday.

SYB also utilizes “non-grading” volunteers to be Group Leaders (3 per age group) and supervise each group while they are waiting to perform at each grading station. The Group Leader will also carry the grading sheets between stations and be responsible for communication between the players, parents and Grading Captains. This is a perfect position for those parents who want to watch their son/daughter tryout but do not want take part in the physical activity or grading. Unlike the graders, the Group Leaders can be involved with the same group as their son/daughter. Many other volunteers are needed to make the weekend go smoothly:

- Hit ground balls to the infielders,
- Receive throws at first base from infielders,
- Feed balls into the pitching machine,
- Feed balls into a pitching machine that throws fly balls,
- Field balls thrown to a base by outfielders,
- Catcher for the pitching station.

Many times these “non-grading” positions are filled by siblings or past SYB players and coaches (SYB Alumni). Please make yourself available for future tryout weekends.

Traveling Team Meetings: SYB schedules two meetings shortly after the Tryouts have completed. The first (early) meeting is for determining who will coach the traveling teams. No players are allowed at the early meeting. SYB Guidelines should be used to determine those coaches and are written as follows:

The age group coordinator and a member of the executive board will be present at the meeting. Potential coaches will discuss how the coaching responsibilities for their particular teams should be designated. It is preferable that a head coach be in place for all teams. If circumstances dictate, a co-head coach situation will exist. The roles of these head coaches should also be defined. Following the discussion between coaches, if a resolution can be agreed upon, the age group coordinator will report the results of the discussion to the executive board for final approval.

If no resolution can be reached, the executive board will appoint the head coach for a team. This decision will be based on the following:

1. Results of the discussion between potential coaches.
2. Information from the applications to coach.
3. Past histories of coaching and participation in SYB (positive or negative)
4. If a difficult decision concerning appointment of coaches needs to be made, the executive board may elect to interview the potential coaches as a group or individually. If a member of the executive board or the age group coordinator is a candidate to coach, that person will not participate in the decision making process for that particular team. The decision of the executive board will be final.

After the coaches have been determined, there will be a second meeting where the coaches will introduce themselves to the players/parents for a brief discussion of expectations for the year. At this time coaches should make known their coaching philosophy and how they intend to handle playing time throughout the season. The coaches should give the players/parents the choice to “back-out” from playing on a traveling team - if the time constraints or demands are determined to be unacceptable. Coaches should get each parent/guardian to sign their child’s name on the official team roster and verify they have the correct phone numbers. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit a Team Parent.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Get the names and phone number from each parent. Many times parents will neglect to write the other parent’s name on the registration form (especially when separated or divorced). Not only does this help the coach learn names quicker, this is particularly important when the kid may be staying at

different homes during the course of the week. As a coach, you have every right to ask for the parenting arrangements in divorce situations so you (or the Team Parent) are able to contact that child as quickly as possible. This is also beneficial in emergency situations.

All SYB Coaches Meeting: Before the teams and coaches can be determined, it is necessary to get all the coaches together for the purpose of discussing league rules and the coaching guidelines. SYB feels it is extremely important that each coach understand the underlying philosophy of Shelby Youth Baseball and Softball – giving the kids an opportunity to play and have fun. Realize that when traveling abroad, one “bad apple” can ruin the whole bunch. SYB has developed a reputation in the area for having “disruptive” coaches and we must do everything in our power to remove that stigma. Once the guidelines and rules have been discussed, coaches will break into age groups and the Age-Group Coordinator will consider coaching applications. Based on the number of kids available to the draft, the amount of teams will be agreed upon and coaches will be determined. Members of the SYB Executive Board will be present and will oversee all decisions made.

In-House Leagues & “C” Team Draft: SYB is dedicated to letting all of the program’s participants to join a team within their age group. A meeting will be held after the traveling teams and potential coaches have been determined, to divide up the remainder of the players, per age group. The 14 & under and 12 & under players will be placed on a team and play in the Independent League at the “C” level. For these teams, entering tournaments other than the SYB Pre-Stars is a possibility, but not recommended. Coaches, keep in mind many parents request their children to play in the “C” league to avoid the time and travel demands of playing tournament baseball.

SYB has two **10 & Under In-House** leagues which are set up to allow players 7-10 years old to play in competition with other SYB teams. The **American League** is a “Coach-Pitch” league for the younger or first-time kids that allow them to develop basic skills of batting and fielding. The **National League** is “Kid-Pitch” which gives the players the opportunity to pitch to and bat against kids in the same age bracket. There are no crossover games between these leagues.

To make matters as fair as possible, the coaches, to determine who is on each team, conduct a draft of the players. The draft is performed in small groups per age division. SYB Guidelines dictate the rules for the draft, but these rules should be agreed upon before the actual draft begins. Variables such as ride sharing, same-age siblings, and amount of coaches allowed per team (son or daughter automatically on that team) should be discussed and agreed upon prior to distributing any player cards.

Before leaving the meeting, the coaches in conjunction with the age-group coordinator should determine the sponsor of each team. It is also highly recommended the coaches exchange names & phone numbers for future reference. Upon receiving a “full” team, the coach should begin calling players ASAP to let the players & parents know what team they are on.

Important Note: Do NOT pick-up non-registered players to fill vacancies on your roster. Proper procedure dictates adding players only AFTER they have completed all registration procedures - including paying registration fees and signing the insurance waiver by a parent or guardian. Most often, players you have “recruited” can be added to your team after proper procedure is followed. However, age-group coordinators reserve the right to place an individual on a different team if the situation warrants doing so.

Suggestions are welcome and highly encouraged at this meeting. If completed, practice schedules will be distributed at this time. Also the Pre-Season Saturday Team Photo, Scrimmage, and Concession Stand schedules as well as the entire schedules for League Games and the Concession Stand for the season, may be distributed as well. In the near future, attendance at this meeting will be mandatory. Getting a list of the names

and phone numbers of your coaching fraternity may prove beneficial down the road – for example, rescheduling a game, switching a practice time, or scheduling a scrimmage.

Uniform & Equipment Handout / Turn-in: The uniforms and equipment are stored in the shed next to the Shelby Town Hall. There is designated handout and turn-in dates. Do NOT miss these dates. If you cannot make it, assign an assistant coach or the Team Parent to pick-up/drop-off the equipment and uniforms. Please inventory your uniforms before handing them out and make sure the uniforms are cleaned before they get turned back in. Uniforms are expensive! Some of the cost is covered in Sponsorship fees, but re-ordering because of careless use will come directly out of the program's pocket. Likewise, make an effort to fix the equipment before trying to get an exchange. Never throw away a uniform or equipment without first asking a respective Uniform or Equipment Committee member. Please contact a uniform committee member ASAP when you detect you will need a special size jersey – as they may take a couple of weeks when placing an order.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do NOT contact your team's Sponsor to ask for equipment, uniforms, or more money. The Uniform & Sponsor Chair of SYB has contacted sponsors and outlined all financial obligations of sponsors in advance. Coaches should not contact sponsors to seek additional funds for tournaments, trophies, apparel etc. If additional items are wanted, these items need to be paid for by the coach or team parents. Encourage thank you notes or support of the sponsors business by team players and parents. It is also a good idea to send the sponsor a schedule for the season's activities (League games, tournaments, team party or picnic).

Team/Player Photo Forms Handout: This varies by year but the team/player photo forms must be distributed to the players (parents) prior to Pre-Season Saturday. This should be done at the end of a practice by the team parent. It is important to make sure all players receive a form to give them the opportunity to get their photo taken in there uniform. The forms must be returned on Pre-Season Saturday - along with payment – before the player can get his/her photo taken. Please notify parents to have their child show up for the photos even if they will not be purchasing any. Team & individual player photos will be scheduled prior to the playing of the scrimmage game on Pre-Season Saturday. It is important for the program to be represented in its team photos and many times these photos are given to Sponsors to be displayed prominently at their business. In this respect, a poor turnout can reflect poorly on the program in the eyes of the sponsor. Additional forms are usually available in or around the area where the photos are being taken.

Pre-Season Saturday: SYB has an annual opening day or Pre-Season Saturday where all available SYB teams play another SYB team in a one-hour scrimmage. Prior to the scrimmage, the team and individual players will have an opportunity to get their photos taken. The photos will be available for purchase and also will be printed in the annual SYB Booster Book. Please stress that all players and coaches attend (even if they will not be purchasing any pictures), as the other team members and parents appreciate having a “full” team picture.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The scrimmage games are “short” and therefore free substitution is highly recommended. For example, do not wait until the 3rd inning to get someone into the game – you may not get to the third inning before your time expires. Do not worry about maintaining a proper batting order, etc. All substitution rules should be waved for the purpose of making sure all team members receive playing time during this scrimmage.

Uniform pant exchange is also held during the morning - at which time size exchanges can be made with members of the uniform committee. This day serves as a

“dress rehearsal” for playing games and is highly useful to a coach if run properly. Stress to the kids to remember to bring their hats! Extra SYB hats may or may not be available at this time. Head coaches remember to bring the uniform bin along with the extra hats given out on Uniform Handout day.

This is also the grand opening day for the Concession stand. Each team will be required to staff the Concession stand for about an hour. Typically 3-4 people can provide adequate service for the masses.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Head Coaches please make your Team Parent aware of the times that your team needs to staff the Concession stand ASAP so they can get parent/older sibling volunteers notified prior to Pre-Season Saturday.

Umpires Clinic: SYB highly recommends its coaches to attend this clinic as many rules and procedures are discussed at this clinic. This clinic is conducted by registered WIAA umpires and is free of charge. Keep in mind the clinic is provided on a volunteer basis and the young, aspiring umpires are highly impressionable, so keep snide comments out of the forefront. This is no time to vent your dislike of umpires.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Registration fees for SYB are among the lowest in the nation - for an organization this large. This is partly due to the use of our older players as umpires for the younger levels. Try your best to do nothing to discourage the younger umpires, but at the same time make sure they are aware of the correct rules and correct procedures to be followed in each situation. Do not “make a scene” during a play, rather pull the umpire aside and give him/her your opinion of how you may have handled the situation. Remember, there are a number of “right” ways to handle a game situation, don’t be fooled into thinking your way is the only way. Proving a young umpire wrong in front of his peers may have just eliminated that umpire from ever working in our program again.

SYB Fun Night: Each year, right before the season begins, SYB has its annual fundraiser called simply - Fun Night. Over the years, SYB Fun Night has turned into the main source of income for the program as well as a great opportunity to celebrate and meet the main ingredient of the program – the people. Many valuable and collectable items are raffled and/or auctioned off during the course of the night. Food & Refreshments are free and games are available as entertainment for the kids. The best part about the evening is meeting the people who have put all this together over the years and hearing the stories about all the went into building Shelby Youth Baseball and Softball. This should also be a time to thank those people and the sponsors who have graciously donated money to the program. Last but not least, it’s a chance for the kids to get together with their friends from past year’s teams and also to get to know their new teammates a little better before getting on the field to do battle with them. It is a night to meet with people and have fun – which is essentially what the program is all about – while showing support for the program. Make sure you actively encourage all your players and their parents/siblings to come out and share in the festivities that is Shelby Youth Baseball & Softball Fun Night.

Opening Day for League Play: SYB is currently affiliated with the Independent League. This league consists of teams made up of players that reside throughout the coulee region. The Independent League has its own rules and regulations that have been agreed upon by its voting members. Like all the other organizations, SYB has only one vote and very limited decision making capability within the Independent League. The Independent League has recently undergone a leadership change and SYB is currently evaluating its status as a member of the League. Many I.L. programs refuse to field traveling teams in the “A” division of the league. This has severely hampered the amount of “quality” opponents available for game scheduling with our “A” teams. In the near future, SYB may have to affiliate itself with another League (Little League, Pony League, etc.) or may have to split up the talent and startup its own league at the 12 &

under and 14 & under levels (as is being done currently with the 10 & under In-House league). Game Schedules are put together by the Independent League and distributed in May.

Concessions: Each SYB team will be assigned certain days and times that they will need to staff the concession stand. Kids are allowed to perform some of the window sales duties needed, but parental supervision is needed most. Depending on the amount of teams in your age level, each team will be required to perform concession stand duty 2-5 times including a weekend tournament or two. This is a mandatory duty – you may be penalized in future years if your duties are not fulfilled. Please take this responsibility seriously, as the concession stand is the primary form of income for the program during the baseball season. Lost sales due to lack of staffing hurts the entire program and should be easily avoided. Likewise, carry-ins (other than water cooler/jugs for games) should be frowned upon. Please keep this in mind at away tournaments also. The easiest way to support a program is to buy from the concession stand. We have a brand new concession stand that should last many years if we spend a small amount of time – when it's our turn to take care of it. Concession times can be swapped between teams.

SYB Invitational Tournaments: SYB runs four invitational tournaments as a way to give the kids tournament experience and to raise money for the program. One tournament is put on for each age level in baseball, and one all-inclusive tournament in run by SYB for Girls Softball. Tournament schedules will be distributed to all coaches who have teams participating typically two weeks prior to the tournament. At this time, Concession Stand staffing schedules will be distributed as well. Please make sure the Team Parent receives this information in a timely manner – so he/she can contact volunteers to fulfill your team's obligations. Due to the nature of tournaments, unfortunately, there will be times when your team needs to staff the Concession Stand while the team is playing. Please understand it is vitally important to the program to fulfill the concession duties (see Concessions).

As a coach and representative of SYB, you should also be aware that our program is on display to visiting teams. Of the field, push aside the competitive urges and be as helpful as possible to your competition and respect their questions and help them find resolutions or direct them to the SYB Tournament Coordinator for assistance. Do NOT intentionally mislead your competition to gain benefit on the playing field. This reflects poorly on the program and ruins the efforts of many volunteers in the process. If you don't know the answer, don't pretend you do – find someone who can provide the correct answer – especially if it regards a rules interpretation.

Other things to keep in mind at this time include; discourage any carry-ins (other than water) during our tournaments, **no dogs are allowed on SYB Fields**, make sure everyone (yourself included) adheres to the parking rules. There is no parking in the Bus Stop area. Each team involved in the tournament will have field cleanup duty either Saturday or Sunday night.

Stars of Tomorrow Tournaments: Each year the SYB fields host the Stars of Tomorrow Tournaments. A percentage of the revenue garnered by the Concessions is paid to SYB in return for the use of the fields. It is important that all players, coaches and fans display their best behavior during this time. Many of these same teams may come back for future SYB tournaments or invite SYB teams to their own invitational tournaments. Also, the Stars of Tomorrow attracts many people from the surrounding community, including potential sponsors and future players. Many of the Stars of Tomorrow Board members are former members of SYB. Please show respect for their tournament and try to help out in any way you can.

SYB Chicken Q: On occasion SYB will hold a Chicken Q or a similar function to help raise money for program. The location and date will vary. Please make yourself available to help and inform the Team Parent of the dates and times when volunteer help is needed. As you can imagine, more help is needed in preparation for this event than during the actual event itself. Also inform your team of the need to buy Chicken Q tickets and support the program.

SYB Golf Outing, Field & Concessions Cleanup Day: At the end of each year the fields and Concession Stand must be cleaned up in preparation for the winter months of non-use. Among other things, the batting cage nets, the L-screens and pitching screens and other miscellaneous items are packed up and stored away. The excess food from the Concession Stand must be cleared out and all food and drink making machines cleaned and stored away. To kick off this day, SYB sponsors a golf outing in the morning for anyone interested. Typically much of the excess meat products are consumed during clean-up day. This is also the unofficial closing day for the icehouse.

SYB Tryout Committee Meeting: After the season is over, the SYB Tryout Committee will have a meeting to discuss Tryouts from the previous year and entertain ideas on how the process should be changed for the following year. Any changes the committee agrees on will then be presented during the next SYB Board meeting. If the board and all SYB members present agree to the changes, they can be then voted in for the Tryout process the next year. If you have any questions or concerns about the Tryout process, this is the meeting you need to attend to voice your opinion. This is pretty much the only time the Tryout process can be changed.

SYB Christmas Party: SYB sponsors a Christmas party each year as a way to wrap-up the previous year. The Christmas party is held in place of the monthly SYB Board Meeting. It is the time of the year to thank those involved and reflect on the year that passed. Please consider attending to show your support for the program and those who put so much time and effort into maintaining the program. Reservations should be made in advance and can be made while at the November SYB Board meeting or by contacting the President of SYB directly.

CONDUCTING PRACTICES:

Practice Schedule: A volunteer(s) from SYB is in charge of setting up the practice schedule for all teams in the SYB program. With 30-40 teams each year, obviously this is not an easy task. Currently, there are six fields: State Road East and West, Hillview AAL, Hillview Isola, Hillview ATT fields, and Mormon Coulee park that are available to the program. When assigning fields, the scheduler gives priority as follows:

- 1) Teams that play on that night of the week:
 - a. 1st Priority on Monday & Wednesday – All Softball & 10&Under baseball
 - b. 1st Priority on Tuesday & Thursday - 12&Under baseball & 14&Under baseball
- 2) Team Level
 - a. 1st Priority - "A" Teams
 - b. 2nd Priority - "B" Teams
 - c. 3rd Priority - "C" Teams and In-House Teams
- 3) Special Reservations made and approved by SYB Board

Contact the Age-Group Coordinator to request early/late practice times or to ask for a specific field. As a general rule, the 4:30pm practice times and fields like Mormon Coulee may be more convenient to some than others. If you would like to switch a practice time, you can call your Age-Coordinator and see if there are any openings.

Many times others are just as eager to take your practice time as you are to get rid of it. Another option is to try calling other coaches - if you attended and got a list of names/numbers at one of the coaches meetings prior.

Practice on non-SYB Site: If you choose to practice at a non-SYB site, be sure to get permission from an authority for that site. SYB cannot authorize practices at non-SYB facilities. Therefore, the liability is on the head coach if a problem arises or there is any damage/destruction to private or public property. Also be aware that you are assuming the risks associated with having a child or onlooker injured during your practice. Also, please respect private property. If someone objects to you practicing there, it would be best to leave and try somewhere else. Clean up the facility after you have finished the practice – do not allow kids to leave wrappers, empty water bottles, etc. Don't think you can "sneak" onto a field – all the kids have "Shelby" written on their hats – including the one on your own head.

Practice on a SYB field: In addition to the equipment each team receives on Equipment Day, SYB has equipment that is stored at its affiliated fields. Some of this equipment (rakes, shovels, drags, pitching machines, etc.) is stored in the shed behind the batting cages at the Hillview fields. Please do not leave the shed open and unattended as there are many potentially dangerous items hanging on the walls. Unsupervised children should not be allowed inside the shed at any time.

The **bases** and **umpire's equipment** are stored in small metal lockboxes that are next to each SYB field. The combination for these lockboxes is on the attachment entitled *SYB Coaches Responsibility Contact & Reference List*. If you take something out of the lockboxes, make sure you return it at the end of your practice. However, if there is a team practicing immediately after you, you can ask that team's coach if he/she would like the bases left out for their practice. Remind that coach to put all equipment away when he is finished. As a general rule, the early practice team sets up the field; the late practice team puts it away. There is also a reel of rope that can be used to measure the correct distances for the bases. See the *SYB Coaches Responsibility Contact & Reference List* for the color-coded list of distances per age group.

The **batting cages** are there for anyone to use. Typically, the teams practicing on the fields next to the cage have rights to them. The team practicing on the middle field (Isola) has priority to the North batting cage. The team practicing on the South field (ATT) has priority to the South batting cage. Otherwise, it can be utilized on a "First come – First served" basis. Please be kind and hustle through your drills when inside the cages – especially if there are many waiting to get inside.

SYB also has two **pitching machines** that can be best used inside the cages. Please understand that utilizing the pitching machines requires a fair amount of setup time and effort. It is not recommended to put real baseballs / softballs into the pitching machine. The pitching machine must be put away immediately upon the conclusion of use. Never allow the kids to use either machine unsupervised.

When finished with the cage, please fill in the holes in the batter's box as best you can. This will eliminate the huge holes that form each year on the right side of the batter's box. Two minutes of cleanup time will go a long way towards keeping the batting cage hitter friendly.

Important Safety Note: Do not allow players or children to stand near the netting when hitting in the cage. Also, do not allow anyone to stand or sit in, or in back of either end of the cage. The net is there to catch the majority of the balls; it does not stop them all. Children should not be allowed to pitch to each other with "real" baseballs in the cage unless properly equipped with helmets and a glove. It would be a shame if SYB would have to remove the cages because of liability expenses being too high as a result of some avoidable accident.

SYB takes pride in its fields. They are probably the best kept fields in the area due to the many hours both Shelby Town Hall personnel and SYB volunteers spend

grooming them each year. Before, during and after practicing on these fields, it is important that you follow a couple of easy steps – that we promise will save many hours later on.

- 1) Before practice, make sure the players warm up in the outfield.
 - a. Prevents the infield from getting chopped up before practice
 - b. Keeps the players on an even level (nobody is throwing from the side of the pitcher's mound, etc.).
 - c. The players are not tempted to throw across each other to a base (or from on top the pitcher's mound).
 - d. Prevents balls from being thrown near the dugout or home plate area (where people may not be paying attention)
 - e. Reduces the wear and tear on the balls (not getting chewed up by the rocks on the infield)
- 2) During practice, try to keep the players in small groups.
 - a. Prevents the players from getting bored and less likely to gather and get distracted by "other" things.
 - b. Keeps them more active & more focused if they are actively participating.
 - c. Better utilizes the practice time. Should give them more reps if done properly.
 - d. Easier to teach a small group than a large one.
 - e. More opportunity for one-on-one discussion & teaching.
 - f. Allows capability to specialize to the individual players skill level or position. For example, create a group of catcher's – or potential catchers – and they can work on catching drills only.
 - g. Gives the assistant coaches more responsibility and makes them feel more involved.
 - h. Utilizes the whole field (Example: one group in the outfield, one group on the infield, one group in the batting cage).
 - i. Separate the Trouble-Makers (need I say more?)
- 3) After practice, fill in holes.
 - a. Allow some time for the players to ask questions.
 - b. Allow some time for the assistant coaches to talk.
 - c. Allow some time to discuss what will happen the next time the team meets.
 - d. Make it a habit to fill in the holes in the batter's box and in front of the pitching rubber.
 - e. If a rake is available, rake the areas around the bases and any other places that received heavy traffic. **Note:** Never rake the dirt into the grass. However, be careful not to create a "lip" at the edge of the grass and dirt. Discard in the trash any large rocks or sticks you may encounter. They can become even more hazardous if you toss them in the grass or the outfield.
 - f. The players should put the equipment away. This gives them a sense of responsibility and makes them more likely to not leave it lying around.
 - g. As part of your conditioning, make the players "sweep the field" for baseballs. Inventory your balls before practice and make sure you end up with the same amount after practice. Baseballs themselves are probably one of the largest expenses to the program. (Example, each lost baseball is one lap around the field – all balls being found, reduces the conditioning by one).
 - h. Clean up the trash. This should happen regardless of where you are. Do NOT leave a mess. Do not ruin it for future SYB players by having us not be allowed at the facilities because of something that could be done in a manner of minutes.

The SYB Concession Stand **Restrooms** can be used during practice time. However, this should be kept to a minimum. There is a key in the storage shed for the restrooms. If you open them, please remember to lock them up again before leaving. It is best to NOT rely on other coaches to do so – as we all have a lot on our minds at the completion of a practice. Like the shed, it is probably not a good idea to leave it open - as there is no way you can monitor what is happening on the other side of the building while conducting a practice. If you are the last team to leave at night, make sure the restrooms are locked (and there is nobody inside!)

Last, but certainly not least, don't get caught unprepared for an **injury**. SYB is discussing the possibility of providing first aid kits to each team, but at the time of this writing, has not been done. The main things you should have on hand at each practice are ice, and the insurance waivers (that were signed by the parents at the time of Registration). Only the worst of injuries will need the waiver, but those are also the ones that typically need the fastest actions. The ice should take care of just about everything else.

Practicing a little preventive maintenance should keep the majority of accidents from happening. The following are some general rules of thumb for having injury-free baseball practices:

- 1) Never allow a player to catch or warm up a pitcher without a protective mask on.
- 2) Make sure all (male) players are wearing a protective cup at all times.
- 3) Do not allow bats to be swung in close quarters with other players. Teach your players to never swing a bat without first looking around – even if in a designated area such as an on-deck circle or batter's box.
- 4) Do not allow young children to be inside the field of play while balls are being thrown, pitched, hit, or bunted. For their safety, if enough are available, keep a helmet on children not participating in the practice. You never know where a foul ball, errant throw is going to land.
- 5) Allow plenty of water breaks during practices – especially early in the season and if the temperature is over 80°. Rotate your catchers when it is hot – if they are wearing all the equipment.
- 6) Teach your players to not throw the ball to someone who they have not made eye contact with. Throwing the ball to someone who is not looking is probably the leading cause of injury in youth baseball & softball. Some coaches have taken this one step further and demand that the players call each others name when before throwing the ball. Showing an open glove, by the recipient, can also be an indication of when to throw the ball. Common sense is the best approach and unfortunately, it has to be taught to everyone at some point in his or her life.
- 7) Another potential problem unique to the SYB fields are the little rocks and pebbles that gather in the dugout. Warn your players to never run directly into the dugout, as many players soon find out that those little rocks can be awfully slippery when they are on top of concrete. At times, this is also true of the area behind the backstop at the Hillview fields.
- 8) Batting cage safety (mentioned above).
- 9) Warm up in the Outfield (also mentioned above).

In summary, keeping the practice drills as short as possible, in as small of groups as possible, helps keep the kids attention. Boredom activities, such as digging in the sand (especially at the lower levels) should be vigorously discouraged – as that is a potential accident waiting to happen. If you see this happening, it is an indication that the child does not understand the game. Try to teach them something or someone to fix their attention on (a coach, base runner, or pitcher, etc) to help prevent this from happening. Although it is tempting and is almost a yearly baseball ritual - Do NOT make fun of the child in front of his peers – this will lead to further withdrawal and make the situation worse. A list of common baseball practice drills with a brief description / instruction on how each drill should be performed is attached to the end of these guidelines. Remember that there is nothing more boring to a young baseball player than watching someone else hit and shagging balls for hours at a time. Avoid this activity if at all possible – or reduce the group sizes and therefore this will reduce the time spent wasted by this activity.

GAME-DAY MANAGEMENT:

LEAGUE GAMES: To the kids, Game Days are the main event. For coaches, the game is where you want everything to fall into place. The last thing you need to have happen is to show up for the game and the field isn't ready. Why aren't the bases on the field? Where are the umpires? Where's the other team? Are we at the right field? Don't let it happen to you. The following are some general Game day procedures that have been passed down over the years within the SYB program.

For the "early" game (5:30pm) during the week, the **Home team is in charge of putting out the bases**. As was mentioned earlier, the bases are stored in the lockboxes next to each SYB field. There is also a color-coded rope for measuring the base lengths (see the *C&R List* for the combination and color-codes). The pitching rubbers should already be in place – you just have to make sure you are using the correct one. For the correct distances, see the *Rules* section pertaining to your age group. Also make sure all screens, hoses, and any other grounds equipment is put safely out of the field of play (behind a fence preferably). Please get there early if it is your night to set up the field.

It is VERY important to **start the games on time**. The league rules state you cannot begin a new inning 5 minutes prior to the starting time of the second game. Currently, the league mandates games to start at 5:30pm and 7:00pm. Therefore, for the early game, no new inning can be started on or after 6:55pm. There should be no exceptions – including injury timeouts – to this rule. The purpose of this rule is to prevent the "late" game from playing the last inning at dusk or in darkness. At no time should games be finished when there is less than adequate light – no game is ever that important to risk a serious injury to a child. Use common sense when it is getting dark, use a new ball if that helps. The same ball could be used as the "game ball" for the next game if only used for a couple of batters.

Have **two good balls on hand for use during the game**. Valuable time is wasted every a player leaves the field to chase a foul ball, or you have to wait to get a foul ball returned. As a head coach, give the umpire a new ball at the start of the game and keep another "good" ball in your pocket, to throw in to keep the game moving. Get your ball back at the next dead ball if the other one is returned. This will prevent you from "donating" balls to the umpires (i.e. forgetting you gave them another one and only getting one back at the end of the game).

If you encounter **rain** before, after, or during a game, be prepared to use multiple balls. Heavy balls can ruin bats, arms, and worse yet – become slippery. Slippery balls can be extremely dangerous. Some bases become extremely slippery in wet weather. Also, if the grass is wet, the potential for injury increases. Slipping is not a good thing in a baseball game. Use common sense when determining whether or not to play through rain.

Important Note: Lightning should immediately postpone a game. As a head coach, you and the umpires are assuming the responsibility for each child participating in the game. You are liable. Each year too many youth baseball players suffer serious injury or even death because of the weather. If the game is THAT important, you should be able to get everyone back together to resume playing at a later date. If not, then it is certainly not worth losing life or risking a season ending injury to one of the players.

Warm up the potential pitchers between innings or while your team is up to bat. It is a good idea to have an assistant coach or parent do the catching. If you must have another player do it, make certain they are wearing a protective cup and protective mask – at minimum. Teach your players to always throw "away from the crowd" so as to not hit anyone with a wild pitch or errant throw. This will minimize the amount of "game time" wasted getting a player ready to pitch. Teach your pitchers and catchers to **only take 3-5 pitches (maximum of 7) to warm up** between innings.

Instruct your players to **run on and off the field** at the end of each inning – even when it is hot out. This is mandatory in the majority of high school and college programs – so they might as well get used to it now. Teach the first baseman and center fielder to immediately put a ball in their glove when they come back into the dugout after playing defense. This will eliminate the common “digging for a baseball” between innings. A little hustle and some smart planning can go a long way when trying to complete a game within the time limit.

You can take this one step further and assign this responsibility to one or more of your players that is not in the game – to have a ball to give to each the center fielder and 1st Baseman when they return from playing in the field. This person could also be responsible for playing catch with the outfielder nearest the dugout – to allow more warm up throws between innings by the outfielders. Before this substitute returns to the dugout, he/she can collect the ball from the center fielder and the first baseman.

Prior to the start of the game, try to **designate a warm up catcher** to be available between innings. This should be a coach but can be a player with protective mask. Also designate a **Courtesy runner** for your catcher – a player who is not in the batting order. The courtesy runner should be available to run any time the catcher becomes a base runner. The League rules state this is **mandatory with two outs**. You can also have a courtesy runner for the pitcher. Typically this is only necessary for the pitcher if he needs to warm up before pitching the following inning. The player who runs for the catcher or pitcher can be changed during the game – but it is against WIAA rules to allow the same player to run for both the pitcher and the catcher – especially in the same inning. Although it is fairly easy to do, try not to abuse this rule.

For example, pulling your fastest player out of the lineup just to insert him as a courtesy runner for your slowest player, who is on second base (who all-of-a-sudden is going to pitch the next inning) during the last inning of a tie game.

Along with base coaches, designate a **Bench Coach** for each game. Any time you put 12 teen-aged (or younger) kids in a small area (i.e. the Dugout), there is a good possibility someone will start goofing off – but only if you allow it to happen. The bench coach should not allow any horseplay during games. Direct the excess energy toward the encouragement of teammates. Prohibit the following from the Dugout area:

- Negative or degrading chants towards the other team.
- Degrading talk between teammates or toward a member of the opposing team.
- Cussing, racial comments or taunting.
- Complaining toward umpires or coaches.
- Throwing of equipment.
- Food or Soda Pop (Exceptions: Water, Sports drinks, sunflower seeds.)
- Rough play or wrestling.
- Non-team members including: friends, parents (not registered as a coach or scorekeeper), little brothers/sisters (no more than one bat boy/girl please), or any other relatives. Try to keep other kids from gathering around the outside of the dugout, as this is highly distracting also.

The dugout should also be kept clear of clutter as much as possible. Try to arrange the helmets, bats and catcher's equipment where they are easily accessible - but not blocking the entrance/exit or the vision of those in the dugout. Use common sense with this, do not put the helmets in an area where the players could get hit by a practice swing or a practice throw by an infielder. Keep the players' bat bags behind/under the bench and away from walking or sitting areas. Be considerate, do not smoke in the dugout and tell your assistant coaches to refrain from smoking or using tobacco around the players. Alcohol use is prohibited at SYB fields during games.

If you have a **batboy/batgirl**, instruct them to never run onto the field while the ball is “live.” Make them stand behind the fence while the game is being played. Make them wear a helmet at all times. No players can be on the field of play without a glove or helmet. If you are using a player as a base coach, National Federation of Baseball / Softball rules state he/she must wear a helmet. Instruct your players to leave their

helmet on until they are in the dugout or off the field of play. Violations of any safety rule such as this can result in an ejection from a contest – and yes, it has happened.

Umpires are a vital part of the game. Most of the SYB umpires are former players or coaches. SYB also relies on many of the 13 & 14 year-olds that are still playing in the program, to umpire the lower-level games. Umpires are in short supply – do not deplete their ranks further by being a jerk or expecting too much. Understand that many of the SYB umpires are learning on the job - so go easy on them. Do not “show-up” the umpires or prove your baseball knowledge at their expense in the middle of the field. If possible, let mistakes slide and call the umpire(s) aside between innings and let them know how you would have handled the previous situation. Explanations are always better than sarcasm. The umpires are instructed to report poor behavior by a player, fan, or coach to their boss - the Umpiring Committee chair. If reported as causing problems repeatedly, the behavior will be evaluated by a SYB Board member and may result in the loss of coaching privileges for the remainder of the year. Don't let it get to that point. Keep in mind that most of the umpires are kids, and they make mistakes. Yelling at them only makes the situation worse.

IMPORTANT NOTE: National Federation of Baseball & Softball Rules state a coach cannot argue balls and strikes. This can and will result in an ejection if the umpire's first warning is ignored.

This is probably the quickest and easiest way for others to lose respect for our program if they see or hear one of our SYB coaches out there arguing in the middle of the field and causing everybody grief. It is a well-know fact that many veteran umpires will put the “squeeze” on your pitchers strike zone, if you give them grief. If you must argue, state your point quickly and drop it. Most veteran umpires will respond positively to your “feedback” and may even come over to “talk about it” between innings – if you state your point with class. Contrary to what people say, most umpires are out there trying to be as fair as possible, and actually rely on coaches feedback to help them call the game properly. More often than not, this really is the case with a veteran umpire who does not normally do many games at the lower (youth) age-levels.

SYB is an organization for the kids and how the coach distributes the **playing time** obviously plays a big role in keeping kids interested in staying in the program. Everybody also wants to play. Yet, everyone on the team wants to win. As a coach, you must be up front with how much emphasis you place on winning from the opening day of the season. The old adage – “You can't please everybody” applies here, but you should be able to satisfying the majority. Determine how you are going to distribute the playing time at the beginning of season, and then stick to it. Parents, players and the rest of your coaches and associates will be more understanding of the difficult times if you stick to the original plan. Once you change your plan, everyone will expect you to change it for their benefit, and that is where you will run into the most problems.

The SYB program has always emphasized the need to give all the kids a chance to play. This should be done without question at the lower age-levels and in the in-house and “C” leagues. Within these divisions, equal playing time should be strived for and no player should ever be left on the bench for the entire game. SYB In-house rules insist on batting all players (not just the nine on defense) during league games. This however, remains optional only for the reason that a player may not want to bat in the game – and therefore, should not be forced to. This situation is rare, but should be respected by the coaches and dealt with as part of coaching the team. At lower age levels, the batting order should be rotated so as to not having the same player “leading off” every game. Every team will have those one or two players that really respond to a certain spot in the batting order – this will ensure you the chance to find those players.

Similarly, how much playing time each player receives in the field will be highly scrutinized. In the American League for the SYB 10 & Under baseball, the rules allow for more than three outfielders – provided the fielders stay in the outfield at the time of the pitch. Do not allow more than 5 infielders (including the pitcher), as this sometimes becomes too difficult for the batters to reach base. See the Line-up Cards and

worksheets attached to this handout for help with determining your lineup. In the same way, the 10 & Under National allows a fourth outfielder in league games. With the option of batting the whole team from the start, this allows the coach to utilize “free substitution” and makes it much easier to make playing time more equal between players. Try to rotate defensive positions with players of similar talent as well.

IMPORTANT NOTES: Be careful not to fall into the trap of setting up kids to fail. Use your best judgment in allowing a weaker player the chance to play a defensive position that may be hazardous. For example, don't put a player - who you are afraid to throw the ball too hard to in practice – at 1st Base. Another player could easily (unintentionally) injure that player by throwing the ball too hard to them. This is no laughing matter and the program depends on you to make a sound judgment in regards to these matters. Telling the player “because I don't want you to get hurt” is a perfectly good and legitimate reason to deny a request to play a skill position.

Another thing to avoid is allowing a weaker player to catch or pitch without a backup plan. Giving them the opportunity is NOT a bad thing. However, not having a get-out-of-the-jam-quick backup plan will be. Try to utilize practice or scrimmage time for experimenting with position changes - before trying it in the game.

Never put up with “begging” – all the future coaches of that player thank you.

One of the biggest responsibilities of the Head Coach of a youth baseball/softball team is taking care of young pitching arms. Although, the tendency is to try and go for the win, the head coach must keep the welfare of his players as the top priority. We all want to win and **Pitching limits** seem to be a big hindrance in the pursuit of that goal. Please remember – the pitching limits are to protect the kids and keep them from hurting their arms at an early stage in their life. Too many times, kids that hurt their arms throwing too many pitches do not recover from this. They can bounce back from broken bones a lot easier than “tired” or torn muscles in their arms. Take this responsibility seriously. Do not ruin a kid's “career” by burning up his arm. **Do not allow kids ages 12 & under kids to throw curveballs.** Proper technique is more mental than physical. The majority of the 13 and 14 year-old kids don't have the discipline needed to stop throwing if something “doesn't feel right ” – let alone a 12, 11, or 10 year-old player. All it takes is one “bad twist” of the elbow to do damage. Teach your pitchers how to throw change-ups for their second pitch. Also, 4-seam, 2-seam, 1-seam, and split-fingered (need a big hand) fastballs are a much more “arm-friendly” alternative and can be much more deceiving to a hitter. If you want to challenge your pitchers, teach them how to throw to a location and change speeds. Having command of location is much more effective pitching tool at any level and should be what youth pitchers strive for – including throwing strikes.

TOURNAMENTS: With a lot of hard work and a history of good sportsmanship, SYB is now capable of providing every player the excitement that is associated with playing in a tournament. Tournament play is a special privilege and should be treated as such. Tournament play brings out the competitiveness in all of us. Therefore, as the Head coach, it is your responsibility – more than ever – to make sure everyone associated with the team behaves in a respectable manner. **Sportsmanship should be emphasized from the moment the tournament begins.** All future SYB players and coaches are depending on you to display the SYB values and give everyone around a positive impression of the program.

The **Shelby Youth Baseball and Softball Tournaments** are a source of great pride within the organization. Every year over a hundred different teams will take part in SYB Tournaments. Each year the tournament depends on hundreds of volunteers to help make them run smoothly. Umpires, Scorekeepers, and Concession workers are just some of the people the SYB Tournament Committee must manage. Age-Group Coordinators, Grounds Crew members, Coaches and Team Parents must also be on hand and available to help during these multiple day events. Coaches and the Team Parent for each team must recruit the players and parents of their respective teams to fill many of the above mentioned positions. **Concession duty and Field Cleanup** are two duties each participating team has during a SYB tournament weekend. There are No Exceptions.

SYB has a Tournament Committee who assigns a Coordinator for each SYB Tournament. The Tournament Committee Chair is listed on the *SYB Contact & Reference List Attachment*. If you have any questions or concerns about an upcoming tournament, contact the Tournament Committee or your Age-Group Coordinator. All SYB Head coaches are responsible for knowing the COMPLETE set of rules for any SYB Tournament they are involved in. All rules for the SYB Tournaments are attachments to this handbook as well. Depending on the age-level of the team, these rules may or may not be the same rules you have been using during League play. Please pay close attention to time limit rules and tiebreaker rules. In many instances these are unique to the tournament being played. As a Head coach, be sure to have the number for the person to contact in case of rain or forfeit. In most cases, the team should receive the tournament schedule at least 2 weeks in advance of the first game.

The Tournament Committee also takes care of scheduling all upcoming **Away tournaments** attended by the Traveling Teams. In most cases, the head coach should receive a packet of materials including:

- Game schedules (by pool or bracket)
- Contact Name and Phone number (Sometimes they have a central tournament phone or Cell phone to call in case of emergency or rain)
- Maps or directions to the hosting city and fields (including a map of the field layout – if multiple fields or a field complex are used)
- Game admittance or parking fees. If there is an admission fee (not often), players and a limited # of coaches typically can get in free – parents, siblings, and friends usually have a choice to either pay a fee for one day or the whole tournament.
- Set of Rules specific to that tournament (with a reference to a State or National set of rules for covering the rest of the situations)
- List of hotels & motels in the area with accommodations (if includes a pool, Rec. room, wet bar, etc.)
- List of restaurants, malls, or other notable establishments.

This packet is typically sent to the SYB Tournament Committee (who sent in the entry fee/request) and must be picked up by arrangement - either at the Shelby fields, Town Hall, or committee member's residence. Do not put this off, as sometimes the tournament officials require the Head coach to verify their entry by a certain date. Read through the materials ASAP after receiving them.

Once again, Sportsmanship is a must when traveling to a tournament. Some tournaments SYB teams have attended annually for many years. Typically, we only

attend those tournaments that received good reviews from the coaches and parents. Please show respect for all tournament officials, umpires, opposing coaches, and any tournament workers whom you may encounter. Please try to support the tournament by buying at the concession stand and not having carry-ins other than water or sport drinks for the players. Refrain from alcohol before or during any competition that day. Please advise the parents who have made the trip to do likewise. If you stay at a motel or visit any of the local establishments, like it or not, you will be identified with SYB so be on your best behavior for the sake of future teams.

As a Head coach, the responsibilities on the road seem endless. Utilize the assistant coaches and recruit the parents to help with setting up rules and scheduling meeting places/times. Off the field, make sure you set clear meeting places and times before and after games. Setting a curfew at night for motel stays – is a must! This should include a time to get them out of the pool, another for getting them out of the hallways, and a third for getting them into their rooms. The majority of parents will thank you for this. Allow time for pre-game breakfasts and post-game meals when planning team-meetings. Each player should have a parent or guardian who is responsible for that child's behavior. The head coach is not a baby-sitter. Make sure the parent or guardian is aware of this before you ever leave for the tournament. Attached to this handbook is a *Checklist for Away Tournaments*, which SYB recommends each Head Coach reviewing in advance of departing for a Tournament.

A final point to be made about youth tournaments – they are designed in part to allow each player on a team a chance to play. They pack a lot of innings in a short period of time. Prepare your tournament game plan with an emphasis on pitching rotation and player rotation. All youth tournaments include pitching limits. However, some also go so far as to not allow a pitcher to pitch in back-to-back games. Know the rules, ignorance will get you in trouble with regard to pitching limits – as there is typically no bending of the rules allowed. If it is hot, good sense tells you to rotate your catchers (make sure you have more than one). Also, take into consideration that the kids will get mentally tired. If involved in “pool” play, try to substitute often in the early games to help keep all the kids into the game. Please your substitutes often so you won't be so reluctant to play them in the close games.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If free substitution is not allowed in a championship game, plan for an injury. Do not put all subs in the first couple innings, as the team will be forced to play with 8 players - if someone gets injured later on in the game. Re-entry rules only allow for players to go back in the same spot in the batting order - for the same person they had originally substituted in for. Odds are the injured player will be someone who was not substituted for (Murphy's Law). Only leave one player on the bench for this reason and be sure you let them know why. This player should be congratulated and praised for being a team player (unless he/she pouts all game about it). This player can also participate by being the courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about sports is that they are there to give us an opportunity to have fun. As a coach, SYB will make you personally responsible for allowing each and every child involved the opportunity to have fun. Please take this responsibility seriously – our children are depending upon it.

Every coach must take the absolute and unequivocal stance that “Sports are for kids,” and all coaching actions should stem from this stance.

Author Unknown

Checklist for Away Tournaments:

Make your motel reservations ASAP

- Make Team Parent responsible for getting a block of rooms – early
 - Each player's parent or guardian is responsible for reserving a room
 - Check-in time: _____
- Motel Name: _____
Phone #: _____
Check-out time: _____

Call Tournament Contact Person

- Name: _____
- Cell Phone: _____
- Home Phone: _____
- 1st Game time: _____
- Field/Location: _____
- Verify Directions to Motel
- Verify Directions to Field or Field Complex
- Bring Map of City/State (If necessary)

Read the tournament rules

- Bat limits (differential, barrel diameter, length, etc.)
- Base lengths (almost always different when playing away from La Crosse)
- Leadoff rules (Leaves hand, crosses plate, etc.)
- Pitching distance (To the pitching rubber)
- Substitution rules (Re-entry, bat everyone, etc.)
- Tiebreakers (Least Runs allowed, most runs scored, etc.)
- Age cutoff date (SYB is August 1st)
- Other equipment regulations (catcher's throat guard, helmets, etc.)
- Pitching limits (Innings allowed per day/tournament, what constitutes an "inning")

Bring a Complete Roster with the full names & uniform number for each player

- Roster already has been sent by SYB Tournament Committee member, don't assume the right person got it
- If someone asks you for this, always get the name of the person before giving any information out about your players

Bring the Player's Birth Certificates

- Before you depart (Do this at the start of the season), check to make sure they are all authentic copies
- If someone asks you for them, always get the name of the person before giving any information out about your players

Bring the signed Insurance Waiver for each player

- If the player's parent is not coming with, make sure you have a number to contact in case of an emergency

Bring Extra Game balls

- Some times they don't include this with the rules. You may end up buying your own baseballs.

Don't forget the team's equipment

- Catcher's Gear / Balls / Helmets - Sometimes this gets "lost" when packing for the trip (Bring an extra uniform, hat, etc.)

Pre-game activities

- Playing catch (Flip, Pepper, etc.)
- Getting in some Practice Swings (Hitting whiffle balls, Live BP, etc.)
- Taking infield / outfield (Develop a routine - the team should do this in practice as well)
- Line-up Card / Scorebook

Post-game meeting

- Discuss game - things to work on, point out things that were done well
- Next game (opponent, where, when to arrive, actual game time)

Write down List of Parents who are driving and what players are in what cars (carpooling)

- In case of change of plans, rain, car trouble, etc. (Cell Phone #'s)

SYB Coaches Responsibility Contact & Reference (C&R) List:

SYB Executive Board of Directors: (posted on www.shelbyball.org)

President:	Phone:
Vice-Pres:	Phone:
Secretary:	Phone:
Treasurer:	Phone:

SYB Committee Chairs: (posted on www.shelbyball.org)

Uniform Chair:	Phone:
Equipment Chair:	Phone:

SYB Age-Group Coordinator: (posted on www.shelbyball.org)

Name:	Phone:
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SYB Reference List:

Lockbox Combo:	(Ask Age Group Coordinator)						
Restroom Key:	In silver base boxes between fields, near Concession Stand Last one off the field locks up the Restrooms!						
Bases Rope (In silver base boxes) Note: Distance measured from <u>back</u> of home plate to <u>back</u> of 1 st base or 3 rd base. Regulation bases are contained inside the 90ft diamond.							
Age Group:	SB ALL	BB10 ALL	BB12 C	BB12 A	BB14 C	BB14 B	BB14 A
Base Distance:	60'	60'	65'	75'	75'	80'	90'
Color Code:	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Blue	Brown

SYB COACHES RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
01 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – January
02 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – February
03 / /	7:00PM	Central High	SYB Registration Meeting
03 / /	10:00AM	Central High	SYB Registration Meeting
03 / /	7:00PM	Central High	SYB Registration Meeting
03 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – March
03 / /	8:00AM	Hillview Fields	SYB Field Cleanup Day
03 / /	8:00AM	Hillview Fields	SYB Field Cleanup Day
03 / /	1:00PM	Central High	SYB Coaches Clinic
04 / /	1:00PM	Hillview Fields	SYB Tryouts – Boys Warm-up
04 / /	SAT-SUN	Central High	SYB Tryouts – Boys Baseball
04 / /	6:30PM	Central High	SYB Traveling Team Meetings
04 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – April
04 / /	1:00PM	Hillview Fields	SYB Tryouts – Girls Warm-up
04 / /		Hillview Fields	SYB Tryouts – Girls Softball
04 / /	7:00PM	Central High	SYB Upper Team Meeting – Girls
05 / /	8:30AM	Central High	SYB In-House/ “C” Team Draft
05 / /	8:30AM	Central High	SYB Umpire Clinic
05 / /	9:00AM	Shelby Town Hall – Shed	SYB Uniform & Equipment Handout
05 / /	9:00AM	Shelby Town Hall – Shed	SYB Team/Player Photo Forms
05 / /	9:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – May
05 / /	8:00AM	Hillview Fields	Pre-Season Saturday
05 / /	5:00PM	All Star Lanes	SYB Fun Night
06 / /	SAT-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	Boys Club Tournaments
06 / /		Hillview Fields & Others	Begin League Play
06 / /	9:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – June
06 / /	SAT-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	SYB Tournament (Girls Softball)
06 / /	FRI-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	Stars of Tomorrow (Girls Softball)
07 / /	FRI-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	SYB Pre-Stars (Boys 14 & Under)
07 / /	FRI-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	Stars of Tomorrow (Boys Baseball)
07 / /	9:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – July
07 / /	SAT-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	SYB Pre-Stars (Boys 12 & Under)
/ /			
07 / /	FRI-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	Stars of Tomorrow (Boys Baseball)
07 / /	WEEK	Hillview Fields & Others	SYB Tourney (Boys 10 & Under - American)
08 / /	SAT-SUN	Hillview Fields & Others	SYB Tourney (Boys 10 & Under - Invitational)
08 / /	7:00PM	Hillview Fields (Icehouse)	SYB Coaches Meeting (Yearend)
08 / /	9:00AM	Shelby Town Hall – Shed	Uniform & Equipment Turn-in
08 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – August
09 / /			SYB Golf / Field / Concessions Cleanup
09 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – Nominations
10 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting – Election Day
/ /			Tryout Committee Meeting
11 / /	7:00PM	Shelby Town Hall	SYB Board Meeting
12 / /	7-9:00PM	Sponsor Restaurant?	SYB Christmas Party

