



**2019
TRAVEL
BASEBALL
PARENT MANUAL**

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2019 Travel Baseball Season! This is an important document about the upcoming season. Please take the time to read it carefully. Our organization is committed to the principles of Positive Coaching Alliance and against a “win-at-all-cost” mentality. A Positive Coach wants to win, but has a second goal that is even more important – to use the sports experience to help young people learn “life lessons” and positive character traits that will help them be successful throughout their lives. Help us promote the three PCA principles which have the power to “transform youth sports so that sports can transform youth.” The three principles are:

1. **Redefining “Winner”**
2. **Filling the Emotional Tank**
3. **Honoring the Game**

REDEFINING “WINNER”

In professional sports (which is entertainment), there is only one goal – to have the most points at the end of a contest. However, in youth sports (which is education), there is a second goal; to produce young people who will be winners in life. To help our children get the most out of competitive sports, we need to redefine what it means to be a “winner.” Winners are people who:

- Make maximum effort.
- Continue to learn and improve.
- Refuse to let mistakes (or fear of making mistakes) stop them.

This is called a Mastery Orientation. PCA says that the Tree of Mastery is an ELM Tree where ELM stands for Effort, Learning, and rebounding from Mistakes. If our athletes keep these things in mind, they will develop habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. There is an added benefit. Athletes who are coached with a Mastery Orientation tend to have reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence. And when athletes feel less anxiety, they are more likely to have fun playing their sport and do better!

FILLING THE EMOTIONAL TANK

Research shows that the home team wins about 60% of the time because of the emotional support a team receives when it plays in front of its own fans. Like gas tanks in cars, athletes have “Emotional Tanks” that need to be filled to do their best. There will be times when you need to correct and criticize. Research has shown that a “Magic Ratio” of 5:1 (praise to criticism) is ideal.

HONORING THE GAME

Honoring the Game gets to the ROOTS of positive play, where ROOTS stands for respect for

- **Rules:** We don’t bend the rules to win.
- **Opponents:** A worthy opponent is a gift that forces us to play to our highest potential.

- **Officials:** We treat officials with respect even when we disagree.
- **Teammates:** We never do anything that would embarrass our team on or off the field.
- **Self:** We live up to our own standards, regardless of what others do.

“Q & A” TO PREPARE FOR THE SEASON?

1. What to wear and bring to practice

- A. Glove
- B. Cleats (recommended)
- C. Bat
- D. Cup (recommended)
- E. Water
- F. Dress weather appropriate.

2. What to wear and bring to games

- A. Game Uniform
- B. Cleats (recommended)
- C. Glove (1st baseman, catchers depending on position)
- D. Catchers Equipment (optional)
- E. Bat
- F. Water
- G. Arrive approximately 45 minutes early to allow players to properly warm up and stretch
- H. Dress weather appropriate.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE PARK DISTRICT?

Park District of Highland Park Travel Baseball Philosophy

The Travel Baseball program provides an opportunity for players to participate at a higher level of competition than in the traditional house league format.

Players selected to play on a team must commit to attending games, practices, and events scheduled by the Park District and League Administrators. In addition, players are expected to dedicate time and effort in learning and improving their knowledge and skills, while cooperating and respecting teammates and coaches to achieve winning teams. Highland Park aspires to hire the best coaches possible, who are capable of teaching the necessary skills, tactics, and strategies to win on the scoreboard, while also reinforcing life skills that help develop winning individuals.

In the Park District's pursuit to provide a winning program, we have developed a set of values to guide our participants, coaches, parents and administrators in implementing the travel baseball philosophy.

- **Fun/Experience** – We will create an atmosphere where young athletes enjoy competing in a healthy, positive environment.
- **Achievement** – We will dedicate ourselves to the improvement of individual and team skills in order to reach our maximum potential.
 - **Respect** – We will enforce, and embrace the importance of respecting league rules, opponents, officials, teammates and one’s self.
- **Teamwork** – We will work as a team to learn from one another, lead by example, trust in one another, and cooperate in reaching common goals.
- **Commitment** – We will commit to ourselves, the coaches and the team in participating in all required events, and following team and league guidelines.
- **Effort** – We will learn from mistakes and always give the most we are capable of giving, on and off the field of play.

Players will be asked to work toward excellence, not perfection. Baseball is a fun and challenging game that requires players to develop the ability to overcome mistakes and to look forward to their next opportunity. The development of skills and team focused play will be a guideline for our program which we believe will create better baseball players and better people. In our pursuit of excellence the following divisions have been created to help build age appropriate curriculums, standards and team policies.

- **Ages 9-12 travel Division** – As players prepare for High School level competition, focus is on mastery of strategic play, positional execution and superior team communication.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE PARK DISTRICT AND YOUR COACH?

Communication

The Park District makes every attempt to take a pro-active approach to communicating information as well as changes throughout the season. We will use the following means of communication:

- A. **Website** - www.pdhp.org/athletics
- B. **Email updates** – If you would like email updates on the season, including event and weather updates, please make sure that the Park District League Supervisor has your email address. You can simply send an email or call the league supervisor.
- C. **League Supervisors.** Please feel free to call us anytime with your questions, comments or concerns. We are always here to serve you.

Chris Maliszewski, Recreation Manager
Eric Golmon, Athletic Supervisor
Brian Romes, Director of Recreation

O) 847.579.4102
O) 847.579.3129
O) 847.579.3119

cmaliszewski@pdhp.org
egolmon@pdhp.org
bromes@pdhp.org

Feedback procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for reporting, reviewing, and reacting to concerns and feedback regarding the coaches, parents, players and umpires. The intent is to raise the standard of service to youth in sports through the enforcement of the Park District Coach, Parent and Player Pledges.

Feedback is welcomed by anyone in the community (coaches, parents, players, spectators, umpires, Park District staff, etc.). All feedback shall be directed to the Recreation Manager within 24 hours of receipt of a concern from coaches, parents, spectators, and umpires. Staff will meet to review the complaint and determine the course of action to be taken and promptly notify the individual involved that a complaint has been lodged against them.

The meeting is not intended to judge a person's character but to determine whether there was or was not a violation of the Coach, Parent or Player Pledge or the rules, regulations and policies. The meeting will focus only on the facts of what happened to give rise to the complaint and to determine the seriousness of the violation, if a violation in fact occurred.

In the interest of time or severity of the offense, the Park District may waive the complaint procedure and take immediate action.

Coaches Pledge

Coaches are an important person in our organization. Coaches help determine the kind of experience our athletes have with sports. We are committed to the principles of Positive Coaching. We expect our coaches to be "Double-Goal Coaches" who want to win and help players learn "life lessons" and positive character traits from sports. The following is what we expect from you during the coming the season.

1. Honor the game

- a. I will Model and teach players to Honor the Game by using the elements of ROOTS – Respect for: Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates, and one's Self.
- b. I will uphold the authority of officials who are assigned to the contests in which the coach and I will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
- c. I will adhere to the expectations, rules, and regulations as outlined in the Park District of Highland Park Coaches Manual.
- d. I will cooperate with the administrator of our organization in the enforcement of rules and regulations, and I will report any irregularities, which violate sound competitive practices.
- e. I will protect the health and safety of my players by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare, rather than for the vicarious interests of adults.

2. Redefine "Winner"

- a. I will model and teach my players to be "winners" in terms of Mastery, not just the scoreboard by teaching players the ELM Tree of Mastery (Effort, Learning, and bouncing back from Mistakes).
- b. I will reward effort, not just good outcomes and look to recognize players for unsuccessful effort.

- c. I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills, teaching, evaluation techniques, and strategies of my sport.
- d. I will become thoroughly familiar with the rules of my sport.
- e. I will become thoroughly familiar with the objectives of the youth sports program with which I am affiliated. I will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to my players and their parents.

3. Fill your players' Emotional Tanks.

- a. I will use encouragement and positive reinforcement as my primary method of motivating.
- b. I will strive to achieve the 5:1 "Magic Ratio" of 5 positive reinforcements to each criticism/correction.
- c. I will conduct my practices and games so that all players have an opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
- d. I will schedule "fun activities" for practices, so players will enjoy their sport.
- e. I will develop "player coaches" by asking for player input and asking rather than telling them what to do.
- f. I will learn to give "Kid-Friendly Criticism" so players will be able to hear it. Criticize in private, "Ask Permission," use the Criticism Sandwich, and avoid giving criticism in non-teachable moments.

WHAT DOES THE PARK DISTRICT EXPECT FROM PARENTS AND PLAYERS?

Players Pledge

The Park District of Highland Park believes that the goal for every athlete should be to become a Triple-Impact Competitor by making yourself, your teammates and the game better. Triple-Impact Competitors make positive contributions on three levels

- Personal Mastery: Making oneself better
- Leadership: Making one's teammates better
- Honoring the Game: Making the sport better

PCA believes sports have two goals:

#1: Striving to win

#2: Learning about yourself and life.

I pledge always to strive to make myself better.

- Winners are people who give maximum effort, continue to learn and improve and do not let mistakes, or fear of mistakes, stop them.
- I will learn by watching others, asking questions and getting coaching.
- I will strive to meet not only my outcome goals, but my stretch and effort goals as well.

I pledge to make my teammates better.

- I understand that my teammates will do their best when their "Emotional Tanks" are full.
- I will fill my teammates' emotional tank.
- I will strive to be the best teammate I can be and focus on how I can best support my teammates.

I pledge to make the game better.

- I understand the importance of setting a good example for my teammates.
- No matter what others do, I will show Respect for the Rules, my Opponents, the Officials, my Teammates, and my Self.

Players Behavior

Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following guidelines have been developed to help make Park District programs safe and enjoyable for all participants. Additional rules may be developed for particular programs and athletic leagues, as deemed necessary by staff. Participants shall:

- A. Show respect to all participants and staff, and take direction from staff.
- B. Refrain from using abusive or foul language
- C. Refrain from causing bodily harm to self, other participants, or staff
- D. Show respect for equipment, supplies, and facilities

A positive approach will be used regarding discipline. Staff will periodically review rules with participants during the program session. If inappropriate behavior occurs, prompt resolution will be sought specific to each individual's situation. The Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of them self or others.

Parents Pledge

I pledge to adhere to Park District Policies and Positive Coaching Alliance Principles. I acknowledge that my role as a parent is a critical component of the youth sports experience for my child, our team, and the Highland Park Community. I accept the responsibility I have as a youth sports parent, in addition to the consequences that may affect my privilege to attend youth sport games due to any failure to adhere with the following:

1. I pledge to get my child to practice and games on time. Doing so builds players' integrity, shows responsibility to the team, and respect to the coach. Furthermore, it shows my child that he or she is a top priority.
2. I pledge to use positive encouragement to fill my child's "emotional tank". I understand that athletes overcome obstacles and perform to their greatest potential when they have a positive attitude and their "emotional tank" is full.
3. I pledge to refrain from yelling out instructions to my child during games. I understand that game instruction is the job of the coach and I will support his or her decisions as well as the team's space on the bench or in the dugout. I will limit my comments during the game to encouraging my child and other players, while remaining within the areas designated for spectators.

4. I pledge to "Honor the Game." I understand the importance of setting a good example for my child. No matter what others may do, I will show respect for all involved in the game including coaches, players, opponents, opposing fans, staff, and officials. I agree to respect our opponent's players and coaches at all times. I understand that officials make mistakes. If the official makes a "bad" call against my team, I will Honor the Game and be silent!
5. I pledge to refrain from making negative comments about my child's coach, his teammates, other parents or the Park District in my child's presence. I understand that this plants a negative seed in my child's head that can negatively influence my child's motivation and overall experience.
6. I pledge to reinforce the ELM Tree of Mastery with my child (E for Effort, L for Learning and M for bouncing back from Mistakes). Winners are people who make maximum effort, continue to learn and improve, and do not let mistakes, or fear of making mistakes, stop them. I understand that mistakes are an inevitable part of any game and that people learn from their mistakes. I understand that children are born with different abilities and that the true measure is not how my child compares to others but how he/she is doing in comparison to his/her best self.

Policies

1. Punctuality

Coaches set their practice times before the start of each season and will try to stay with these times throughout the season. Coaches will start and end their practice promptly. Players are expected to arrive **fifteen minutes** before the actual time of practice. Players are expected to be at designated game locations **forty-five minutes** before game time. This provides players with proper warm-up time to avoid injury. The game times will dictate the arrival time required of the players at both home and away sites. It is very important to arrive at the time assigned by the coach.

2. Player Pick-Up

It is each player's responsibility to arrange for transportation to and from every practice and game site. It is also the player's responsibility to be picked up immediately after each practice and game. Coaches have been instructed to stay at the game/practice site until all players are picked-up.

3. Automobile Use

The Park District staff and volunteers **are not allowed** to drive program participants in their own personal automobiles. Liability is a prime concern and does not extend to coverage in personal automobiles. The responsibility lies with the parents for transporting their athletes to and from sporting events.

4. Discipline

One of the major lessons in sports is discipline. Staff has been instructed to maintain discipline and control at all times during practices and games. The Park District expects all players to treat all coaches with the utmost respect. They are expected to address their coach as "Coach." Staff has the program Manager's support in cutting playing time for those players who cannot conduct themselves in a proper manner on or/off the field. Coaches, in return, will demonstrate respect toward players,

coaches, officials and their parents at all times. **By players, parents, and coaches working together, this program will be an enjoyable learning experience for all.**

Team Information

- A. It is a long-standing policy of the Park District of Highland Park that if a child attends any travel program tryout and is selected to any travel team and any of the following occurs:
1. The player withdraws from the team prior to the first scheduled practice or
 2. The player quits the team after the date of the first scheduled practice for any reason other than family emergency or a specific medical problem or
 3. The player is removed from the team by the Park District of Highland Park management for violation of any team rules, as specified by the baseball travel team policy.

In any such event, the player will be prohibited from future participation with his team or from attending any future Park District of Highland Park travel sports tryouts for one calendar year.

- B. Practice/Game Schedules

Practices and game days, times, and locations maybe be changed from your original schedule due to unforeseen circumstances. The Park District will do its best to minimize the amount of changes made to your player's schedule. Please be patient as some of these changes may be last minute.

The practice schedule is determined by the player, coach and field availability.

Attendance

- A. Excused absences during the regular season are:
1. Religious events for self or immediate family
 2. Family emergencies
 3. Required school functions
 4. Personal injury or illness
- B. If any player is absent for more than 3 consecutive events, approval and/or a doctor's note must be submitted to the Park District.
- C. Any player that will be absent for 7 or more consecutive calendar days during the regular season or pre-season must submit a written request to the Park District before the final day of try-outs. Any requests received after teams have been formed may not be approved. Approval will be determined by athletic staff, based on the relevance of the absence. Approved extended absences may still be subject to playing time penalty and/or suspension.

- D. Players that miss more than 25% of the regular-season and/or the pre-season for excused or unexcused absences will be subject to removal from the team. Players that knowingly could miss 25% of the season or more should not try out for Park District Travel Baseball. (25% of the pre-season will be approximately 4-6 practices. 25% of the regular season will be approximately 10 practices and/or games. The number of practices and games and extent of permission will depend on the age level and team schedule.) Special consideration will be taken into account for extreme uncontrollable circumstances such as illness, injury, or family emergencies.
- E. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:
1. Parties and events other than for immediate family members
 2. Professional sporting events
 3. Non-required school functions

9-12 yrs. Permitted to miss up to 3 unexcused games without a formal penalty. Playing time may be reduced due to an unexcused absence or tardiness to any practices or games. After 3 unexcused game absences the player will sit 1 game per absence and be subject to suspension or removal from the team.

Playing time

Coaches are encouraged to use their full roster each game and must follow the standards below for minimum playing time.

9-12 yrs. Each player must play 3 innings per league game. Exceptions can be made for tournament and championship games. Tournament games will require 1 innings per game and no requirement for championship games.

League and Tournaments

The Highland Park Baseball Teams will be competing in the Mid Suburban Baseball League this upcoming season. For directions to fields, standings and schedules please go to the MSBL website is <http://www.msbleague.org/>

Information will be emailed about the tournaments/off season practices, and other information regarding your son's team.

Uniform

Every player is required to have a uniform and must be worn during all league games and tournaments. If a player loses any part of the uniform during the season, please contact Chris Maliszewski for the replacement cost. Uniform fees have already been paid in the registration cost. Additional items will be available for purchase the day of the uniform fitting.