



President's Newsletter



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“Little League baseball is a very good thing because it keeps the parents off the streets.”

- Yogi Berra

Its hard to believe we are almost at the start of another season at McAllister Park Little League. During the offseason, I spent a lot of time talking with former players and parents. One comment I heard is a parent's decision to not participate in Little League. This disappoints me as president of one of the greatest Little Leagues in Texas. Why parents would make that decision is beyond me, but I can only say it is unfair to their son/daughter. There is no better sports option in this city for a child to grow up in. In this great community of friends and families, every child has the opportunity to learn the game of baseball and forge lifelong friendships. There are not many other sports organizations that can say that.

There is no better place to be on a Friday night in the spring than McAllister Park Little League. Our little league still is a place for our kids to be kids and to have fun playing the game of baseball. Secondly, it's still a place for all our families to be just that...a family.

Parents, don't take that from your children and your family. My family has been involved with McAllister Park Little League for 8 years. My wife and I are thankful for all the friends and families we have met through the years. There is no better place that we would want our three boys to have grown up in.

It is my hope that you continue to support YOUR Little League and continue to be a part of OUR family!

Field upgrades!

We are completing a major expenditure at the fields. McAllister Park Little League committed \$15,000 to get our playing surfaces in top condition. Several truckloads of new sand were brought in and spread onto all 16 of our fields. They have all been professionally graded which will aid in drainage of water from the playing surfaces. We will also have tarps installed on the four home plates of fields 1-4 to aid in keeping our home plates in the best playing condition.

I am pleased also to announce that the lower tball practice field has been reworked to the normal little league field base distances and we are working to have a field all of our tballers can practice on...WITHOUT THE STICKER BURRS!!!



Registration

We are down to our final week of registration with one more in-person registration occurring tomorrow January 20th at the Northwoods Academy from 9am to Noon. Our final registration will be held next Saturday at the MPLL Concession stand from 9am to Noon. Please let anyone know who might be new to MPLL.

FREE Players' clinic

FREE FREE FREE! Next Saturday in conjunction with our final in-person registration, we will be hosting a players' clinic at the main complex at 10am. As our own version of "Spring Training", our plan is to have several fields for all our age groups. We will have coaches on hand to help coordinate the event. Please bring your little leaguer out and let them get a little baseball in prior to the season.

If you are interested in helping as a coach, please send me an email with your child's age and division and I can forward to the correct VP.

Fundraising

For those of you familiar with our Little League, we have focused primarily on our gala event as our primary fundraiser each year. Every year this gala has declined in numbers and support, and it has been decided to no longer host the gala. But that doesn't mean everyone is off the hook for fundraising. We are currently working on another spring fundraiser which I think everyone will be excited about.

The board is still finalizing the plans and I hope I will be able to share the news in our February newsletter. More to come on this.....

2017 Little League rule changes

Little League International has shared their rule changes for 2017 play. Their rule changes are primarily focused on increasing the pace of play.

1) Keep One Foot In Batter's Box

Starting in 2017, local leagues will have the option to mandate batters keep one foot in the batter's box throughout their at-bat, barring eight exceptions provided in the rule book, during regular season games. If the batter leaves the batter's box or delays play and none of the exceptions apply, the umpire shall warn the batter. After one warning on a batter, the umpire shall call a strike. Any number of strikes can be called on each batter.

2) Intentional Walk [Baseball Only]

For Minor and Major Divisions of Baseball, defensive teams will now be able to elect to intentionally walk a batter by announcing the decision to the plate umpire. After appropriate notification is made by the defensive manager, the ball is ruled dead and no other runners may advance unless forced by the batter's award of first base. Once the award is granted, four pitches will be added to the defensive pitcher's official pitch count.



3) Stealing and Relaying of Pitch Selection and Location

Starting in 2017, local league umpires will have the option to adopt the rule that the stealing and relaying of signs to alert the batter of pitch selection and/or location is unsportsmanlike behavior. If, in the judgment of the umpire, this behavior is occurring, both the player and the manager may be ejected from the game. The same rule will be mandated during tournament play.

A summary of all rules changes can be viewed on Little League International's website at [Little League Rules.](#)

Volunteer at YOUR Little League

Little League Baseball and Softball is an organization designed to build good citizens. It is a program of leadership, preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's leaders. At the local level, Little League and McAllister Park Little League rely on a devoted legion of adult volunteers to help ensure that the organization remains structured and runs smoothly. Our program is always looking for responsible and enthusiastic individuals to support and coordinate Little League events and activities. As a volunteer, you have a keen interest in the safety, well-being, and overall development of children in our league.

Should you have any questions or any suggestions that you feel might make our little league a better place, I encourage you to reach out to me at mpllpres@gmail.com.





Groundskeepers Corner

JP Guerra, our current head groundskeeper has put together some information for field care that he has asked to share.

Grounds keeping 101

January 2017

Hello and welcome to the first of many grounds keeping articles to be shared with the coaches and parents of McAllister Park Little League. My crew and I are excited for the Spring '17 season to begin, and have been working hard renovating all 16 ball fields to create a more consistent, and safer playing surface for our players.

This offseason, the Board voted to invest significantly to address drainage issues that have plagued our league for seasons. These issues have been largely brought about by ineffective and improper maintenance techniques. This forum aims to help educate our volunteers with the appropriate techniques to maintain the highest level of playability for our facility, and avoid costly expenditures to fix damage created by well-intentioned, but misinformed volunteers.

In this month's issue, we'll discuss the proper way to rake and drag an infield, and cover some common mistakes to avoid.

First, understanding the importance of maintaining a level playing surface where the turf meets the skin (the infield dirt). Lips, or bumps that occur at the edge of the skin create dangerous hops, tripping hazards, and inhibit the field's ability to allow rainwater to drain effectively away from the infield and into the turf. The single most important way to avoid lip creation is by raking and dragging the field properly and following these simple tips:

- 1) SLOW DOWN!! A metal finish drag should be pulled no faster than walking speed, and slowing further when making turns. Excessive speed throws the infield material away from the drag, impacting the grade by creating low spots under the drag and high spots where the material ultimately lands.
- 2) STAY AWAY FROM THE TURF. A finish drag should be kept a minimum 12" from the edge of the grass to avoid creating a lip. The edge should be addressed with a rake rather than a pull drag.
- 3) CHANGE IT UP. Change the start/stop location of dragging frequently to avoid creating high/low spots. Always remove the drag within the skin so material isn't pulled into the turf, then use a rake to level the excess material caught by the drag.
- 4) LET IT FLOAT. When using a rake, allow the rake to "float" to maintain a consistent, level playing surface. Push the rake slowly along the entire edge of the infield and avoid 'back and forth' action as it creates troughs and ridges.
- 5) LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD. After games/practices, use the leveling rake to pull material away from the bases (typically caused by sliding at 2nd, 3rd, and Home) and back to the low spots created from sliding.



6) BE PROACTIVE. Each blockhouse contains a poly rake to be used by volunteers to address the edge of the turf/skin to prevent lips from forming in the first place. Use these rakes (not metal) to pull infield dirt back from the grass and into the skin. Home and the mounds are areas that should be addressed daily.

If we all take the time to learn the proper techniques and share them with other volunteers (and speak up when others are using incorrect methods), we can achieve a safer playing surface, fewer rainouts, and save McAllister Park both time and money to address other concerns of our facility.

Thanks for reading, and please share these tips with your coaches and volunteers. If you have any questions, or find an issue that needs to be addressed, please feel free to contact me at mpllgroundskeeper@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
JP Guerra
Head Groundskeeper
McAllister Park Little League

