**Stanley Park Optimist Ball: Handout to team reps April 2023**

**Additional information regarding team meetings and practises:**

**We do not get involved in team meetings and practises. Just pick a spot and go for it.**

**We do however request that all safety precautions and equipment be used just as if it were a scheduled event; i.e. practice with the required batting helmets and fielder’s masks. Getting used to game situations helps!**

Know that you're proceeding without a permit so it's first-come, first-served and there are a lot of other leagues and organizations out there operating on the same basis so sometimes a 5:50 pm arrival with equipment is better than arriving at 6 pm which is a more common time. If a group is there you’re out of luck ---- find another spot!. If a group comes after you, but has a valid permit issued by the City (that they paid for just as we do for ours), you must vacate the premises immediately. We have permits for all our scheduled events.

In short order you should be able to narrow down some suitable days/times for practises and someone on your team may have a good spot to hold such that is usually available. Franklin is a very common spot for our teams to pick for practises so good thing that there are multiple diamonds if the one you pick is taken. IF two of our teams from the same league show up at the same location, it has been fairly common for them to share the facility and practise together.

Although a diamond is nice, you don't need one for throwing and hitting drills.

**Welcome and thanks for helping get your team up and running. At this meeting you’ll get:**

* Your team’s equipment --- please check that it’s all there as listed. If anything breaks or needs to be replaced at any point during the season, please mention it to one of our supervisors (yellow vests) and get it looked after.
* Your team’s uniforms: a shirt and a hat for each player. The shirts are different sizes so we request that you do not hand out any before you have a team meeting/practice. Strongly urge parents to put their player’s name inside their hat in case it gets misplaced. (Marking your child’s name on their ball glove is also highly recommended. If your team has less than the max. number of players, (11 in Blastball and Jr T-Ball, 13 in Sr T-Ball), please keep the extra uniform(s) in the bag provided as players may still be assigned. We collect the extra uniforms on photo day.
* A hard copy of your team’s roster c/w preliminary volunteer roles, contact info., and any playing day restrictions. **You are requested to initiate contact with each player ASAP if you haven’t already done so**. Your team’s schedule (online on the website) should reflect those requests (except for those that were “waived” to be on your team with somebody and some registrations that were received after April 17, again with the preferences waived). Team rosters & schedules are now FINAL. You can add/authorize others access to your team by using the Team App.
* Each team is being offered a Health/sanitizing package. Additional items are available as they get used up.
* Junior T-Ball & Blastball teams may pick up a safety vest for a Sportsmanship Manager if the team has a volunteer willing to serve in that capacity. ALL Senior T-Ball and 3-Pitch teams are being supplied with at least 1 vest and an adult volunteer is required to wear it while supervising sportsmanship at each and every game.

Now that you have the team’s equipment and supplies, **your first job is to initiate contact ASAP with each and every member of your team** and call a team meeting/practise – at least one before your team’s first scheduled event.

**Team photo sessions** will be held, in conjunction with your team’s first scheduled event on **May 7, 8, 9 or 10 at Franklin** (weather permitting as we’ll be shooting outdoors). On Sunday May 7, we plan to hold sessions as early as 4:00 pm and process as many teams as possible that day. The other days will be from approx. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm with photos either before, during, or after your game. Please discuss with your team members and get back to us via email **Ball@stanleyparkoptimist.com** with your team’s most suitable date/time === the most suitable is when most of the team, including the coaching staff, can make it. Each session takes approx. 12 minutes if teams are present and ready for their scheduled time. Teams are requested to arrive early so the players can be prepped and ready to be photographed. Players who miss the team photo appointment can supply their own individual photo. All players must be in full uniform.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** Sportsmanship managers from the teams will be actively involved throughout the season promoting good sportsmanship, supporting our officials and dealing with any perceived issues before any issue arises. We have a zero tolerance for abuse and enforce that policy. There is no taunting, no bullying --- let’s just say we’re all there to enjoy the game but not at anyone else’s expense. There is NO smoking (of anything) and No vaping nor anything that has to do with either at any of our events. This is not only our policy, it is a bylaw. We play on school and park property under permits issued by the City and are governed by its Behavioural Policy. It’s more fun for everyone to play with good sports!

**ATTIRE:** All participants are required to wear closed shoes such as running shoes, i.e. no sandals, no flip-flops. The wearing of shorts, bathing suits, etc. is discouraged as is jewellery. Blastball excepted, all batters and base-runners must wear a properly fastened batting helmet and the pitcher and catcher must wear a helmet with a facemask. In SR T-Ball and both 3-Pitch leagues, all the other infielders must wear face protection, i.e. either a fielder’s mask or a helmet with a facemask.

**The SCHEDULES:** All events (except Sat May 6 when we play at Midland Park) are at Franklin School/Park. There are 3 diamonds (#1, 2, 3), 3 play screens for Junior T-Ball (#4, 5, 6) behind the school and an area for Blastball under the trees by the fence along the soccer field. Blastball and Jr T-Ball events are all exhibition = no final score, no winners and no losers. Our Senior T-Ball and both 3-Pitch leagues have two weeks of exhibition games and then play regular season games that include scoring and will count in the standings. Senior T-Ball and the Junior 3-Pitch leagues will have trophy presentations, based on the standings, at the end of the season. Senior 3-Pitch does not have any events scheduled during the final days (up to June 27) to provide for some playoff games including a Championship Final and Consolation Final during that period.

**Rainouts and scheduling issues:** We will notify everyone affected at least an hour before game time if your event is being moved or canceled. DO NOT cancel any games on your own initiative. Game Day status is maintained on the website so you can check as weather conditions change throughout the day --- and are often not the same as in Waterloo! We sometimes start a few minutes later or move a game to an alternate location. If conditions are playable, play the games with the players that show up to play. Yes, in competitive play a team requires 8 players, so a default can be declared but the kids can still play for fun. (There is no default number for Blastball and Junior T-Ball play.) Play as long as participants are willing and lightness allows: Blastball events usually last about 30 to 40 minutes but those willing to stay and play on can do so; same thing for Junior T-Ball – about an hour early in the season, longer in June as it warms up. Our officials will be trying to get at least 3 innings in! Sr TBall games are 5-inning events but usually that doesn’t happen until later in the season. Regardless, darkness dictates a safe-ending time which gets extended as the season progresses. Our officials and supervisors are involved with ending the games at an agreed upon time. Players are allowed to arrive late and/or leave early without penalty. As re-scheduling games is next to impossible, sometimes we “shift” the play area if there is, for instance, one puddle by 3rd base but the rest of the area is playable. If the coaches of the teams involved in a cancelled game can come up with a mutually agreeable date to play a make-up game, we will secure a permit for it and arrange umpires.

**Rules:** If you’re concerned about the rules, please read them. In Jr TBall, there is a “one-error” rule. In all our leagues, the main concern is safety, so a “thrown bat” is an automatic out and terminates that batter’s at bat. Two thrown bats during a game means that batter is excluded from batting for the rest of that game. The umpire determines whether it’s deemed to be a thrown bat. There is no appeal. “Time” is called by the plate umpire when there is no play being made or no play to be made. If the umpire is waiting for one play to finish (with no play being made), a new play cannot be started. “Throwing the ball around” negates the umpire’s cability to call “Time”. No one can be out on a play after “Time” is called. A batter cannot start play until after “Play Ball” has been called by the plate umpire. Two main rules our officials go by: (1) common sense and (2) no one benefits from doing something against the rules, inappropriate or unsportsmanlike. While a member of the coaching staff can question a ruling, the umpire’s decision is final. We do not entertain any arguments nor game delays debating the rules. Sportsmanship managers will step in and stop such discussions whether requested by the umpire or not.

**Game days:** Coaches (and players) should arrive early! Home teams are responsible for setting up the bases but there is nothing gained by waiting if the visiting team is already there with their equipment. Bases have to be nailed in. Before game, warm-up exercises are encouraged! In SR T-Ball and 3-Pitch, the Home team supplies one of their new baseballs (so save the new ones for that occasion. The officials will be trying to get play started even if it’s not “start” time yet. The umpire will call a plate meeting with the coaches, team captains (for that game), officials and sportsmanship managers before the game --- brief but important! The umpires will provide any updates and answer questions. Once plays starts, we want as little wasted time as possible so there’s more time spent actually playing. Know that the umpires are mandated to get the game started and keep things moving so teams are expected to have their next batter ready with helmet already on with strap properly secured, fielders ready to take their pre-assigned defensive positions, coaches helping batters as needed, etc. For SR T-Ball and 3-Pitch, a coach (or someone with Web Admin access) needs to enter the mutually agreed final score after the game.

**Volunteers:** Each team needs a fair number of volunteers to make the experience a rewarding one for the players and keep the game moving**: BATTING**: base coaches at 1st and 3rd, batting instructor, someone getting the lineup in order and ensuring the batting helmets are on and secured, a scorekeeper, sportsmanship manager … etc. **FIELDING:** someone to pre-assign the positions so the switch can be done quickly each half inning, equipment person to ensure the infielders have the proper gear, 3-Pitch catcher to be suited up to start play, fielding coaches in the outfield (as pre-agreed), Health/sanitizer person as appropriate, scorekeeper, Sportsmanship Manager, 1st aid standby, worker manning the hitting stick, etc….

**Final game day:** Each team will have a final event scheduled for June 25, 26 or 27. At the conclusion of that game, teams will be provided with pizzas, courtesy of Domino’s, and players will receive their medallions and photo package. Trophies will be presented to the top teams in Sr T-Ball and both 3-Pitch leagues. All teams are encouraged to make the event a team “celebration” as the season ends and summer break begins. Please take all garbage and recycling with you.

**Parking:** If driving, we encourage you to car-pool and park in the Franklin School lot or, for Junior T-Ball play, on Bradley Dr. or Midland Dr. Viewmont Close is the handiest spot to access Franklin #1. We have special permission to use the lot at St Luke’s Church that is closest to the diamonds as long as we respect that it’s private property and the Church does hold its own functions so may require us to park elsewhere on occasion. We are not authorized to park on the far half of their lot so please refrain from doing so. There is street parking close by and no need to park on the grass.

**Let’s all do what we can to make this an enjoyable experience for everyone – on both teams and the officials!**

**There are a LOT of helpful articles on** [**our website**](tanleyparkoptimist.com) **for coaches, parents and players --- as well as the rules. Please take the time to read at least a few you deem relevant. How to run a practise, hitting skills, how to throw, warm-up exercise, and more than more. We didn’t write them, experts did. Links to entire training programs included! Have a great weekend!**