

Baseball is a game



From the CSLL Chief Umpire

February 2010

My name is Steve Strausser and I am the Chief Umpire for Central Springfield Little League (CSLL). I would like to congratulate you on your selection as a manager in our great league. I truly believe you have the hardest job in Little League.

Rule 1.01 states "Little League baseball in all divisions is a game". Please treat it as such. We all volunteer our time to give the kids a chance to learn fundamentals, sportsmanship, teamwork, and to have fun. Please do not put winning as your main priority.

The umpires are all volunteers, just like you. Many of them have limited training other than the five sessions our league offers. We WILL make mistakes, forget rules, be out of position, and do other things that will undoubtedly drive YOU and your PARENTS crazy. It happens in all levels of baseball and it will happen in CSLL. My advice: take a deep breath, relax, and move on. Additionally, constantly remind your parents of the same. I strongly believe that if we can control the parents, the CSLL experience will be a much more positive one. This is an area I really need your help.

For what it is worth, here are my thoughts on how you and I can help make CSLL baseball a more pleasant experience:

1. If you must talk to an umpire about a call, request time, show restraint, especially with the Junior umpires. Some of these young ladies and gentlemen are already nervous going onto the field in front of people just looking for them to make a mistake. When they have an adult yelling at them, it will only make things worse. We can't afford to keep losing umpires at the current rate. Protect these children, especially from your parents.
2. Set a good example for your players and parents. If you complain loudly, it gives everyone the impression that it's okay. Control your coaches also.

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3. Safety should always be a priority. Please follow the rules.
4. Managers, coaches, older siblings, parents, etc. are not allowed to warm up pitchers at anytime.
5. Cell phones, walkie talkies, blackberries etc, are not allowed to be used on the field.
6. Control your parents. If you hear one of your dads / moms harassing or bullying an umpire, please ask them to ease up. You should be in charge of your team (players, coaches and parents).
7. Seek me out. If something happens that requires my attention, let me know right away. I want positive, constructive criticism so I can continue to teach the umpires.
8. The CSLL Board of Directors (BoD) has implemented the following:
 - a. A position of Team Umpire. Each Manager at the TB-1, ML-1 and ML-2 (A, AA, AAA) division will establish the position of adult Team Umpire. This adult will be used in the event no umpire or only one umpire is assigned to a game. The Head Umpire will provide dedicated training to ensure each team umpire has a basic level of knowledge. I intend to hold that training 23 March 2010. Only one training session per parent is required. If no CSLL umpire is assigned, the adult team umpire will step in. Please refer to the CSLL website for specifics.
 - b. The manager and coaches for each team will umpire a minimum of two regular season games.
 - c. Tightened and modified CSLL Policy #12 increasing the penalties for misconduct during games or other CSLL activities. Please refer to the CSLL website for specifics.
 - d. Put into place a policy in an increasing effort to stop umpire abuse. **CSLL Policy 18 Harassment of Umpires by Managers, Coaches and Parents** provides for

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corrective action in the event this becomes an issue. Umpire harassment has no benefit to anyone associated with CSLL. Harassment creates a hostile, confrontational atmosphere that has no place in a children's game. Umpire harassment is repetitive berating, belittling or harassing comments made as a result of a call or situation directed toward the umpire in a manner meant to intimidate. At the basic level it is bullying. In an effort to empower the umpires to address this negative activity and gain immediate relief the BoD has established a Team Unsportsmanship Conduct Warning. This will be given to the Team Manager by the Division VP on recommendation of umpire affected. Please refer to the CSLL website for specifics.

Local rules training will be held Tuesday, 16 March 2010 at Garfield Elementary School. I strongly urge you to attend.

I have a website, <http://www.eteamz.com/csumps>, with some info under the "Handouts" link to help you as well as a link to my email. If you have questions, feel free to contact me.

Enjoy the season and thanks in advance for your support!

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