

## SPYBA Coaching Philosophy

If you are an experienced coach, we thank you for your past commitment and willingness to continue volunteering. If you have never coached in your life, and you have volunteered/been nominated/been asked by your son/daughter to do so. Relax! The fact that you are here, looking for help, puts you ahead of ninety-five percent of potential volunteer baseball coaches. We will work with you to ensure you have all the resources you need for a successful season.

Let's start with what is **YOUR MISSION AS A COACH!**

Coaching Little League can be a very rewarding experience. It is very important however, that you keep a proper perspective of what your priorities and mission should be at this level of competition.

Your primary responsibility is **NOT** to win! The pressure of winning will come soon enough for these young athletes. Your primary mission as a Little League coach is to: teach and develop while keeping the process fun.

The single **MOST** important thing we need from you - keep kids coming back to baseball!

- We want to create an experience that brings kids back to our program year after year
- Not as important - kids with perfect swings, excellent mechanics, or a pile of state championships
- Seek the right combination of having fun, allowing kids to be kids, and focusing on getting better
- Focus on the process and the journey rather than the outcome
- Teach kids to compete
- View yourself as a critical part of our collective baseball program...because you are! The success of our little league program is a product of the success of our coach training program. We are all in this thing (providing a great baseball experience for kids) together.

The importance of teaching to compete vs. focusing on wins

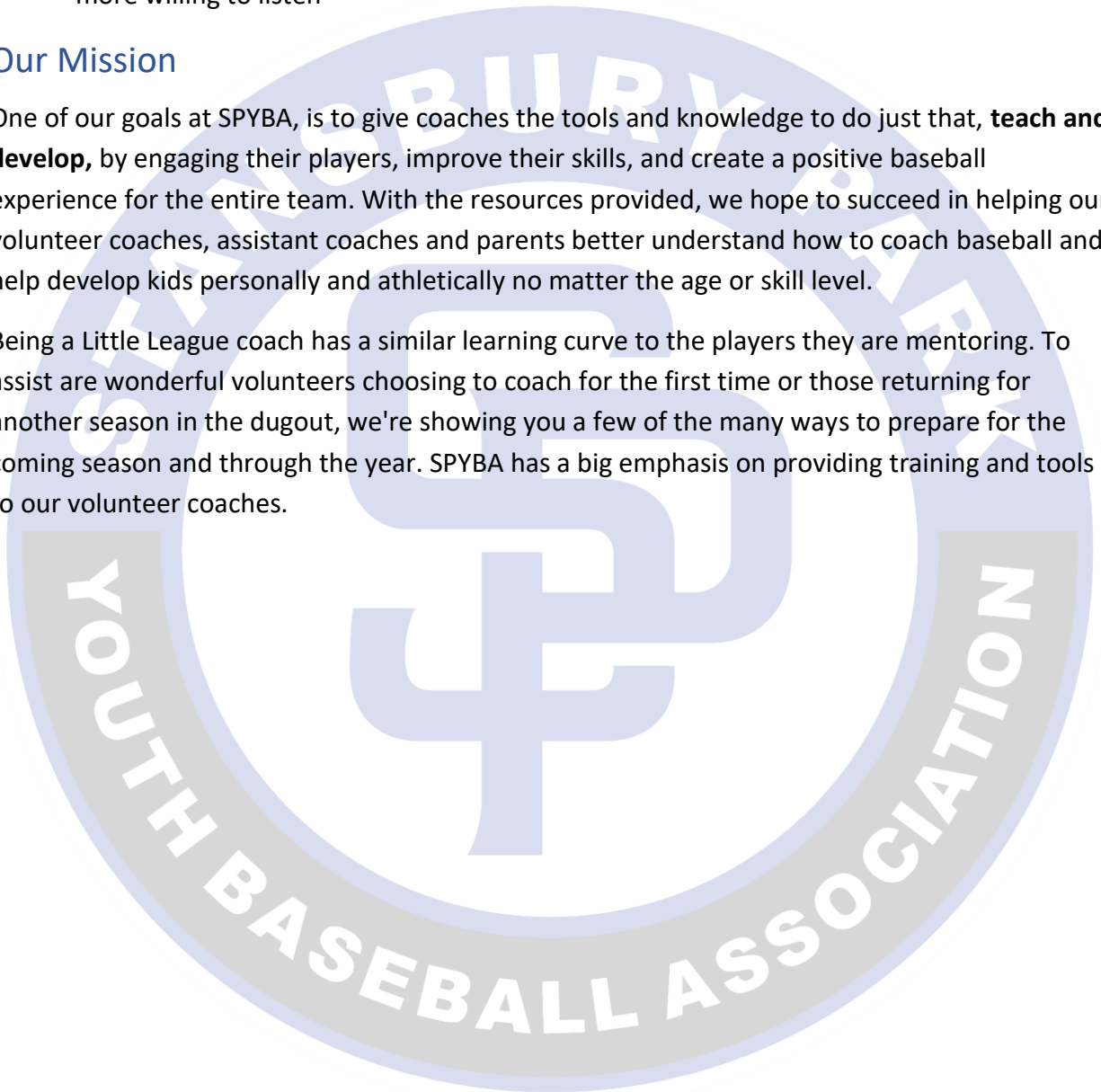
- Demonstrates a focus on the process (what can be controlled) as opposed to a result (what can't be controlled)
- Enforces a big picture focus on your players' futures
- Creates a conversation about how we played, what we did well, what we need to improve on vs. what the score was

- Creates an environment in which players are allowed to fail, learn from it, and not dwell on it
- Relieves undue pressure placed on both kids and coaches, allowing for a safer and more enjoyable experience
- Opens up conversations for you to teach life lessons in an environment where kids are more willing to listen

## Our Mission

One of our goals at SPYBA, is to give coaches the tools and knowledge to do just that, **teach and develop**, by engaging their players, improve their skills, and create a positive baseball experience for the entire team. With the resources provided, we hope to succeed in helping our volunteer coaches, assistant coaches and parents better understand how to coach baseball and help develop kids personally and athletically no matter the age or skill level.

Being a Little League coach has a similar learning curve to the players they are mentoring. To assist are wonderful volunteers choosing to coach for the first time or those returning for another season in the dugout, we're showing you a few of the many ways to prepare for the coming season and through the year. SPYBA has a big emphasis on providing training and tools to our volunteer coaches.



# SPYBA Coaching Guidelines

**Goal:** Elevate skill level of entire league through unified divisional targets.

Coaches should be viewed as partners of the league whose goal is to develop the players in a constructive, fun way that promotes sportsmanship and healthy competition. Kids should get similar level of instruction regardless of coach/team they're placed on.

- Develop every kid
  - Don't write off a kid and stick them in right field every inning
    - Have discussion with parents if focus issues or disruptive behavior
  - Move kids to multiple positions to give them the opportunity to discover their interest and grow
- Winning isn't the priority here, it's developing the kids
  - Main KPI of coach is if kid learned & enjoyed season enough to come back next year
  - Paradoxically, by focusing on player development and fun you will likely win more games
- Have parent meeting at start of season to set expectations
  - Practice attendance
  - In-game behavior (yelling at kids/umpires etc.)
- Coaches need to be clear communicators as they're the league point of contact for all players/parents
  - Practices
  - Games
  - Picture day
  - Field cleanups
  - Who's on snacks that game etc.
- Can practice even when SPYBA field isn't available
  - Several parks/schools have locations that can be used
  - Should practice at least twice a week prior to games starting
  - Should practice at least once a week once games start
  - Lean on assistant coaches if you are unable to make a practice
- Make a practice plan before the practice takes place
  - This is key for effective use of the limited time you have with the team
- Try to break out into smaller groups with multiple drills
  - Don't have 1 kid fielding a grounder and 10 kids standing in line
  - Clearly plan the drills and how to break-out the team

- Try to incorporate several functions/lessons into a drill
  - For example, player pitcher throws to player catcher then coach tosses own ball and hits to field for defense while a player base runner takes off to 1st.
  - This incorporates pitching, catching, defense and base running all at the same time.
- Try to save time (~15mins) for a game or activity at the end of practice (they're still kids after all)
- In Minors & Majors, use many pitchers (6+)
  - Both for development and player arm health
- If not enough assistance, other coaches or league representatives should be available to step in
  - Shouldn't be viewed as your team or my team but more at a league level
  - Joint practices are a great way to get more support and exposure

