

League Organization

1. **What does my player league fee actually pay for?**

Player subscription fees go towards covering the cost of running the league each season. We have many costs including Little League charter fees, District 5 league fees, equipment (bats, helmets, catchers gear etc), baseballs, uniforms, player insurance, advertising, coaching clinics, umpires etc. League financial statements are made available at the AGM each year.

2. **Why am I asked to volunteer when I've already paid league fees?**

MSLL is completely volunteer run. The league fees cover league expenses only. The President and all roles on the Executive board, along with all coaches, managers and division coordinators are all volunteers. MSLL recognizes that some families have more time to give than others. However when you sign up to Little League and your child is placed on a team where they will be coached by parents who are giving many hours of their time – there is an expectation that you will contribute at least some amount of your time. This may be through working in the concession, score keeping, pitching counting, field prep, helping on photo day etc..

3. **Are there any paid positions in MSLL?**

ALL executive members, coaches, managers and division coordinators are volunteers. The only positions to receive any compensation during 2014 were the umpires, the concession manager, the Rally Caps Junior coaches and the Bigs players who took part in the AA coaching program. Umpires were paid as per norm in local Little League; the concession manager received a small honorarium as a thank-you for her time and efforts; the Junior coaches were rewarded with concession vouchers and the Bigs players were paid a small amount to cover their time commitment.

Schedule

4. **Why don't we play teams from other associations?**

The intention of Little League is to play baseball within your local community and with kids from the local schools. While this leads to a relatively small number of teams in each division, it has the benefit of allowing the kids to really get to know one another in a way that would not happen if the league extended across the entire District. By the time players reach Majors they are likely to know every other child in their division as the teams are mixed up each year. Little League does not support playing Inter-League games until Majors. MSLL does participate in Majors Interlock games with other North Shore Little Leagues.

Once players reach Juniors (age 13-14) the divisions are organized across the entire District and the teams do play both other MSLL teams and teams from other North Shore Little Leagues. This is also the case for the Seniors and Bigs divisions.

5. **Why do we play/practice so many times per week?**

The baseball season is relatively short. We get access to the fields from Apr 1st and the season wraps up in mid-June shortly before schools break for vacation. Given that we only have an 11

week season, we aim to have our teams play 2 games and practice at minimum once per week. Teams are also welcome to schedule additional practices. This results in baseball being a short but intense season.

6. Why does the season end so early?

Little League is organized with a regular season followed by post season All Star play. The tournament dates for All Stars are set by taking the Little League World Series dates and working back to fit in Nationals, Provincials and District tournaments before that date. In our District the 9/10 All Star tournament is played prior to the beginning of the Majors tournament resulting in a start date around the middle of June. Most other leagues in the Lower Mainland close their regular season by the end of the first week of June. We are the only North Shore league that currently plays through to the second week of June.

MSLL would like to see more kids continue to play baseball through the summer. This year for the first time we ran a "Summer Ball" program for the Rookie Senior division, as well as entering additional tournaments such that 8/9s and 11s teams were playing through to the end of July. We are looking at options for 2015 to extend the season as much as possible for all our age groups – either by running those divisions right through to the end of June, or by keeping the same closing date but offering Summer Ball across other divisions. Of course all these options require coaching volunteers to put in the time and commitment.

7. Is there any reason why the MSLL playoff schedule has to be released later?

No – all teams make the playoffs and the standings are reset for the playoff round. Therefore there is absolutely no reason why the full schedule could not be released at the start of the season. Thanks for the suggestion – we will change this in 2015!

8. Why can't Rally Caps teams played on the same night each week?

In 2014 there were 12 teams in the division. Each team played one week day game and one game on a Saturday. If teams were always scheduled on the same week day it would mean always playing against the same 2 other teams. While it can be tricky to work around the changing schedule with other activities, the kids really enjoy the opportunity to play lots of different teams

9. What is the Fall Ball program?

For the past few seasons Inside Performance (IP) have organized a Fall Ball league running from early Sept to approximately mid-October. This usually includes two MSLL teams – 9/10s and 11/12s. MSLL cannot drive its own Fall Ball program as we do not have any baseball fields available to us in the fall (Myrtle Park and Blueridge both revert back to soccer in the fall).

Fields

10. Why is the Seycove field in such bad shape – can't we improve it?

The Majors diamond, Rally Caps field, RJ and RS senior diamonds are provided to us by North Vancouver District. In the case of the Seycove field this is owned and operated by the Seycove

High School. This field is used regularly by the High School for many sports including Rugby games during the baseball season. We can't do anything to the Seycove field without first obtaining permission from the school district.

11. Why don't we play more games at Blueridge (and/or other diamonds)?

The Blueridge diamond is slightly smaller than the Seycove diamond and as such is really too small for Majors and AAA games. We do schedule some AA games at Blueridge – however the park has two significant disadvantages in that it does not have a washroom and does not have the concession facility. As much as possible the schedule tries to play all games at Myrtle and instead keep Blueridge open as a practice location.

Myrtle Park and Blueridge are the only Little League sized diamonds within our league boundaries. Other parks such as Parkgate Park and Inter-river are full sized diamonds and therefore not suited to Little League.

Coaches

1. Are there any qualifications required to be a coach?

We encourage all our MSLL coaches to attend the Al Herbeck Teaching for Tomorrow courses that are held in March each year. There are two course one for coaching players aged 4-7 and the other for players aged 7-12. We are also looking into introducing the NCCP coaching program for MSLL coaches.

All coaches must submit a criminal record check (CRC) every two years or use the online CRC process which is valid for 10 years.

2. Why does it seem like the same coaches are selected every year?

In 2014 MSLL had 41 teams and only 31 volunteers signed up to be head coaches in the registration system. In order to get enough head coaches for each team the President spent hours on the phone reaching out to coaches from previous years asking them to volunteer again. Each head coach is then responsible for finding his/her own assistant coaches. If you want to see new faces – MSLL would be more than happy to have more volunteers.

3. How are coaches selected for the Post-Season?

Around mid-May all head coaches and assistant coaches in AA, AAA, Majors, Juniors, Seniors and Bigs are sent an email describing the post-season opportunities and inviting them to apply for either a head coach or assistant coaching position. After receiving the applications the Executive discusses the merit of each. The Executive then have a secret ballot to select the head coach of each team. Executive members may not vote in any division in which they have applied for a position. The head coach is responsible for selecting his assistant coaches although the Executive does hold the power of veto over any assistant selection.

Games

4. **Are all kids given equal playing time at every position?**

In Rookie Junior and Rookie Senior coaches are encouraged to play all players in all positions to give them the opportunity to develop. Starting from the AA division kids will begin to develop more in specific positions. Fair play rules require that each player gets to play both infield and outfield. Coaches in AA up are encouraged to give all players who want to try pitching or catching the opportunity to do so. However, some kids do not have the physical skills, focus or even the desire to play these pressure positions. As such some players will play some positions more than others. All players should be given the opportunity to practice every position during practice sessions.

5. **Is there any way to reduce the number of walks in AA?**

The AA division can feel a bit like a step back after Rookie Senior – but is a critical step in player development as the kids learn to pitch. The transition from the pitching machine to kid pitching is done in steps to try and make it as smooth as possible. While the early season can be very slow – this division often shows the most player improvement with a good standard of baseball being played by the time the playoffs role around.

6. **Do we play games when it's raining?**

We follow Little League rules which specify that games are cancelled only when the field is unsafe to play due to puddles. Games should not be cancelled due to rain – but only when the field becomes unsuitable to play. For this reason coaches do not call games until they have been to the field and checked the conditions. All rained out games in AA, AAA and Majors are rescheduled.

Rally Caps

7. **What is the purpose of the assessments in Rally Caps?**

The purpose of the assessment portion of Rally Caps is to provide direction and measurement of skills development. The players enjoy the mini-games but actually learn far more during the practice portion of a Rally Caps session. The assessment are intended to guide the coaches through the skills they should be looking to teach their players. The two assessment days provide plays with a chance to try out their skills and see how they are progressing. The coloured caps provide an incentive to the kids to work hard in practice. The intention of the assessment is not to compare the kids to one another but simply to measure their own skill development. This is similar to how the Tiny Tots swim programs is run – the only difference being that in baseball you do not need to attain any particular assessment level in order to move on to the next stage.

8. **Why are the Rally Caps shirts so big?**

Good question – we will look into our size options to see if there is any chance of getting smaller shirts next season.