

## Paris Optimist Baseball

Paris Optimist Baseball (POB) is a recreational league intended to promote and facilitate a community based league play. POB accepts any child regardless of race, color, religion, sex or athletic ability. The program focus is on open participation and player development while allowing for a variety of skill levels among its players.

The rules and regulations in this book are presented to you to help all of us make the baseball program successful, fun and rewarding for everyone associated, especially this community's future, the children. The Paris Optimist Club has a goal to "Bring Out the Best In Kids".



# Paris Optimist Baseball Rules and Regulations

## 1.00 Parking Lot

The City of Paris will issue citations for parking in the red marked fire lanes. Parents and visitors are requested to park in the designated parking areas only. The property along Hyw 271 is owed by the Paris Optimist and should be used for overflow parking. **Vehicles pulling trailers must use this parking area instead of parking lots by the ball fields.**

## 2.00 Charles Taylor Complex Rules

**2.01** No metal cleats shall be worn by any players at Charles Taylor Youth Complex.

**2.02** Smoking / E-cigarettes is not allowed in any of the buildings, pavilions, posted areas, or inside Charles Taylor

**2.02 2.03** Complex and within 40 ft. of each entrance into the complex.

**2.04** Coaches, players and spectators are expected to be respectful of the facilities to prevent damage and to place trash in the proper containers. Parents shall be responsible for damage to facilities caused by their children.

**2.05** Coaches and players are required to clean trash from their dugouts after each game.

**2.06** Children are not allowed in the batting cages without a coach and without wearing a batting helmet. Parents are asked to instruct their children to not go into the batting cages. Children found in the batting cages will be taken to sit with their parents.

**2.07** If anyone including children is observed playing in the restrooms or damaging property, it should be reported to an Optimist member.

## 3.00 Fundraising

**3.01** The fields at Charles Taylor Youth Complex are privately owned and funded by the Paris Optimist Club. The City of Paris and Lamar County do not have any control over the complex. All teams are required to participate in the fundraising activities.

**3.02** Coaches who do not support and work with their teams to raise funds shall not be approved to coach Optimist Baseball teams in the future.

**3.03** Teams are required to have their team pictures made by the photographer contracted by the Paris Optimist Club. If a team does not have their team picture made, the team manager will not be allowed to participate in the first game of the post season championship tournament ***and the team shall be required to pay a \$200 fee to replace the Optimist fundraising losses.***

## 4.00 Concession

The concession is one of the many fundraising activities. The concession is owned and operated by the Optimist Club. All proceeds go to help with the operating expense of the baseball program.

## 5.00 Rain Out Procedure

**5.01** A decision on field conditions and cancellation of games due to weather **will not be made until 4:30 PM.** This is to allow every opportunity for the fields to be made playable.

**5.02** When games are cancelled, the League Agents will be notified. Each League Agent will set up his/her procedure for the notification of coaches.

**5.03** Cancellations will also be posted on Facebook, the web site, and sent out through our registration/baseball management platform. Coaches will also be notified by their League Agent.

## 6.00 Player Registration

**6.01** Player registration fees shall be as follows:

- Instructional League - \$50.00
- A League (T-Ball) - \$85.00
- AA League (Coach Pitch) - \$85.00
- AAA League (Kid Pitch) - \$90.00
- Ozone League - \$90.00
- Ranger League - \$100.00

- Upon completing an application financial assistance may be provided based on need.

**6.02** These rates apply to the first two players in a household. Each additional member of a household shall receive a \$15.00 discount.

**6.03** Registration form, liability release, birth certificate and registration fee must be paid and in order prior to players first team practice. A player MAY NOT participate in a game until these requirements are satisfied.

**6.04** There will be no player registration fees refunded after one day prior to the league draft. A statement to this effect will be included on the player registration form.

**6.05** Once leagues have conducted their draft, a \$20.00 fee will be added to the registration fee for late registration. In cases when a league needs additional players, there will not be a late fee.

### **7.00 Player Uniforms**

**7.01** The player sign-up fee includes the uniform shirt and free drinks or snow cones after each game.

**7.02** The players are responsible for the batting helmet, pants, cap, sox, shoes, bat and glove.

**7.03** A batting helmet will be provided if the player does not have a personal helmet.

**7.04** Cap cost should not exceed \$18.00. Coaches should not require a more expensive cap or pant from what is the least expensive in the local sporting goods stores. Example: fitted wool caps, special pants, etc.

**7.05** Teams may wear **ONLY** black, white or gray pants and shirts shall be numbered 1 thru 12 only. Pants must be of length to fit below the knees. The legs must be covered.

**7.06** Team colors are determined by the Optimist Club. A team cannot get someone to sponsor or buy their team something different than has been specified in these requirements.

**7.07** Coaches must communicate to the parents that the most economical caps and pants shall be purchased for the team.

**7.08** Coaches who are confirmed to have required something different than specified in these requirements shall be suspended from the first regular season game and the first post season tournament game.

### **8.00 Sportsmanship**

**8.01** Ejection of a coach or player from a game will carry a minimum one game suspension starting with the next scheduled game for that player or coach. This may be appealed to the League Agent and then to the Baseball Committee. Additional discipline may be applied.

**8.02** A flagrant disregard of rules, profanity, verbal or physical abuse to an umpire or league official may also include a meeting with the Board of Directors.

**8.03** An ejected coach must leave and go outside of the complex into the parking lot. An ejected player must stay in the dugout unless a parent takes him/her with them.

**8.04** A ZERO tolerance policy is in place for coaches and fans. The definition of ZERO tolerance is as follows:

- a. Use of obscene or vulgar language and / or gestures in a loud boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
- b. Openly dispute any decision by an umpire or league official in a loud boisterous manner.
- c. Visual display or any sign of dissatisfaction with an umpire or league official's decision (display any loud boisterous sign of dissatisfaction with an umpire, league official or coach).
- d. Visually or verbally incites the umpires, players, or spectators.
- e. Any loud boisterous arguments or incidents with another fan or family members (ex-spouses, etc.).
- f. Any physical contact with anyone.

**8.05** The Paris Police will be immediately summoned should anyone involved in a fight or disturbance that cannot be resolved. The Paris Police will also be summoned if anyone requested to leave the complex refuses.

**8.06** Paris Optimist members have a duty and authority to maintain order at the ballpark and may eject anyone that is exhibiting disruptive behavior. An ejected person must leave the park immediately.

### **9.00 Accident Insurance Coverage**

**9.01** Paris Optimist Baseball carries an accident insurance policy that covers each registered child for injuries incurred while participating in scheduled games, practices and other scheduled League activities. This policy is an excess coverage policy.

**9.02** If a child incurs an injury, parents need to first file the claim with their primary medical insurance carrier. When no other insurance is available or whenever any medical expenses are not paid by the primary policy or when deductible

results in an unpaid charge, these unpaid bills should to be submitted to Sadler Insurance Company. This is done by obtaining an on-line claim form. Contact the Paris Optimist E. D. or a Player Agent for more information.

### **10.00 Liability Coverage**

**10.01** Paris Optimist Baseball carries general liability insurance. However, damage to parked cars by errant baseballs or parking lot accidents is expressly excluded.

### **11.00 League Agent Definition**

**11.01** An Optimist Club member who is in charge of a league division. He/ she is a volunteer responsible for assigning coaches, coaches' meetings, registration of players, submitting all required paperwork, ensuring that there is someone to be in attendance at the fields each day of games. This person cannot be a coach of the same league that he or she coaches in.

### **12.00 Field Commissioner Definition**

**12.01** This person is not required to be an Optimist member. He/She can be a coach or a volunteer. Their responsibility is to monitor the playing fields for disturbances, take care of scorekeepers, check to see if umpires get to the fields, and be available for questions from coaches, umpires, and fans.

### **13.00 Coaches**

**13.01** Coaches on each team must have background checks and be approved by the Board of Directors prior to first game of the season.

**13.02** Paris Optimist Club members shall be given first consideration for coaching positions. A written notice for a coaching position must be submitted to the League Agent. If there are more coaches' applications than there are teams available needing coaches, the following criteria will be used to select coach and assign them to a team.

1. Desire to coach kids.
2. Optimist member in good standing.
3. Has demonstrated support for the Optimist Club and baseball program.
4. Has demonstrated good sportsmanship leadership and motivation with kids.
5. Returning assistant coach to be head coach of same team.
6. Head coaches moving up from other age divisions by seniority (number of years coached in the Optimist Baseball league).

Based on this criteria and qualifications, the League Agent will assign coaches to teams and submit names to the board of directors for approval.

**13.03** A head coach and only one assistant will be allowed on a team for the purpose of protecting (free) players.

**13.04** The first assistant coach must be named the day prior to player draft.

**13.05** The head coach and first assistant coach will get one protected player each (free pick if he/she has no player). This free pick must be named prior to the day of the player draft. The first assistant coach must also be presented to the board by the League Agent and confirmed that he/she will be an active coach with the team at workouts and at games.

**13.06** A first assistant coach cannot be named for the purpose of a team getting a protected player and the coach not be an active coach with the team. Protected (free) players are those players who are eligible for the draft only (not pool players and brother / sister).

**13.07** The League Agent will investigate each case where a head coach or first assistant coach with a protected player does not participate with the team (such as sitting in the stands during games, watching a game on another field, helping coach in another league, not helping with workouts, or any other activities that indicate non-participation). The first assistant and head coach must be in regular attendance at the team practices and games. If the reason for non-participation by a coach is not justifiable, the coach in violation will be removed from the team. The team will be required to have one less coach on the field at team games for the remainder of the season.

**13.08** A head coach and/or a first assistant coach shall not be the head coach or first assistant coach for another Optimist Baseball team in another age division. If they serve as a third or fourth coach on another team, they must give priority for workouts and games to the team that they are named head coach or first assistant.

**13.09** A head coach or first assistant coach shall not move to another team in the same age division. Exception: In the case where the League Agent cannot find enough head coaches, he/she may assign a first assistant coach or a parent

with a player from a team to fill the needed vacancy of another team. In this case (and the player was a free pick) the team losing the player of the first assistant coach or parent shall be given an additional first round draft choice which shall be the last pick of the first round. There may be other circumstances such as the COVID-19 season that an exception would be made.

**13.10** If there is a Head Coach or First Assistant Coach on a team that is to be eliminated, the League Agent may place a coach from the eliminated team and their “protected player” on a team to be retained provided the player stays in the same league.

#### **14.00 Background Checks**

**14.01** Background checks shall be conducted on the head coach, first assistant coach and volunteers working with the team players and in the Optimist program. Background checks will be conducted every two years or when a coach moves to the next age division.

**14.02** All coaches of league teams must have provided Child Protection or any other training as required by Paris Optimist. Coaches will be penalized if they refuse to attend training that is provided. Exception: In A and AA if there are not enough trained coaches for assistants, only the head coach must be **trained**.

#### **15.00 Player Placement System**

**15.01** The Optimist goal is to not turn any child away who wants to play baseball. Application can be made for financial assistance.

**15.02** The objective is to put no more than 11 players on a team. The Player agent may make exceptions if needed.

**15.03** Extra players will be placed on a team during the draft by first asking coaches to volunteer to take an extra player. If there are not enough volunteers, there will be a drawing to place them on a team.

**15.04** In emergency situations for a team short of players, the League Agent has the authority to place late sign-ups on a team or teams in a way to ensure that there will be enough players to prevent forfeits. (**See 15.25, Adding Players After Season Starts**).

**15.05** Due to the need to number of players registered or other circumstances it may be necessary to redraft a league some years. The decision to redraft will be made by the League Agent.

**15.06** The draft order will be determined by random draw.

**15.07** A “Snake Draft” where the first team drafts first the first round and the last team drafts first the next round will be used. This order will be followed though out the draft.

**15.08** When teams reach eight (8) or more players in the draft, they will not draft again until all teams have 8 players. A team that begins the draft with eight (8) players shall not be allowed a first-round pick or a “Pool Player”.

**15.09** Depending on the number of teams in an age division, the draft may be oriented to allow specific ages to play together.

**15.10** The son / daughters of the Head Coach and First Assistant Coach of a teams shall be placed on a team as “protected payers”.

**15.11** If the Head Coach and or the First Assistant Coach does not have a child, they will be allowed a “free” draft pick up to the day prior to the draft.

**15.12** Players requesting to play on a specific team **shall not** be honored. Exception: In "hardship" cases the League Agent may ask for 100% approval of the coaches in that age division to honor a player request to play on a specific team.

**15.13** When someone is given a Head Coach position (team A) and he / she has a player on another team (team B), that player shall be assigned to that team (team A). The team (team B) who gives up this player will be given the third-round pick of (team A). The team B player must be a player who was drafted and not a player added to the team during the season.

**15.14** Brothers and or sisters shall be put on the same team unless requested by the parents to be separated. This shall include stepbrothers and sisters and children of “Common Law” marriages where there is proof of children living in same residence.

**15.15** A brother/sister may be put into the draft if they chose. However, they will be bound to the team that drafts them along with all other rules that apply to protected (free) players on a team

**15.16** A team shall not have more than two undrafted players on a team. Exception: Teams may have more than two undrafted players when brothers and sisters are involved.

**15.17** In some cases, the League Agent may find it necessary to identify “pitchers”, “catchers”, “skilled” and “unskilled” players to be drafted separately . This may be allowed to bring parity among the teams in the league.

**15.18** The Head Coach and two named assistant coaches will be the only team representatives at the draft. No players or children shall be in attendance.

**15.19** If tryouts are conducted players who participate in the tryouts will be drafted and placed on teams first. Parents of player who do not participate in the tryouts will become pool players. All teams will be eligible for the drawing of Pool Players.

**15.20** Once a player is picked up as a “protected player” by a coach or first assistant coach, another player cannot be picked up free until the “protected player” has graduated or quits the team. If the assistant or head coach does not return the next year to his/her team, his/her free pick becomes a pool player.

**15.21** A player who desires to not play on the same team that he/she played on the previous year may make a request to not play on that team again. The request must be made at the time of registration and that player must become a “pool player”.

**15.22** A player cannot change leagues and be eligible for All-Star play (DYB Rules). Exception: When a redraft occurs.

**15.23** Any player who refuses to be picked up as a “free” protected player by a coach that has a “free” pick will be placed in the pool that year. Any player who refuses to play for a team after being drafted will not be eligible to play in the Paris Optimist League for that year.

**15.24** There shall be no **trading of players** during or after the draft.

**15.25** Adding Players After Season Starts

- a. Players will be allowed to sign-up after the draft provided there are any teams with less than 11 players.
- b. Players who sign up late will be placed on a team according to (1) the team with the least number of players (2) the current year draft order (3) coach volunteers to take extra player.
- c. The League Agent will assist a team who has 9 or less players find players to add to the team.
- d. The League Agent will investigate each team situation to prevent recruiting of players by a team.
- e. A player must play a minimum of 7 games to be eligible to play in the post season tournament. Exception: Agreement of 100% of coaches to allow a team to play a player with less than 7 games to prevent forfeits.
- f. High school varsity players shall not be eligible to sign up after the second week of season play.

## **16.00 Pool Players**

**16.01** Pool Player are defined as:

- a. Protected players of head coaches and first assistant coaches who resign from the team during the regular season or after the season for any reason. Exception: If the League Agent does not allow a coach to return to the team, the League Agent may allow the removed coach’s free “protected player” to stay on the team.
- b. Players that request to be removed from a team for any reason.
- c. Players that are displaced from their team due to team reduction or the inability to find sufficient coaches.
- d. “Protected players” from teams where there were “free picks” and their coach was not approved or removed by the Paris Optimist Board. Exception: If there is no indication of “stacking” a team, the Player Agent may choose to leave the player on the team.

**16.02** Pool players will not be eligible to return to their original team

**16.03** Pool players who want to remain eligible for All-stars must stay in the same league where they were franchised with Dixie Baseball.

**16.04** Pool players’ names will be written on a slip of paper and placed in a “hat” along with enough blank slips to allow all eligible teams an opportunity to draw the players.

**16.05** Slips of paper with names of Pool Players will be selected from the “hat” in the draft order for that league.

**16.06** Eligible teams will be allowed to skip one time their turn to draw for a Pool Player. (Exception: If the Player Agent has set an allowable number of players for that age group and the draw could put that team over the maximum number the team will not be eligible to draw.)

## **17.00 Reserved**

## **18.00 Outside Teams – Regular Season**

**18.01** Blossom, Detroit and Bogata are considered a part of the Paris Optimist Ranger League and are eligible to play for the league championship.

**18.02** A, AA, AAA and Ozone divisions from these same small area leagues may be scheduled with Paris Optimist to give them or the Paris Optimist required spring season games. The non-Optimist teams shall not play for the league championship.

### **19.00 Reserved**

### **20.00 Reserved**

### **21.00 Select /Travel Ball Players**

**21.01** Select team players may participate in other sports programs' weekend games and tournaments. Play in weekend games and tournaments **must not** in any way interfere with a players' responsibility to the Paris Optimist Dixie League practices or games.

### **22.00 Player Ages and Divisions**

**22.01** All players will play within their age division as outlined under Dixie Youth and Ranger Youth Baseball rules.

**22.02** **League age** is the age of a player prior to May 1.

- a. Instructional Division - Ages 3 & 4
- b. A – Division (T-Ball) – Ages 5 & 6
- c. AA-Division (Coach Pitch) – Ages 7 & 8
- d. AAA-Division -- Ages 9 & 10
- e. Ozone Division – Ages 11 & 12
- f. Ranger Division – Ages 13 & 14 (age 15 may play if not playing high school baseball)

**Exception:** A player who is 6, 8, 10 or 12 and has a birthday prior to September 1 may apply in writing prior to registration to move up to the next age division. Players approved by the League Agent to move up to the next league age (T-ball, AA, AAA, Ozone, or Ranger) shall be entered in the regular draft. In the case there are more than 11 players per team registered in a league age (5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14), the player / players moving up must be approved by the Baseball Committee to play up in that league and a drawing for the player / players will be conducted at the end of the draft. This exception does not apply to a coach who has a "protected player" (son /daughter) playing up. **A player who plays up to the next age division shall not play down on an All-Star Tournament team.** Any player who is two years old shall not play up.

### **23.00 Local League Playing Rules**

**23.01** Courtesy runner **MUST** be used for the catcher when there are two outs. There are no courtesy runners in T-Ball.

**23.02** A batter must keep one foot in the batters' box at all times during batting.

**23.03** If a team does not have 8 players to start a game and expects that players are on the way to the game, upon request the game may be delayed 15 minutes to give players time to arrive. The time taken for the players to arrive shall be deducted from the game time limit.

**23.04** A team may play with 8 players without forfeiting the game

### **24.00 Tee Ball, Coach Pitch and AAA Rules:**

**24.01** A seven-run rule for every inning with **NO** open inning

**24.02** Tee Ball and Coach Pitch will not keep score during regular season. The scoreboards shall not be used.

**24.03 Tournaments** - If either team is more than 7 runs ahead at the end of the time limit, the game will be called. This could happen in the middle of an inning.

**24.04** All teams will play 10 players on defense. Four players **must** play in the outfield. They may not play closer than 20 ft. from the base line.

**24.05** Batting helmet with face mask is required for Tee Ball, Coach Pitch and AAA divisions. Face masks are optional for all other age divisions. **Exception:** Batting Helmets with face mask will be optional for each individual player on the tournament All-star teams.

### **25.00 Run Rule for AAA, Ozone, Ranger**

**25.01** A game shall be considered a regulation game in regular season and post season tournament play when a team is ahead by:

- a. 20 runs after 1 inning
- b. 15 runs after 2 innings
- c. 12 runs after 3 innings
- d. 10 runs after 4 innings
- e. 8 runs after 5 innings

**Note:** AAA will use the 12-run rule after 3 innings when games are played using the 7 runs per inning rule.

**25.02** In cases where a game is shortened by weather or other unplanned events, three (3) innings will be considered an official game.

**25.03** Scoreboards on the Tee Ball and AA fields shall NOT be used during regular season.

### **26.00 Tee Ball Division (5-6)**

**26.01** Games shall be played by the Dixie Youth Baseball Rulebook (DYB) with the following exceptions:

- a. There shall be NO coach pitching.
- b. There shall be NO coaches on the playing field during the game.

**Note:** The objective of league play will be to have no more than 11 players on a team.

In place of batting the line up each inning, the game will continue until the 55-minute time limit expires.

### **27.00 AAA Division (9-10)**

**27.01** Four (4) players will play the outfield.

**27.02** There is no 20' line. Outfielders must play in the outfield and may not play on the infield.

**28.00 Ranger Division (13-14)** shall use the Dixie Youth Rulebook Ozone Rules and the Ranger Supplement.

- a. Metal cleats shall NOT be used.
- b. Headfirst slide is allowed.
- c. 15-year-old players who do not play high school baseball shall be eligible to play in the Ranger League. 15-year-old players shall not play the catcher and pitcher positions.

### **29.00 Local League regular season game time limits will be as follows:**

- a. Ranger League = 1hr. 30 min. and no new inning after time has expired or 9:50 P.M.
- b. Ozone = 1hr. 30 min. and no new inning after time has expired or 9:45 P.M.
- c. "AAA" = 1hr. 30 min. and no new inning after time has expired or 9:45 P.M.
- d. "AA" = 1hr. 10min. for 2 games on same field
- e. "AA" = 1hr. for 3 games on same field
- f. Tee Ball = 55 minutes
- g. There will be no new inning to start with less than 5 minutes left in the game time limit. Exception: this rule will not apply to end of season tournament games.

**29.01** Suspended games due to weather will not be made up. Both coaches may request that a game be continued at a later date if fields are available.

**29.02** There shall be no infield warm-up (practice) prior to games.

**28.03** The inning is over when a team scores 7 runs or make three out.

### **30.00 Player Participation**

**30.01** The continuous batting order shall be used in all age divisions. If a player becomes sick or must leave the game, the player position in the batting line up will be skipped. An OUT SHALL NOT be charged.

**30.02** There will be FREE substitution on defense. Except for the pitcher, any player may enter the game on defense in any defensive position as many times as deemed necessary by the team manager.

**30.03** All players must play a minimum of every other inning on defense. A player must not sit out two consecutive innings on defense. They must play a minimum of one complete inning (three outs) each time they enter the game on defense. Coaches must report defensive substitutions to the scorekeeper.

**30.04** A team that cannot field 8 players may pick up players from the opposing team. If the opposing team does not have extra players, the two coaches may alternate players between the teams on defense. Players from other Optimist teams may also be picked up. The players picked up shall not pitch. The games will be counted as forfeits.

### **31.00 Practices and Season Play**

**31.01** The head coach (exception Instructional League coaches) must conduct a minimum of one team practice each week starting the week after the league draft. Exception: Spring break week, weeks when a team plays 3 games and bad weather weeks. After verification of the first complaint by the Player Agent, the coach will be given a warning. Second complaint the coach shall be removed from coaching in the next scheduled game. Third complaint the coach shall be removed as a coach.

**31.02** In cases of a player failing to attend practice or arriving late to games, the player may be disciplined by the coach.

**31.03** Normally teams will play two games per week. A season will have a 15-game schedule plus an end-of-season tournament for the league championship. This will be followed by All-Star tournament play. The league season play shall end by the second week in June. All-Star tournament play could continue through July.

### **32.00 Post Season Championship Games**

**32.01** Time Limits – post season tournament games will be played with the regular season time limit for that division. Exception: single championship game played on a single field will be played with no time limit. Exception: Both team managers may agree to play with the game time limit. This must be confirmed prior to teams taking the field for pregame practice.

**32.02** Number of Players – All (including Ranger Division) post season tournaments will be played with the DYB local league option that a game must start and finish with 8 (eight) players (a ninth player **cannot** be picked up).

**32.03** Post Season tournaments using seeding from the regular season shall use the following season tie breakers:

- a. Head-to-Head Play
- b. Most Runs Scored Head-to-Head
- c. Coin toss

**312.04** Game Tie Breaker Rule –Starting with the first inning after a time limit expires or the 5<sup>th</sup> inning in T-Ball, the 6<sup>th</sup>inning in Coach Pitch, AAA and Ozone and the 7<sup>th</sup> inning in Ranger, the last three batters from the previous inning shall be placed on base in reverse order from their batting order. The batter shall be the next player up in the batting order from the previous inning. The inning will start with one (1) out. Two (2) innings will be played with this format. If the game is still tied after the two extra innings, the winning team will be determined by the following:

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> – team with the most runners to reach third base in the game.
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> – team with the most runners to reach second base in the game.
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup>-- team with the most runners to reach first base in the game.
- d. 4<sup>th</sup> – team that left the most runners on base.
- e. 5<sup>th</sup>- team that allowed the least number of runs per game in the tournament.
- f. 6<sup>th</sup> - if the game is tied after all tie breakers have been considered and if there is a second game on the same field to follow or if it is the second game and time curfew has expired, the game shall be resumed the next day at a time scheduled by the Player Agent.

**32.05** The League Championship Games Tie Breaker. The two of three championship games (one game on single field) or championship game of single play-off bracket to determine the league champion will be played with extra innings until the winner is determined. The games must be played as a single game on one field. (In case of weather delays forcing two games to be played on a single field, the tie breakers shall be used).

### **33.00 Awards and Recognition**

**33.01** Individual awards will be given to members of first and second place teams only in each league at the end of the spring and fall season play tournaments. In addition to individual awards, a special team trophy for Sportsmanship also may be given in each league. Participation awards will be given only to the Instructional League players.

**33.02** All-Star coaches and players will be announced and presented with a recognition award. Any player who will not be available to participate with the team until the team is eliminated from tournament play shall not be announce.

### **34.0 All-Star Policies**

**34.01** The League Agent with the signed and documented approval of 2 or more members of the baseball committee shall select all (3 or 4) All-star coaches on a team. The following qualities shall be considered in selecting All-star coaches:

- a) Motivates and encourages his / her teams' players, and works to develop the weaker players,
- b) Conducts at least one team practice per week,
- c) While coaching his / her Optimist team, he / she gives the team priority over other sports,
- d) Is a role model and displays sportsmanship on and off the field,
- e) Carries out instructions given by the Optimist baseball program and League Agent,
- f) Is an active working member of the Paris Optimist Club. Examples of being an active member are: 1) being in regular attendance at club meetings, 2) working tournaments, 3) participation on a club committee, 4) working on the annual Baseball Bash, 5) involving team in fundraising, 6) volunteering to assist the club with special needs and special request,
- g) Courteous and respectful to umpires
- h) Best regular season team win and loss record or best winning percentage.
- i) Assisted with tournaments,

#### **34.02 Reserved**

**34.03** All-star teams for all divisions shall be selected by a voting process with a paper or electronic ballot. All players from every team are eligible for selection to an All-Star Team.

**34.04** The process will be as follows:

- a. All players on all teams must be considered in the voting for All-Stars. All players from every team should be listed on a ballot. Parents will be required to sign their player up for All-star consideration. A sign-up sheet will be given to each team coach two weeks prior to the end of the season. The parents shall declare that their son / daughter is available to play All-stars and that they are committed to the All-star dates, Parents will also be required to sign a commitment letter when they sign the medical release form.
- b. The age 7, 9 and 11 All-stars must be selected before the age 8, 10 and 12.
- c. Only two coaches (manager and first assistant) from each team will vote with the top 8 players receiving the most votes being placed on the team. The voting process must be by paper ballot. The manager of the team shall have four free picks. It is recommended to allow the players on a team to vote, also.
- d. Coaches may recommend players from their team for All-Stars. These recommendations should be players who have demonstrated good baseball skills, have performed well at their position, have displayed good sportsmanship and whose parents have confirmed that the players will be available for All Star practices and games until their team is eliminated from tournament play.
- e. Any eligible coach who fails to turn in an All-star ballot shall not be allowed to coach the first game of the post-season league tournament. Any player unable to participate in All-Star team practice will not be eligible for All-Star tournament play.
- f. A player cannot be announced and recognized as an All-star who are not going to practice and play the required time period required for the team. This includes such cases as vacation, baseball camps, or other reasons for being absent. Recognition shall not be given, and that player will be replaced immediately. Two weeks prior to the end of regular season play, team coaches will petition their players to get commitment from players / parents desiring to play All Stars.
- g. A player aged 4, 6, 8, 10 or 12 who plays up to the next age division **shall not** be eligible to play on an age 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12 All-star team that he / she moved up to. The player playing up in an age division may play on the 7, 9 or 11 age All-star teams.
- h. All-Star coaches and players must commit to participating with their team until the team is eliminated from tournament play. A letter of commitment will also be signed by coaches and player parents.
- i. A coach or player who resigns from an All-Star Team for travel baseball play, vacation or who quits his/her team during All-Star Tournament team shall not be eligible to participate on another Optimist All-Star team for a period of two years. Each player and coach shall be given information on the length of the All-Star tournament season and requested to commit to that time period.
- j. All-star coaches and players will be announced and introduced on the field. Awards will not be presented.

**34.05** A player must have played in the Paris Optimist baseball program for two consecutive years to be eligible for All-Stars

#### **35.00 All-Star Expense Policy**

**35.01** All-Star teams will pay for all tournament expenses. This includes uniform and travel expenses. A player who cannot fund these expenses may petition the League Agent for assistance. In a case of extreme hardship and/or when a

team can *demonstrate* that they have conducted fundraising and have fallen short they may make a request to PO the board for assistance with their **hotel** expenses.

**35.02** Due to hardship on parents it is recommended that the player All-star uniform cost be limited to not more than \$100.

**35.03** The individual All-Star teams shall be responsible for selecting and purchasing their uniforms. The team name on the shirt must have Paris American or Paris National on it. There shall be no "Select Baseball" team names used. Uniforms must be approved by the Player Agent of the league prior to purchase. American League team colors shall be red / white. The National League team colors shall be blue or navy / white. The single ages (7U, 9U, 11U) shall be red / white or navy or blue / white (white with red or blue is acceptable).

### **36.00 World Series Team Expense Policy**

**36.01** A team that qualifies for the World Series or a team advancing to another level of tournament play designated as a World Series shall be required to raise at least two-thirds of the needed expense money necessary to go to the series before making a request for assistance to the Optimist Club. This will be above and beyond the money given to them by Dixie. An Optimist member or delegate must be assigned to travel with the team as Team Business Manager. The Team Business Manager shall have the duties of managing the team money to pay expenses and this person's travel expenses shall be paid along with the expenses of the team. Expenses of coaches' wives and children (not team members) will not be paid. The President, two Vice-Presidents and Player Agent shall monitor and approve the purchase of uniforms and transportation. *The Optimist Club shall assist the team in fundraising by making request to the Chamber of Commerce or other resources.* The Paris Optimist Club will submit and approve all advertising for recognition of contributors to the team.

### **37.00 Fall League**

**37.01** Returning managers and their returning players only may be placed on a fall team without being included in the draft process.

**37.02** Paris Optimist teams who are not a part of the draft process shall not be allowed. There shall not be any "Select" or "Travel" teams to play in the Fall League.

**37.03** Small league area teams may be allowed to play in the Paris Optimist fall league. If one of these leagues have more than one team, they must have a draft for the two teams. If they only have enough players for one team, they may be allowed to play with the approval of the Fall Player Agent.

**37.04** Dixie Youth Baseball rules will apply with the following exceptions:

**37.05** The Fall League is an instructional league (not competitive). Coaches shall give all players equal playing time in the course of two games and allow players to play different positions.

**37.06** Each team must conduct one practice per week. At the request of the coach, teams may practice a maximum of one time per week at Woodall.

**37.07** Games shall be played according to the game times on the schedule. Any change must be made by the league commissioner (not coaches' agreements).

**37.08** Two games per day shall be played as scheduled. Coaches shall not have an agreement to play one game with an extended time limit.

**37.09** Time limits are as follows:

- a. Ranger, Ozone (12-U) and AAA (10-U) - Five innings or 1 hr. 25 minutes "Drop Dead" time limit.
- b. AA (8-U) - Five innings or 1hr. 10 min. time limit. A new inning starts when the third out of an inning is made.
- c. Tee Ball – 50-minute time limit.

**37.10** There will not be any extra innings if the game ends in a tie.

**37.11** No win and loss records will be kept..

**37.12** A drawing will be conducted to place teams in the post season tournament bracket.

**37.13** Pitch Count Limits - in all leagues, a pitcher who pitches 41 or more pitches in the first game in the same day cannot pitch again that same day. Pitchers are limited to:

- a. AAA = 75 pitches in one game or one day
- b. Ozone = 85 pitches in one game or one day
- c. Ranger = 95 pitches in one game or one day

**37.14** The home team shall be the official scorekeeper and keep pitch count

**37.15** The continuous batting order will be used. An out will NOT be accessed if a team is missing a player or has less players than the other team.

**37.16** In Ranger and Ozone Leagues balks will be called. There will be no games where warnings are given.

**37.17** Steel cleats are not allowed for any age group. This also applies to out of town teams.

**37.18** Paris Optimist Tee ball, Coach Pitch and AAA players are required to wear a batting helmet with face mask. Face mask are optional with out of town teams.

**37.19** Each team will furnish their own uniforms and 2 game balls for each game.

**37.20** Players will furnish their own water for games.

**37.21** There may be times when there is a shortage of umpires and one umpire will be used behind the mound. There will be one umpire used for AA (8-U) and AAA (10-U) most of the time.

**37.22** The concession will be open for drinks, hot dogs, nachos, candy and popcorn. *Free snow cones will **not** be given to teams.*

**37.23** The NO TOLERANCE policy in effect at the ball park. Coaches and players must sit out the next scheduled game for any ejection from the game. Fans who yell at the players, umpires, coach or fans and who cause any type of trouble will be removed from the ball park for the remainder of the season. This is the **first and only warning**. Make sure that all players and fans understand the policy.

**37.24** Run Rules:

- a. 20 after 1 inning
- b. 15 after 2 innings
- c. 12 after 3 innings
- d. 10 after 4 innings
- e. 8 after 5 innings

### **38.00 Use of Fields at Charles Taylor Youth Complex**

**38.01** Playing fields cannot be used for team practice without permission from the Optimist Board or a designated member appointed by the Board who is in charge of the fields.

**38.02** Optimist All-Star Teams shall be authorized to use the fields for practice when approved and scheduled by the Optimist Director of Grounds.

**38.03** Optimist Fall Baseball League teams shall be authorized to use the fields once per week for practice provided there is time. Use must be scheduled through the Optimist Director of Grounds. Teams must clean up all trash inside and outside the fields.

**38.04** In case of wet weather, the contracted groundskeeper shall determine if the conditions of the fields are suitable for use.

**38.05** Teams must clean up all trash outside and inside the fields to retain the privilege of using the fields. In cases when state tournaments are scheduled at the complex, it may be necessary to not allow practice at the complex.

### **39.00 Rental of the facilities**

**39...01** Fields - \$85 per day per field (not raked or marked).

Fields - \$100 per day per field (raked and marked).

Fields - \$20 per hour for lights on a field.

Fields - \$15 per hour for a minimum of 2 hours.

Fields – shall not be rented for “travel” or “select” baseball tournaments.

Pavilions - \$75 per day.

Pavilion plus a field - \$100 per day.

Meeting rooms and concession will not be rented.

## **Safe Sport Act Federal Law Applies to DYB Franchised Leagues**

In 2018, Congress enacted a new Federal law (Public Law 115-126) which establishes a nationwide standard “**duty to report**” suspected child abuse. The “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017” (“Safe Sport Act”) specifically applies to all Dixie Youth Baseball (“**DYB**”) leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations. All **DYB** leagues must comply with the following provisions of the **Safe Sport Act**:

- 1) **Duty to Report Child Abuse** – Dixie Youth Baseball franchised leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations whose membership includes any adult who is in regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to law enforcement. Please review the “**Abuse Reporting Guidelines**” under the **League Risk Management** tab on the **DYB** website at youth.dixie.org,
- 2) **Limit One-On-One Interaction with Minors** – Dixie Youth Baseball franchised leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations must establish procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor and an adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility under a jurisdiction of the league without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except in emergency circumstances.
- 3) **Training for Adults and Minors** - Dixie Youth Baseball franchised leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations must offer and provide consistent training to all adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors, and subject to parental consent, to members who are minors, regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse to allow a complainant to report easily an incident of child abuse to appropriate persons.
  - This Plan will serve as awareness education training for all league officials and staff who agree to educate themselves on all forms of misconduct and to refrain from engaging in such misconduct and in violating the policies herein. Leagues may adopt this Plan or adopt a similar plan which complies with Federal law.
  - The **Safe Sport Act** requires sports organizations including Dixie Youth Baseball franchised leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations to provide training to minors on preventing and reporting of child abuse. **DYB** league organizations shall provide all parents of minor children access to the “Abuse Avoidance Training for Minors” or a similar document from another source to each parent with a strong recommendation that each parent should review this document with their minor child. Under the **League Risk Management** tab on the **DYB** website at youth.dixie.org, please review the “*Abuse Awareness Training - Minors*”.

**Prohibit Retaliation** - **DYB** franchised leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations must prohibit retaliation against any individual who makes a report required under the **Safe Sport Act**

### **DYB Child Protection Plan (a child abuse/molestation risk management plan)**

This **DYB Child Protection Plan** is designed to meet the requirements of the Safe Sport Act and has the following components:

- **DYB Child Protection Plan** – A detailed child abuse/molestation risk management plan (or similar comprehensive plan) adopted and implemented by all DYB franchised leagues;
- **Background Check Guidelines** – Guidelines for leagues conducting third-party criminal background checks which, at a minimum, search the National Criminal Database and the National Sex Offender Registry in all 50 states.
- **Abuse Reporting Guidelines** - Guidelines for compliance with Federal law for reporting sexual abuse of minors. Individuals who fail sexual abuse of minors to the appropriate child services organization and/or local law enforcement are subject to criminal penalties;

- **Abuse Training for Minors** – On a voluntary basis, recommended information for parents to discuss age appropriate content with their children based on the child’s age and maturity level relating to the prevention and reporting of child abuse.

## **Purpose**

The safety and well-being of all participants is paramount in the Dixie Youth Baseball® (“**DYB**”) program. **DYB** wants all youth to participate in a safe environment. **DYB** leagues and/or their sponsoring organizations have the responsibility to protect the children playing in its local program.

The purpose of this risk management plan is to reduce and/or prevent the occurrences of misconduct in **DYB** affiliated leagues baseball programs as well as to reduce the liability potential for **DYB** leagues and/or sponsoring organizations. Misconduct can negatively impact participants, league official/staff members, family, friends, and the sport.

## **Definitions**

**Participant:** Any athlete or non-athlete participant who participates in any tryouts, practices, drills, instructional sessions, competitions, camps, clinics, tournaments, or non-sport outings including travel, lodging, and health or medical treatment sponsored by the league.

**Child, Children, Minor, and Youth:** Anyone under the age of 18. These terms are used interchangeably throughout this Plan .

**Manager or Coach:** Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training, or advising athletes of the league.

**Misconduct:** Behavior that results in harm, the potential for harm, or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sports: sexual (including grooming behavior), physical, emotional, bullying, harassment, and hazing.

**League:** Local league organizations which affiliate with Dixie Youth that adopt this Plan .

**League Misconduct Officer (MO) and/or Misconduct Committee (MC):** The League MO-Officer or the MC- Committee appointed by the league that manages any and all allegations of misconduct and policy violations. The League MO and/or MC report to the league’s board of directors.

**League Official/Staff Member:** Any paid or unpaid member providing service to the league including officers, directors, administrators, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, and team parents.

## **TYPES OF MISCONDUCT AND EXAMPLES**

The following six types of misconduct are prohibited by the league:

### **1. Sexual Misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse**

Sexual misconduct is defined as:

- Any sexual interaction, whether non-touching or touching, that is forced or perpetrated in an exploitative, harassing, aggressive, or threatening manner.
- Any sexual interaction between a participant and an individual with direct, indirect, or evaluative authority. Such relationships usually involve power imbalance; disparity in age, development, size, or intellectual capabilities; the existence of an aggressor; and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative.
- Any conduct or acts defined under state or federal law as sexual abuse or misconduct.

Sexual misconduct can be between adults, between adults and minors, or between minors. Minors don’t have the legal capacity to consent to sexual activity with an adult, and as a result, any sexual interaction between a minor and adult is strictly prohibited.

Types of sexual misconduct include:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual abuse
- Any other equal intimacies that exploit an athlete

Touching offenses include:

- Fondling a participant's breasts or buttocks;
- Providing a sports-related reward (ex: playing time, position, lessons, award, praise) in exchange for sexual favors;
- Sexual penetration and sexual touching;
- Genital contact whether or not either party is clothed
- Any intimacies or sexual relations between a league official/staff member and participant when the league official/staff member is in a position of authority, trust, control, or evaluative decision making over the participant.

### **Permissible Physical Contact**

Some level of physical contact between a coach and a participant may be appropriate, such as in instruction, celebration, or consolation of a distraught participant who has been injured or after losing a competition.

Appropriate physical contact in training and instruction consists of the following elements:

- The physical contact takes place in public.
- There is no potential for or actual, physical, or sexual intimacies during the physical contact.
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the participant and not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

Prohibited forms of physical contact include:

- Lingering or repeated embrace that goes beyond acceptable physical touch.
- Tickling, horseplay, or wrestling.
- Continued physical contact that makes a participant uncomfortable.

Non-touching offenses include:

- Making innuendos, comments, or jokes of a sexual nature about a participant or other behavior that is sexually harassing.
- A league official/staff member referencing his or her sexual activities with a participant.
- Questioning a participant about his or her sexual activities.
- A league official/staff member requesting or sending a revealing or nude photo to a participant.
- Exposing participants to pornographic material.
- Voyeurism
- Sending participants communications or photos, whether electronic (e.g. sexting) or otherwise, of a sexually suggestive or explicit nature.
- Intentionally exposing a participant to sexual acts.
- Intentionally exposing a participant to nudity (except for shared changing areas or locker rooms).
- Non-verbal or verbal communication of a sexual nature; physical advances; or sexual solicitation.

The following defenses are not allowed under any circumstances to an allegation of sexual misconduct: (1) the consent of a minor, mistaking the age of a participant, or that the interaction did not occur during a sanctioned event of the league.

### **Peer-to-Peer Child Sexual Misconduct**

Approximately one-third of all cases of sexual abuse are child peer-to-peer. Whether or not sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance in power and/or intellectual capabilities. Allegations or suspicions of peer-to-peer child sexual abuse must be reported to the child abuse officer or a board member.

## Grooming

Grooming is an intentional and effective strategy that sexual predators use to set up and prepare victims, parents, league officials and staff to gain a position of trust and lower their defenses, which assists in the perpetration of misconduct.

The steps taken in the grooming or seduction process are:

- Identify a child and determine his or her vulnerable areas (ex: being misunderstood, lack of attention from parents, lack of spending money, absent parents, etc.)
- Through careful observation of the target, determine their needs to fill what is missing.
- Fill the needs to create a special bond and to gain their trust. Examples are providing gifts and spending money, helping with homework, providing transportation, special consideration on the team such as more playing time, special attention, sharing secrets, etc.
- Spend a disproportionate amount of time with the family to gain their trust.
- Isolate the victim from their peers to create situations where they are alone.
- Gradually introduce sexual interplay that may start with conversations of a sexual nature (in person, texting, and social media), providing alcohol and drugs to lower inhibitions, watching pornography, sharing nude photos, tickling, horseplay, massages, and other boundary invasions that lead to sexual touching and nudity.
- Maintaining control and silence to continue and keep the sexual abuse hidden.
- Use shame or fear as motivating factors to continue the relationship.

League official/staff and parents who understand the grooming process and the policies that are meant to prevent it through education are likely to identify it and notify the League MO or a board member of suspicious behavior.

## One-on-One Interactions

Two-Deep Leadership: Two adults (ex: any combination of coach(es), volunteer(s), parent(s)) should be present at all times so that a minor cannot be isolated one on one with an unrelated adult. This also helps to protect the league official/staff member from false accusations.

Individual Meetings: An individual meeting to address a participant's concerns may be necessary on occasion. During such meetings, the following guidelines shall be observed:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as in the corner of a building.
- If the meeting takes place in an office or a locker room, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the league official/staff member should inform another league official/staff member and ensure the door remains unlocked.
- Individual Training Sessions: When necessary or requested, parent/guardian written consent should be obtained and a parent/guardian encouraged to attend.

**Prohibited One-on-One Interactions:** Except as provided above with regard to individual meetings, individual training, or emergency situations, any one-on-one interaction between an adult and an unrelated minor participant should be avoided. A possible exception may occur if the minor is stranded and the adult must be present so that the minor will not be left unattended or unsupervised. In such cases, the adult and minor shall remain in the open until another adult arrives.

## 2. Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct includes:

- Intentional physical contact or threat of such that causes or has the potential to cause personal injury or bodily harm to the participant.

- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse under state or federal law, such as assault, child neglect, and child abuse.

Examples of prohibited physical misconduct:

### **Contact offenses**

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Providing alcohol to a participant who is under the legal drinking age
- Providing non-prescription or illegal drugs to any participant
- Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play after an injury (e.g. concussion) or sickness prematurely or without clearance from a medical professional
- Prescribing diet or other weight control methods for humiliation purposes and without regard for the health of the athlete (e.g. public weigh-ins or caliper tests)

### **Non-contact offenses**

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g. locking an athlete in a confined space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring the athlete to kneel on a hard surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep

Physical misconduct does not include physical contact that is a professionally-accepted coaching method for teaching skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building or appropriate discipline.

### **3. Emotional Misconduct**

Emotional misconduct involves a pattern of intentional, noncontact behavior that causes or has the potential to cause psychological or emotional harm to a participant. Physical acts, verbal acts, or acts that deny support or attention are included in these behaviors.

Examples of prohibited emotional misconduct:

- **Verbal Acts:** A pattern of verbal behaviors that personally attack a participant (e.g. calling them disgusting, worthless, or fat) or repeatedly screaming at participants in a way that does not serve a legitimate motivational or training purpose.
- **Physical Acts:** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing or punching sports equipment or other objects in the presence of participants.
- **Acts that Deny Support or Attention:** A pattern of ignoring or excluding a participant during practice or team discussions for an extended period of time.

Emotional misconduct does not include generally-accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. Note that a single incident such as a verbal outburst may be inappropriate but does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

### **4. Bullying**

Bullying involves an intentional and repeated pattern of committing or intentionally allowing or not preventing behaviors that are intended to cause physical harm, fear or humiliation in an effort to socially isolate, diminish or exclude another participant physically, emotionally, or sexually.

Bullying can occur through verbal, written or electronic communications or by means of a physical gesture or act.

#### **Examples of prohibited bullying behavior:**

**Physical:** Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting, or slapping; throwing

objects such as sports equipment at another participant.

**Verbal:** Teasing, ridiculing, taunting, name-calling, or intimidating, or threatening to cause harm.

**Social, including Cyberbullying:** Using electronic communication, social media or similar to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate someone; using rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.

**Sexual:** Teasing, ridiculing, or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or implied), gender traits or behavior (e.g., taunting someone for being too effeminate or too masculine), or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.

It is often not the staff, but other participants who perpetrate bullying. However, it is a violation if a league official/staff member knows or should have known of bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A participant or parent/guardian who participates in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent ban, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

### **Difference Between Mean, Rude, and Bullying Behavior**

Mean is defined as purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone very infrequently. Rude is defined as inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else. Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive behavior repeated over time that involves an imbalance of power. Mean or rude conduct does not rise to the level of bullying absent the imbalance of power. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors to encourage a culture of team unity and/or harder training effort.

### **5. Harassment**

Harassment is a pattern of physical or nonphysical behaviors that cause annoyance, fear or humiliation; degrade or offend; reflect a discriminatory bias; or create a hostile environment for the purpose of creating superiority, dominance, or power over an individual participant or participants based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, culture, national origin, race, or physical or mental disability. It also includes any conduct or acts defined as harassment under state or federal law.

#### **Examples of prohibited harassment:**

Name calling, taunts, threats, belittling, stalking, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed.

Sexual harassment is conduct towards a participant that includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical behaviors of a sexual nature and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and objectively offensive that it negatively affects an individual's performance.

### **6. Hazing**

Hazing includes any behavior which is physically harmful, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive. Hazing typically is an initiation activity that is a precondition for being socially accepted or joining a team. It also includes any act that is described as hazing under federal or state law.

Examples of hazing include:

- Using force or peer pressure to require the consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Restraining a person through tying or taping
- Requiring simulations of acts of a sexual nature.
- Depriving one of sleep
- Withholding water and/or food
- Requiring public actions that are illegal, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable (e.g. public nudity)
- Paddling, branding, beating or other forms of physical assault

- Requiring excessive training

**Hazing occurs even when the participant agrees to cooperate.**

### **Willfully Tolerating Misconduct**

It is a violation when a league official/staff member knows of prohibited misconduct but takes no action to intervene to protect participants or other league officials/staff members. It is also a violation to observe illegal and prohibited misconduct and not report it in a timely manner to the appropriate entity or law enforcement authorities.

### **Social Media and Electronic Communications**

Electronic communications and social media interactions between league officials/staff and participants and their parents/guardians is essential with regard to activities, schedules, and administrative issues. Furthermore, social media touting the positive aspects of competition and club promotion should be encouraged. However, the potential for misconduct exists including sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing.

#### **Social Media, including, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.**

The league may create an official social media account which may connect with other staff, participants, and parents/guardians for the purpose of official league communications about activities, motivation, team building, and answering posts from staff, participants, and parents/guardians.

League Officials/Staff and minor participants should not connect on social media outside of the league's official social media account.

#### **Email, Texts, and Instant Messaging**

A league official/staff member and minor participant may communicate via email, text, or instant message if the communication is about official league activities. A parent/guardian of minor participants should be copied on all such communications sent by a league official/staff member.

#### **Digital Photos and Videos**

Leagues frequently publish photos and videos of activities on their website and social media accounts, and transmit via email to various media outlets. Before publishing a photo or video of any participant, the league should obtain an image release agreement signed by the parent/guardian. Also, all photos and videos should be taken in public view and should be appropriate and in the best interest of the participant and the league.

League official/staff should immediately honor any request from parent/guardian to discontinue all digital communications or imagery with a minor participant without any repercussions.

Violations of the league's electronic communications and social media policy should be reported to the League MO or a board member for appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement.

#### **Travel**

Travel to and from practices and competitions subjects participants to risk not only from auto accidents, but also makes them more vulnerable to misconduct, particularly during overnight stays. During overnight stays, participants are away from their families and support networks and find themselves in unfamiliar and less structured settings, such as locker/changing rooms, sports facilities, autos, and hotel rooms.

Local travel is not planned or supervised by the league, but parent/guardian for each participant is responsible for making the travel arrangements. Local travel occurs when minor participants are driven to and from practices and local competitions, usually by parents/guardians in a carpool setting. The guidelines for local travel are as follows:

- Drivers should have a valid driver's license, meet state insurance requirements, and operate a well-maintained vehicle in accordance with state laws.
- League official/staff drivers providing local transportation should not ride alone with an unrelated minor participant. There should either be at least two other participants or another adult in the vehicle at all times unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the parent/guardian of the participant.
- League official/staff drivers who are also the parents/guardians of a minor participant may provide shared transportation but should always pick up their own child first and drop him/her off last.
- League official/staff drivers should have the parent/guardian of participants sign a parental authorization and release form.

Team travel usually requires overnight stays and occurs when the team plans and supervises transportation for local, regional, or national competitions. For greater travel distances, league officials/staff and chaperones will often travel with the participants in order to provide adequate supervision. To follow are guidelines on team travel:

- All drivers should have a valid driver's license, meet state insurance requirements, and operate a well-maintained vehicle in accordance with state laws.
- Be sure to maintain appropriate adult-to-minor ratios, which will vary with the age of the participants.
- Hotels and air travel should be booked in advance with schedules published for all league officials/staff and parents/guardians.
- Participants should share rooms with 2 to 4 participants per room depending on room size. Participants should be grouped according to sex and age group.
- Attempts should be made to have one chaperone of the same sex for each group.
- No chaperone or other league officials/staff members should spend the night in the same room with any unrelated minor participants.
- Chaperones must be cleared by a criminal background check and undergo awareness training before having any appropriate one-on-one interactions with a minor participant.
- The league should ask the hotel to block pay-per-view channels in the rooms of each participant.
- Meetings should not occur in rooms and a large room or suite should be rented so that league officials/staff can meet and socialize as a group with minor participants.
- Family members attending the event should be encouraged to stay in the same hotel as participants.

#### **League Officials/Staff and Chaperone Responsibilities**

- Brief participants and parents/guardians prior to travel on policy guidelines, expectations, and travel and competition schedules.
- Follow all policies on preventing misconduct including travel, locker/changing rooms, and two-deep leadership.
- Assist participants in preparing for competitions.
- Encourage minor participants to engage in daily communications with parent/guardian.
- Set curfews based on age and competition schedule.
- No use of alcohol or drugs by chaperones in the presence of minors and they should not be under the influence while performing duties.
- Chaperones should make sure that league officials/staff comply with all travel and other misconduct policies.
- Immediately report any violation of travel or misconduct policy to League MO or a board member.
- Notify parent/guardian not traveling with the minor participant of any injuries, discipline problems, or any other concerns.

#### **Reporting Child Sexual and Child Physical Abuse**

Congress enacted a new Federal law in 2018 which establishes a nationwide *standard "duty to report"* suspected child abuse. **Public Law 115-126 "Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017" ("Safe Sport Act")** specifically mandates that all amateur sports organizations, which participate in an interstate or international amateur athletic competition and whose membership includes any adult who is in regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor must report

suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to law enforcement. The duty to report extends to all youth baseball programs and affiliated leagues.

The new Federal law provides that:

- An individual who is required, but fails, to report suspected child sexual abuse is subject to criminal penalties.
- If an individual reasonably suspects a case of abuse within their league, they should report it to the appropriate child services organization and/or local law enforcement, as well as, their League MO, the League President and District Director.

The League MO or a board member should separately report such allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities as required by state and federal law. Failure to report such abuse may be a violation under state and/or federal law. Those making such reports may have civil and criminal immunity as long as the report was made in good faith. An attorney should be consulted prior to reporting for currently applicable state and federal law.

Participants and parents are also encouraged to report any reasonable suspicions of child sexual and child physical abuse to the League MO or a board member.

#### **Resources for assistance with state and federal reporting requirements:**

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- [Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/mandata.cfm) [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/mandata.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/mandata.cfm)
- State Statute Search: [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)

#### **After Reporting to Law Enforcement**

After a report of reasonable suspicion of misconduct to law enforcement has been made, whether for reasons of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, or other illegal reportable misconduct, the League MO and/or MC should take the following actions:

- Do not engage in any internal investigations or attempt to investigate the credibility of any such allegation. An independent investigation may interfere with the investigation of law enforcement. Allow law enforcement to conduct its own investigation. However, the League MO or MC member may ask a few clarifying questions of the complainant or minor(s) involved to adequately report the suspicion to law enforcement.
- To the extent permitted by law and appropriate, the League MO, MC, and/or a board member shall protect the names and confidentiality of the complainant (if requested), the accused, and the victims.
- Immediately remove the accused league official/staff member from his/her duties. No hearing is required and the accused has no right to defend himself/herself because the safety and wellbeing of the participant is of utmost importance. The League MO may simply notify the accused league official/staff member that he/she is no longer eligible to participate in the league's activities.
- After consulting with legal counsel, the League MO or MC may decide at their discretion to inform other league officials/staff members, parents, and participants of any child sexual abuse or child physical abuse allegations that law enforcement is actively investigating, in an effort to find out if there may be other cases of child abuse that shall also be reported to law enforcement.
- Once the investigation by law enforcement has concluded, the MC may reconvene to determine whether or not the accused can be reinstated or reassigned. Even if the investigation is inconclusive, the MC may use its discretion in deciding on reinstatement or reassignment.

#### **Reporting Other Misconduct, including Emotional Abuse, Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, or Grooming Behavior**

Any league official/staff member, participant, or parent who has a reasonable suspicion of emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, or grooming behavior shall report within 24 hours such misconduct to the League MO or a board member. Depending on the severity and nature of the allegations, the League MO and/or MC shall determine whether to immediately report such allegation within 24 hours to the appropriate law

enforcement authorities as required by state or federal law.

### **How to Report All Misconduct to the League**

Reports of all misconduct made to League MO or to any board member may be made orally or in writing. The information required is the name of complainant(s) making the report, the type of misconduct alleged, the name(s) of the accused league officials or staff members who allegedly engaged in the misconduct, the approximate dates of misconduct, and any other relevant information.

### **Responding to Misconduct and Policy Violations**

Upon receiving a report of emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, or grooming behavior that is not reportable to law enforcement under state or federal law, the League MO and/or MC shall investigate and take appropriate action.

Factors to be considered in an investigation include the age of the alleged victim, the age of the alleged perpetrator, and the extent, nature, and scope of the allegations. Before taking any disciplinary action, the accused shall have an opportunity to present his/her defense. If the accused is a staff member such as a coach, the board shall be notified of the pending investigation. If the accused is a minor, his or her coach and parents shall be notified in advance.

The confidentiality of the complaint, complainant, victim, and accused shall be protected by the organization until the outcome of the proceedings is finalized. Notice shall be given about any sanction. The investigator shall not discuss the ongoing investigation with anyone other than for the purposes of gathering information related to the investigation unless requested otherwise by law enforcement or child protective services. Likewise, participants in the hearing shall be requested to keep all information confidential unless requested by law enforcement or child protective services.

Sanctions applied shall be appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances.

Sanctions that may be applied against a league volunteer or staff member:

- Referral to law enforcement authorities if a crime is believed to have been committed
- Dismissal in the event of extreme cases
- Temporary suspension.
- Reassignment of duties.
- Formal warning.
- Place under the supervision of another staff member.

Sanctions that may be applied against a participant:

- Revocation of membership or participation in competitions
- Suspension of membership or participation in competitions
- Verbal/written warning
- Provided additional education and guidance\

### **Additional Reporting to Dixie Youth Baseball**

In addition to the reporting requirements above, all **DYB** Leagues shall report to Dixie Youth Baseball, Inc. at [dyb@dixie.org](mailto:dyb@dixie.org): The identity of any person (coaches, volunteers, etc.) affiliated with it or any of its members who is convicted of, or pleads guilty to, or who is charged with and pleads guilty to a lesser offense, any crime of child abuse and/or crimes of a sexual nature, and the identity of any person (coaches, volunteers, etc.) who is permanently banned from participation in its activities or the activities of any of its members as a result of a claim of child abuse or as a result of a claim of sexual abuse.

Any individual reported by a League to **DYB** shall be reported to USA Baseball.

### **Dealing with the Media**

In the event of media inquiries involving an allegation of misconduct, a single board member or attorney shall be appointed as the sole media contact and any comment shall be based on the following principles:

- The league has notified the proper law enforcement authorities.

- The league is following its internal policies and procedures regarding the allegation(s).
- The privacy of all involved individuals shall be respected and protected throughout the proceedings.
- The identity of any accused perpetrator shall not be disclosed unless 1) law enforcement is actively investigating and the name is a matter of public record; 2) law enforcement believes that the accusation is likely valid; and 3) the league has taken action to sanction or remove the alleged perpetrator.

### **Whistleblower Protection and Bad Faith Allegation**

Whistleblowers who report misconduct suspicions in good faith shall be protected against any retaliation, punishment, and other harm regardless of the outcome of any investigation. To allow otherwise would defeat the purpose of this Plan. Anyone who retaliates is subject to disciplinary action.

Likewise, complainants who act in bad faith in making malicious or frivolous allegations are subject to civil and criminal actions and disciplinary action by the league.

### **Screening Volunteers**

The league shall select a criminal background check vendor that will run background checks and will assist in interpreting results and in compliance with state and federal laws.

The criminal background check vendor shall, at a minimum, conduct a third-party criminal background check which searches the National Criminal Database and the National Sex Offender Registry in all 50 states (not limited to just sexual offender records) from state and county databases on all managers, coaches and other authorized adult participants in the league who have repetitive access to and close contact with minor athletes. *Also, see the Risk Management section at [www.sadlersports.com](http://www.sadlersports.com) for “Types of Background Checks on Volunteers” and “Criminal Background Check Vendors.”*

*Note: Certain employees or independent contractors from outside the league may have repetitive access in close contact with youth. Steps shall be taken to make sure that a background check has been run on these individuals by their employer.*

The League MO shall be responsible for implementing, monitoring, taking corrective action, disqualifying unfit candidates, and working with third-party background check vendors on all issues related to the criminal background check program. The League MO shall maintain confidentiality to protect against possible claims of slander or libel. The League MO shall work with third-party vendors for assistance in interpreting background check results and to protect against possible claims under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, First Offender Act, and all other state and federal laws protecting those who undergo criminal background checks.

### **Administration of Criminal Background Checks**

**Disqualification Criteria:** To make sure that all individuals are treated fairly and consistently, the following disqualification criteria shall be used:

Individuals in the league who are found to be guilty of the following crimes shall be disqualified as a manager/coach or other position in the league as outlined below.

- All sex offenses including child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.
- All felony violence including murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary, etc.
- Found guilty within the past 10 years of all felony offenses other than violence or sex including drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.
- Found to be guilty within the past 7 years of all misdemeanor violence offenses including simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.
- Found guilty within the past 5 years of misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses (or multiple offenses in the past 10 years) including driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.

- Any other misdemeanor within the past 5 years that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of the official/staff member, including contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft (if volunteer handles funds), etc.

Guilty means the applicant was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by the court's finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjudication of guilt (conviction) or a withholding of guilt. This policy does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, dismissal or in an entry of *nolle prosequi*.

Shall any of the pending charges described above be discovered or shall any of the above charges be brought against an applicant during the season, the applicant shall be suspended from serving until the charges are cleared or dropped and the League MO approves reinstatement.

*Note: These disqualification criteria are provided courtesy of Southeast Security Consultants, Inc. Each league may customize its own criteria to meet the league's specific policies. Another excellent, local source would be the disqualification criteria used by the local school board.*

**League Manager/Coach/Volunteer Application:** Prior to the running of any criminal background check, the applicant shall complete a league official/staff application form giving his or her consent to the running of such check. This form shall include a question about the existence of any prior criminal convictions. A "yes" answer shall require a detailed explanation including the type of offense, locations, and dates. An application under the League Risk Management tab on the **DYB** website may be used or the league may develop its own application. The application form shall be provided by the third-party criminal background check vendor. The vendor's legal department can take on the risk of ensuring the form complies with the state and federal laws, which change frequently. The information obtained in the application/consent form, as well as the results of criminal background checks, shall be held in strict confidence to protect the confidentiality of the information. It shall be kept in a secure location with access by the League MO or MC only. Confidential information shall not be disclosed outside of the league and shall only be shared within the league on a need-to-know basis. However, under certain circumstances, the league may have a legal duty to disclose certain types of information to government agencies or law enforcement.

**Run Criminal Background Check:** After collecting the league application/consent forms, the League MO shall verify that they are complete and legible. Next, the applications or information therein shall be forwarded to the selected criminal background vendor.

**Results:** The results from the criminal background check vendor shall be received by the League MO. The League MO may need the assistance of the vendor in interpreting the results against the predetermined disqualification criteria. In addition, the League MO shall ask the vendor about any applicable first-offender acts in a particular state that may disallow the use of the results in making a disqualification decision. All disqualified applicants shall be provided with the following documents:

- 1) Fair Credit Reporting Act: Summary of Rights
- 2) Letter of disqualification
- 3) Copy of the criminal background check results.

The vendor shall advise if there are any other requirements under state or federal law.

**Appeals Process:** Official/staff candidates disqualified due to an unsatisfactory criminal background check shall be given a right to appeal if they notify the League MO in writing. Such appeals shall be heard by a three-person MC. The MC shall decide whether to uphold the decision of the League MO. As a compromise, the MC may decide to reassign the applicant to a more appropriate position or to place the candidate under a probationary period. The results of all criminal background checks and appeals shall be kept confidential.

The written appeal shall include:

- Full name and address of the appellant;
- Full name and address of any person making the request for an appeal on behalf of the appellant;
- The grounds for the appeal, providing a detailed explanation of the appellant's objections to the decision, additional facts, or factual errors in the decision;
- The relevant particulars to the appeal, providing any background facts relating to the appeal including how the appellant is affected by the decision and a detailed description of the requested relief (i.e. what appellant wants the MC to do);

- The signature of the appellant or the appellant’s representative, and the date of the appeal.

### **Monitoring and Supervision Compliance**

The league and its League MO and MC shall monitor and supervise the implementation and compliance of this Plan as follows:

- Require all league officials and staff to review the Plan and agree to abide by its guidelines and requirements.
- Require all league officials and staff having repeated access to youth to undergo and pass a criminal background check.
- Promptly address any reports of child abuse or other misconduct and take appropriate action.
- Observe and periodically spot check compliance with interactions at practice and games, locker/changing rooms, travel arrangements, and social media.
- Stay in touch with other league officials/staff members, participants and parents to learn of any potential instances of misconduct.

### **Distribution**

A paper or electronic copy of this adopted Child Protection Plan or a similar comprehensive plan shall be distributed to each authorized adult participant in the league annually.

This plan was adopted by Paris Optimist Club of Paris, Texas

League Name

on January 1, 2020

Paris Optimist Board of Directors

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### Sources

- U.S. Center For SafeSport; SafeSport Code For the U.S. Olympic And Paralympic Movement; 12-28-2017
- U.S. Center For SafeSport; Practices And Procedures; 3-3-2017
- SafeSport Program Handbook; U.S. Figure Skating; 1-1-2018
- USA Basketball SafeSport Program Handbook; 11-9-2017
- Model Youth Football Safe Sport Policy; USA Football; 2-20-2015

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