

2022
FRIENDSHIP BASEBALL LEAGUE
FOR 8 YEAR OLDS*
INFORMATION & INVITATION PACKET
<https://www.mass-friendshipleague.com>

LEAGUE OBJECTIVES:

The Friendship League is a summer travel baseball league specially designed for eight year old baseball players (age as of 04/30/2022) to help them develop their baseball skills and introduce them to summer travel baseball in a competitive, but friendly, environment. Last year, 62 teams (between the East Conference based out of Braintree and West Conference based out of Foxboro) participated.

NUMBER OF TEAMS & TEAM SELECTION:

We want to involve as many players/teams as possible, and we want to achieve parity between teams from the same program. This is not an all-star or elite A team league. We encourage programs to enter more than one team. Seven year old players are allowed to fill out teams. **If a town enters more than one team, the teams must be of equal skill levels! No elite "A" or less skilled/younger "B" teams!** Town Programs must make every effort to balance teams if they are entering more than one team. See the attached team selection method in this packet. This method is not mandatory but strongly recommended.

REGULAR SEASON AND PLAYOFFS: The regular season will consist of 8 games (2 games per week) and tentatively starts the week of June 27th.. Playoffs tentatively begin the week of July 25th, and the championship game is scheduled for Saturday August 6, 2022. All teams qualify for the playoffs, and **these dates are subject to change.**

We'll present trophies to the top two finalists in the Championship Series for each Conference. A final Championship Game will be played between the East and West Conference Champions in early August for the Friendship League Championship Trophy.

PAYMENT & REGISTRATION PROCESS:

Payments can be made online during the registration process or mail checks to

- Braintree (East Conference) payable to: East Braintree Little League, P.O. 850736 Braintree, MA 02185-0736 or paid online during registration process ([insert url](#))
- Foxboro (West Conference), payable to Foxboro Youth Baseball and Softball Association; P.O. Box 527, Foxboro MA 02035 or paid online during registration process ([insert url](#))

INSURANCE: The Friendship League does not provide insurance for players, managers, coaches or spectators. **Each League/Program/Team must obtain its own insurance and provide evidence of insurance with their Registration Fees.**

The Friendship League reserves the right to modify, change or alter the regular season division play, Play-off format, rules and schedule given the number of Teams, weather conditions and the like.

FEE: \$300.00 PER TEAM

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT: JUNE 10, 2022

Online team registration will open in the spring on the Friendship League's website.

LEAGUE CONTACTS:

- Billy Duncan, East or Braintree Conference: 857-526-1546 or billy@theduncan7.com
- John Mulkern, West or Foxboro Conference: 508-446-7940 or john.mulkern1@gmail.com

The date for Team Commitments and payment of Registration Fees is June 10, 2022.

RECENT FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE CHAMPIONS:

2008: WELLESLEY

2009: BRAINTREE AMERICAN

2010: FOXBOROUGH AMERICAN

2011: BRAINTREE AMERICAN

2012: PLYMOUTH BLUE

2013: WELLESLEY SOUTH

2014: WHITMAN BLACK

2015: RAYNHAM

2016: NEEDHAM GOLD

2017: PLYMOUTH

2018: NORFOLK

2019 MARSHFIELD

2021 BRAINTREE AMERICAN

2022 FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE RULES

1. No stealing, advancing on passed balls, wild pitches, or over-throws to the pitchers from the catcher after a pitch, and no balks. Base runners may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate (no leading before the pitch crosses plate). However, they may not advance to the next base, unless a pick-off attempt is made by the fielder (runner advances at his or her own risk), or until the ball is hit into the field of play by a batter or until forced ahead by a walk or hit batter. No stealing but players may leave the base as the ball crosses the plate. Player leaving the base may not advance but does so at his/her own risk and may be picked off (a runner may advance on an overthrow on the pick-off attempt). A player can't just take off for the next base on a pick-off attempt. He/she must attempt to return to the base and may advance only if the throw gets by the fielder.
2. Bunting is NOT allowed, and no dropped third strike rule.
3. Infield fly rule does not apply and will NOT be called. Tagging up on a fly ball is allowed. Runner advances at his/her own peril.
4. "Full Roster Batting". All teams will use a "Complete Team Batting Order". That is, every player attending the game bats in turn, regardless of whether he or she is playing in the field or on the bench. If a player is injured and misses a turn at bat, he/she is removed from the game and may not return. Only batters that cross the plate count as runs scored. See Rule 6 below. The batting order is "restarted" at the beginning of each game and is not continued from game to game.
5. Free substitution: Ten players in the field at a time (6 traditional infielders and 4 outfielders). Players may be moved in and out of the field positions at will, except for the pitcher. Once removed as a pitcher, a player may NOT pitch again in that game but may play any other position in the field. See Pitching Rules.
6. All players must play a minimum of nine (9) defensive outs in the field.
7. Although Players and spectators may cheer for their team and teammates, **there is no chanting or singing**. "Organized songs" or "organized cheers" are not permitted. This is a matter *that must* be resolved between managers. Remember we are adults, and they're only 8. The reason for the rule comes from recent experience. It's one thing to cheer and encourage the batter or pitcher, it's another to make so much noise that he or she can't think. This applies offensively and defensively but will most likely be the offensive team from their bench. **PLEASE USE YOUR BEST DISCRETION AND ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION WITH THIS...WE WILL BE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO ISSUES OR COMMENTS WE RECEIVE ON THIS TOPIC.**
8. **Batter Limit Per Inning**. A team's inning at bat will end after three (3) outs are recorded, or after every player in the line up has batted in an inning. If one team has more players than the other at the game, each team will be allowed to bat the higher number of players in an inning, if the three outs are not recorded in the inning.
9. **Last batter rule:** The Manager of the batting team will approach the umpire to quietly state that it is the last batter. This is to prevent the runners from taking additional bases/running off of the field.
10. **Dead Ball when "Mounded"**. The ball is dead, when it is HELD on the mound by any player (IF THERE IS NO MOUND USE AN IMAGINARY 8 FOOT CIRCLE. IN DISCRETION OF THE UMPIRE AS TO MOUNDING). Runners advancing will be returned to the last base touched, (if

they are halfway or less to the next base). Umpire's judgment.

11. Four (4) outfielders are allowed on the field. They must play the outfield, no short fielders. (left, left center, right center, right fielders). Regular infield positions. No additional in-fielders.
12. Sliding. No head first sliding. **"Slide or Avoid" Rule applies**. If a play is being made on a runner, he must either slide or avoid contact. NO CRASHING THE BASEMAN/CATCHER. Umpire's discretion. If a play is being made on a runner with no slide and contact is made, Runner is out!!
13. There is no two hour rule (no time limit), and there's no extra innings during the regular season (except play-offs). Regular season games are played so as to complete a regulation Game, if possible, meaning 6 innings or less due to inability to play due to weather conditions or darkness. Except in the play-offs, if it rains or gets dark, you have a regulation regular season game after 4 full Innings or 3 and ½ if the home team is ahead after 3 1/2 innings. If you don't have a complete or regulation game, Little League rules for completion of games apply. If there is a tie after a complete or regulation game it goes into the books as a tie. NO EXTRA INNINGS!! (Except in play-offs.)
14. Unlike regular season games, all play-off games must be played the full six (6) innings (5 ½ if home team is ahead). Incomplete playoff games must be completed the next night.
15. Except as herein provided, the Rules of Play shall be governed by the Little League Baseball Rules in force and effect for the applicable season (2022). 2022 Little League Baseball Rules apply unless covered by Rules 1-16 above, which supersede Little League Rules.
16. THERE IS NO SLAUGHTER OR MERCY RULE (OTHER THAN THE ONCE AROUND THE BATTING ORDER RULE) BY DESIGN. THERE IS NO MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING RULE. HOWEVER, WE EXPECT MANAGERS TO BE REASONABLE AND REMEMBER THE PURPOSES OF THE LEAGUE. YOU CAN'T TELL AN 8 YEAR OLD NOT TO SWING OR TO INTENTIONALLY MAKE AN OUT, BUT YOU CAN USE A LESS SKILLED PITCHER IN A LARGER LEAD SITUATION AND LET THE OTHER TEAM HAVE SOME AT BATS, REST YOUR ACE(S) AND GIVE OTHER PLAYERS THE CHANCE TO PITCH!!! GO STATION TO STATION. STOP YOUR RUNNERS AT THIRD. WHATEVER YOU CAN THINK OF TO KEEP THE SCORES CLOSE.....WE LOVE 19-18 GAMES!!! LOTS OF HITTING, PLAYS BEING MADE OR AT LEAST ATTEMPTED DEFENSIVELY, LOTS OF THINKING ABOUT THE GAME (IF YOU CAN GET THAT) THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO ADDRESS THIS. WE HATE LOP-SIDED SCORES AND IF WE OBSERVE ANY TENDENCIES FOR TEAMS TO PRODUCE LOPSIDED SCORES, IT WILL BE ADDRESSED.

PITCHING

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of two (2) consecutive innings in a game (they must be consecutive), and a maximum of six (6) innings per pitcher in a week (A "week" starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday). Delivery of one single pitch constitutes an inning! Once a pitcher stops being the pitcher (regardless of whether or not it is at the end or in the middle of an inning or he goes to the bench or another position in the field), he cannot return to the game as a pitcher. **There is no pitch count!** A pitcher may appear as a pitcher only in two consecutive innings. (If he throws one pitch in relief in the second, he may pitch the entire third inning but must be removed after the third inning).
2. Pitchers may not pitch on consecutive days. Caution, this applies to make-up games!!! Make sure you schedule your makeup games accordingly. Pitching Rules may be "re-set" for

play-offs at League's discretion.

3. A pitcher must be removed after hitting two (2) batters in an inning.
4. Pitchers will throw from a throw down pitching rubber (anchored if possible) placed approximately three (3) feet closer to home than the normal distance for a Little League pitching rubber or 43 feet from the "back" or peak of the plate (normal little league pitching distance is 46 feet). Managers should agree on pitching rubber location prior to the game. A manager may elect to have his pitcher pitch from the 46' distance but this must be announced before the game and all pitchers for that team must pitch from the 46' distance for the entire game. **All pitchers shall pitch from the 43' Distance during playoff games. No exceptions.**
5. Regulation and age appropriate Little League or Cal Ripken approved (hard) baseballs must be used. Each team provides one new ball per game. No "soft" or "t-balls" allowed.
6. In addition to a first base coach and third base coach, the only coach allowed on the field of play is to be positioned behind the catcher to return passed balls. The DEFENSIVE team should supply this coach each inning. He is needed in order to speed up the game to retrieve balls that get by the catcher, but should not talk to, instruct, direct or otherwise coach the players from that position. This coach must stay to the left or right of the catcher, not directly behind the catcher. One coach is allowed on the bench to keep score, keep kids in line and maintain batting order.
7. Umpiring should be done from behind the catcher. Home team provides the umpire(s) at its expense. Please ensure managers and umpires review the Friendship League "Special Rules" and local ground rules before the game. We ask that young umpires be supervised by an adult during the summer season. The Friendship leagues Director's emphasizes that for all playoff games there is at least one patched umpire and two, preferably two.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. Please remember that this is a FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE! Please be considerate of the other team's players and spectators, as well as your own. Managers should attempt to accommodate each other's needs, and agree on rules interpretations with the umpire(s) before the game begins. **THERE IS NO SLAUGHTER OR MERCY OR MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING RULE BUT PLEASE REMEMBER WE ARE DEALING WITH 8 YEAR OLDS AND WE EXPECT MANAGERS TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES ACCORDINGLY.** 25-0 scores are frowned upon and the League Directors reserve the right to address Teams running up the scores of games. **MANAGERS HAVE BEEN DISCIPLINED IN THE PAST AND WE RESERVE THE RIGHT, IN OUR DISCRETION, TO SUSPEND MANAGERS VIOLATING THE RULES OR RUNNING UP SCORES.** A good score for a Friendship League game is 18-17. Lots of hitting, lots of plays...lots of baseball. That's why we are here, **TO LET THEM PLAY THE GAME AND WHY WE DON'T HAVE A SLAUGHTER RULE.** Give your "Ace" a rest in a game with a big score and try to avoid "blow-outs". You can't tell a kid to strike out or make an out but there are other ways to avoid the big scores. Have another player pitch an inning. **WE FROWN ON BLOW-OUTS AND SUCH ISSUES WILL BE ADDRESSED BY THE LEAGUE DIRECTORS.**
2. FEE: \$300.00 per team. Please make check payable to: EAST BRAINTREE LITTLE LEAGUE or, if your organization is in the Foxborough Conference, checks should be made payable to FOXBOROUGH LITTLE LEAGUE. Team Commitments and Registration Fees must be received by June 10, 2022. Late registrations or payments subject to wait list and availability and \$50.00 late charge.

3. Team rosters must consist of 12-15 players and must be submitted to the Director (via the league website) no later than June 20, 2022.
4. Players may not be older than Age eight (8) on MAY 1st, 2022. No exceptions. The Birth Certificate verification form MUST be submitted with rosters no later than June 10, 2022. For the Roster all we require is a player name, Date of Birth and Uniform number (if you don't have uniform numbers by the 1st game we want them as soon as possible. No roster. No play offs. Only players from recognized Little League, Cal Ripken or "other" Regular Season Spring Leagues. All players must meet League residency requirements. Mixed teams from multiple towns, leagues or programs are not allowed! Players will be declared ineligible.
5. Scores must be submitted by the winning team after each game (no later than 10pm on game night). The winning team can either enter it on the website or email it to the League Director.
6. If it becomes necessary to reschedule a game (rain), the manager of the home team must arrange an alternate date with the visiting team manager and notify the Friendship League that night but at least within 24 hours. If possible, the game should be played during that same week (preferably the next day), at either team's field. If this is not possible, it must be played as soon as possible! In case of conflict contact the Director of the Friendship League. Please play games as soon as possible. We will establish a deadline at the end of the season for completion of games for play-off seeding purposes. Do not wait until later in the season to schedule make up games. If you don't play the games, you don't get credit for the points. (And our purpose is to have the kids play the games). Sunday nights (5:30 or 6PM) are good make up nights as players who have gone away for the weekend are usually back by then. **Remember, pitchers cannot pitch *on* consecutive days!!!. They can pitch in consecutive games as long as they are a day apart. Schedule make-ups accordingly!!!!**
7. First place/play-off seeding, will be determined by the total number of points acquired. A win earns two (2) points. A tie earns one (1) point. Tie breakers: Head to head and then we go to a coin-toss. **Reporting scores accurately is important for post season seeding.**
8. All teams qualify for the playoffs. The format will be single elimination: (subject to change based upon the number of teams and divisions.)
9. The pitching rules may be reset for the playoffs. Every team starts fresh at the beginning of the play-offs.
10. The Friendship League and its affiliated entities/programs will not provide team, player, manager, coach or spectator insurance and each respective local program shall obtain insurance for each team at its sole cost and expense and provide proof of insurance to the Friendship League.
WE DO NOT PERFORM CORI CHECKS FOR MANAGERS, COACHES OR VOLUNTEERS. EACH PROGRAM MUST PERFORM CORI/BACKGROUND CHECKS ON ALL MANAGERS, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS!!!
11. By entering/registering a team in the Friendship League, each program, team, player, manager, coach and spectator agrees to be bound by the Rules and Administrative Procedures set forth herein.
12. **Conference Championship Games:** The East(Braintree) Conference Championship games will be hosted by East Braintree Little League at Watson Park or Hollingsworth Field, Braintree. The West (Foxboro) Conference Championship games will be hosted by Foxboro Youth Baseball at

the Booth Fields in Foxboro.

13. ALL PLAYERS MUST BELONG TO A RECOGNIZED LITTLE LEAGUE AND/OR CAL RIPKEN LEAGUE SANCTIONED PROGRAM AND MUST BE DERIVED FROM WITHIN LEAGUE AUTHORIZED BOUNDARIES. THE LEAGUE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW THE CHARTERS/BY-LAWS OF NON LITTLE LEAGUE OR CAL RIPKEN PROGRAMS. PLAYERS MUST SATISFY LEAGUE BOUNDARY/RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS. ANY INELIGIBLE PLAYERS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED AND MAY LEAD TO TEAM DISQUALIFICATION.
14. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE ARE YOUNG PLAYERS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE (WE WISH THEY WEREN'T, BUT REALITY IS REALITY)...SPECTATORS, MANAGERS AND COACHES ARE REMINDED OF THIS AND SHOULD CONDUCT THEMSELVES ACCORDINGLY.....NO AIR HORNS, DRUMS, BULL HORNS, VUVUZELAS, COW BELLS OR ARTIFICIAL NOISE MAKERS OF ANY KIND ARE ALLOWED. VIOLATORS ARE SUBJECT TO REMOVAL FROM THE GAME AFTER A WARNING FROM THE UMPIRE.
15. **Although Players and spectators may cheer for their team and teammates, there is no chanting or singing. "Organized songs" or "organized cheers" are not permitted. This is a matter *that must* be resolved between the Managers. Remember we are adults and they are only 8. The reason for the rule comes from recent experience. It's one thing to cheer and encourage the batter or pitcher, it's another to make so much noise that he or she can't think...this applies offensively and defensively but will most likely be the offensive team from their bench. We have our reasons, and it is important that everyone cooperates with its application. We want them to have fun, but we do not want a circus.**
16. MANAGERS AND COACHES SHOULD NOT ADDRESS THE SPECTATORS AT ANY TIME. ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO SPECTATORS ARE TO GO THROUGH THE UMPIRE TO THE MANAGER OF THE OFFENDING TEAM.....IF NO COOPERATION, MANAGER MAY EJECT THE OFFENDING PARTY OR STOP THE GAME UNTIL THE PERSON IS REMOVED. OFFENDING TEAM SUBJECT TO FORFEIT. THIS WAS A NEW RULE in 2011.....WE NEVER NEEDED SUCH A RULE BUT AS A RESULT OF SOME UNFORTUNATE INSTANCES, WE HAVE SUCH A RULE NOW...PLEASE HELP KEEP YOUR COACHES AND SPECTATORS IN LINE.

FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE 2022

RECOMMENDED TEAM SELECTION METHOD

As you've read many times in this document, it is and always has been our objective, intention and purpose to encourage fair and balanced competition within the Program. At age 8, there are plenty of years down the road for "A Teams" and cut-throat competition. We encourage Programs to enter as many teams as they can in order to afford as many young players as possible a change to participate.

Although they do not have to use the Recommended Team Selection Method, we require that Programs submitting more than one team select their teams so as to balance them. Our philosophy has always been to discourage and avoid labeling kids as "A" or "B" Team players (as well as the Managers) at age 8. And we have always advocated adding more teams simply to get more kids exposed to summer ball at the earlier age. We have always been very proud of this basic philosophy.

Notwithstanding our hopes and dreams (idealistic as they may be), each year we have heard rumblings and allegations that "this team" or "that team" is "stacked". "Osh Kosh has two teams and one team is an A Team and the other is a B Team. We picked our teams evenly and we're getting smoked". Not only do we hear the comments, we can see that we are not achieving our balanced team goals because we see the "blow-out" scores... believe me, I know many managers and programs have tried to be fair and do the right thing in games but sometimes lopsided scores can't be avoided.

So... not because we want to, but because we've talked it over and decided that it might be best to standardize the team selection process and **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that the following procedures be adhered to in selecting your teams (if you have more than one team). We have discussed the potential impact of instituting this procedure as a mandatory requirement and please believe me when we say that we would do this as a last resort. Given that we cannot be at every team's draft or team selection, we needed to come up with an "objective" albeit arbitrary and only "**STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**" way to select and create teams.

We hope people get on board so we can avoid having the conversation again next year. It gets old.

Accordingly, for the 2022 Season, we **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that all programs submitting more than one team select their teams in the following manner:

If a Program is entering more than one team, the pool of eligible players for the teams to be created should unlikely be listed in chronological order by date of birth and selected from this pool as follow:

First. Pitchers. The best pitchers in the pool must first be identified and divided evenly among the teams and placed at the top of the roster of each team with a "Pitcher" or "P" exception designation next to the player's name on the roster. These Pitchers are then out of the pool and placed on the respective teams. No more than 4 "P" exceptions may appear on a roster.

Second. General Player Selection. The Players remaining in the pool after selection and removal of the pitchers in Step 1 will be selected and placed on teams in alternating order as they appear on the chronological list of remaining players by their Birth dates.

Example:

<u>Pool/Player</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>Team</u>
David Ortiz	5/1	Red
Ted Williams	5/25	Blue
Pedro Martinez	6/3	Red

Carl Yastermski	6/29	Blue
Jim Rice	7/3	Red
Joe Cronin	7/4	Blue
Bobby Doerr	8/5	Red
Johnny Pesky	12/31	Blue
Carlton Fisk	1/30	Red

...and so on until all "non-pitchers" in the pool have been placed on a team.

Third. Wild Cards. Recognizing that this procedure, if followed faithfully, might result in a Manager's Assistant's child being placed on the "other" team, and that there are the traditional "car pooling issues", not more than three (3) players may be "traded" from their designated team roster as determined in Step 2 above due to "hardship" or Manager/Coach affiliations. (Pitchers may only be traded for and replace pitchers). These players may be placed on another team (remaining and replacing the traded players in chronological order from the other team so as to balance the numbers) by the programs and must be designated on the roster in the Exception or "E" box with a "W" or "Wildcard" next to the player name on the roster.

No more than four (4) "P" designations and no more than three (3) "W" designations on a roster. All players on the rosters (except the Pitchers) must be alternating birth dates. So if you "trade" a player from the Red Team, you have to replace him with a player from the Blue Team with the closest player in age/DOB to the one being removed.

VERY IMPORTANT. As you consider how many teams you want to enter for your program, please make sure you carefully determine how many teams you wish to enter by the entry dead-line as once your roster(s) are submitted, you will be required to "scramble" (literally and figuratively) your teams so as to have all teams constituted using this method.