

# Parents Guide



**A Parent's Guide to the History, Organization, and Structure of Clarksville National Little League Baseball.**

## About CNLL

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Clarksville National Little League is a non-profit 501c organization affiliated with and adopting the same mission statement as Little League Incorporated: Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists youth in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.

CNLL strives to accomplish these goals while promoting sportsmanship, honesty and fun while teaching fundamental baseball/softball skills. CNLL is run entirely by volunteers and supported by donations.

## History

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Mr. John Maddox, a local businessman, was the inspiration for Little League baseball in Clarksville. Mr. Maddox seeing the need for organized youth baseball in the community gathered support from local civic organizations, community leaders, and elected officials to start a Little League in our area.

Play began at the newly built Merricourt park with 4 teams (Giants, Cardinals, Yankees, and Tigers). As new teams were added and interest in baseball grew in the community the league expanded. In 1965 the Clarksville Little League split into two leagues, the Clarksville American Little League, which continued to play at Merricourt Park, and the Clarksville National Little League, which began playing baseball behind the recently built Barksdale School, and later added softball at Merricourt Park.

Bob Huddleston was instrumental in starting the Clarksville National Little League, which began with six teams (Braves, Cardinals, Pirates, Cubs, Giants, and the Dodgers). Another person instrumental in the early years of the league was Eddie Page who served in various capacities from 1967-1985 as a coach and board member. Field 2 is dedicated in his honor.



CNLL hosted the 2005 Little League Tennessee State Championship.

The league added two more teams in 1972 (Reds and Mets). As time went by more teams were added, additional fields were built, and more people volunteered their time. Carroll Poole, Robert Taylor, Bruce Myers and Len Rye are just a few of the other civic-minded citizens who have faithfully served over the years.

There have been countless others in the community who have volunteered their time and resources in making Clarksville National Little League baseball an organization worth participating in. Whether these boys and girls continue in athletics beyond their CNLL years or

not, each one has been exposed to the concepts of leadership and teamwork, preparing them for successful lives in whatever activities they pursue in the future.

## Organization

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CNLL is governed by a locally elected Board of Directors, and abides by the league constitution, and the rules of Little League International. The BOD is elected by the general membership at an annual meeting held on the fourth Sunday of July at 2pm. Any parent or volunteer who registers on election day and pays a \$1 registration fee is a general member of the league, and eligible to vote in the election. The BOD then elects its officers, which include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Safety Officer, Player Agent, and Information Officer. Other positions and committee chairs may be selected by the board as needed.

The board is responsible for overseeing the daily operations and procedures of CNLL, within the CNLL constitution and rules and regulations of Little League.

## The League Structure

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Little League provides divisions of play for children who are age 5-18 as of April 30 of a given season. Generally the divisions of Little League are: Tee-Ball (age 5-8), Minor (age 7-11), Majors (age 9-12), Junior League (age 13-14), Big League (age 15-16), and Senior League (age 17-18).

CNLL further breaks down the divisions into smaller age groups, but does allow players to move up or down, within the parameters set by Little League. The local league structure for 2009 is as follows, along with a brief description of playing rules.

**Tee-Ball** (Age 5-6) Coaches pitch or children hit from Tee. No base stealing allowed, and bases taken are generally limited on an overthrow of first base. No Score is kept officially during Tee Ball games. Players are substituted freely, and everyone in the roster bats. Tee Ball teams are selected by the Tee Ball coordinator annually, with no tryout required. Player/coach requests are honored when possible.

**Pee Wee** (Age 7-8) Coaches pitch for the first 3 innings of the game, and then the last 3 innings are a mixture of kids pitching and coaches pitching. There is no stealing of bases allowed in the Peewee division. Scores are kept. Players are substituted freely, and everyone on the roster is in the batting order. Players moving up to the Pee Wee division try out, and are then selected to play for a team at the draft. The 7 year old selected to a team would normally return to the same team as an 8 year old the following year, with no tryout or draft required.

**Minor** (Age 9-10) Kids pitch in minors, and stealing of bases is allowed, once a pitch reaches the batter. There is a maximum of 5 runs per team allowed to be scored in an inning. Players are substituted freely, and everyone on the roster is in the batting order. Players moving up to Minors from Pee Wee try out, and then are selected to a team at the draft. A 9 year old selected to a minor team would normally return to the same team the following season as a 10 year old, with no tryout required.

**Major** (Age 11-12) Kids pitch in majors, and stealing of bases is allowed once a pitch reaches the batter. There is no 5 run rule. The lineup consists of 9 players, and those not in the current lineup do not bat until substituted into the game (ie, no continuous batting order) Players moving up to Majors from Minor try out, and then are selected to a team at the draft. An 11 year old selected to a Major team would normally return to the same team the following season as a 12 year old, with no tryout required.

**Jr/Sr./Big League** (Ages 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18) Field size moves up to 90' bases and rules are similar to Official Baseball Rules (Major League Baseball). Lineup of 9 players with no continuous batting order. Teams are selected new each year after player evaluations.

**Coach Selection:** Head Coaches are appointed by the President, and approved by the Board of Directors. There is no tenure in Little League; appointments are for one season only.

**What do I need to buy?** The league will provide a shirt and hat, and the team will have batting helmets, and gear for a catcher. Your child will need a baseball glove, cleats, and a protective cup. Your coach will tell you what color baseball pants and socks to buy. Most children have their own bats, but your coach can find one to use if you do not have one

## **Playing Up – Playing Down**

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In Pee Wee through Majors divisions, players may move up a year early if they are strong players, or stay down in a division if they are weak. For example, an 8 year old could move up to and be drafted into minors if approved by the league player agent. Also, a weaker 9 could play down a division using the same criteria. Weaker 7 year olds may play down in Tee Ball, but LL does not allow 6 year olds to play up in PeeWee because kids pitch. If you have questions about play up/play down options, please talk with the Player Agent, Pat Neal (358-5584)

## **The Season**

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Each team will play approximately 15 games during the course of a season at CNLL (Tee Ball slightly fewer). Teams will play only teams from their same division. The schedule of games begins in mid April, and continues through mid June. Games are played on Weekdays (except Wednesday), and begin at 5:30 or 7:30. On Saturdays, games begin at 9:30am, and continue in 2 hour blocks through 7:30 start times. Tee Ball and Pee Wee divisions are not scheduled for the 7:30 time slots if possible.

## **All Stars**

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At the completion of the season, coaches vote to select 2 all star teams of 12 players from each age group. For example, the minor league coaches gather and select a 10 year old "A" team, and a 10 year old "B" team. Generally, CNLL does NOT allow players to play up in all stars – they must play within their league age.

These teams are then entered in the District 9 all-star tournament, and compete for the district Championship in a double elimination format. The tournament sites rotate around other leagues in District 9. The other leagues in our district are Northwest, St. Bethlehem, Woodlawn, Stewart County, Montgomery Central, South Cheatham, Dickson County, Burns, White Bluff, and Hickman County.

Tee-Ballers are also eligible for all stars. In Tee-ball, a regular season team may enter the Tee-Ball tournament. All star players are not voted on in this division.

Tee-ball through 9 year old divisions may advance only as high as a district championship. Older divisions may advance to the state championship, and the 12 year olds have an opportunity to advance all the way to the Little League World series, which is shown on ESPN.

## **Volunteers**

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CNLL is a volunteer organization. We lease our property from the City of Clarksville on an annual basis at a minimal cost. However, most of our buildings, fields, and facilities were constructed with volunteer labor and funds. The City of Clarksville helps with infrastructure as well, providing new field lights for field 1 in 2009, and the big field in 2010. .

2010 will also see improvements funded by the league, including new batting cage nets, fencing repairs, and improvements to the pitching mounds. Please take care of our facilities.

Our buildings and facilities are maintained and repaired by CNLL volunteers and parents. Our volunteers manicure the fields, cut the grass, paint, pick up trash, staff and stock concessions, and coach the children.

## **Budget**

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CNLL has about 650 children who play over 400 games of baseball on our 5 fields in the spring season. The annual operating cost of running this league for a normal year is approximately \$65,000, excluding improvements and significant repairs. About \$40,000 of this is covered by registration fees, while the balance comes from sign sales, team sponsorships, and concession sales. Please, help sell signs, sponsor a team, and make sure you work in the concession stand when asked! This is how we help hold down the registration fees.

## **Safety**

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All volunteers who have regular interaction with the children must first pass a national criminal background check. Any crime against a child permanently disqualifies that person from service in Little League Baseball.

CNLL has implemented and had approved by Little League its ASAP safety plan, which takes additional steps to ensure the safety of our children. CNLL has an Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED), which is kept in the upstairs score booth on field 2. Kenny Daniels (320-0250) is the Safety Officer for 2010 – please contact him, or a board member, immediately if you see a safety issue that needs correction. If you witness any unsafe situation please try to correct the situation and notify Kenny or a board member as soon as possible.

- NO SMOKING
- Skates, skateboards, bicycles, etc are not allowed.
- No Pets.

## **Role of the Parent**

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The parents are an integral part of CNLL. Parents may be asked by the head coach to serve as an assistant coach, or perform other duties to help the team. A parent may be asked to help take up picture money, organize uniform orders, or even help rake the field. You should be prepared to help your coach with the team as required. Your team will work at least one day in the concession stand – concession stand profits are needed to help fund the operations of the league, so please show up for concession duty!

Perhaps the most important role of the parent of a CNLL player is to show your support and positive reinforcement to the team. Parents should cheer for and recognize the good play of their team. Cheering and yelling from the stands should be positive – no parent should EVER heckle or yell anything derogatory toward any child, coach or umpire. Parents should also recognize that the children on the team look to the adults to learn how to behave or react to certain situations. There is a right way, and a wrong way to react to any situation that may arise- please make sure that you set an example to all the kids of the right way to react. Good sportsmanship is a tradition at CNLL, and parents in the stands are expected to continue that tradition.

## **Field Maps**

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CNLL contains five baseball fields. Your game schedule will indicate which field your team plays on.



## Website

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Most of the communication throughout the season including game and practice schedules, league standings, rainouts, and other important events will be posted on the league website at [www.clarksvillenational.org](http://www.clarksvillenational.org)

## Frequently Asked Questions

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- 1. How much will my child play?** A. Minimum Playing Requirement is 2 innings on defense, and 1 at bat per game. Since tee-ball through minors implements the continuous batting order, your child will always be in the batting order in those divisions. CNLL encourages coaches in TeeBall to make playing time approximately equal for all players. In Peewee and minor, playing time becomes less equal, but your child will probably not sit out more than 2 innings per game. In majors and above, better players tend to receive significantly more playing time, and weaker players less. Holding a weaker child down a division may be a good solution here. Generally, the coach of a team controls playing time, and the philosophy of each coach varies. If you have an issue with playing time, you should talk with the coach privately, and escalate your concerns to the player agent (Pat Neal 358-5584) if necessary.
- 2. Will my child play in the infield, or pitch?** A. Much like playing time, positioning players is up to the coach, and each coach has a different philosophy. In Tee-ball, players can rotate into the infield quite easily, and most coaches tend to do this. But a child who cannot catch will likely not be placed on first base. As children advance in age and skill, coaches begin to place players at the position that is best for the team, and rotate them less. You can always improve your child's chance of playing a certain position by practicing the skills needed for that position with him at home. You should talk to your coach privately, and perhaps he can explain why your child plays a certain position, or what skills you might be able to help him improve upon.

3. **Can my child be redrafted to a new team?** A. If you are unhappy with the team your child is returning to, address the issue up front. Talk to the coach privately about the problem you have. Next, escalate your concern to the player agent (Pat Neal 358-5584). If you still would like your child to be redrafted to a different team, you may request a “player release form”, state your reasons, and your child will be placed on a different team at the draft. Always address safety issues with someone immediately if it endangers the physical or emotional health of a child!
4. **My child is really good, can he play up a division?** A. If you feel your player should play up, or down a division, contact the player agent, and he will consider your request, and accommodate it if possible. The desire of CNLL is to have children play in the division that is suitable for their ability.
5. **What if it rains?** A. You should get your child dressed for his game, and head to the field. When games are rained out, we post this at [www.clarksvillennial.org](http://www.clarksvillennial.org) as soon as the decision is made. Our fields are surfaced with brick dust, and it takes a large amount of rain to cancel our games. Do not ever assume games are cancelled until you see it on the website.
6. **Can my son play on his friend's team?** A. CNLL seeks to provide a league where the teams are balanced so that games are competitive. While we would like to accommodate friend or coach requests, we cannot. The best method to balance the competition is to have an open and fair draft, and not allow the “stacking” of teams.
7. **My sons are age 9 and 10, can they play on the same team?** A. Yes! Our draft method provides that siblings playing in the same division can play on the same team. Just make sure we are aware of the situation before the draft so we can accommodate this.
8. **What are the rules?** A. The rules of Little League Baseball are based upon the Official Baseball Rules, which MLB uses. LL has made some adjustments to these rules (such as base stealing, leading off, coaches pitching, etc), but the basics are the same. You will find a link to purchase the official LL rulebook at [www.clarksvillennial.org](http://www.clarksvillennial.org). Additionally, the league has a few local rules, such as time limits, which vary by division. The coach of your child's team will have a copy of that, and should be happy to review it with you or provide you with a copy.

### **Little League Pledge**

**I trust in God  
I love my country  
and will respect its laws  
I will play fair  
and strive to win  
But win or lose  
I will always  
do my best**