Dear parents,

As we begin a new season, I wanted to address the behaviors that will give us the best opportunity to have a successful season.

Everyone has heard those parents spewing and fuming about bad calls, poor plays, or poor coaching decisions after losing a game. Meanwhile, their child is over at the snow cone stand laughing and cutting up with their friends that just beat them. Many parents could learn from the example their children set, especially in this circumstance. I have often told my own kids, “Positive things happen to positive people.”

Your role as parents is simple. I ask that you support the team, league and umpires in a positive manner and be a positive influence for everyone in the park. All the managers, coaches, and league officials are volunteers. They are giving up time with their families, so your child has a positive experience and place to play baseball. Little League baseball could not function without their support and dedication. Secondly, I know I am asking a lot of you when I ask you not to coach your kids from the stands. This includes approaching players between innings in the dugouts. I would appreciate if you would pass this on to guests as well. You have signed your kids up and I truly appreciate the level of trust you have bestowed upon me to not only teach them the great game of baseball, but also teach them lessons that will reward them in many aspects of their lives. From the time the kids get to practice or games until they end, I ask that you let me do my job.

I want everyone to understand my goals for the team so we are all on the same page.

1. Have fun!
2. Learn life lessons (i.e. good sportsmanship, teamwork, give 100%)
3. Utilize their skills in any capacity to help the team win.

Too often managers and coaches are so focused on the winning; they miss out on the best part of the experience which is building relationships with the young men and women, as well as a team culture where everyone understands they have a job. I truly believe that a coach’s success is not measured by wins produced, but by the number of winners produced. If we focus on giving 100% at all times, being great sportsmen and team mates, winning will be the result. We are going to win some games in this season and we may lose as well. Regardless of the outcome of the game, we will always display good sportsmanship. Being a good sportsman is having a positive attitude regardless of the outcome. Standing up straight, with your chin up and making eye contact with the person you are congratulating. We will lift up our teammates when they are down and will never make negative comments to each other or anyone else. That being said, there will be games where the umpiring is going to be bad. The faster we understand this, the better off everyone will be. Take it from another umpire, even when we get the call right, we will always be wrong to the other side. Players and parents will not show any emotion towards any umpire calls. If I feel a call needs to be discussed with an umpire, I will. But, rest assured, I will show the umpires the respect they deserve and set a positive example to all the players, parents and managers on the field.

The most common complaint from parents is about defensive positions and where their child will bat in the order. When it comes to defensive positions and batting order, I am going to place kids where they will have the greatest success for themselves as well as the team. This may mean that there will be times when players will not play in their favorite position or bat where they have batted in the past. My favorite movie quote is from the movie “Miracle”, about the 1980 US Olympic hockey team that beat the Russian hockey team in Lake Placid. When Kurt Russell, as Herb Brooks says, “The name on front of the jersey is a lot more important than the name on the back.” My decisions are based on what is best for the team.

I will ask a lot of your children and have high expectation for them. I expect that at every practice and games, they give me their very best. When players come to practices or games, they will be focused and prepared to play. We will run out every hit harder than any other team in the league. Each player will have an assignment on every play, even if the ball is not hit to them, backing up their teammates. Players on the bench will be attentive to what is going on in the field and not messing around. Our team will set the example for good sportsmanship. After every game, they will shake the umpire’s hands and tell them thank you, as well as shaking the hands of the opposing team while telling them great game.

As I wrap this up, I realize I must sound like the Little League Nazi. I truly believe a successful season is not measured by wins or losses, but the experience as a whole. Too often parents and coaches stress winning and lose focus of what Little League is all about. I am as competitive as the next guy, but if our energy is focused on the right goals, winning will be the result. If everyone does their part, this will not only be a rewarding experience for your children, but for you as well. Again, thank you for the opportunity and trust you have put in me to coach your child.

Sincerely,

Coach