

**QUICKSTART GUIDE TO PLAYING BALL
AT CROWN HILL FIELD**

**Tee-Ball & a baseball/SOFTBALL (Coach-Pitch) Divisions**

**YOUR LEAGUE**

We are excited that your family has chosen to be part of Northwest Seattle Little League (NWSLL)! We look forward to getting the Spring season underway, and to growing and cheering with you for many seasons to come. NWSLL is an all-volunteer organization, so your support, involvement, and feedback are important and valued. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or suggestions throughout the season, please email us at info@nwsll.org.

**YOUR COACHES**

Your team coaches are your primary point of contact for all your questions about games and practices, equipment, and so on. They will contact you before the season begins. Be sure to help them out! There’s always a lot to do.

**THE SPRING SEASON**

The Spring season begins in mid-April. Some team coaches choose to begin play the week of Spring Break (for Seattle Public Schools), and some choose to begin the week after. Typically about half of the teams start during Spring Break week; thus, the season will last 8 or 9 weeks and end the second Saturday after Memorial Day.

The practice evening slots are now set, and the game schedule has been finalized. But there sometimes are a couple of teams who need to change a game time or two before the season begins (to accommodate the needs of the coaches involved). Thank you for your patience with this process. As you will see in the schedule, there will be one 1-hour, midweek practice per week and one 60-minute (Tee-Ball) or 75-minute (Coach-Pitch) game slot on Saturdays.

Soon you will also receive information regarding the league’s Fan Fest Fundraiser/Team Picture Day (first Saturday in May), annual Year-End Picnic and Championship Day (first Saturday after Memorial Day), and opportunities to buy tickets for Little League days for the Mariners and/or the UW Husky games. Stay tuned!

**SAFETY**

At this level of play, ensuring safety is our primary responsibility. Here are the main safety rules that your coaches will observe during the season:

1. Coaches cannot leave the game or practice field until all of their players have been safely handed off to a parent or guardian. If you can’t stay for practices and games, please arrive back at the field 15 minutes before the end of the game or practice.
2. Players need to wear helmets when they are holding a bat or running the bases.
3. There is no on-deck circle; batters remain in the dugout (bats down) until they are up to bat.
4. Taking photos at games is permitted, but if you plan on posting photos to the web, please make sure that you do not identify kids by name unless you have permission from the families.
5. Players who need to use the restroom during a game or practice should be accompanied by a parent or trusted adult.

**GAME & PRACTICE RULES**

Aside from keeping players safe, our main emphasis is teaching good sportsmanship, the basic rules of baseball/softball, and the dynamics of team play. Skill levels and attention spans at this age mean that games and practices need to be limited in length and complexity. The basic rules are:

1. Practices last exactly one hour.
2. Tee-Ball games last about 50 minutes, and Coach-Pitch games last about 70 minutes (the exact timing will vary depending on how the game is going). Aim to complete at least 3 innings if possible.
3. Scores are not kept or emphasized.
4. Every player gets a chance to play each position (throughout the year), though we do not field a catcher for Tee-Ball or Coach-Pitch.
5. All players bat every inning regardless of how many outs are made.
6. There is no leading off or stealing of bases. Runners may leave the base when contact is made by the batter.
7. In Tee-Ball:
	1. A maximum of 11 players will take the field each inning (5 in the IF and 6 in the OF). Teams with more than 11 players will keep extra players in the dugout and rotate with defensive substitutions each 5-6 batters. In other words, about halfway through the other team’s batting order, the coaches should substitute in the players who were out.
	2. Batters stay on their base even if they are “out.”
	3. Batters may advance just one base per at bat, except for the last batter of the inning when the players can run all the bases after the ball is put in play. Base runners should not keep running just because a play was not made by the fielders (except for the last batter in the inning).
8. In A Baseball/Softball (Coach-Pitch):
	1. A maximum of 10 players will take the field each inning (5 in the IF and 5 in the OF). Teams with more than 10 players will keep extra players in the dugout and rotate with defensive substitutions each 5-6 batters. In other words, about halfway through the other team’s batting order, the coaches should substitute in the players who were out.
	2. Coaches stand about halfway to ¾ between the pitching rubber and home plate (rarely on the rubber) and preferably pitch underhand or from one knee unless a player requests otherwise. If a player doesn’t get a hit after 6-8 pitches, they hit from a tee. The coach helping the batters with technique and stance will also serve as the “catcher.”
	3. Batters and runners may advance up to two bases per at bat, except for the last batter of the inning when the players can run all the bases after the ball is put in play.
	4. If a batter or runner is forced out, tagged out, or a fly ball is caught, the player who is “out” should return to the dugout.

**ATTENDANCE & SPECTATOR RULES**

1. All practices, and most games, will be held at Crown Hill Field on Holman Road (across from Dick’s Drive In). Spectators are encouraged at both practices and games. Due to high levels of player registration, some overflow Tee-Ball games will be held at Soundview Field 2 (60’ field on Lower Soundview area SW of Whitman Middle School).
2. Occasionally practices and games will get rained out. Your coach will notify you of this as soon as possible after the Seattle Parks Department issues an official field closure report, sometime in the afternoon on practice days. On Saturdays, the coaches for the first game of the day at Crown Hill (or the first overflow Tee-Ball game at Soundview 2) will visit the field at least 30 minutes before game time to report the field status to the teams scheduled to play. The coaches will also share this information with all the other coaches, so they can make their own rainout determinations based on field conditions and any developing weather. Rained out games will be canceled instead of rescheduled.
3. Team rosters can vary wildly throughout the season as families go on vacations and struggle to meet competing obligations. Try to make it to practices, but especially games!
4. Arrive 10-15 minutes early for games to give your player enough time to warm up.
5. Cheer for good plays on both teams, for good teamwork, and for good sportsmanship.
6. Be encouraging—most players at this level will struggle with some aspects of hitting, throwing, and catching. This is especially true early in the season and is completely normal!

**VOLUNTEERING**

1. All coaches, assistant coaches, and volunteers/helpers who will have regular, sustained contact with players throughout the season are required complete a volunteer application and background check.
2. Parents are encouraged to contribute throughout the season however they can—bringing snacks, preparing the field for play, cheering at games, etc.

**EQUIPMENT**

1. Players should supply their own water bottle and baseball glove. We do recommend that players get their own batting helmet (to minimize the risk of spreading head lice), but the league will provide each team with some team helmets. Some players choose to wear molded rubber baseball cleats (metal cleats are not allowed), but typically, most players wear athletic shoes. Jerseys and hats are provided by the league. Players may wear whatever pants they would like. In A Baseball/Softball many players switch to wearing gray baseball pants (gray is much easier to keep clean than white!). But these are by no means required.
2. Many players do bring their own bats (if you do, try to buy a bat that meets the USA Baseball bat standard). Kids will always want to use the biggest bat. If you are buying your own, just buy a Tee-Ball bat for Tee-Ball players, and something slightly larger and heavier for A Baseball/Softball—around 26-27” and 14-16 oz. (longer and heavier bats are difficult for most A Baseball/Softball players to swing properly). Metal, composite, or wood bats are fine. Bat standards aren’t strictly enforced at this level, but they will be in AA Baseball/Softball and up.

**SUMMARY**

Have fun this season! Get a glove for yourself and help your child develop their throwing and catching skills! Help coordinate your team’s Little League Day at the Mariners game! Volunteer to be an assistant coach! Everything ends with an exclamation point—there’s a lot to look forward to. Thanks again for being part of this league!

Play Ball, and Go Northwest!!