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Excellence in Coaching

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Coaching youth baseball and softball can be a very rewarding experience. But it is very important that you keep a proper perspective of what your priorities and mission should be at all levels of competition. Your mission **IS NOT** winning at all costs. Your primary goal is to teach and develop in a fun atmosphere. In continuing with our commitment to provide our players with the very best educational, sports experience possible, Babe Ruth League, Inc. now requires all of its coaching personnel to successfully complete coaching education and certification.

We do realize that many of you already donate much of your time to the youth of our program. With that in mind, Babe Ruth League, Inc., Ripken Baseball and the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) have created the most accessible, comprehensive and affordable baseball and softball certification programs anywhere featuring "Coaching Youth Baseball: The Ripken Way". There are other certification programs out there. Some are less expensive and some are more expensive. **NONE ARE AS COMPREHENSIVE!!**

Today, and for the next several weeks, our special "Coaches Corner" messages will feature excerpts from "The Ripken Way" online training program offered by ASEP. If you haven't already done so, please visit www.BabeRuthCoaching.org to become the coach that every player looks up to...become the coach that makes a difference in a youngster's life...be the best role model that you can be.

CHAPTER 1 – STEPPING INTO COACHING

Your responsibilities as a coach:

- **Provide a safe physical environment.** Playing baseball holds an inherent risk, but as a coach you're responsible for regularly inspecting the practice and competition fields as well as for making sure that your team has an understands how and when to use the proper protective equipment.
- **Be an effective and positive communicator.** You'll communicate not only with your players but also with parents, umpires and administrators. Communicate in a way that is positive and that demonstrates you have the best interests of the players at heart.
- **Teach the skills, strategies and rules of baseball.** With this course you will be introduced to the Ripken method of teaching and practicing the strategies and skills young athletes need to know – an approach that kids thoroughly enjoy. You will also find the main rules to teach later in this course.
- **Direct players in competition.** This includes determining starting lineups and a substitution plan, relating appropriately to umpires and to opposing coaches and players, and making tactical decisions during games. Remember that the focus is not on winning at all costs, but on teaching your kids to compete well, do their

best, and strive to win within the rules.

- **Be a role model.** Just as kids imitate their parents and teachers, they take their cues from their coaches when it comes to how they act on the diamond. A coach's attitude and behavior set the tone for the atmosphere surrounding a team. If a coach gets visibly frustrated with his or her players, the higher-skilled players on the team are most likely to get frustrated with the lower-skilled players. The lower-skilled players may get easily frustrated with themselves and not enjoy the sport.

Five Tools of an Effective Coach:

Have you purchased the traditional coaching tools – things like whistles, coaching clothes, sport shoes and a clipboard? They'll help you coach, but to be a successful coach, you'll need five other tools that money can't buy and they're easy to remember with the acronym **COACH**:

C **Comprehension**
O **Outlook**
A **Affection**
C **Character**
H **Humor**

Comprehension of the rules, strategies and skills of the game is required. In addition to acquiring knowledge of the game, you must implement proper training and safety methods so that your players can participate with little risk of injury.

Outlook refers to your perspective and goals. Those most common coaching objectives are to provide an enjoyable experience, to develop the players' fundamental skills, and to get players to perform to the best of their abilities on a consistent basis. Remember the motto "Athletes First, Winning Second".

Affection is a genuine concern for the young people you coach. It involves having a love for working with kids, a desire to share with them your love and knowledge of baseball or softball, and the patience and understanding that allow each player to grow through his or her involvement in sport.

Character means modeling appropriate behavior for sports and life. This means more than just saying the right thing. What you say and what you do must match. Challenge, support, encourage, and reward every youngster, and your players will be more likely to accept, even celebrate, their differences.

Humor is an often-overlooked coaching tool. For our use, it means having the ability to laugh at yourself and with your players during practices and contests. Nothing helps balance the tone of a serious skill-development session like a chuckle or two. And a sense of humor puts in perspective the many mistakes your players will make. Allow your players and yourself to enjoy the ups, and don't dwell on the downs.

We hope you enjoyed this first issue of **COACHES CORNER**. Keep checking your email for more to come...