

Greetings Valley Little League Families –

We are encroaching on the start of the 2023 Little League season. Evals are complete, drafts are underway for Upper level divisions, and we're creating practice schedules to start at the end of February. The Valley Little League board wants to take an opportunity to share our league's progress and set expectations for the upcoming season.

Record Numbers in Valley Little League

Since returning from the pandemic in 2021, our league has grown by 25%. In 2022, we served over 560 kids ranging in age from 4-16 in softball and baseball, and we expect to see nearly 600 participants this season.

Our league boundaries encompass a youth population of roughly 6500 kids, which means about 1 out of every 10 kids in our community plays ball for Valley Little League. Additionally, we see great volunteer participation from our families as coaches, assistants, team parents, etc. As a board, we view this as a huge opportunity and responsibility to ensure we meet the mission of Little League which *"believes in the power of youth softball and baseball to teach life lessons that build stronger individuals and communities."*

We strive to plan and be organized so that players, coaches, and parents can live out the mission and have fun on the field. We're a 100% volunteer organization. When things don't go right, we try to be transparent and strive to do better with our families. Thank you all for taking an active role in our community and being a critical part of the Valley Little League Organization.

How We Draft Upper Level Teams

As mentioned above, we are in the process of completing drafts for AAA and above divisions. We place players in the division where we believe they will have fun and the best development based on evals and experience.

Our desired outcome from the drafts is parity for teams across a division. Valley Little League does not believe in building "super teams" or stacking one team with more talent than another. To help increase parity, we use eval information and previous coaches' input to build teams across a division with evenly distributed talent. The toughest division to build balanced teams is in AAA, with the least amount of information on the incoming 8- and 9-year-olds. We try to overcome this with eval data and coaches' input, but we can end up with unbalanced teams.

Kicking Off Practices

For Upper level teams, we practice at Big Rock in Duvall and Tolt-Macdonald and Mariner fields in Carnation. We have great facility partnerships with the City of Duvall and King County, but until daylight savings begins, we have limited field capacity. Big Rock fields #1 and 2 are the only fields in our community with lights. Additionally, other organizations such as Lacrosse and soccer are also practicing at Big Rock.

We ask for your patience and flexibility as things get started, practices may not be on the same days or at the same times, as we try to balance all the teams on our limited field availability. After daylight savings kicks in things typically settle.

All-Star Team Recruitment

Although All-Star tournaments don't begin until June, we want to make sure the board, coaches, and parents understand our league's approach to building All-Star teams.

First, All-Star participants are selected based on regular season play by coaches and the board.

Second, All-Star teams are built to be the most competitive based on the All-Star age brackets, not the division you played during the regular season. For example, if you played in the Coast division as a 10-year-old, coaches and the board may choose to place you on the 8/9/10 All-Star team because that is the team you could help the most.

Many of the 11-year-olds who played in the Majors division, may end up on the 9/10/11 All-Star team. This is not a demotion. During the regular season, we are focused on fun and developing players. With an emphasis still on having fun, All-Star teams have a greater focus on becoming as competitive as possible with other All-Star teams from our district.

Get Ready to Play Ball

We are excited to start our 2023 season. Thank you again for your participation and support. See you at the ballpark this spring, GO VALLEY!!!