Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

Safety Awards

Making it 'Safer for the Kids'

Regional Winners Named

Best Safety Plans in Nation Earn First, Second Places

The safety officers who created the "best of the best" will soon be arriving in Williamsport, to determine the national winner in ASAP's best safety plan contest.

Congratulations to all safety officers who put together safety plans this year for making it "safer for the kids!" Each region's safety plans were recently judged on their ability to strengthen safety at the local league level. Over 1,640 plans were submitted for the contest and the player accident insurance credit.

The first place winning plans' representatives will travel to Williamsport to experience the ultimate Little League thrill: the World Series.

Lamade field when the regional certificates are presented. What are the judging criteria for the plans?

exceeds Little League lighting standards.

Teamwork — League got players, parents and friends of league involved

The first and second place winners from each region will

receive \$500 to spend on safety equipment for their leagues

or their insurance premium. The first place winners will vie

for the best safety plan in the country, which will also

receive a Musco Light-Structure 2[™] lighting system to light

a 200-foot field. Worth over \$20,000, the system meets or

The national winner will be announced on the Howard J.

The winners are: Crystal Little Ill., Little

"thinking safety"?

Community Plan used resources of the land owner or community organizations to benefit the program?

Planning

League considered future goals in safety improvements or new programs?

Operations — Safety officer has an on-going method to improve safety?

Project Impact — How

the project improves the safety of participants, spectators and volunteers?

Creative Solutions — Used ingenuity to overcome obstacles or achieve safety goals?

Creative Funding — Creatively made funding goals? **Discretionary Bonus** — Points for an exceptional plan.

Central Region

First place: Lake, League Second place: Elgin, Ill., Classic

Eastern Region

League

First place: Pottstown, Pa., Little League Second place: Nyack-Valley Cottage, N.Y., Little League

Southern Region

First place: Fairfax, Va., Little League

Second place: Windcrest, Texas, Little League

Western Region

First place: Granada Hills, Calif., Little League Second place: Manhatten Beach, Calif., Little League

Should league be required to use

(The following is a recent exchange of ideas by safety officers currently on the **Safety Officers Email Server**, by Virginia District 7. The email messages are routed to safety officers who request to join. To join, see below.)

Make Chin Straps Mandatory

"Again this season I am requesting the addition of the following to the Little League Rule Books:

'The use of chin straps on batting helmets to be required for Major Division and younger divisions in both baseball and softball.'

"I see chin straps being used during the Little League World Series and I think this would be appropriate to add to the Little League Rule Books and be required by each league to follow. I have noticed that baseball is the only sport that uses protective helmets, but does not require chin straps. I am a firm believer that the use on chin straps would cut down on injuries to the head. So many times I have seen batters jump back from a pitched ball only for the helmet to partially come off or come off completely. Also, runners that lose their helmets exposing their heads to a thrown ball in an attempt to make a play.

"The National Youth Sports Safety Foundation has stated:

"1. Head injuries are one of the most common causes of death in athletes."

"2. In baseball the head area is involved in more injuries (41%) than any other segment of the body, followed closely by the arm.'

"Again I would like Little League Baseball to consider this change for the safety of our players."

> Gary Burrman, district safety officer District 4, Virginia



Make sure helmets fit

"The injuries that Gary refers to (at left) occur mainly because the helmet comes off, or partially off of the player's head. Our league has always gone to great lengths to purchase and provide helmets in appropriate sizes for the players on each team. And, per our Safety Plan, coaches and managers are responsible to ensure that each player is properly equipped before taking the field. This includes helmets when going to the plate.

"It is my observation that properly fitted equipment stays in place and does its job.

"On the other hand, if a league has limited resources, or for whatever other reason, that the only helmet available to a player going to the plate is a loosely fitting one, I whole-heartedly agree that a chin strap would help and should be made available.

"We've had our share of batters bailing out of the batter's box and runners sliding to bases and I've seen very few lost helmets in our league. At present, the trend shown by our history of injury reports does not indicate that mandatory chin straps is necessary. Should that trend change, I will be the first to advocate chin straps for our league.

"It is my opinion that each league's safety officer and/or board of directors should assess their own league's situation and safety record and make its own determination of whether to make chin straps mandatory for their league."

> W. Steven Collins, safety officer Poquoson Little League, Virginia District 7

Are injuries cited just to players' head, or also to faces?

"I would say that this is a good idea but, would add some expense. Expense *should* have *no* bearing, but warrants consideration. In light of the numbers (41%), there should be a distinction of whether this reflects head or face injuries.

"The latter could be corrected by installation of face guards, but represents an even greater expense. I agree with the chin straps as a safety issue but to make it mandatory in situations where the injuries are primarily to the face (if this is the case) would do little more than add the expense. Ensuring the proper fit of helmets would go far in reducing injuries related to the loss of a batting helmet."

Chuck, safety officer

Phoebus Little League, Virginia District 7

(Interested in becoming a part of the free Safety Officers Email Distribution List? Then go to the online registration at: www.dpll.org/safetyform.htm — Editor.)

chin straps?

Chin straps needed?

"When I first read Gary's email, I immediately searched my old Injury Report records. I couldn't find one incident where the injury occurred because a helmet fell off a batter's or runner's head, so I tend to agree with the response Steven gave.

"However, anyone who has watched the Little League World Series must have noticed that every one of them wear chin straps. Certainly, Williamsport feels this added safety precaution is necessary for their part of the tournament. I wonder if any of the ASAP folks have input to this."

Mike Dec, safety officer Fairfax, Va., Little League, District 10

Use common sense

"I enjoy the exchanges I see taking place on this communication vehicle. I would like to add my comments, keeping in mind that I don't speak for Little League Baseball. When we began the ASAP Program, one of the basic tenets was that it recognize the common sense methods of the people in the field who deal with the real world problems of Little League Baseball. This seems like one of those problems.

"From my perspective, if it makes sense that the kids wear helmets, it makes sense that the helmets stay in place during the activity for which they are worn. Forget whether there are rules to force the issue does it make sense? I think it does. Rules are most effective when a majority of the constituency agrees with them. One of the most effective ways of gaining consensus is to implement on a voluntary basis, as you see with several things at the World Series. However, in my opinion, it doesn't have to be a rule for you to implement at the local level. Keep up the good work and don't wait for Little League to make a rule on things that make common sense."

Dave Shanahan Musco Lighting, ASAP co-sponsor

Make sure helmet needs strap

On one last thought, Little League Baseball Risk Management Director Dan Kirby notes that not all helmets need chin straps, as some are not designed for them. "Not all helmets that are manufactured have the snaps for which chin straps can be used. Some are molded to the head and do not need chin straps. Other models that have the snaps, have recommendations from the manufacturers that they should be used, and in those cases they should be used. We should always follow those recommendations," said Kirby.

We'd Like To Know

What are options for first aid kits?

"Question: I am the safety officer for Mendota Little League in Mendota, Illinois. I am looking for an inexpensive way to provide good first aid kits for all of our teams. Buying ready-made kits can be very expensive. I would be glad to hear some solutions from other leagues who have to provide a large number of kits for their teams. Thanks for your help."

Karen Stremlau, safety officer Mendota, Ill., Little League

Seal shows kits are stocked

"As the safety officer, I am responsible for periodically checking and replenishing the first aid kits. Instant Ice Packs are a standard component of all of our first aid kits and by far, are the most commonly used items.

"To assist in my effort to maintain the first aid kits in an as fully stocked condition as possible, our local ambulance service provides me with a supply of seals that they use to secure their drug storage compartments. These plastic, numbered, yellow seals look like small locks, attach easily to the first aid kits and are readily broken when the kit is opened.

"When a kit is checked and restocked, it is sealed. Then, as long as the seal is intact, I know the kit is still fully stocked. Also, since the first aid kits are in the dugouts during games, the seals help dissuade the players from going into the kits and playing with the supplies and ice packs.

"The idea for using these seals to control access to our first aid kits came out of a brainstorming session on safety that I had with an ambulance representative when I first took on the responsibility of safety officer.

"Since then, (they) have become an invaluable resource for our safety program by providing guidance, training, and, of course, the yellow seals.

"Beyond the use of the seals, I fully recommend looking to the local community for support of your safety efforts. We have also involved the police department in our youth protection and bicycle safety programs.

"The help is there, you just have to ask for it."

John J. Thomas III, safety officer Plymouth Little League, Plymouth Township, Pa.



Question/Answer

'Can a league install on-deck cages?'

"Can our association legally install chainlink cages for the purpose of on-deck swings? There will be one opening only, monitored by an assistant coach calling out

on-deck hitters' names. None of these cages will be on fields, but will be adjacent to four different dugouts for 9-12 year old players' use. Our primary concern is safety, of course, but a batter who has taken warm-up swings is more likely to get a hit! We want to install these but are worried about legal/insurance problems. Any insight? I am aware of the 'no on-deck circles' rule and we intend to abide by it. However does Little League have a policy on isolated swinging within a cage?"

Chris Wallace, safety officer Waxhaw, N.C., Athletic Association Little League



According to Dan Kirby, risk management director at Little League Baseball, you can't have any on-deck area, enclosed or not for 12-year-olds and under (Rule 1.08,

Note). When the change was adopted in 1996, the rule states "... All on-deck circles, cages and other designated warm-up areas are prohibited. The batter will be required to go from the dugout to assume the batter's position." The batter is allowed and encouraged to take practice swings in the area next to the batter's box as he/she approaches the plate, but not before that.

"The problem was, we had players warming up hitting their teammates, hitting their coaches, or being hit by equipment being thrown into the on-deck area by returning players. And if the field didn't have an enclosed area, the players were hitting even volunteers and spectators as they warmed up to bat," Kirby said.

Please pass on the information to other league and district personnel to avoid any confusion on this issue. (On a related matter, please note that the "traditional batter's doughnut" weight is not allowed for any age or division of play (Rule 1.10, Note).



"There is a child in our league who suffered a broken wrist a while back. He got his full-arm cast removed, but is still in a wrist-cast for another week or two. This

child has been coming to his team's games dressed in his uniform the whole time he has been sidelined. Is there any rule that would prevent this child from being his team's first-base coach? As an extension to this question, could a child in a leg cast act as the first-base coach? Would the existence of an arm or leg cast prevent an adult from acting as a base coach?"

Mike Dec, safety officer Fairfax Little League



Dan Kirby at Little League Headquarters says a child can sit in the dugout with his team with a cast on, but cannot act as a base coach, or participate in playing in any

way. Being on the field as a base coach makes the child a participant, and the rules say for the child's safety and that of the people around him/her, no casts are allowed for participants, either on an arm or leg. The same goes for adult volunteers. This issue was just recently addressed by Little League, allowing players to be with their teams in the dugouts. Prior to last year, players wearing casts were supposed to sit in the stands.

Have a question or tip to share?

Call the ASAP Hotline:

800-811-7443.

or e-mail: asap@musco.com



Or write to us at:
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What's Inside



FINALISTS TOLD Regional safety plan winners to see 'The Series'





S.O.'s DISCUSS Should all leagues use chin straps?





SAFETY CHATTER
Remember:
On-deck position
is out for LL'ers



HOTLINE IDEAS

FROM READERS

"We unveiled a new safety mascot this year. We have a large gorilla suit which a volunteer wore with an ASAP cap and shirt on to promote safety. 'Safety Sam' will follow the slogan, "Don't Monkey Around, Play It Safe" to help encourage safety awareness at all levels in our league."

Scott Donalds, safety officer Par-Troy West Little League, Randolph, NJ

"Greater Richland Little League of Washington District 5 adopted a season rule that 'the bat retriever must be wearing a helmet when he comes out of the dugout.' The ball may be alive if time out is not called. A runner could break for home and the ball could hit the bat retriever. We have adopted this rule for District Tournaments."

Mel Haas, district administrator, Washington District 5, Walla Walla, Wa.

(Great ideas, Scott and Mel; keep calling them in — Editor.)

These safety officers received ASAP caps for calling in their safety ideas. What is your league doing to become safer for the kids?

Call the ASAP Hotline, or e-mail them to asap@musco.com!

800-811-7443

The 1999 Safety Officer Manual is available by calling the ASAP Hotline!

ASAP News

ASAP News is a service of Little League Baseball®, Inc. facilitated and published by Musco Lighting, Inc. P.O. Box 808
Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577

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