

ASAP news



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

Leagues Take Up Safety

Record Numbers Helping Keep Kids and Volunteers Safer

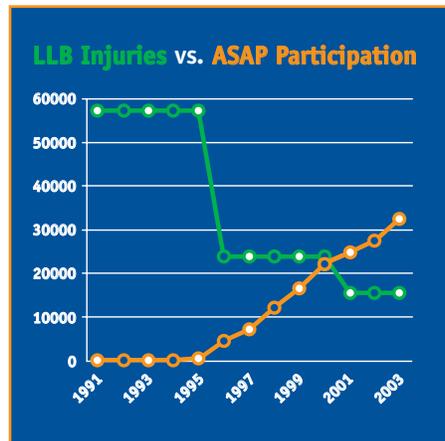
Over 3500 safety programs are running across the country, improving the safety of participants and volunteers at all levels.

This is a record number of safety plans with about 540 more plans in early May this year than all of last year, and late plans are still arriving in Williamsport.

If you submitted a safety plan in the past and didn't this year, remember that each year you need to resubmit the safety plan your league is implementing. So if you haven't sent in your plan, please do so right away.

New Leagues Participating

While the total number of leagues with safety plans is rising over last year, the real increase is being fueled by a jump in new leagues. Over 678 leagues submitted a safety plan this year that didn't send one in last year. That's amazing! What a jump in participation, accounting for over 10 percent of all leagues in the country,



and over 19 percent of all the safety plans submitted this year so far.

This is similar to trends last year, when 18 percent of leagues submitting safety plans hadn't submitted plans in 2002. That is good news for getting more leagues involved in avoiding potential risks to players and volunteers.

However, if all leagues that had implemented a safety plan in the past had continued, where would we be in terms of

increasing the safety of participants and reducing the number of injuries across the country? Please be sure to make copies of your full safety plans and pass them on to next year's officials if you won't be continuing in your league.

Taking Advantage of ASAP Incentives

All leagues submitting a qualified safety program will earn a 20 percent credit on their 2004 Hartford Player Accident Insurance premium. That will be somewhere around \$400,000 in credits given out in July to all participating leagues who qualify.

Also, leagues will be entered in the awards contest to determine the first and second best safety plans in each region, culminating in the national winner earning a Musco lighting system for a 200-foot field. Regional first place winners will earn a trip to the Little League World Series in late August where the winners will be recognized on field at Lamade Stadium.

E-News: Keeping You In Touch

Don't miss out on any of the latest Little League news and information! The ASAP News is available several weeks earlier online than in print, and if you are signed up for E-News, you'll be notified within hours of its being posted at www.littleleague.org.

Whether it's rules changes or breaking Little League news, everyone can use E-News (www.littleleague.org/enews) to stay on top of all important updates:

- League Officers/Board of Directors
- Managers, Coaches
- Umpires
- Parents

- District Officials
- Any Volunteer!

Little League News

Receive notices of news and announcements, as well as changes and updates to the Little League Website.

ASAP Safety Newsletters

Packed with Little League's best safety tips and ideas, this newsletter will bring your parents, volunteers, team or league to the forefront of the safety movement.

ActiveSports.com Updates

ActiveSports.com is working hard to make sure your team has the

best web site possible. This is where you'll learn to take advantage of all the ActiveSports.com features.

Little League Merchandise Updates

Information on new merchandise, clearance sales, and special discounts for E-News subscribers!

2004 Little League Summer Camp Information

Make sure you've given us your current address above so we can send you a summer camp brochure.

Changes and updates to Little League Rules and Regulations

2004 Congress: Celebrate

Injuries down, in severity and number

Every day, Little Leaguers celebrate home runs, double plays, and other performance-based accomplishments.

It's natural. But if your league had avoided a terrible accident, and you knew it, you'd celebrate that too, right?

A knee that wasn't blown out, a child that wasn't hit by an overthrow, a volunteer that wasn't injured in the concession stand: these are all injuries that have occurred consistently and are being reduced. So if you've been taking part in ASAP, you should celebrate these accomplishments as well as the home runs. These reductions are every bit as important as the home runs hit and shut outs thrown.

ASAP, with your participation, helped reduce injuries an amazing 76 percent in 2002 from pre-ASAP injury statistics. **The three-year average from 2001-'03 shows injuries dropped to an annual rate of 1,556, down from 5,695 for the five-year period prior to ASAP's start.**

That's incredible! And that's with only half the leagues in the country formally submitting a safety plan in 2003. What will we see in 2004? And 2007?

That was the message Dan Kirby took to District Administrators at the 2004 International Congress in Virginia Beach, Va., in mid-April, as DA's gathered to hear about LLB programs and vote on future rules changes.

Kirby, the Risk Management Director at Little League Baseball International Headquarters, presented a solid case for leagues getting involved and developing on-going safety programs to reduce and avoid injuries. He stressed Districts' involvement in that effort as being key to the early success, and still a vital role for the future of ASAP.



Why Safety Awareness?

A Safety Awareness Program was begun in 1994 from a series of focus groups around the country to discuss ways of reducing injuries. These had been static in Little League for many years.

"The injuries were so consistent, that I could take the number of participants and tell you the number of injuries per position, overall, we would see," Kirby said. "They didn't happen in the same leagues, but they did happen." Kirby equated the risk of injuries with playing Russian roulette, since leagues should understand they are tempting the law of averages to catch up with them by not implementing safety procedures.

Virginia DA's were the first group to jump onboard with ASAP, setting a goal of 100 percent participation for the entire state. Since 1999, the state has averaged over 90 percent participation. West Virginia overtook Virginia last year as the leading state in the country, with 97 percent, but both are great examples of what entire states can do to improve safety and reduce injuries.

te What Did **NOT** Happen

ember, thanks to your ASAP participation

In fact, the early results in Virginia showed that districts with over half of leagues with safety plans were averaging 7 injuries annually, while districts with less than half of leagues in ASAP were at 17 injuries, a 57 percent difference. National statistics now show that even greater reductions in injuries have been realized due to safety planning.

ASAP Drives Results

ASAP has been benchmarked by Congress appearances:

- 1995 — Introduced at Reno, Nev., Congress
- 1998 — 10% of leagues in ASAP at San Antonio, Texas, Congress
- 2001 — 33% of leagues were in ASAP at Ottawa, Canada, Congress
- 2004 — 50% of leagues were in ASAP prior to Virginia Beach, Va., Congress

Considering the entire eight-plus year period that ASAP has been working to reduce injuries, the total equals 28,942 injuries to managers, coaches, umpires, adult workers and young players that did not occur.

That is equal to almost the entire population of Williamsport, Pa., home of Little League.

Not only have the numbers dropped, but the severity of injuries has also been

"If leagues continue to do things the way they've always done them (without regard to risks), they will have accidents," stated Kirby. "It's just a matter of time."

impacted. Where previously a player might have broken a leg sliding into a solid base, break-away bases have resulted in either no injury, or only a sprain or strained muscle, to give just one great example.

And all leagues have benefited from the growth of safety. Several states have earned individual insurance rate reductions due to their reductions in injuries, but all states were given increased insurance benefits in 2003 due to so many leagues' hard work. And where would we be if all leagues implemented safety programs?

Kids, Not Numbers

Why is safety so important? Little League's insurance history proves that if nothing changes, players and adults alike will be injured. It's only a waiting game to see which leagues will be hit by a catastrophic, life-threatening or crippling injury. Talk to any league veteran, and you'll hear stories that were a hair away from being true

tragedies. Leagues need to realize the risk of not implementing safety awareness, and make changes now.

It's not enough to fill out a form and copy someone's safety plan. You need to get involved, and get others in your league involved. Each league has unique safety concerns, and needs to address them for themselves.

Getting Involved

Make a goal this year. If your league doesn't have a safety plan yet, get started on one now. Implement the parts you can, as you can, and keep working on it. You may not qualify for the accident insurance credit, but your league will be safer, and that's the real incentive.

Make copies. If you submit a safety plan, it should be in enough hands this year that you don't have to ask for it back next year. Especially if you have a change in leadership, the safety plan you start this year will help keep kids safe next year, since the plans will be written down. Don't get caught in the position of saying, "What did they do last year? It was so good."

And communicate with your District staff. They are a great resource to you. Send a copy of your safety plan to the DA, so they have a backup for you if a computer crashes, a fire occurs, or it gets blown away during a field clean-up (all real life examples called in).

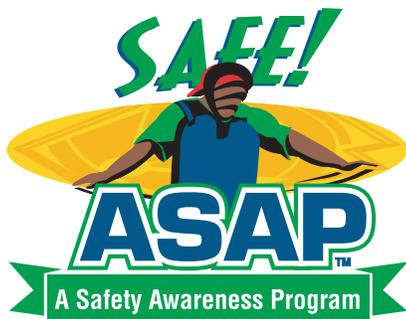
Put it into action. Make sure you get your board's backing and implement it. Safety is an active word. The paper a safety plan is written on isn't magic. If you don't follow the program, kids and adults will still be injured.

With all of us working together, we've made progress that the focus groups probably didn't even hope for. A reduction in injuries of 76 percent in 2002, and almost 29,000 injuries avoided overall. That's amazing. But if we keep working, we can do even more.



Think you know some

Be sure to check volunteers' backgrounds for criminal offenses of all kinds against kids.



Statistics show child molesters are four times more likely to re-offend than other violent criminals. Sex offenders move from state to state without re-registering in the new state's Sex Offender Registries.

When you conduct a background check of the Sexual Offenders Registry in your state, remember that you are only meeting the minimum requirements of the Little League Child Protection Program.

A presentation on the one-year-old agreement between Little League and Rapsheets.com demonstrated that many leagues are finding concerns with potential volunteers who would not be screened out by the Sexual Offenders Registry search. The agreement allows leagues to immediately search 39 states' Sex Offender Registries, as well as 160 million criminal records, all for \$1.50 per searched name.

Many concerns can be raised with the different registries across the country, since states list offenses differently, Dan Kirby pointed out. Kirby, the Risk Management Director at Little League International Headquarters, noted that some states list crimes as serious misdemeanors — offenses that don't qualify for the state's SOR — for offenses that other states recognize as felonies. "There is no consistency in laws state to state," Kirby stressed.

He also said leagues need to consider the intent of the new regulations requiring checks of the state SOR. Does it say only exclude people who have a child sex crime on their record? Kirby asked. "No, it says no league shall allow anyone to participate who has 'a conviction or guilty plea for any crime involving or against a minor.'" (See Reg. I c (9).)

In 2003, 10% of leagues performed at least one search on Rapsheets.com's databases. They performed 22,157 distinct searches, which resulted in 947 positive hits within the search state, as well as 873 additional hits

outside the state. Of the 947 charges within the search state, 137 were for felonies, but only nine were on a Sex Offender Registry.

In the six weeks preceding the Congress this year, 27,657 searches were conducted. Of these searches, 496 resulted in discovering felony convictions for the applying volunteers in the same state, and only two were on that state's SOR.

The types of felonies found:

- Incest
- Risk of injury to a child
- Sexual assault – second degree
- Negligent storage of a firearm
- Possession of narcotics
- Sale of controlled substances
- Sexual battery by a custodian – victim under age 18
- Theft, robbery and related crimes
- Lewdness, indecent exposure

The types of misdemeanors found:

- Speeding
- Driving a vehicle while intoxicated
- Selling liquor to minors
- Sexual assault – third degree
- Prostitution
- Domestic battery
- Assault – family violence
- Lewdness, indecent exposure

Kirby asked if these are people you would want in your league? While he acknowledged that if an offense wasn't against a child, and occurred years earlier, that might mitigate what the local board decided to do about accepting the person's application. However any offenses against children and child family members would automatically keep them from participating as volunteers under the restrictions of Reg. I c (9). But the majority of these non-SOR offenses would never come to light without a more thorough check.

Everybody? Think Again...

A further example Kirby made was a basketball coach in Georgia who just prior to Congress was arrested on suspicion of killing his wife. He was the coach of a nine-year-old girls basketball team at an elementary school. After his arrest, it was discovered he had convictions for manslaughter and battery in other states.

While this person wasn't a Little League coach, he could have been. "People could have thought, 'Hey, he's a heck of a guy. He's a coach for the elementary school girls' basketball team. Let's ask him to coach. We don't need to do a background check on him.'" Kirby noted. "But unless you do the check, you don't know what people are like. You can't know. People move around, especially if they have something in their past they want to hide."

"The SOR check is the minimum requirement," Kirby reminded the assembled District staff people. "Should we do more? That's something that you need to think about."

Two other examples of state SOR's Kirby gave were for Texas and Utah. In the large state of Texas, 130,000 people in all of Rapsheets.com's Texas data have sex-related charges, but only 35,000 people are listed on the state's SOR. In Utah, a smaller population state, 10,500 people are listed as having sex-related charges, but only 4,000 people show up on Utah's official SOR.

Other concerns: Statistics show child molesters are four times more likely to re-offend than other violent criminals. Sex offenders move from state to state without re-registering in the new state's Sex Offender Registries.

Check Government ID:

Kirby also pointed out that any check, whether of the State Sex Offender Registry or on

Rapsheets.com, requires good data. "If you put bad data in, you'll get bad data out," he stated.

He used an example where a person had called to tell him Rapsheets.com didn't work for a volunteer that person knew to have convictions. When Kirby tried it, the records all came up. The problem? Because the form didn't allow a middle name, the person entering the data had put both first and middle names in the first name blank. Because the person's official first name wasn't "John Michael", the search didn't work.

"That's why we tell you to use photo ID's. Not to make one for your volunteers, but to take a government identification card and see that their official name is just like what they wrote on their volunteer application," Kirby stressed. Without checking the official name and other data, you could be checking out anyone's background – or more to the point – no one's. "If you don't use their official name, you can't check official records."

No league shall allow anyone to participate who has 'a conviction or guilty plea for any crime involving or against a minor.'

See Reg. 1 c (9)



New Rules/Regulations

Little League Baseball's 23rd International Congress in Virginia Beach, Va., resulted in seven changes to the rules and regulations under which the game is played. Ten additional modifications were considered by the 498 delegates attending the congress, but failed to garner the required two-thirds majority required for consideration by the Little League Baseball International Board of Directors, or in the case of tournament rules, the Tournament Committee in Williamsport, Pa.

Here are the modifications and the voting results:

APPROVED FOR 2004 IMPLEMENTATION

Affects Regulation I(c) 5 **THE LEAGUE – All Levels of Play**

Adopt and play a separate schedule of games as provided for in Regulation VII. Interleague play and practice with another league(s) is permitted during the regular season **with the approval of the district administrator. The district administrator must verify that all leagues involved in the interleague combination are properly chartered and insured. Interleague play during the regular season between leagues from two districts must be approved by the regional office. Leagues involved in interleague play will field separate tournament teams. Players shall not be transferred from one league to another. Requests to combine for tournament play must be submitted through the district to the regional offices for approval per guidelines established by Little League. Districts will be required to submit interleague play forms with all insurance claims that result from interleague play.**

Item 7 Voting:

Yes; 436 votes — 96.5%
No; 16 votes — 3.5%

Affects Regulation IX (c) **SPECIAL GAMES – All Levels** **of Softball and Baseball**

With the approval of the Charter Committee of Little League Headquarters, and on recommendation of the Regional Director and District Administrator, **chartered leagues may engage** in Special Games during and after the regular season but prior to the opening of the school term or September 1st, whichever comes sooner.

Removed terms – same and contiguous districts

Item 13 Voting:

Yes; 414 votes — 91.6%
No; 32 votes — 7.1%
Abstain; 6 votes — 1.3%

Affects Rule 8.06 **Little League Baseball and Softball –** **Majors and Minor Divisions**

This rule, which applies to each pitcher who enters a game, governs the visits of the manager or coach to the pitcher **at the mound.** (Approved for Regular Season and Tournament Play.)

Item 5 Voting:

Yes; 351 — 77.7%
No; 100 — 22.1%
Abstain; 1 — 0.2%

APPROVED FOR 2005 IMPLEMENTATION

Affects Rule 3.03 **Little League Softball**

3. A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher any time in the remainder of the game, but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed.

Item 1 Voting:

Yes; 272 votes — 76.8%
No; 76 votes — 21.5%
Abstain; 6 votes — 1.7%

Affects Regulation I(b) **THE LEAGUE – All Levels of Play**

President may manage, coach or umpire provided he/she does not serve on the Protest Committee nor serve as Tournament Team manager or coach.

Item 6 Voting:

Yes; 311 votes — 68.8%
No; 139 votes — 30.8%
Abstain; 2 votes — 0.4%

Affects Regulation III **THE TEAMS – Minor League and** **Tee Ball, Baseball and Softball**

(a) The league shall, at least 10 days prior to the first regular game, establish the number of players on each team. **There will be no minimum or maximum established at the Minor League and Tee Ball levels.**

Item 10 Voting:

Yes; 335 votes — 76.8%
No; 101 votes — 23.2%
Abstain; 0 votes — 0%

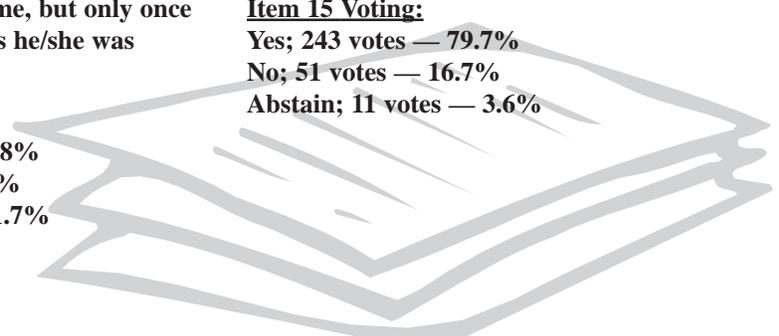
Affects Tournament – Player Eligibility – **Big League Baseball and Softball**

Any player League Age 16, 17 or 18, with amateur status, who has participated as an eligible player in one-half the regular season games (**Special Games may be counted toward this requirement**) by the start of Tournament Play in their respective District, with the exception of the high school or college baseball/softball season, on a:

1. Big League Baseball/Softball Team, or;
2. Senior League Baseball/Softball Team.

Item 15 Voting:

Yes; 243 votes — 79.7%
No; 51 votes — 16.7%
Abstain; 11 votes — 3.6%



Don't Swing It Until You're Up to Bat!

**Don't let this
happen in
your dugout!**



This player was hit by a teammate waiting to bat, while in his dugout. While serious looking, he is fine today. It could have been much worse if the bat had struck him in the temple.

REMEMBER:

No one should hold a bat until they leave the dugout to go to the plate.

RULE 1.08

"NOTE 1: The on-deck position is not permitted in Tee Ball, Minor League or Little League (Majors) Division."

What's Inside

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Injuries down thank to ASAP participation.

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Think You Know?

Be sure to check volunteer's background.

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New Rules/Regulations.

Approved changes for both 2004 and 2005 seasons.

"Ohio District 11 Little League has worked with a local hospital, Southern Ohio Medical Center, to sponsor a boys and a girls team within each league of the district that agrees to support a tobacco education program. The agreement calls for a vinyl sign and two posters to be hung at a field in each league. The posters read, "Dugout and

Scrubs team up for your health," and then shows both mascots. Scrubs is a cartoon dog, who is the mascot of Southern Ohio Medical Center (SOMC). The message below the two characters reads: "SOMC is a proud sponsor of a Tobacco Free Little League. The use of tobacco products in any form is not permitted on the playing fields, benches, dugout and stands. This initiative is supported by local and national Little League organizations and your District 11 Umpires Association.""



Glenda Cordle
District 11 Safety Officer

Editor's Note: A longer article on this initiative will be in next month's ASAP News.

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