

## **We are thrilled that your family is interested in McLean Little League!**

Below are answers to many of the Frequently Asked Questions about McLean Little League.

McLean Little League offers three divisions of **baseball and softball play for children ages 5- to 12-years-old**. MLL operates under charters from Little League International. More than 1,000 kids ages 5 to 12 play McLean Little League each season.

MLL also has a **Challenger division, an adapted baseball league for kids ages 5-18** with different needs. MLL also has an intermediate **baseball for 13-year-olds and senior softball league for players 13- to 16-years-olds**. More information about Challenger is available here: <https://www.mcleanll.com/Default.aspx?tabid=535855>. More information about intermediate play is available here: <https://www.mcleanll.com/Default.aspx?tabid=535856>

### **Baseball and Softball for 5- to 12-Year Olds**

#### ***Why should my child play Little League?***

Little League offers **physical activity, skill development and fun!** MLL also **teaches sportsmanship and team building skills**. The MLL complex provides a community gathering place for players and families.

**Spring 2021:** Little League offers a comparatively safe opportunity for kids to **interact and socialize with their classmates** and other children while staying physically active. **MLL is specifically encouraging new players** and kids who may only choose or need to play little league during the pandemic to join us as part of **MLL's commitment to the community's mental, emotional and physical health during the pandemic**.

#### ***When are practices and games?***

Typically, developmental league and lower level minor league teams practice **once a week for one hour-and-a-half and play one or occasionally two games per week that are one to two hours long, depending on the level of play**. Most developmental and lower level minor league games are held on Saturdays. Major league teams practice two times per week and play two games per week.

**Spring 2021:** Some developmental league teams and lower level minor league teams' practices may be held immediately prior to their games. Due to reduced capacity for games at the MLL complex, per the COVID safety plan, some games may be played on Sunday. **MLL is committed to accommodating players for whom religious commitments would otherwise limit their ability to play** during the spring season.

#### ***Is my 8-, 9- or 10-year old too old to play for the first time?***

**No!** This is one of the most common questions parents have. Each season, **we have kids of all ages play for the first time**. All **coaches are committed to helping develop new players**. We even have some coaches who say coaching older kids new to little league is their favorite part of coaching.. In the last two seasons, both 11- and 12-year olds played for the first time!

Placement in the correct level of play is crucial to a new player's successful season. Please contact [toddoverman@hotmail.com](mailto:toddoverman@hotmail.com) or [navidlotti@yahoo.com](mailto:navidlotti@yahoo.com) about baseball placement or [bprender@hotmail.com](mailto:bprender@hotmail.com) or [kmfontenot@verizon.net](mailto:kmfontenot@verizon.net) for softball placement to determine the best level of play for your child, based on their age and general athletic ability.

### ***What are the levels of play?***

**MLL has three leagues: developmental league, minor league and major league.** Within the developmental and minor league there are different levels of play. The developmental league is co-ed. Beginning with the transition level, the play splits into baseball and softball. Occasionally, a girl will chose to play baseball, but, generally, girls generally play softball and boy play baseball.

**Developmental League:** The developmental league has three levels of play, **T-ball, rookie ball and transition ball** which are designed to gradually help players develop. The style of play and rules vary at each level. For example, kids hit off of tee at the first level, but then progress to machine pitch and coach pitch at levels two and three. The developmental league players are ages five to ten, with most players between ages five and seven.

**Minor League:** Minor league play has three levels, **Single A, AA, and AAA**, designed to continue developing and adding new skills and expanding rules at each level. Single A starts as coach pitch, but the second half of the season is kid pitch. AA is kids pitch, but after a kid pitcher throws four balls, coaches pitch to ensure batters have the opportunity to hit strikes. AAA adds walks and stealing to the game. At the Single A and AA levels, player rotate through all the fielding position but start to develop a few regular positions in AA. By AAA, players typically play 1-3 positions based on the skills they have developed and their team's needs. Single A players are generally ages 6-8; AA players are typically ages 8-10, with occasional 7-year-olds and 11-12-year-olds. AAA players are generally 9-11-year-olds. Players are assigned to teams based on skill evaluations and rankings in the spring and by friend requests, schools and prior teammates in the fall.

**Major League:** Major league plays is the highest level of play and most closely mimics the rules of high school and college baseball. Players are typically ages 10-12, although 9-year-olds occasionally play with special permission. Majors play has a minimum six hour weekly time commitment. While many kids play at the majors level, others choose to play AAA as 11- and 12-year olds, due to the lesser weekly time commitment and for more guaranteed playing time.

### ***What is the weekly time commitment?***

For the developmental league and single A, the average weekly time commitment is two hours. For AA, the time commitment is approximately three hours. For AAA and the major league the average time commitment is six or more hours.

### ***Where are practices and games held?***

Most games are played at the **McLean Little League complex** at 1836 Westmoreland Street. Practices are held on baseball/softball fields at **local parks and elementary schools**. Teams occasionally play games on those same fields.

**Spring 2021:** As part of MLL's response to COVID and commitment to social distancing and players' safety, we are limiting the number of players and games at the MLL complex. In order to accommodate the same number of teams and games overall, some teams will play more games at local schools and fields rather than the MLL complex than they would in a typical season.

## ***Why do my neighbors keep saying that fall is a great time to try Little League for the first time?***

Any time is a great time to start playing little league. Fall ball is a casual season when players **can request to play on a team with specific friends** and many teams consist of players from the same school. Many kids who play for little league for the first time when they are 8-, 9- and 10-year-olds start with fall ball.

**Spring 2021:** Another great reason to try little league is because **MLL offers a relatively safe opportunity for social interaction and physical activity.** Many other sports may not be able to run a program. MLL is committed to providing an opportunity for physical activity and social interaction to help support kids socially, emotionally and physically. **MLL played a 2020 spring/summer season and 2020 fall season and there was not any known COVID spread within the MLL community.**

## ***How does MLL protect kids' safety?***

MLL has strict protocols to protect **players' physical, mental and emotional health.** In addition to MLL's safety protocols, MLL complies with all Little League International safety protocols.

**Physical health:** Players are **required to wear helmets** when batting and running the bases in games and practice and players are trained in **carrying bats safely** and when and where they can swing bats among other safety rules.

**Spring 2021:** MLL implemented extensive COVID safety protocols for the 2020 spring/summer and fall seasons. MLL will use many of the same protocols for the spring season including additional procedures for our younger, developmental league players to help ensure their compliance. The **safety protocols comply with CDC, state and local guidance, utilize Little League International's best practices for play during the COVID pandemic and were developed under the guidance from two local pediatricians.** Each team has a **designated COVID coach/safety monitor who is specifically responsible for ensuring their team's compliance** with the MLL safety protocols. The **complete safety plan and protocols are available here:**

**Emotional and mental health:** Coaches are required to complete a **Positive Coaching Alliance course,** sign a **coaches' code of conduct** and are subject to **suspension or ban from coaching for violations** of the code of conduct. Coaches are subject to a background check. Parents are also required to sign a **parental code of conduct** stipulating appropriate conduct at games and practices and are subject to disciplinary action for failure to abide by the code of conduct. Players are coached on sportsmanship and conduct throughout the season.

MLL board members are available to discuss any safety concerns throughout the season.

## ***What is Little League Age?***

A player's Little League Age is determined **based on Little League International's age criteria.** Baseball and softball ages are calculated differently. Baseball age is determined as a child's age as of August 31 of the spring season being played: for example in the Spring of 2021 a child born on May 3, 2011 would be LL age 10. . Softball age is determined December 31 of the year prior to the season. For example, in the spring of 2021, a child born on May 3, 2011, would be LL age 9.

## ***Does my child have to live in McLean to play for McLean Little League?***

To be eligible to play in McLean Little League, a child must legally live within the boundaries **or attend a school that is associated with McLean Little League.** More information about residency requirements is available in the residency requirements section of the website..