

Just a quick note to let you know that we have your son or daughter registered to play fall baseball with Stewards of the Game. If you have not yet mailed in your form, please do so as soon as you can.

### **Instructional Clinics: Rising 5-8 Year-Olds**

- Instructional Clinics for those 5/6 and 7/8 yr olds signed-up for the clinics will begin the Thursday **after** Labor Day, Sept 10th
- Clinics will end on or around Saturday, October 17th
- We will hand out practice t-shirts and baseball caps at the first or second session.
- Each participant should wear black baseball pants and orange socks that can be purchased at Dick's Sporting Goods. The pants should be the elastic wasteband type....no belt loops.
- Each player should bring a youth baseball glove. Bats will be provided.
- We need TONS of parent participation at the instructional clinics; so come ready to help if you are able. If you are a parent, you can be a coach. We will try and get in a Coaches Clinic early in the season so parents can be familiar with the fundamental techniques of the game and therefore feel equipped to jump in and help out at the clinics. It's important that we are all prepared to consistently teach the sound fundamentals of the game; especially at these early ages. The clinics are all about the players getting lots of repetitions of solid fundamental techniques.
- We will hold two instructional clinics during the week and have informal scrimmage games on Saturdays.
- Tentative Instructional Clinic Dates are as follows:
  - Tuesdays, 5:30 - 7:15 p.m.  
Waymer: Fields 2 & 3
  - Thursdays, 5:30 - 7:15 p.m.  
Fields: TBD
  - Saturdays, Time TBD  
Field: TBD

### **League Play: Rising 7-14 Year-Olds (Age as of 4/30/10)**

We have just received confirmation on our field reservations for our first week of Skills Evaluations for those players ages 7 and up who are signed up for **League Play**. Listed below are dates, times and field locations for the first week of Skills Evaluations. Again, the schedule below is for those players signed up for League Play only. Participants in the Instructional Clinics do NOT need to attend the Skills Evaluations below. We will be developing practice and game schedules for the remainder of the fall season in the next couple of weeks. You will receive this information from your coach; once your player is placed on a team. So please stay tuned for more info on that from your respective coaches. Games for league play will likely begin the week after Labor Day.

No practices or games over Labor Day weekend.

### **SKILLS EVALUATION SCHEDULE FOR LEAGUE PLAY PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Rookies (Rising 7/8 year-olds - Age as of April 30, 2010):**

Saturday, Aug. 22nd, - NMP: Field #1, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.  
Tuesday, Aug 25th, - Waymer Field #2 & #3, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Thursday, Aug 27th, Bradford Park Field #4, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.  
Saturday, Aug 29th, NMP: Field #1, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

#### **Minors (Rising 9/10 year-olds - Age as of April 30, 2010):**

Saturday, Aug. 22nd, - HAP: Fields #1 & #2, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.  
Monday, Aug 24th, - NMP: Fields #1 & #4, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Thursday, Aug 27th, NMP: Field #3 & #4, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.  
Saturday, Aug 29th, NMP: Field #3 & #4, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

**Majors (Rising 11/12 year-olds - Age as of April 30, 2010):**

Saturday, Aug. 22nd, - HAP: Fields #1 & #2, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Monday, Aug 24th, - HAP: Fields #1 & #2, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Aug 29th, HAP: Field #2 & #3, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

**Babe Ruth (Rising 13/14 year-olds - Age as of April 30, 2010):**

Saturday, Aug. 22nd, - HAP: Field #4, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, Aug 27th, - HAP: Field #4, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Aug 29th, HAP: Field #4, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

\*NMP=North Meck Park

\*HAP= Huntersville Athletic Park

For Field Directions: Go to [www.stewardsofthegame.org](http://www.stewardsofthegame.org) and click on Baseball Program / Parent Information

Again, more info to come later from your coaches. But again, we wanted you to know that we have your child registered to play fall baseball and wanted to provide you with some basic information for this first week of Skills Evaluations. If the schedules above change, please look for emails from one of the coaches in your age division.

**Skills Evaluation Philosophy**

Rather than doing a single skills day and try to assess skill level in a couple of hours, we will actually practice several large groups of kids together for an entire week or so, putting them all through a series of instructional drills. At the close of Skills Evaluations, once the coaches get a sense of all the players' ability, the head coaches will meet and divide up the teams. Players will then be called by their coaches....and practice schedules for the following week confirmed.

Aside from having fun and getting some of the baseball rust off, one of the key objectives of Skills Evaluations is to assess the skill level of all players to enable us to achieve parity across teams within each age division. We always receive a number of requests for players to be placed on specific teams for a variety of reasons (i.e. carpool, friendships, etc.). The head coaches will have access to the "special requests" noted on registration forms and will do their best to honor these requests; as long as team parity is not jeopardized. However, there is simply no way we can honor **all** these requests. It is important to spread talented players and experienced coaches around as it leads to greater skill development and more FUN for all. So, achieving team parity will take precedence over accommodating all special requests. We appreciate your understanding on this matter.

**Playing Up or Down: Stewards of the Game Policy**

*"As a general rule, Stewards of the Game does not allow players to "play-up" or "play down" in an age division above or below their actual age. The only exception to "playing up" will be those rare instances where a player's skill level is so advanced that they would clearly dominate the game at their age level or put their peers in harm's way on the field. The only exception for "playing down" will be instances where there is a high probability of a player being severely injured or embarrassed if they were to play with kids their own age."*

- Any exception to this rule must be approved by the Age Level Coordinator (ALC) for their age division, the ALC for the age division they wish to play in and the Director of Baseball for Stewards of the Game.
- A request form for playing-up or playing-down can now be found on the Parent Information screen under Baseball Program. Please print and complete this form and get it to the Age Level Coordinator (ALC) of the age division your child would normally play in. The ALC will then get with myself and the ALC of the age division you are seeking your child to play in. We will collectively evaluate the requests and get back to you as soon as possible.

I often hear parents express that their 6 yr olds should "play up" because they can hit a pitched ball. But more often than not, their swing mechanics are not what they should be, they can't properly catch or throw a baseball and they don't understand the game enough to move up. Pro ballplayers still hit off tees in practice.....as do ALL our players in the older age divisions. So, let's not rush kids to Machine Pitch or Kid Pitch too fast. They have plenty of years ahead of them for that. Kids grow up fast enough as it is; no need to speed it up. This policy will also allow the more talented ballplayers to further develop their leadership skills by mentoring and leading players in their peer group who are not as advanced as they are

## Uniforms

- After Skills Week, for those players signed up for League Play, team coaches will be furnishing each player with a practice T-shirt and an embroidered black hat that they should wear to ALL practices with their black pants. As a reminder, they will keep these items at the end of the season.
- Prior to the start of the regular season games, we will also issue every player a "home" & "away" Stewards of the Game baseball jersey to be worn at games only. The concept behind the "home & away" jersey is to put all kids on a "level playing field"...so to speak. Our teams will all be dressed alike.....wearing "orange" jerseys when they are the "home" team...and "black" when they are the "visitors". As you can imagine, outfitting players with two jerseys each is quite expensive. It is imperative that each player return both game jerseys at the end of the season....so that we can recycle them next fall and spring.
- Just a reminder....you will need to purchase a pair or two of black baseball pants and a pair or two pairs of orange socks for your child to wear at every practice and every game. Elastic / Drawstring style for T-ball, Rookie and Minors Age Divisions (5-10). Majors and Babe Ruth Age Divisions (11-18) will wear black pants with belt loops. Parents of Majors and Babe Ruth players will need to purchase an orange belt for their players.
- Please note that Dick's Sporting Goods is one of our corporate sponsors again this year. They have a good supply of black baseball pants, orange socks and orange belts now in stock. So please drop by their store in Birkdale to pick up your pants and socks....and any other baseball items like gloves, bats, cleats, batting gloves ,etc. that your child may need. Dick's Sporting Goods has really stepped-up to the plate to support Stewards of the Game this year and we would sure like to return the favor by patronizing their business best we can.

## Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather when playing or practicing on Huntersville town fields, please call the Huntersville Weather Hotline at 704.766.2250 after 4:00 on a weekday. If the weather hotline says the fields are closed, then our practices and games on these fields are officially canceled. Practices and instructional clinics will likely NOT be made up; due to field space limitations. If a practice or game is scheduled on a non-Huntersville town field, please look for rain-out information from your coach.

## Volunteer Needs

As you know, Stewards of the Game is a certified 501(3)c non-profit organization led completely by non-paid VOLUNTEERS. Yes, we all have day jobs believe it or not. As the program grows, and we maintain our commitment to continually enhance the quality of the experience for our players and family members, we **must** continue to build our volunteer base. As you can imagine, there is plenty of work to go around, if you can call it "work." Over the past couple of years, we have established Volunteer Teams to organize the many, many tasks that have to be completed to pull-off a successful season.

A number of you have already stepped-up to help on one of these volunteer teams...but we need MORE help. Please give prayerful consideration to the volunteer needs outlined below. **If you have a talent & passion in serving on one of these teams, please contact the Team Lead listed below.** For more information on the responsibilities of these teams, please go to the Parents Corner button on our website and click on Volunteer Opportunities.

**As you can see below, we have a few TEAM LEADER positions that are now OPEN.** We also desperately need volunteers to step-up and help out on volunteer teams outlined below such as Outreach, Equipment, Uniforms and Special Events. Please contact one of the team leads below if you can help out on one of these teams.

## MULTI-SPORT VOLUNTEER TEAMS

Communications - Team Lead: **OPEN**

**Fundraising** - Team Lead: **OPEN**

**Outreach** - Team Lead: Teresa Sharp (704.992.0681)

**Merchandising** - Team Lead: Scott Crosbie (704.895.4190)

## **BASEBALL-SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER TEAMS**

**Administrative** - Team Lead: Beth Naspinski (704.483.4917)

**Coaches** - Team Lead: Mike Sharp (704.992-0681)

**Publicity** - Team Lead: **OPEN**

**Registration** - Team Lead: Mike Sharp (704.992-0681)

**Scheduling / Facilities** - Team Lead: Ben Travis (704.875.0395)

**Special Evens Team** - Team Lead: Amy Murray (704.483.2961)

\*\*\*\*This team plans, publicizes and executes all baseball-related special events (i.e. Opening Day, Stewards of the Game Day at Davidson College, Home Run Derby, Championship Celebration, Coaches Game, etc)

**Equipment:** Team Lead: Tony Tascione (704.896.1053)

**Uniforms** - Team Lead: Bob Schaffer (704.948.7175)

### **Parents Information Link on the Website: A Couple of MUST Reads**

We have created a Parents Information section on our website to provide you with streamlined access to general league information and ensure parents have a keen understanding of the philosophy, core values and league principles that are the foundation of Stewards of the Game. You can find this information by clicking on Baseball Program / Parent Information.

A few MUST Read items on the Parents Corner of our website:

- Stewards of the Game Philosophy: Taking it to the Field (What Stewards of the Game Baseball should look like between the white lines)
- Playing Time Philosophy
- Directions to Fields
- Inclement Weather Lines
- Parental Pledge that each parent should have signed at registration
- Volunteer Opportunities.

Well, that should be enough info to get you started!!!

Thanks and make it a blessed day! Hope you have a wonderful fall baseball season. More importantly, hope your son or daughter does.

Coach Sharp  
[coachsharp@aol.com](mailto:coachsharp@aol.com)