

**Kempsville PONY Baseball
Post Office Box 65243
Virginia Beach, VA 23467**

March 12, 2008

Kempsville PONY Baseball Managers:

As you leave Draft Night and head out to start your pre-season practices, I want to cover a few things that will be important as we start our 50th spring season. First, and most importantly, I want to thank you for volunteering to be a manager. This is a challenging job with responsibilities that go beyond practices and games and we are grateful for every manager who understands the job and does his part to provide a quality baseball experience for his players. We choose our managers carefully and we have high standards for manager performance over the course of the season. As the person responsible for the behavior of your coaches, players, and team parents, please do your best to emphasize good sportsmanship, teamwork, and respect for the game by showing respect for the umpires.

We had another great registration drive, adding four more teams. Over the last two years, we have added nine teams in the League. Many of the new players have come to us from other leagues and organizations. We like to think that the strong reputation that KPB has built over the last 50 years is what attracted these new players. Whatever the reason, we owe it to them and to our own returning players to live up to that reputation. We expect that the assistant coaches you choose will keep this goal in mind as well. We expect that you will know your baseball and that your practices and games will be run safely and will involve all of your players. We expect that you will see to it that your coaches, players, and team parents show good sportsmanship throughout the season. We expect a lot and we depend on you to represent the league well.

League vice-presidents will do their part to help you to be the best manager you can be. If you need help or advice, please ask for it. Over the last year, 18 more KPB managers and coaches completed the online "Coaching PONY Baseball" course that we consider to be basic training for a successful season. If you haven't completed it yet, you need to. The course material is important to know and the resources available to those who complete the course will help you to become the kind of coach whose teams get better at every practice. If you use the "games approach" when planning and running your practices, you will never be caught running the worst practice in baseball: One batter swinging at one ball to a field full of players doing nothing.

We have given you a lot of material in your manager packet, and the best time to read it is TONIGHT before practices, the candy sale, uniform distribution, and games begin. Three items in the packet deserve special attention: (1) You must know the pitching restrictions for your league in the PONY Baseball rule book and you must follow them. They are in place to protect young arms from injury. (2) The KPB Local

Playing Rules handout is loaded with important information on topics like minimum player participation rules, length of games, authorized uniforms, and responsibilities for preparing fields before games and repairing them after. Know these rules and ensure that your coaches know them, too. (3) The Field Allocation handouts are provided so you know when KPB teams are authorized to be on particular fields. It's a good idea to keep a copy with you at practices.

We have provided you with the opportunity to sign up for assigned practice slots on the fields we were allocated. If you choose to practice on a field that KPB was not allocated, you do so at some risk to the League. If you are approached by someone questioning your permission to be on an unallocated field, be courteous and leave the field quickly. Middle School fields need special attention. If an outdoor Middle School activity is still going on when your practice is supposed to start, find a place to wait until the activity is over. Middle School officials are authorized to refuse entry onto school property while these activities are going on. A manager who is careless at a Middle School risks losing access to the field for the entire league. You don't want to be that guy. At all fields (including our own), you should leave the field a little cleaner than it was when you got there. Get players and parents involved in picking up.

Please remember this part of Kempsville PONY Baseball's mission statement: "...the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or winning of games is secondary and the molding of future citizens is of prime importance." The season will have its fill of close games that challenge your game management skills, your sportsmanship principles, and your ability to stay positive as a youth baseball coach. Years from now, nobody will remember what your record was when you were managing the Mustang Cardinals, but your players and their parents will always remember you for how you handled yourself as "Coach" over the course of the season. Do your absolute best to not be a child's last coach.

Thank you again for volunteering to be a manager. No matter how hard we on the Board work to organize and run the League, YOU are the one who has the biggest impact on how successful the season will be. Best of luck as you lay out your plan for a successful and enjoyable baseball season.

Sincerely,

Frank Alberio
President, Kempsville PONY Baseball