

# Madison Baseball Association Parental Document 2008 Prep and Tee Ball

Written by:

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## **Welcome**

On behalf of the Madison Baseball Association (MBA) and our league coaches, I want to welcome you to the 2008 season of Prep and Tee baseball. We feel that this baseball association is an excellent place for your young player to learn the game of baseball at a pace that is appropriate for their age. I also want to thank you for taking the time and making the effort to enroll your child in our league. We take the trust and responsibility that you have placed with us very seriously and we look forward to the 2008 season.

## **Parents Meeting**

In past seasons, we have tried to hold a parents meeting during pre-season to discuss the league and answer any questions from parents. This meeting, while effective, was typically hard to attend for all league parents so, in an effort to make the league information available to all, I am moving to a written document this year. Hopefully, you will find answers to your questions contained within this document. If you have a specific question after reading this document, please feel free to contact me at: [auburnc2@yahoo.com](mailto:auburnc2@yahoo.com).

## League Play Overview

- **Season dates** – The MBA Prep and Tee ball seasons typically run from late March through early June. The teams in these leagues are not formed at the same time as other leagues because these two leagues are fewer in number, less complicated to schedule, do not require officials or all stars and have shorter seasons. You should start hearing from coaches in mid to late February and practice should begin in early March.
- **Tee Ball** - The MBA Tee Ball League is for children that are 5 years of age on or before April 30 2008. This is the 1st league in our developmental program. The players in this league should learn the basics of baseball while playing in a non-competitive environment. Players will hit the ball off a batting Tee. Score is not kept in this league. All players will play in the field each inning and ½ of the team will bat each inning. If outs are made by the team in the field, that out is honored by the batter or runner returning to the dug out but the out does not count toward inning changes. Sides change when ½ of the batting team has had their turn at the plate. Typical games will consist of 4 innings with each player batting twice.
- **Prep** - The MBA Prep League is for children 6 years of age on or before April 30 2008. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> league in our developmental program. Players in this league continue to learn the game of baseball while still playing in a non-competitive environment. Players advance from strictly tee ball to slow machine pitch (approximately 33 MPH). Generally the coach will pitch 5 balls to each batter from the pitching machine. A batter failing to hit the ball will receive three tries to hit off the Tee. Score is not kept in this league. All players will play in the field each inning and ½ of the team will bat each inning. If outs are made by the team in the field, that out is honored by the batter or runner returning to the dug out but the out does not count toward inning changes. Sides change when ½ of the batting team has had their turn at the plate. Typical games will consist of 4 innings with each player batting twice.

## Coaches

Your team coaches and all of the league management are 100% volunteers. We do not have anyone coaching or managing this league that gets paid with your registration fees. We do have paid officials in the leagues above Prep. These officials are paid by the registration fees for those leagues and that is why these leagues cost more per player. All of your head coaches and 1<sup>st</sup> assistants are required by the league to attend a coach's certification class. In this class, they learn how to instruct players on baseball basic. They also learn how to manage teams, injuries, parents and many other league related issues during this certification process. Please get involved with your team and your players. The coaches only get these players for a limited time each week and, if you truly want to see improvement in your player's skills, you will have to put in some time at home reinforcing the techniques that they learn at practice. The coaches will look first to you when confronted with medical issues regarding your player so please advise your coach of any medical issues with your player prior to the season. As a general rule, please do not leave your player alone at the park. These teams can not become baby sitting services and our coaches are instructed to avoid any situation that puts them alone with someone else's child.

## **Uniforms**

It is a difficult task to order, sort and distribute uniforms to 500+ players each year. Your coach will order your uniforms based on the sizes that you recorded on your registration form. The uniforms will be ordered and delivered as fast and as accurately as possible. The league will hold an opening ceremony on opening day where all the league teams show up in uniform to officially open the park for play in 2008. Your team uniforms should be available prior to this opening ceremony. Your coach may want to put names on each jersey – this is not part of the MBA uniform so each coach must get this done on his own. For safety reasons, the coaches in the league will be discouraged from putting the player's first name on their uniforms.

The MBA expects teams in game to wear their uniforms correctly. This means that shirts should be tucked in and hats should be worn correctly. The coaches will be in charge of handling these issues on their teams.

## **Batting Helmets**

You do not have to buy your player a batting helmet to play in this league. The MBA has some used helmets that we can make available to the team coaches if they have players that do not have their own helmet. In most cases, the players in these leagues have their own batting helmet that they do not share with teammates. Most people find that owning your own helmet is safer - head lice and overall fit issues. Please let your coach know if you want to use one of the league helmets so that he can alert the league equipment manager of the need. All helmets must have a chin strap and a face guard to be used in league play.

## **Team Moms / Concession Duty**

Robin Elliot will head up the team mom and concession duty for MBA again this year. Robin will have a team mom meeting prior to the season starting. I will post the date of this meeting as soon as it is determined. Each team will have two concession duties throughout the season. If you have any questions about team mom or concession duties, please contact Robin at: [relliott@venturiaerospace.com](mailto:relliott@venturiaerospace.com)

## **Have Fun**

Folks, this is youth baseball and not the World Series. Have Fun! Don't stress the small things. At this age, our #1 goal is that these players want to play again next year. There is plenty of time to be serious in later leagues.

## **Contacts**

- Madison Baseball Association
  - [www.madisonbaseball.org](http://www.madisonbaseball.org)
- MBA President – Anthony Dupree
- Prep and Tee Ball Player Agent – Clark Cook
  - [auburnc2@yahoo.com](mailto:auburnc2@yahoo.com)
  - 256.694.2743
- Weather Questions
  - See League Website for latest
- Palmer Park Batting Cages
  - (256) 772-8798

## **Miscellaneous Data**

This data is not official MBA information. It is, however, information that might be useful based on my experience in the league. Please use this information as you see fit but know that it is only one mans opinion.

- **Bats** – Most of the players on our team will have a bat of their own but you do not have to go out and buy a bat for this league. Many times the bat that a player selects becomes a liability rather than an asset because they go out and select a bat that is too big for them. Often these situations negatively affect a player’s development because he is stuck trying to swing a heavy bat and this creates swing flaws. The mass of the bat is important but swing speed is what we need to look for at this age. In general, if the player can not grip the bat with one hand and hold his arm straight out in front of him for more than 10 seconds, the bat is too heavy. The ultimate way to determine the correct bat weight is to have them swing it and try to stop half way through the swing. If they can stop the bat without falling out of balance (or letting the bat control them), then the bat is OK. The perfect situation would be to get the heaviest bat that they can control without falling out of balance. If you have not bought a bat, I’d suggest letting your son try some of the bats at practice before buying a new one. Avoid the high tech, big dollar sell at this age. Bat technology is wonderful at older levels but not in Prep. We just want to hit it at this age.
- **Gloves** – Again, avoid the high tech, high dollar sell here since most of these guys will be moving to bigger gloves within the next year or two. With that said, let me say that, if you can afford it, buying a leather glove is a must in my book – especially at the next level. These leather gloves will just last longer than the plastic designs. If you need help with breaking in a new glove, see one of the coaches.
- **Batting Gloves** – The time that we take to get in and out of the dugout will impact the number time times each team gets to bat so we will need to hustle in and out of the dug out and try to play 4 innings. At this age, the management of batting gloves often takes up more time in the dugout than the management of any other “equipment”. As always, the coaches will do our best to help our players with these gloves but also we’d like to work toward your player learning to manage these gloves for themselves.
- **Shoes** – You do not have to have baseball cleats to play PREP baseball. If you do buy cleats, buy them so they fit now (athletic shoes are not something that you grow into). Nike offers some models with inserts that will allow some expansion as their foot grows. Please let them wear the cleats around the back yard a few times prior to running for a full practice.

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There are many opinions on the correct way to buy and break in a new baseball glove. The following is simply one man's opinion (mine) on the best way to go about it. Take my suggestions and use them if you like but they are not the only way to get this job accomplished.

- Buying a new glove for kids

- Value - I would caution against buying a high tech, high dollar glove for those players below 10 years of age. In these age groups you simply don't need the technology and the risk of loosing a glove is very real. It's much easier to deal with losing a \$40 glove rather than losing a \$200 model. With that said, let me say that, if you can afford it, buying a leather glove is a must in my book - especially as they get leagues above tee ball. These leather gloves will just last longer than the plastic designs and tend to hold their shaping better in the long run.

- Flexibility - In recent years, the glove companies have done a really good job of making kids gloves with some built in flexibility. There are many brands out here that will work fine. For me, the "Wilson EZ Catch" is the best combination of flexibility and pockets size in an "off the shelf" glove.

- Size - Bigger is not better. The glove is an extension of the hand and should be treated as such. In later years, the kids will get specialized gloves; typically infielders use smaller gloves and outfielders / pitchers use larger gloves. In little league, I'd prefer to see kids with as small a glove as possible so that they better learn to use their hands to catch the ball. A 10.5" glove is about right for the 6, 7 and 8 year old group. In the 4, 5 and 6 year old groups, I'd resist anything over 9.5".

- More data from Major League Baseball:

- <http://shop.mlb.com/sm-baseball-softball-glove-size-and-fit--bg-222858.html>

- Breaking in a new glove

- Stretch - Spend a little time pulling the fingers of the glove apart gently to stretch out the leather strapping holding everything together. You can even turn it inside out if you like.

- The Hinges - The glove is a big hand. Your hand has two natural break points and your glove should as well. The first hinge is across the base of the fingers which allows the fingers to fold down into the palm. The second break point is across the palm which allows the thumb to fold across to the ring finger. Work these hinges over and over by pulling the finger tops down into the palm and by closing the thumb over to the ring finger of the glove.

- Work it out - Work the hinges and pound the pocket with a ball.

- Dunk it - Dunk the leather glove in water and hold it there for 5 seconds.

- Pocket - Place two balls in the glove right next to each other. Place the 1<sup>st</sup> in the desired pocket and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lower and across the palm. Tie the glove up tightly with the thumb pulled across in a desired "thumb to ring finger" position.

- Let it dry - Put it under a mattress and let it dry for a few days.

- Work it out - Work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, throw and catch using the glove, work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, etc...

- Conditioner - After the glove dries, condition it. You can use a variety of expensive glove products but the cheapest solution is to get some shaving cr me with lanolin and use that as a conditioner. You can find a can of Barbasol with Lanolin for less \$2.00. The glove oils cost much more and will weigh the glove down when used in excess.

- Work it out - Work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, throw and catch using the glove, work the hinges, pound the pocket with a ball, etc...

Again, this procedure is my opinion on the best way to pick a glove for kids and break it in. I'm sure that there are many other opinions on how to accomplish this task. Use your best judgment.