

## **What is the Miracle League baseball program?**

This is a specially designed program for individuals with disabilities which allow children and adults of all ages to play America's most beloved pastime. The field includes special features such as a synthetic turf to prevent injuries, wheelchair accessible dugouts and a completely flat surface to eliminate barriers to wheelchair users and/or visually impaired players. The mission of the league is to include every child and adult – no matter his or her special need in the game.

### **Eligibility**

1. Each player needs to be 5 age as of March 25, 2010 (season 2010). Players over the age of 17 before March 25, 2010 of the season in question will need to play in an adult league. Waivers to this provision are granted on a case-by-case basis.

***NOTE: Season starting March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at this time will be combined with the anticipation of separating out at a later date. Safety is important.***

2. Player must have registration form signed by parent or legal guardian, along with media release before play.
3. Insurance - Prior to player participation in League events, he/she must be covered by the League insurance policy.

### **Miracle League Game Rules**

1. Games will not exceed 1 ½ hours.
2. Two innings minimum per team per game.
3. Everyone bats every inning.
4. Everyone plays defense.
5. Everyone is safe at every base. The last batter hits a "home run", so everyone runs to home.
6. The score is not recorded and both teams "win."
7. Teams will have pre-game huddles and cheers, and post-game huddles and wrap up.
8. Each player will receive a team shirt and baseball hat. Baseball pants, shorts, sweats, jeans, etc. may be worn.
9. Teams consist of a maximum of 13 players.
10. Each player will receive an award at the end of the season.
11. A Miracle League coach cannot coach another Miracle League team.
12. An umpire covers each game to call the players safe on first and home.
13. Each team will have a coach and assistant coach if possible.
14. If a player chooses to hit from a pitcher – two (2) strikes will be allowed and three (3) balls then batter will need to hit from the tee to keep the game moving.

**\* All coaches, umpires and volunteers will be screened through the FDLE website before they are allowed to volunteer, for the safety of our participants.**

## **Head Coach**

1. Submission of consent to perform background check on all League volunteers.
2. Attends coaches' meetings as directed.
3. Coordinate team activities and training with the Assistant Coach and maintain contact with players and families.
4. Ensure that each player receives a uniform (shirt/hat).
5. Provide players and families with game schedules.
6. Communicate with players and their families to provide information on upcoming events and schedule changes.
7. Communicate concerns regarding specific players to the League officials.
8. Manage team equipment and ensures its arrival 30 minutes prior to game time.
9. Provide copies of team line-up to umpire and announcer before each game.
10. Pitch.
11. Make sure players have the opportunity to learn new skills.
12. Keep up the team spirit.
13. Ensure that the games proceed and are ended on schedule.

## **Assistant Coach (but not limited to)**

1. Assist Head Coach with the team.
2. Pitch.
3. Verifies that each player has an assigned Buddy.
4. Arrive at the field 30 minutes prior to game time.
5. Assumes all Head Coach responsibilities in the absence of the Head Coach.
6. Must attend all trainings.

## **Umpires**

1. Should always demonstrate enthusiasm, love and concern for each player, buddy, and volunteer.
2. There should be one to two umpires per game.
3. The umpire should start each game with a loud and clear "Play Ball!"
4. The umpire is to call each child safe at first base and home plate.
5. The umpire should wear an official umpire shirt and should be presentable and clean at all games.
6. The umpire should arrive 15 minutes before each game.
7. The umpire will call the beginning and ending of each game at the appropriate time.
8. The umpire is to assist coaches and players as necessary.

## **Buddy Guidelines**

1. Attend training.
2. Show up for each game—your player and his/her team are counting on you.
3. Check in with the coach and/or assistant coach.

4. Allow the player do as much of the activities as his/her abilities will allow. Only assist when a player is unable to take an action that is not within his/her capabilities.
5. Make sure your player puts on a hard helmet when going to bat. (Check with parents to make sure it won't upset him/her, however.)
6. Select a bat that is appropriate to your player's abilities and size. (The player may already know what he/she wants to use.)
7. Find out if your player needs to use a batting tee. If not, after two (2) strikes and three (3) balls, the coach will ask him/her to hit from a batting tee to keep the game moving.
8. Assist the player to the bases by gentle directing. (Some will need to be pushed by wheelchair or their hands held to guide them.) Do not overtake a previous base runner.
9. If a player can reach down and grab a ball, allow him/her to do so.
10. If a player can't reach the ball, but can throw, hand him/her the ball.
11. If a ball goes by a player and he/she can move to it, do not go get. Take or encourage the player to go the ball and get it back in play.
12. Talk with your player—help him/her understand the flow of the game, what to do if a ball comes toward him/her, which base to run to next. BE POSITIVE in comments and instructions.
13. Please arrive 15 minutes before scheduled game time.

Enjoy the game and encourage your player to do so as well. Talk with the coach and/or assistant coach and player's parents/caregivers if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Team Formation**

Teams are formed in two ways:

1. A group of players with a coach may register as a team
2. Players that register individually will be formed into teams taking into account requests to be with other players, home address, volunteering to coach, etc. The league will do everything possible to accommodate the needs of each player.

### **Equipment**

1. Rubber Batting Tee
2. Baseball bats – aluminum bats are preferred over wooden. They are usually lighter and last longer. However, wooden bats are acceptable.
3. Batting helmets
4. Baseball – soft core, cushioned baseball; bright yellow in color; wiffle balls, beeper ball for the blind (optional); no regular baseballs or softballs (too hard).
5. Baseball gloves (optional)
6. First Aid kit
7. Team ball bag

### **Game Day Procedures**

Arrive at the field at least 30 minutes prior to game time. Your player needs to be ready to go at the assigned start time. An early arrival gives us time to match your player with the most appropriate buddy. Late arrivals and no shows are disruptive for everyone. If you can't make a game let your coaches know in advanced.

The Miracle League of Tallahassee (MLT) is about players getting to meet and interact with new and old friends. Unless you are a coach or a buddy, please stay off the field and out of the dugout. Sit back, take a break and enjoy. You deserve a break.

Having special needs and being medically fragile are two different issues. If your child is medically fragile, please communicate this fact to your coach. Work with your coach so we can create and maintain a safe playing environment for your child.

### **Bad Weather Procedures**

In the event the weather (rain/extreme heat/extreme cold) could cause game delays or cancellations. A final go/no go decision will be made no later than 2 hours before scheduled game time.

Cancelled games will be rescheduled depending on field availability.

### **Financial Obligations**

**Playing Expenses.** MLT is a non-profit Corporation that raises its funds through sponsorships, fund raisers and concession revenues.

Note: Funds raised by any means from any source in the name of MLT are to be used ONLY for the purposes for which it was collected.

**Team Trophies.** The MLT purchases participation trophies for each player at the end of the season.

**Equipment.** The MLT purchases game balls. Game balls are 9-inch soft core safety baseballs with synthetic covers. MLT will pay for equipment purchases or approved for purchase and uniforms only. MLT issued equipment excluding uniforms (hat/shirt) must be returned at the completion of the season.

- **Note: Rules are subject to change without notice.**