

**Welcome**

*Spring/Fall 2023*



[www.stbll.org](http://www.stbll.org)

**John Eszlinger**  
Softball Vice  
President

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## Welcome

On behalf of the St. Bethlehem Little League Board of Directors we extend a warm welcome to the 2023 season! St B strives to continue the rich tradition of Little League by providing our families with a high-quality program and rewarding experience. We are proud to be chartered with Little League,

which believes in the power of youth baseball and softball to teach life lessons that build stronger individuals and communities. It's our mission to create an inclusive and safe environment for the children in our community where they can have fun while learning the fundamentals of baseball/softball and the basic principles of sports: courage, perseverance, respect, loyalty, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

Whether you're a veteran with the league or a new St. B family, we believe you will find valuable content within this resource that details what to expect throughout the season.

## I've registered my child, now what?

At the conclusion of the registration period, the St B will work with the player agents and managers (head coaches) at each age division to balance team rosters and order uniforms. It is important that you ensure your child(s) size is correct on their registration. You will be contacted by the head coach of your child's team in early March for the spring season and late August for the fall season. Practices are set to begin the first week of March in the spring season and the first week of September in the fall (weather permitting). Games will begin in April for the spring season and September for the fall season.

Medical forms can be found online and **MUST** be filled out and given to the coach prior to your player stepping foot on a field. [Click here for medical forms.](#)

## How are teams assigned?

Spring season:

Preseason evaluations help us balance talent among our teams in each division. Players are expected to participate in evaluations if they are:

- new to the St B program
- transitioning to a new division
- requesting to play in a division higher than the default division based on their age

Head coaches and board members will be present at evaluations, assessing the players' capabilities. All divisions will have a draft, which helps equitably distribute the talent and experience levels among the teams. Our goal at every level is to have balanced teams. For this reason we can only accommodate requests to be matched with a specific coach(es) and/or player(s) if there is a compelling justification, as determined by the board of directors.



## What comes with my child's uniform?

Spring: Softball players will receive a jersey, pants, belt, and socks. Baseball players will receive a jersey, pants, belt, and hat.

Fall: Softball players will receive a jersey and socks. Baseball players will receive a jersey and hat.

Jersey sizes are selected by a parent/guardian during the registration process. It is important that you ensure that your child(ren)'s size is correct on their registration. If the league does not provide a jersey size that matches the size chosen by the parent/guardian, we will provide a reprint at the correct size with no cost to the family of the child. If the provided jersey matches the size chosen by the parent/guardian at registration, but it does not fit to their preference, the family will need to pay for the reprinted jersey at the newly requested size. For reprints, we will do our best to match the team jersey, but supply chain challenges may prevent us from ensuring a perfect match. Number preference is considered but not guaranteed in the spring only.

## What equipment will my child need?

Every player must have their own glove for their non-dominant hand (the glove goes on the hand opposite of the one they use to throw, write, etc.). Cleats are highly recommended for players; sneakers can be slippery on wet grass and dry infield dirt. Cleats intended for other sports (soccer, football, etc.) are acceptable, but metal cleats are only allowed for junior and senior divisions.

A bat and batting helmet are recommended, but a team helmet will be available for your child to use. Softball players must have a fielder's face mask. Baseball catchers must wear a cup.



## Bat Requirements

Baseball bats for Majors and below must meet the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) required by Little League, designated by a USA BASEBALL emblem between the bat's handle/grip and the taper towards the barrel. All wood bats are allowed and are not required to carry the USABat emblem. 50/70 (Intermediate) and Junior's may use a USA Bat or BBCOR. For the Senior division, BBCOR bats must be used.

Softball Bats must be 1.20 BPF.

Tee Ball bats are only approved for use with soft Tee Balls and cannot be used with the conventional hard baseballs (Tee Ball bats cannot be used in our Pony/Coach Pitch division and above).

[Complete list of requirements and resources.](#)



## Divisions

Most players will be assigned to a division based on their age. Little League defines a baseball player's age as their age on August 31 of the current year and softball player's as their age on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. The [Little League Age Calculator](#) may help you if you're unsure.

### *Exceptions (requests to move up or down)*

A parent/guardian can request a move to a different division by emailing the player agent at [softballpa@stbll.org](mailto:softballpa@stbll.org) or [baseballpa@stbll.org](mailto:baseballpa@stbll.org) with a brief explanation of why they believe a move is best for the child. All requests will be considered, but not all requests will be approved. Decisions will be made by the St B Little League President, division coordinators, player agents and based on several factors including (but not limited to) roster sizes, competitive balance, and the player's skill level.

### **Instruction Tee Ball** *Ages 3-4*

There is a greater emphasis on fun than fundamentals in Tee Ball. First- and second-year ballplayers will learn the basics of throwing and fielding, running the bases, standing to hit, and swinging a bat. Everyone in the lineup bats each inning and defenders are encouraged to field the ball and throw towards first base.

### **Competitive Tee Ball** *Ages 5-6*

There is still an emphasis on fundamentals, but competitive play will be brought in to play. In this division, softball players will begin using a softball.

### **Pee Wee** *Ages 7-8*

Our coach-to-kid-pitch division is intended for 6-year-olds who have already played two years of Tee Ball and 7- and 8-year-olds. This division introduces players to balls and strikes, a strict batting lineup, 3-out half-innings, defensive positions, and kid-pitching after the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. Basepaths are the same distance as Minors/Majors (60-ft), but there are some "unique rules" in place to encourage play that balances the fun of hitting and scoring runs with some protection from the consequences of common and frequent mistakes on defense. On defense, players will learn proper throwing technique and develop their ability to catch a ball in the air and on the ground. On offense, players learn the concept of the strike zone, and begin developing their ability to make base running decisions.

### **Minors** *Ages 9-10*

In this division, most of the "unique rules" no longer apply. Players will pitch the entirety of the game. Players are expected to possess all the foundational skills taught in the instructional divisions and be capable of throwing and catching with a high rate of success. Teamwork and strategy are introduced, positional responsibilities are defined, and runners frequently attempt to advance bases, including base stealing.

### **Majors** *Ages 11-12*

This is a competitive division. Leading is not allowed, but baserunners are taught to exploit defensive mistakes, including steals of home on passed balls and wild pitches. Pitchers throw hard and use different pitch types with success. Most players have settled into primary positions on defense and are working to develop more advanced techniques and refine their situational awareness.

### **Intermediate 50/70 (Baseball Only)** *Age 11-13*

Still considered part of Little League, the basepaths are 70-ft, and the mound distance is 50-ft. Baserunners may lead and steal at any time.

### **Junior and Senior**

#### *Age 12-16*

These divisions use the same rules as high school baseball with 90-ft basepaths and a mound distance of 60-ft 6-inches for baseball. In softball a 43 ft pitching rubber will be used.



## Why do I have to volunteer/provide volunteer checks?

The St B Little League is **100% operated by volunteers**; without volunteers our organization would not exist. St B Board members and coaches are not compensated for the countless hours they invest in our league. However, their investment ensures a better experience for the children and families of our community.

Please consider making your own investment into our league and community. This could be by coaching, helping coach, keeping a scorebook, or volunteering on your team's concession day. All volunteers are required to complete a background check to ensure the safety of all of our players.

Please understand that you may not get a MLB coach but you are getting a coach that cares enough to step up and help us make this season a huge success while helping your child grow as a player.

## What does the registration fee cover?

The registration fee covers many things, including but not limited to the Montgomery County impact fee paid to Park and Rec, uniforms, baseballs, team equipment, softballs, umpire fees, field maintenance, league equipment, and Little League chartering and liability insurance, etc.

## Donations and sponsorships

Financial support from donors and sponsors covers the gap between the league's actual expenses and the revenue generated through registration, and concessions. As a self-funded, nonprofit that benefits the children and families in our community, we rely on local businesses to support our league. In turn, we encourage our families to support those businesses.

Are you friends with a business owner who is interested in supporting the Clarksville community? Is there a restaurant your family visits regularly; a salon you've gone to for years; a mechanic, realtor, or general contractor you recommend to your neighbors? Please ask them to consider a donation to St B Little League. [Sponsorship Information can be found here.](#)



## What if my child requires special considerations?

Once you learn who your child's head coach is, and before practices begin, please make them aware of any factors that will help your child—and the other players and coaches in the league—have the safest, most enjoyable experience. Examples include:

- Your child communicates or learns in a unique way.
- Your child has a medical condition like asthma which may require an inhaler, or they have a severe allergy and an EpiPen must always be nearby.
- Your child is receiving professional care for a mental health condition, like ADHD or a mood disorder.

Please provide the head coach with communication strategies that have worked in the past and have a plan in place in case those don't work. Also, please understand that the coach will rely on a caregiver to be present at all times. This caregiver is responsible for aiding in the efforts to communicate, teach, and guide your child appropriately.

The league will make reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of each child, while remaining committed to the pursuit of a safe, healthy, and enjoyable environment for all players, coaches, and families involved with the league.

## Tournament Team Selection

At the end of our regular spring season—near the beginning of June—the league will invite a small group of players to join tournament teams (aka “all-star” teams) to continue playing and represent the St B against other tournament teams from Little League TN District 9 and beyond.

Teams and player eligibility are based on a player’s “Little League age.” In most instances, players will be invited to play in the division they played all season but could be asked to play on an “age appropriate” tournament team which may differ from the division they played in the Spring regular season. Example: a 10-year-old that “played up” in Majors during the regular season vs. mostly 11-12-year-olds is eligible to play on the 10U tournament team and could be asked to join a team comprised of 9-10-year-olds that mostly played in Minors during the Spring season.

The Little League President, Vice President, Player Agent, Coordinator and Coaches at each respective age level will collectively assemble teams and rosters of players they believe will give our organization the best opportunity to achieve success. Qualities displayed throughout the regular season—including talent/ ability and attitude/sportsmanship—along with positional depth and player availability will be considered.

Availability to participate in tournaments is a huge factor that is considered when choosing the tournament teams. If you think your child might be selected to join an St B tournament team, and you would like for them to participate, we encourage you to “save the dates” for practices early-June to mid-July, and most importantly for tournament play that extends into late-July and early-August.

## Tournament team costs

There is an additional fee to join a St B tournament team, this will cover their all-star uniform. It does require investments of time and travel expenses for each family throughout the tournament season. Trips to other local leagues are likely, and possibly further if a team progresses to state and regional tournaments. These distant locations may necessitate lodging at a hotel and meal costs for multiple nights, paid for by the families on the team.



## Parent responsibility

*Remember...*

- It's just a game. For fun!
- Coaches are volunteers, and they are doing their best.
- Everyone has a single role during a game: player, spectator, official, coach.

*Be...*

- On time, to the best of your ability.
- Positive, encouraging, and supportive of the whole team.
- A good example.

## Umpires

St B Little League has a mixture of new umpires, veteran umpires, junior umpires, and district umpires. That means that the experience of our umpires varies. We do work hard to provide training for all our umpires by the district umpires and our UIC. While training is provided, field experience is necessary for the inexperienced umpires to learn. You may have a new umpire on your field, please be patient with them. There is ZERO tolerance for badgering, yelling, or any other forms of verbal or physical abuse toward our umpires. The offender may or may not receive one warning at the umpire or board members discretion.

Violation of this rule by a coach, assistant coach and/or parent will result in the head coach being ejected from the current game and suspended for the following game as well as the offender. Remember we are all here for the kids, we are all human and we will all make mistakes. We do this not only to provide safety for our umpires but also keep our umpires coming back. Umpires are becoming more and more scarce every year. Due to this, there could be a time that we ask the coaches to find a parent to umpire. We do our best to cover every game with one to two umpires but sometimes we are unable to do that.

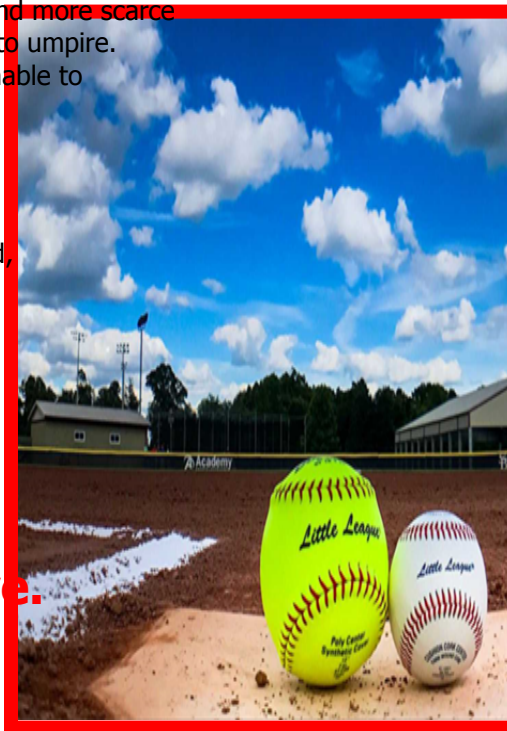
## Why haven't we received a schedule yet?

Please remember that St B Little League is 100% operated by volunteers; with that said, most of us have other obligations as well that we must work around.

Schedules cannot be built until registration is closed and we know how many teams from each division we have. We also must coordinate with Montgomery County Park and Rec to determine what fields we can use and of any preexisting reservations that were made prior to our season beginning. We work hard to get these out as quickly as possible.

## I have suggestions on how you can improve.

St. Bethlehem Little League Board of Directors has quarterly meetings that you are allowed to come to provide your feedback and suggestions. These will be posted on our Facebook page. We are also always looking for new board members to assist making the league a success. If you are interested in joining the board of directors, please email [president@stbll.org](mailto:president@stbll.org).





# Map of Civitan Park

Please see the map of our complex. This will help you find the field your child will be practicing or playing on. The main concessions stand in restrooms can be found as well in the building labeled board room.



## A letter from the President.



*Dearest Parents and Volunteers,*

*Welcome to the St. Bethlehem Little League 2023 season! We're very excited for the season to get here. Nothing makes us happier than looking around the park and seeing the fields full of players!*

*I want to thank everyone who gives of themselves to make this league operate. We're a volunteer run organization and without volunteers it wouldn't happen. Thanks to all the coaches, managers, and team parents for all you do. Also, a huge thank you to the St. B board members. They put in countless hours year-round for this league to run. Be sure to tell them thanks the next time you see them!*

*Parents, your hard work also does not go unnoticed. You give up your time, season after season. Countless hours are spent in the car bringing your child to practices, games, and tournaments. It's not always easy. Especially in Clarksville traffic.*

*My primary goal is to make sure the league provides a safe, instructional, and fun experience for all of our players. I think our little league also offers a great opportunity to join together a community of great parents that want their players to experience and develop friendships, learn teamwork, learn the game of baseball or softball and become better players.*

*To me, baseball and softball are about quality time with our family and friends. Along the line lifelong memories are created. I know many of my fondest memories were made on the softball field and at the park with my teammates and family. I am thankful that I get to be a part of making each of your players' memories possible.*

*Lastly, I want to issue a challenge to all parents for this upcoming season. Volunteerism is down in all areas, youth sports, schools, churches, etc. I want to challenge each and every one of you to find a way to volunteer this year. I'd love for it to be at St B, but if that's not an option, please go out and find some way to help others in your community. For those that want to volunteer at St B, please reach out to someone on the board and we'll be glad to share ways you can give back.*

*I am looking forward to the upcoming season and hope to see you and your kids at the park. If there is anything I can do, please feel free to email me at [president@stbll.org](mailto:president@stbll.org).*

*Sincerely,*

*Ashley Kiesel  
St. Bethlehem Little League President*