

Sunshine Baseball Club Junior Program.

Coaching Philosophy – T-Ball to U18

This coaching philosophy has been developed over several years of trial and error, success and failure. Over the years Sunshine has come to realise that winning a baseball game is secondary to doing your best. In the game of baseball individual players have very little control over the outcome of a game. Because baseball is a team sport, you can put the greatest baseball player in the world on a terrible team and that team will probably not win the championship. As coaches, if we focus our team on winning as the only goal, there is potential for great let downs and discouragement.

However, if we place our focus on effort first and winning second, not only do we give our players control over the goal, but teaching them to do their best will translate into lasting benefits for their future.

That being said, please don't think that Sunshine does not value or not strive to win baseball games. But winning is the "Icing on the cake".

Under 12 Friday & T-Ball

*** Winning is the second priority. Safety, Effort and Fun are Number One.**

Sunshine would rather have a team that had fun all season and did not win many games, as opposed to a team that won the championship but no one learned much and hardly anyone returns for the next season. Too many coaches stress results instead of effort. By putting the emphasis on results we are adding pressure onto our players and whether we know it or not, detracting from their performance. If the players give less than 100% then they need to do better. If they give 100% then they are winners and are successful regardless of the outcome of a particular pitch, at bat, play or game.

*** Give the Players your Attention**

Kids crave attention. Kids deserve attention. As a coach you want to give your players all the attention they need to thrive as baseball players. Feedback and communication are foundational to giving kids attention.

*** Give the Players Affirmation**

Kids need affirmation. Affirmation is a key in helping kids develop. Players need a patient supportive coach that can teach and motivate in a positive way. If all a player hears is negativity and correction without affirmation that is a bad and potentially harmful situation for a player to be in.

*** Give the Players Affection**

The old saying is so true, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." By showing the players that you care for them, they will be far more open to respond to your coaching efforts.

*** Be Good Sports**

Sportsmanship is becoming a forgotten concept and is unfortunately being taught less and less by coaches. Most players are learning their idea of sportsmanship from professional athletes. Most of what you see is trash talking, taunting and belittling of opposing teams and players. This is neither healthy nor good. Players need to be taught that they are competing “with” the other team not “against” the other team. Good plays need to be complimented regardless of what team makes them. Winning and losing need to be handled graciously. The coach has a huge impact on how his players will act on the field. You are a role model, so make sure you model good sportsmanship when dealing with umpires and opposing teams. Maintain self-control and teach your players to do the same.

*** Communication**

Communicating our expectations and listening to input and feedback from other coaches, parents and players are critical to the team’s success. No one wants to be placed in an environment where they don’t know what they are supposed to do, or where they do not feel like it is safe to speak up if they want to. As a coach I will listen to and take into account any concerns that are brought up. Players must communicate with other players in a positive manner. No put downs or foul language is tolerated.

*** Parents Must be Involved**

A big part of the success of the team is based upon the involvement of parents. This is “OUR” team. Parents, players and coaches need to be involved. Helping at practices, field maintenance day, games, organizing snacks and helping with umpiring duties will make the season run far smoother than a couple coaches doing everything themselves. Believe me, been there done that!

*** Integrity is Important**

Our players are learning from us as coaches. Not only by what we say, but they are being impacted even more so, by what we do. We need to be consistent and honest as well as embody the values that we are trying to teach our players. We should treat players, parents, umpires, other teams, basically everyone with respect. We should be self-controlled at all times. With the understanding that nobody is perfect- We need to admit mistakes, acknowledge failures, learn from them and move on. In doing this we can teach our players in action and deed, values that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

*** Have Fun**

I don’t want to do something that isn’t fun. I know kids are the same way. So, in applying the values listed above, our players have a much better chance of learning baseball, winning some games and having fun. Effort, enthusiasm, development of baseball skills and fun are the goals for this season.

*** Key Skills to be worked on**

Proper throwing technic

Proper Catching/Fielding technic

Proper Hitting technic

Baserunning (i.e tagging up, force outs etc.)

Under 12 All Star & Under 14 Friday

All the key sections from the above group remain important at this stage. At the age of 10-13 years old, boys and girls participating in our U12 All-Star and U14 Friday Junior level of baseball, will experience a competitive situation at a higher level. Fairness and equity in playing time must still be insured by the coaches. Most players will now begin to develop a desire to play a specific position. However, all players should continue to play a variety of positions throughout the year. The emphasis is placed on teaching baseball skills as winning becomes only moderately emphasized. When short term successes conflict with the longer term player development gains, it is our desire to always opt for the course that will likely result in the player's benefit future years. Coaches and managers for the first time need also to manage the behaviour of not only the bench players, but also the spectators. We recognize that players master skills in varying time frames and that less talented players at this level are very sensitive and insecure about their performances. While baserunning restrictions that existed in earlier levels are now lifted, it is not the intention to allow wild base running that would never be attempted if (and when) the players abilities is great. It is the role of the coaches to prepare players from all skill levels for the next level, and at no time should the desire to "win," supersede this philosophy.

*** Key skills to be developed**

Pitching Fundamentals

Catching Position Requirements

Base Running (i.e taking leads, Stealing, Hit and Run etc)

Under 14 All Star – U18

At the age of 12-17 years old, boys and girls participating in our U14 All-Star through to U18 Junior level of baseball, will experience a more competitive situation at a higher level. Although fairness and equity in playing time is still important at this level a greater importance is put on winning, playing time will be insured by the coaches. Most players will now have a desire to play a specific position, but as they proceed into Senior Baseball they may have to play a secondary position, this again will be insured by the coaches. The emphasis is placed on teaching baseball skills as winning becomes of higher importance. When short term successes conflict with the longer term player development gains, it is our desire to always opt for the course that will likely result in the player's benefit future years. Coaches need to continue to manage the behaviour of not only the bench players, but also the spectators.

***Key skills to be developed**

Understanding signals

Fundamental hitting (i.e Bunting, Hit and Run etc)

Set Defensive plays (1st and 3rd, Bunt defence, pick offs etc)

Last Words

At no time should the desire to "win at all costs," supersede this philosophy. The Sunshine "Eagles" Baseball Club is greater than any individual game and any individual. As a club we strive to teach players and coaches to respect their opponent and to ALWAYS RESPECT THE GAME.