

**SOUTHWEST OHIO LEAGUE LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**READ BEFORE SIGNING A CONTRACT WITH ANY LEAGUE TEAM**

**From:** Southwest Ohio League Officers & Board Members

**TO:** Parents of a minor child for whom a participation spot on a league team is considered.

We seek your cooperation in reading and making a wholehearted effort to understand both the need and purpose of this communication. This is a personal letter written to you as a parent and is not a legal document. It is however vital that you read and accept what is communicated in this material.

The Southwest Ohio League LLC is a nationally affiliated select baseball league. Many of our rules and guidelines are a compilation of the rules and procedures imposed upon us by the various national organizations with which we affiliate. Bylaws are made available to the teams in the league upon request. Playing rules are posted on the league web site. In addition to rules governing game management, are rules that pertain to allowable pitch limits, allowable player movement and player tampering. Consider this the definitive document for outlining parental conduct and parent-coach relations

As a parent of a player participating in this league you had a choice for which team your son or daughter would participate. That child could play for any team in this league that offered them a contract, or any other team offering a playing opportunity. Participation in this league is an opportunity, not a right. If you failed to properly research your options and ask the right questions prior to signing that contract, you will likely have to live with your decision for the duration of the season unless there was proven deception on the part of the coaching staff or coaching conduct that crosses the line in accordance with our league policies and bylaws.

Playing time, position/s played and batting order are **solely** at the discretion of the coaching staff and most likely won't be what parents want or expect. There will be no sympathy toward parents if conflict arises.

A player that becomes a distraction or discipline problem to the team may be removed from the team and may or may not be granted a release to play for a new team, most often at the discretion of the contracted teams coaching staff. (You do have the right of appeal to the league board if conflict arises or a release is denied.)

While it is regrettable, there are situations where a player can suffer for the bad conduct of a parent. This is not unusual in society. As an extreme example, a child

will suffer if their parent commits a crime, is judged guilty and goes to jail. There are, circumstances where bad parental conduct can accomplish the same result here and parents have been barred from attending games and other activities involving Southwest Ohio League teams. And players have been affected.

As an independent, non-governmental organization, we have, according to a ruling by the United States Supreme Court, the right to freedom of association. We choose not to associate with those who will not properly honor the terms and conditions of our league contract and code of conduct. This would include coaches, out of control kids, unruly parents and anyone that would create an unsafe environment for game participants and spectators, or cast a negative light on a Southwest Ohio League team or the league itself. In return, families have the freedom to associate with any one of the teams offering their child a spot on the team roster.

**No child may participate with two teams in the same age level prior to termination of the league contract except as a pick-up player where the team with whom there is a signed contract has given permission.** Contracts may not be signed prior to the last Saturday in September and are valid through the conclusion of the contracted teams originally scheduled season and post season schedule, or August 10, whichever occurs first. (This applies specifically to post-season play where participation is in nationally sanctioned tournaments under the auspices of organizations with which the league affiliates.) Multiple year contracts are not permitted under any circumstance by national affiliation and league rule. Playing with teams in different age levels requires conditional permission that can only be granted by the league President.

In the event a parent or player chooses to quit playing for the team holding his contract, there may or may not be a release granted-at the discretion of the coach and any partial refund of fees paid would only be a courtesy offered by the team. If a player is cut from the team for non-disciplinary reasons, a partial refund of unused fees is reasonable. A player cut for player or parental misconduct is not entitled to any refund of fees.

No player or parents or representative of a player may initiate contact seeking a change of team with a representative of another team in the league while still under contract with a League team. Doing so would make that player immediately ineligible to play for the team solicited. The same rule applies to a league team soliciting a player.

A parent or player with a complaint about the conduct of a coach (not being a matter of playing time, or position) is welcome to present their concerns to league leadership beginning with their Age Level Coordinator. If the Age Level

Coordinator is also the coach about whom the complaint is filed, the parent(s) may contact another member of league leadership. (See the league web site for listing). If there is a complaint about an umpire, field conditions or any other non-conduct matter, those concerns should be made known to the coaching staff, who alone may present these concerns to the site director or league leadership as applies. There are somewhere between 8,500-9,000 participating kids from 6,500 and 7,000 families involved in league participation, so it's important to initiate the complaint and resolution process at the immediate age level.

This league will not discriminate against a person due to race, ethnicity or religion, but we choose not to tolerate bad conduct from any player, parent, fan or coach regardless of race ethnicity or religion.

### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUGGESTIONS:**

Player selection for/of a team is a bi-party process. The team has to offer the opportunity to play and the parents and player have to agree to do so. Beginning with that initial offer and acceptance, player fees and responsibilities should be clearly laid out by the team, with no surprises, as well as their refund policy if applicable. It is the responsibility of the parents to meet that financial commitment. Failure to pay all fees or to return team uniforms and equipment will make that player ineligible to participate with another Southwest Ohio League team until that obligation is met.

The league seeks to create a safe environment in which to play the game of baseball and while baseball is said to be the safest sport with an athletic component it is not risk free. **It is the responsibility of the parents to decide what safety equipment they feel comfortable will protect their child from the effects of injury.** Helmets and facemasks that are not reflective are perfectly acceptable, body armor is available and many feel it is not a burden to wear. Of course NOCSAE certified batting helmets in good condition and for catchers, NFHS approved gear is required.

If your child is a pitcher, it is not only the responsibility of the coaching staff, but the parents to monitor and police pitch counts. Standards in place by the USA Baseball Medical Advisory Board and Beacon Orthopedic are clearly listed on the league web site on the back pages of age level playing rules. No parent should complain about arm injuries if they have allowed any abuse to take place. While there are congenital conditions that result in need for medical treatment, many arm injuries are the result of over-use and/or poor mechanics.

**Parent Acknowledgment:**

This certifies that I have read this document prior to signing the League Player Contract. Failure of parents to properly complete and sign a League Player Contract as well as the Medical Release & Consent Form or to provide an acceptable record of live birth to verify age will automatically eliminate any youth from participation in the league. Falsification of a birth document will result in a lifetime ban from league participation.

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Print Players Name and Age

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Print Parents Name

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Parent/Legal Guardian Signature  
DATE

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Parent/Legal Guardian Signature  
DATE