



SPRING 2009

NEWSLETTER

PROTECT THE THROWING ARMS OF YOUR PLAYERS

Protecting the throwing arms of your players should be an absolute top priority!

The top 3 reasons I love working with Little League are; Little League's commitment to safety, to the education and training of volunteers and to the commitment to the all-around development of the players that sign up to play baseball and softball.

Little League has recently stepped up to implement a program to protect the throwing arms of young pitchers right across the organization. Little League worked with experts in the field, piloted the program in hundreds of leagues and now has included a Pitch-Count regulation for each level of play.

Over the years I have watched thousands of games in local leagues, in tournament play and at the Little League World Series and have seen pitchers hurt their arms by being allowed to throw far too many pitches. At times the young player's pitch-count went well beyond what highly trained Major League Baseball players throw in a game.

I believe this new regulation will help protect and develop young arms right across the organization and whole-heartedly support this initiative. Way to go Little League!

Coaches, I would like to offer a little more advice on this front. The pitch-count "limits" in the regulation are just that, "limits". Several of the pitchers on your team are not strong enough to pitch to the maximum and early in your season none of the pitchers on your team should be expected to pitch to the limit.

Here is the development approach I used when I was coaching in Little League:

First, I taught all players how to pitch and made sure everyone got the chance to work on the pitching technique in almost every practice. At every level of play coaches are always looking for more pitchers. I always felt if I had 12 players on my team I needed 13 pitchers, so why not develop them all.

Second, I implemented my own team pitch-count guideline:

- In a pitchers first outing of the year I kept the pitch count between 35-45 pitches.
- In the pitchers second outing of the year, usually in the second week of the season 45-55 pitches.
- The third outing the pitcher could throw 55-65 pitches in the game.
- In the pitchers fourth outing, usually a month into the season, I allowed 65-75 pitches.



WWW·**BIGAL**BASEBALL·COM



SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

Coaches, by using this approach, I was able to develop the strength and technique of everyone on the team without any setbacks due to injury or soreness. And surprisingly we won our fair share of the ball games early on and later in the season we competed with everyone.

Coaches, never leave a pitcher on the mound, when you recognize he is getting a little tired or showing any signs of soreness, regardless of the number of pitches they have thrown. A good coach does not ask a pitcher if they would like to continue, he/she recognizes when a pitcher is getting tired or sore and immediately brings the player off the mound.

The player's arm, of course, is far more important than winning any ball game. Coaches, if you handle your players properly, the pitcher should be able to do their work on the mound and then move to another defensive position on the field and make the plays without any soreness. Another heads-up for you, if your player has a sore arm the day after pitching, you left him on the mound too long!

Here are some of the other benefits of this Little League regulation:

- More players get a chance at this key position & develop the courage that comes along with experience.
- More balls will be in play so players in the field will have more fun.
- Your pitchers will quickly figure out that if they want to pitch a complete game they will need to throw strikes, put the ball in play, and have innings where their team gets 3 outs with 4-5 pitches.

Coaches and Managers, protecting and carefully developing the throwing arms of all of your players should be a top priority. I know you are going to like the Little League pitch-count approach, have a great season!

Big Al



Al Price (Big Al) has presented clinics to over 100,000 coaches and managers and 50,000 players around the world and the author of a comprehensive set of resources for coaches, managers, players and their parents.

WWW·BIGALBASEBALL·COM