

## Updated changes for 2010 Tri-County Baseball

In the fall of 2008 the board of Tri-County baseball (Middletown, Myersville, Braddock and Carroll Manor) decided to transition to Cal Ripken baseball rules for the 6U through 12U age groups. The decision was made to transition to these rules over the next few years. Last year we adopted the Ripken rules and created at some levels All Star/Select level of play Sunday only, Ripken Level and D2 as well as creating Post Season District All Star teams.

For 2010 we will be making some additional changes which include eliminating the D2 level, and adopting Ripken's play-level definitions, which contain overlapping age ranges. Thus, we will no longer use the age-specific division level descriptions of U6, U8, U10, and U12. Instead, we will have Rookies (formerly T-ball), Machine Pitch (formerly 8U), Minors (formerly 10U), and Major (formerly 12U). This will allow us to not only utilize a player's age when placing him/her on a team, but also factor-in his skill level. The goal of Ripken baseball is to continually put players on teams where they can be the most successful, continue to grow in their skills and enjoy the game while receiving maximum playing time.

Minors and Majors can comprise of age groups of 8-12 years old. This is why our evaluation process that we do each year is so important. For instance with the new categories, you could have a 9 or 10 year old who excels play at the next level of baseball. If that 9 or 10 year old player was evaluated at the highest categories they could jump from Minor ball to Major ball to continue to build his/her skills. The system also works for the opposite, if a 9 or 10 year old is just starting baseball or needs to continue to work on their skills, they can stay at the current level or even go to machine pitch so they can continue to grow and excel versus potentially being overwhelmed at the next level.

The Minors division would play with rules that we used in the past for 10U, 60ft bases, 46ft pitching distance, no stealing until after it passed the catcher etc. The Majors division has 70ft base path, 50ft pitching distance, leads off of bases and stealing off the pitcher etc.

### **District All Star Teams**

This year instead of waiting until early summer we will be forming up the Western Frederick All-Star teams (players from all the communities in Tri-County) in February or March. This will be an open invitation for all to try out for. Instead of each community forming their own All-Star teams that played Ripken Sunday All-Stars during this past spring, the WFC All-Star teams will play Sunday All-Stars together during the spring, as well as possibly some tournaments. This will give these teams more time to "gel", potentially making them even more competitive in the Ripken state tournaments. To keep as many kids involved in Sunday All-Star play, we will offer the following teams; U12 "A", U12 "B", U11, U10 "A", U10 "B", and U9. Some of these teams may choose to play in the MABA Sunday All-Star league.

## **League play during the season**

If your son/daughter is evaluated above the machine pitch level there will be three levels of play offered.

These will be the following;

**Majors Interleague Travel-** This level is for our players who want their full-time spring team to play an weeknight, interleague travel schedule, here in Frederick County, while earning Ripken eligibility.

**Majors In-house-** This level is for our Majors level players who want their full-time spring team to play a weeknight schedule against the other Tri-County community teams, while earning Ripken eligibility.

**Minors-** This level will most closely resemble our previous U10 level, weeknight games against other Tri-County community teams while earning Ripken eligibility.

In general, we will be separating the Majors pool of players into two groups. The Interleague Travel teams will play against other Frederick county Ripken Interleague Travel teams, possibly from Urbana, FBA, and others. These are not the state tournament All-Star teams. It is likely that Middletown, Myersville, and "Carroll Heights" will each field a team in this division. The rest of the Majors and Minors players will play a normal Tri-County weeknight spring schedule. The goal is to offer two different levels of play for our highest-level and more seasoned players.

The teams for Middletown will be decided after our evaluations on January 30<sup>th</sup>.