

SLVGS Coaching Manual

Thank you for volunteering and welcome to your new team and a new season!!

The Manager's main job is coordination of all the team and league events, parent volunteer positions, and communication to and from the team – all the administrative tasks. This may include managing the practices/game schedule, the attendance for each, clearly communicating to all players and parents and sometimes, developing line-ups for games. Shared by the Manager and Assistant Coach is player and team development. A good thing to remember is that each team is different in matrix and that being flexible will be key to a successful season. The most important thing is to make the season fun for the players, the coaches and yourself. Good resources to review are the SLVGS website (www.slvgs.org).

PRE-SEASON

The Coach & Manager Relationship:

If a new relationship is being formed you may want to discuss his/her coaching philosophy, the separation of duties (who creates the line-up, who transports equipment, practice schedule, date of initial team meeting and other items that will help the season run smoothly for the players.

Contacting Your New Team:

Before you contact the team, it may be helpful to familiarize yourself with the division requirements and rules. You do not have to be an expert, but parents may ask questions about the schedule (days of week, times, length of season), equipment, etc. Once again, the website, Coaches/Managers meeting, team binder and your discussions with the other coaches are good sources of information. Try to contact every family on your team as soon as you receive your team roster and contact information. This is a good time to verify the contact information and solicit people for the team volunteer positions. At the same time you may field parent questions; some you may have to research before responding. When you contact your team remember to tell the parents and players about the initial team meeting including location, date and time. You should shoot for having it on or before the first day of pre-season practice.

The initial-team meeting:

The team meeting purpose is to meet each player and parent in person, share the team philosophy, cover the skills the players will learn in this division, distribute the practice schedule, gather information about the player's experience, provide the required equipment list, explain your communication plan and finalize the team's volunteer list. You will also want to choose your team's name at this meeting if possible. The League will ask for the team names before Opening Day. Also use the meeting as the opportunity to have the Parent and Player Codes of Conducts signed and make sure you have the correct contact information.

Pre-season Practice Schedule:

The League provides the opportunity to set a pre-season practice schedule for your team at the Coaches/Mangers meeting. This can also be found on the website www.slvgs.org. Please communicate this information to your team. It is helpful to include scrimmages in the practice schedule. This is especially useful for the older divisions. You can arrange scrimmages with other teams' Coaches or Managers during the pre-season. You can use one of your scheduled field times or request a field assignment from the league by contacting the Schedule Coordinator. League scheduled events can usually be found on the League calendar on the website.

Equipment Purchase:

There are several places to purchase softball equipment in the South Bay. Most sporting goods stores (Play It Again, Big 5, Sports Authority) carry the required equipment. As baseball and softball seasons begin, supplies may be low, so encourage your parents to shop early. Each player needs a glove, cleats and softball or softball-like pants (black) and they have the option of wearing sliding shorts with sliding pads underneath.

Communication:

During the pre-season and season, it may be helpful to send a weekly email (or set up a team website) to remind the players and parents of the softball event information scheduled for that week. The email would include the practices, games, snack schedule and other events for the week. It is also a way to keep track of the scheduled absences and late arrivals. This information is helpful for the person who is creating the line-up. There will be several times throughout the season when you will receive information from the league to pass to your team. Some of the league communication may ask you to obtain information from your players and parents to be returned to the league.

Uniforms:

A volunteer from your team will need to be in contact with the League Uniform Coordinator. The league only provides a jersey with a number for each player; any additional lettering is extra and paid for by the coach or player. Extra items will have to be added after the uniforms have been distributed to the team and must be executed by a representative of the team.

The Game/Practice Schedule:

The League will provide a game schedule for each team. One suggestion is to take this schedule and add practices, snack schedule and league events. League scheduled events can usually be found at www.slvgs.org on the league calendar.

Weather:

Our website will be updated daily to inform you of current weather/field conditions. Check the website at www.slvgs.org on practice and game days where weather is in question, to ensure the fields are open. Please be aware that we will do our best to update the site regularly, but due to changing weather conditions a game may be called on the field by the umpire-in-charge in order to ensure the safety of our league players.

Line-up and Player Positions:

It is a good idea to discuss line-up and player positions with your coaching staff. If you are responsible for the player positions, you will want to rotate players through all positions for younger divisions. Players must play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield. At the older divisions (12U+) positions may become more specialized. Regardless of the division, players should learn in a recreational league and a player's time should be balanced between the infield and the outfield. You may also be asked to provide the batting line-up to the plate umpire and the other team. The goal is to have all players get the most at bats possible. In the younger divisions, you may want to rotate (ex: start with the next player after the last player at bat in the last game). In older divisions, it is more specialized using the traditional line-up methods.

Game Time:

It is the manager's responsibility to provide the line-up to the opposing team, the umpire and to the scorekeeper for your team. If you are the home team, your scorekeeper will be the official scorekeeper. S/he will need to sit close to the home plate umpire as the umpire may need clarification on counts, runs scored etc. The league will provide each team with a scorebook.

Dugout:

It is the manager's responsibility to manage the dugout or to appoint a team parent to do so. At the younger ages this would include getting players prepared for the next at bat, fielding position (ex. getting catcher in gear once the 2nd out is made). For all divisions you are there to insure the game runs smoothly by communicating the batting order & positions, arranging scorekeeper, providing first aid and ice, keep batters on deck, catcher gear-up/down, insure good sportsmanship, expect players to clean up equipment and dug out, and that the players thank the umpire(s). An appointed team parent or assistant can handle much of this.

Conflict Resolution:

As unpleasant as it may be, it is your responsibility to manage conflicts on your team, between the parents and the coaching staff, between your team members and other teams etc. Though these are few and far between, they do occasionally occur. Please do not hesitate to ask for assistance from your Division Representative or from a board member. All altercations need to be reported.

First Aid:

As manager you will be responsible for team first aid. If not provided by the League, the Coaches/Managers provide and maintain a first-aid kit for their team. The kit should be on hand at each practice and game. It is also your responsibility to bring ice or ice packs to each team event. You will also need to have a copy of the player registration form, which has the signed 'Authorization to Treat' from each guardian. We recommend you keep this in the Team Binder and with you at all times. Please be prepared to treat cuts and scrapes, burns, nosebleeds, and bleeding. You will also want to monitor and prevent dehydration and heat exposure of your players. You will want to familiarize yourself with the closest place to obtain treatment. In the unlikely event that a player is hurt, please contact guardian/parents immediately and decide on the best course of treatment. It is your responsibility to complete an incident report form and then submit it to the Division Representative within 24 hours.

Special practices:

With parent's permission and funding; you may be able to schedule practices with area trainers or at indoor locations where they have indoor batting cages.

Final Note:

The SLVGS Board is dedicated to improving our league and assisting all of the volunteers that make playing softball in the San Lorenzo Valley possible. If there is information you feel would be useful in this manual, we are open to feedback and will consider all suggestions.