

# RALSTON AREA BASEBALL ASSOCIATION



## PARENTS & COACHES HANDBOOK 2010

**Adopted by RABA Board of Directors, December 2000  
Revised February 2010**

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## RABA Mission Statement

**WELCOME TO RALSTON BASEBALL!** The RABA Board of Directors hopes this handbook will give you a better understanding of RABA and its role of providing a sports program as a learning experience for our children. The fundamental goal of the program and the means of achieving this goal are outlined in our Mission Statement:

*“The primary objective of the Ralston Area Baseball Association shall be to implant firmly in the youth of our community, the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and reverence. This objective will be achieved by providing a supervised baseball program. The attainment of exceptional skills or the winning of games shall be secondary to the prime goal of molding ethical young adults.”*

It is very important to remember this central point. The athletic skills developed in our program may give some of our children a chance for an athletic scholarship or perhaps a career for a few. But the lessons of teamwork and sportsmanship, in both victory and defeat, are our primary focus because they are the more universal lessons – they are lessons good for life for all players.

Two major goals of RABA are to provide an opportunity for as many children as possible to play baseball at an affordable price, and to develop in these players a life-long love of the game, even if they only play for one or two seasons. It is our objective to be inclusive, not exclusive. RABA has been a leader in developing rules that provide balanced teams and playing time for all, while maintaining a competitive program that develops good playing skills for players with all levels of natural ability.

The season actually begins in the fall when the Board of Directors sets goals and budgets for the season ahead. In February, when registration is completed, player skills rating sessions are held for players ages 7 & up. Teams are organized and coaches selected in March, and practices begin around April 1<sup>st</sup>. The playing season begins in early May, with approximately 400+ players on 40+ teams across five in-house leagues, playing two scheduled games a week until approximately the first week of July. Tournament Teams are selected during June and generally compete until late July. RABA also offers competitive Select Teams where players earn roster positions through a tryout process during July of the previous year. RABA Select Teams compete against other area, in-state, and out-of-state teams at age levels from 10 & under through 18 & under. Play begins in April for most teams, and continues through July.

**We are a volunteer organization!** It’s staggering to think of the work of registering, equipping, uniforming, training, and scheduling 400+ players and umpires for over 500 games and practices. And don’t forget running the concession stands, fundraising events, or rounding up league sponsors! The City of Ralston owns and maintains the playing fields, but RABA and RGSA work and contribute funds and volunteers to assist in the improvement and maintenance of the fields. Our facilities are the envy of other organizations and are the pride of Ralston Baseball!

RABA is in its fifth decade of providing a quality youth sports program for the young athletes of the Ralston area. Ralston is a baseball community. Together we have accomplished a great many things over the years and we thank the countless dedicated volunteers that have built the program into what it is today. Over the past years, we have continued our efforts to improve the facilities, with the addition of the centerfield flagpole at Pierson, purchase of needed field maintenance equipment, and replaced the public announcement system, to mention just a few of the many projects completed. We continue to enjoy the cooperation we have shared with the City of Ralston, Ralston School District, Ralston Girls Softball Association, and Ralston Soccer Club in making certain the children and coaches of Ralston have reliable practice facilities as well as playing fields.

RABA is a proud participant in “**Pursing Victory with Honor**”, a program introduced to the organization five years ago. We strive to continually train coaches and commissioners, parents and players. The purpose of this program is to place special emphasis on sportsmanship and the positive aspects of athletics. **We expect all players, parents, and coaches to lead by example.** We should strive to be positive ambassadors for our Ralston Baseball Program. We know you are a big part of RABA and its ongoing success. We look forward to your continued support of RABA by donating your time as a coach, umpire, team parent, board member, helping at practices, or working in the concession stand, announcer’s booth, and fundraising events. Most of all, participating in the program is fun for you, your child, and their teammates – and you will meet some great people in the process. We look forward to seeing you and your family at the ballpark. When parents participate in their child’s lives, everybody wins!

**Our job is to make sure your children have fun! Let’s play ball!**

Board of Directors  
Ralston Area Baseball Association

# Organizational Structure

## Bylaws

A complete copy of the RABA Bylaws, including provisions for election of officers, duties of officers, general policies, protests, discipline, awards, safety, conduct, etc., is available to any interested party upon request, but is not included here due to space restrictions. To view this document, as well as brief job descriptions, for each board member, please visit our website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>

### 2009 RABA Officers and Board Members (\* denotes members of Executive Committee)

Board President *:	Bob Kment	290-1056 Cell 592-7602 Home
VP Administration *:	Brian Choyeske	597-1788
Director of Field Scheduling:	Theresa Van Ornam	339-7057
Legal Advisor:	Mark Klinker	331-2847
Tax Advisor:	Al Hennings	331-8471
Director of Public Relations:	Beth Fletcher	216-3037
Webmaster:	Ed Stark	339-9505
VP Operations *:	Tim Otte	596-5412
Director of Field Maintenance:	Matt Henry	
Equipment Manager:	Phil Straw	592-5440
Umpire-in-Chief:	Brian Johnson	339-6522
Ralston Sports Committee:	Dennis Swift	331-2543
	Bob Kment	592-7602
VP Player Personnel *:	Theresa Van Ornam	339-7057
Shetland Commissioner:	Dave Molek	339-5652
Yearling Commissioner:	Joe Linhart (Co-Commissioner)	731-7331
Mustang Commissioner:		
Bronco Commissioner:	Phil Lira	
Pony Commissioner:	Ed Stark	339-9505
VP Select Teams *:	Greta Webster	
Ralston Select 10U:	Bruce Lavicky	339-7336
Ralston Select 11U:	TBA	000-0000
Ralston Select 12U:	Joe Siwa	339-0796
Ralston Select 13U:	Mike Hartigan	991-1971
Ralston Select 14U:	Andrew Peters	319-6603
Colt Select Team:	Luke Olson	218-3747
Palomino Select Team:	Mark VanOrnam	593-7348
Secretary *:	Beth Fletcher	331-8653
Treasurer *:	Linda Plack	331-8671
Concessions:	TBA	000-0000
Director of Fund Raising:	Bob Kment	592-7602
Pickle Sales:	Gail Hackendahl	339-5845
	Pat Gibbons	895-3303

If anyone is interested in serving on any board position, please contact any member of the Executive Board, or send an email to the appropriate officer through the website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>

## **Volunteers: *There's a Job for Everyone!***

**Each and every parent must volunteer some time** for our youth to have a quality baseball program. Just so nobody can say "I don't know what to do!" below are some examples of volunteer positions and the responsibilities of each. Most amount to only a few hours of your time and you will be rewarded with a lot of satisfaction from helping your child's program be successful.

The League Commissioners are responsible for the organization and operation of one of five leagues. Once the season is started, they make sure all team are following league rules, keep track of league standings, work with the Vice-President of Player Personnel to ensure quality officiating, and address questions and concerns of players, parents and coaches.

The Head Coach is responsible for the overall organization of the team "on the field". The head Coach is also responsible for teaching the players how to properly play the game. They set practice locations and times, maintain the team's equipment, determine playing positions and batting order, act as positive roll model for sportsmanship, and maintain team discipline.

The Assistant Coach assists the Head Coach as needed in running the team, usually someone who is interested in baseball but cannot be available often enough to take on the roll of the Head Coach. Assistant Coaches are also expected to be positive roll models for sportsmanship and may be asked to manage the team if the Head Coach is absent. Assistant Coaches are invaluable to the Head Coach in making the team run "like a well-oiled machine".

The Team Parent is responsible for the "off the field" organization of the team. Duties include scheduling and reminding parents about their concession duty, assuring raffle tickets are being turned in, informing everyone about picture day schedule, organizing recognition events or team picnic, and other events the team parents agree to do for their players. The Team Parent should also arrange for a parent to send game results to The Ralston Recorder.

The Refreshment Coordinator schedules the post game refreshments & reminds each parent before their turn (for late games try to avoid caffeine laden soda pop and high sugar treats). The person can also assist the Team Parent in whatever capacity they are able and willing to do.

## **Volunteer Information Form**

The Volunteer Information Form located at the end of this packet may be used to assist you in signing up to volunteer for your child's team. Please return the completed form to the Commissioner of your player's league, or to the Vice-President of Player Personnel. The Ralston Area Baseball Association is built and run totally on volunteer efforts. If you can donate some time to RABA in any capacity, please fill out and submit the Volunteer Information Form. We will definitely contact you to assist our program.

## **Player Eligibility & Sign-Up Information**

### **Age & Residency Requirements**

**The "League Age" of a player is determined to be the player's age in years as of April 30<sup>th</sup> of the year in which they will compete.** The age group cutoff date for RABA matches rules established by USSSA Baseball which RABA is associated with. Your child's age as of April 30<sup>th</sup> of the season in which the player will compete, is the age group in which the player is eligible to play for the current season

## **Policy Update**

Ralston Area Baseball Association (RABA)

Submission Date: February 23, 2010

RE: Player Play-Up Guidelines

The following policy guideline has been approved by the RABA Board of Directors as of 2-20-10:

Effective March 1, 2010 any registered RABA player will be allowed to play in the age group (league) immediately above their "current sanctioned aged bracket" (as determined by USSSA Baseball guidelines) at the sole discretion of the RABA Board of Directors and subject to the following conditions:

### **Shetland (T-Ball) League ONLY: Age Bracket 5-7**

1. Player has played a minimum of 1 full season in the USSSA sanctioned league as determined by the Player's age on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of April preceding the first scheduled game of the regular season; the "minimum 1-year of play in the previous age bracket" rule may be waived for a "first-year" RABA player if related play can be documented from another USSSA sanctioned league;
2. Player MUST be a minimum of 6 years of age on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of April preceding the first scheduled game of the regular season;
3. Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of the Player will be expected to participate in team activities as a coach, assistant coach, or team parent; assignments of team activities will be made at the sole discretion of the league commissioner;
4. Player will be required to attend a RABA sponsored "player evaluation session" to be held prior to the first scheduled team practice; Player must grade at an acceptable skill level for the play in the league immediately above the league played in the prior season;
5. Parent(s) and Player will be required to execute a "waiver of Liability" form which will be submitted to the league commissioner prior to the first scheduled team practice;

### All Other Leagues: Age Brackets 8-18

1. Player has played a minimum of 2 full seasons in the USSSA sanctioned league as determined by the Player's age on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of April preceding the first scheduled game of the regular season; the "minimum 1-year of play in the previous age bracket" rule may be waived for a "first-year" RABA player if related play can be documented from another USSSA sanctioned league;
2. Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of the Player will be expected to participate in team activities as a coach, assistant coach, or team parent; assignments of team activities will be made at the sole discretion of the league commissioner;
3. Player will be required to attend a RABA sponsored "player evaluation session" to be held prior to the first scheduled team practice; Player must grade at an acceptable skill level for the play in the league immediately above the league played in the prior season;
4. Parent(s) and Player will be required to execute a "waiver of Liability" form which will be submitted to the league commissioner prior to the first scheduled team practice.

The following table will be used to determine league eligibility and the "*League Age*" of a player. A photocopy of the player's birth certificate may be required for first-time participants in RABA Programs.

League	AGE (AS OF APRIL 30 <sup>TH</sup> )
Yearling	7 – 8
Mustang	9 – 10
Bronco	11 – 12
Pony	13 – 14

A Shetland (T-Ball) League is also offered for 5 and 6 year old boys and 5, 6 and 7 year old girls. Girls, who will be 8 years old as of April 30<sup>th</sup>, are encouraged to participate in programs offered by the Ralston Girls Softball Association (RGSA).

All children are welcome to participate in RABA Programs. However, for RABA All-Star Teams, specific residency requirements are stipulated for sanctioned USSSA Baseball Tournaments Competition. For these teams, residency requirements are that the player must live within the boundaries of the State of Nebraska (see USSSA Baseball Rule Book: 5.04.c 'AA', 'A' & 'All-Star 'A' Teams).

Questions regarding these requirements should be submitted to the Executive Board at the parent's earliest opportunity.

## Season Sign-Up Information

Registration Dates and Times for the 2009 Season are: (see website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org> for costs)

Day	Date	Time
Sunday	February 15, 2009	1:00 to 4:00pm
Monday	February 16, 2009	7:00 to 9:00pm
Tuesday	February 24, 2009	7:00 to 9:00pm

Registrations are held at the Ralston Middle School. Registrations made after Feb. 24, 2009 will be subject to a \$10 Late Fee. Player skill evaluations for the first-time participants (**for the 2009 season, all players will go through a skill evaluation session**) in the RABA Yearling, Mustang, Bronco, and Pony League (does not include T-Ball players) will be held at Wildewood Elementary School located at 8071 Ralston Avenue on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:00pm. The purpose of these evaluations will be to place players on teams so an even distribution of talent can be attained. As an organization, we want all kids to have an opportunity to play ball, regardless of skills, and to have the teams as evenly matched as possible. Questions may be directed to any RABA Board Member.

## Starting Dates

Practice normally begins around April 1<sup>st</sup>. The playing season begins around the first week of May and ends around July 4<sup>th</sup>, depending on rainouts and tournament schedules. Shetland League is a non-competitive instructional program for 5 & 6 year old boys, and 5, 6 & 7 year old girls. Practice and games for this league will normally start later than the other leagues. Coaches for each team will contact their players to inform them of practice dates and times.

## League Line-Up

*RABA League Rules included below are supplemental to the USSSA Official Baseball National Bylaws and the Official Rules of Baseball (National League) as published by The Sporting News. More specific rules and clarification for each league may be adopted by RABA and will be provided to coaches and parents by the respective league commissioner.*

### Shetland League

Shetland League (boys ages 5 & 6, and girls ages 5, 6, & 7), is an informal league to teach the fundamentals of baseball by the simplest method possible – **letting them play the game!** Shetland League is T-Ball. Base running is restricted since throwing arms are inaccurate, but the players learn the fundamentals of hitting, where to throw the fielded ball, and the basic rules of the game. Game scores are not kept, there is no league tournament, and field bases are 40 feet apart.

### Yearling League

Yearling League (ages 7 & 8), is a slightly less informal league which is also intended to teach the fundamentals of baseball to beginning players by the simplest method possible. Yearling League is coach pitch. On offense, teams are limited to six batters per inning, regardless of the number of outs. Base running is restricted, but the players learn the fundamentals of hitting, where to throw the fielded ball, when to look for the double play, and the basic rules of the game. Field bases are 50 feet apart.

### Mustang League

Mustang League (ages 9 & 10), introduces the young person to the complete game of baseball. This is the first “kid pitch” league; however, pitching is restricted to three innings per player to protect young arms. Runners **CAN** lead off and are allowed to steal bases and play the complete game of baseball. Field bases are 60 feet apart and the pitching distance is 44 feet.

### Bronco League

Bronco League (ages 11 & 12), is commonly referred to as “Real Baseball”. This league allows players to pitch no more than 10 innings in a week (Monday through Sunday). There is also a mandatory 24-hour rest (player cannot pitch again until this

time limit has expired) after throwing more than three innings in a game. Position players work to refine their playing skills and improve team effort. The Bronco League diamond has 70-foot bases and the pitching distance is 48 feet.

## **Pony League**

Pony League (ages 13 & 14), is the transition program, taking players from the smaller “kids” diamonds to a field closer to regulation size. Players have the opportunity to fine tune their playing skills and study game strategies. The Pony League diamond has 80-foot bases and the pitching distance is 54 feet.

## **Colt League**

Colt League (ages 15 & 16), gives the athlete two years of competition on a full size diamond, the same as the major leagues, before facing older players in open play and high school play. Field dimensions include 90-foot bases, pitching from 60 feet, and a total of 8100 square feet of playing space. **The league age cut-off date for the Colt League is JULY 31<sup>st</sup>!**

## **Palomino League**

Palomino League (ages 17 & 18), is a highly competitive baseball opportunity for the older high school player. In addition to being a wholesome summer fun activity, the Palomino League can provide the opportunity for players to exhibit their skills for collegiate coaches and/or professional scouts. **The league age cut-off date for the Palomino League is JULY 31!**

## **Teams**

### **Player Draft/Selection of Teams**

Each League Commissioner makes every effort possible to create fair and balanced teams. To accomplish this goal, a process most often used is where the League Commissioners utilize individual player skill ratings to distribute players and establish teams of near equal talent. In this process, specific emphasis is given to evenly distributing the higher rated players (particularly pitchers and catchers) to each team. The player skill ratings are prepared by head coaches at the conclusion of the previous season, and includes information on the players hitting, fielding, throwing, pitching, & catching abilities. Players without established ratings are requested to attend a player skill evaluation session scheduled after registrations, and before player drafts begin.

Head Coaches are allowed only one pre-selected assistant coach. This requirement is enforced to help maintain team parity. Individual requests to play on specific teams are reviewed by League Commissioners and/or Executive Board members, and only approved based on substantial justification. Reasons such as “wanting to play with friends”, playing on the same team because “they all go to school together”, or “car pooling”, are not normally considered substantial justification. Specific coach requests will also be reviewed by League Commissioners and/or Executive Board members. It is important to remember that one of the goals of the Ralston Baseball Program is to create an environment where players (and parents) have the opportunity to interact with other members of the Ralston Community in an effort to enhance our community environment.

### **Selection of All-Star Tournament Teams**

At the discretion of the League Commissioner, the Mustang, Bronco and Pony Leagues may select an All-Star Team to participate in a sanctioned post-season tournament. Post season tournaments normally begin after July 4<sup>th</sup>. The League Commissioner will select a coach from the league to coach the All-Star Team, based on a variety of criteria, not the least of which is the coach’s demeanor and ability to be a positive example of Ralston Baseball. In 2003, the RABA Board implemented a new process to select All-Star players through nominations and voting by coaches and players, under the direct supervision of the League Commissioner. The Head Coach is then responsible to appoint his Assistant Coaches after the selection of players has been completed. A complete copy of the procedure will be made available to all Head Coaches.

No matter how good the rules are, selection of All-Star Teams is highly subjective, and is sometimes the source of hard feelings. To accurately pick the best 12 – 15 players for a team from a league of 100+ players is nearly impossible. If your child feels he should have been selected and was not, please explain to them the difficulty of the job of selecting a team.

## **Fund Raising**

### **Pickle Cards**

As you may or may not know, for the last several years, RABA has been selling Pickle Cards at Ralston Keno & now at Brewsky's Food & Spirits on 84<sup>th</sup> & Park Drive. Purchase a card or two the next time you visit either venue. Proceeds go towards the purchase of new equipment and capital improvements. Thanks for your support!

### **Concession Stand**

RABA will again be operating a concession stand during the upcoming season. The purpose of the stand is to raise funds to help keep registration fees to a minimum. All parents whose children compete on Pierson Field will be asked to operate the stand. It is recommended that all coaches make parents aware of this early in the season and/or designate one parent to coordinate the effort for your team. This will take the responsibility off the coaches and allow them to concentrate on coaching. More information will be communicated to coaches as the season gets underway.

### **RABA Raffle**

In 2007, the RABA Board of Directors voted to discontinue participation in manning a fireworks stand for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. This decision was a difficult one as discussions to continue or not spanned more than two years. In the end, the lack of participation by team parents and the same people having to fill the open volunteer slots time and again, helped to solidify the decision to end this fundraising effort. Many of the parents commented time and again that they would rather pay a little extra at registration than give up their time to work the firework stand.

In 2008, the RABA Board of Directors supported enhancing the raffle drive held during the past two seasons. This year's raffle will be the major fund raising event for RABA programs involving both the In-House and Select teams. As part of the registration process for the 2009 season, each player will be assessed a \$20 fee for two books of raffle tickets. These tickets (and more) can be sold in order to recoup the \$20 fee (ticket stubs are to be turned in for the raffle drawing for prizes). Tickets will be mailed to each player prior to the kick-off of the raffle. For prize information, and further details, please check the website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org> If you have questions; please contact your league commissioner or any member of the RABA Board of Directors.

### **Sponsors & Fundraising**

We are now preparing the list of sponsors for the upcoming season and we would like to invite you to join the list. Sponsors are needed for the upcoming season to keep things going. With operating costs increasing every year, sponsorships and program advertising funds are a necessity. Sponsorships are essential to keep registration fees to a minimum. Without the sponsorship and partnership of businesses in the community, RABA would not be able to provide the outstanding youth baseball program it does.

Look at the important benefits you or your business will receive by being a RABA sponsor this season:

- ✓ Charitable Tax deduction of \$150.00
- ✓ Sponsor listing inside the front cover of the Parents & Coaches Handbook
- ✓ Sponsor's banner displayed at league and tournament games
- ✓ Handout identifying all sponsors, sent home with all players
- ✓ Sponsor's banner carried by players marching in the Ralston Independence Day Parade
- ✓ Prominent "Thank You" ad naming all sponsors, in the Ralston Recorder
- ✓ Sponsor listing on the RABA website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>

If you have any questions or are ready to be a RABA sponsor, please contact our Treasurer, Linda Plack, or visit our website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org> or mail the Sponsor Form at the back of this packet to the address indicated on the form. Thank you for your anticipated support. Let's make this the best season ever at RABA!

## Other Important Events

### RABA/RGSA Cleanup Days

Date	Time	Field name	Team(s)
Saturday, March 28 <sup>th</sup> (Rainout Date is April 4th)	8am – 1pm	Pierson	Ralston Select Teams & IH Pony League
	8am – 1pm	Meadows	IH Shetland League
	8am – 1pm	Wager, Crown	IH Yearling, Mustang, Bronco Leagues & RGSA
Saturday, April 18th	8am – 1pm	Pierson	Ralston Select Teams & IH Pony League
	8am – 1pm	Meadows	IH Shetland
	8am – 1pm	Ralston Middle School	IH Yearling, Mustang, Bronco Leagues & RGSA
Thursday, May 14 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 – 8:30pm	Pierson	IH Pony League
	5:30 – 8:30pm	Ralston Middle School	IH Yearling, RGSA
Thursday, June 9 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 – 8:30pm	Pierson	IH Bronco League
	5:30 – 8:30pm	Ralston Middle School	IH Mustang, RGSA
Saturday, August 15 <sup>th</sup>	8am – 1pm	Pierson	Board Members, Parents, Players
Saturday, October 10 <sup>th</sup>	8am – 1pm	Pierson (winterize)	Board Members, Parents, Players

**Please bring rakes, brooms and gloves. If we all pitch in, this should only take an hour or two each time. Thank you for helping us get the fields ready to play ball!**

### Ralston Independence Day Parade

RABA is placing special emphasis on getting as many teams as possible to walk in the Ralston Independence Day Parade this year. All RABA players and coaches are reminded and encouraged to walk in this parade as a symbol of our community spirit. We will carry our sponsor banners with our group as a big “Thank You” to our generous sponsors. This event is one of the times during the year that our sponsors are recognized.

We traditionally meet at Noon in the parking lot on the north side of Messiah Lutheran Church at 80<sup>th</sup> and Lakeview Street. Parents should use Lakeview Street to get to the church, not “Q” Street which will probably be blocked off in preparation for the parade. From there, we will go as a group to our spot in the parade lineup. Players and coaches should wear their baseball shirt and hat; however, they can wear shorts instead of baseball pants if they want. If it is forecast to be a hot day, participants may want to bring along a cold drink they can easily carry, to keep hydrated. Parents should be prepared to pick up their kids at the end of the parade around 75<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets, just east of downtown Ralston. A convenient spot is the parking lot by Bushwacker’s at 7401 Main Street. Parents are asked to be prompt and let their children know where they will meet them so coaches do not have to wait for all the kids to be picked up.

### Select Team Tryouts

RABA provides the opportunity for players to compete on competitive Select Teams. These teams play an expanded schedule and generally begin practicing starting in January but may begin as early as the fall preceding the upcoming season. The season starts in April and continues into July. The Head Coach of each team along with other designated personnel, evaluate players through a competitive try-out process. Players are selected for their age specific teams during July. Select teams

operate under the RABA Vice President of Select Teams who directly supervises the coaches of each team and reports to the RABA Board of Directors.

Practices are mandatory starting in January and positions on the team and on the field are earned by skill and outstanding play. Equal playing time is not guaranteed. This statement should be qualified; however, by pointing out that most coaches realize it is to everyone's advantage to continually develop all of their players to be ready to step in at any time due to injury or illness. Additional information on these teams as well as the dates, times and locations of tryouts, is available on our website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>

## Players

### Players Guidelines & Responsibilities

This section may be given out or photocopied and given out to all players and coaches with the following credit please:  
Developed by Richard Todd, [richard@textras.bc.ca](mailto:richard@textras.bc.ca) Source: <http://www.textras.bc.ca/webball/>

1. **BE CONSTRUCTIVE.** Work hard, lead by example, and be positive and constructive in all criticism. If you have a personality problem with another player, talk to a coach one on one. If some part of your game is not going as well as you want, don't get down, get help; ask for individual instruction.
2. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Get maximum performance from maximum nutrition – foods and liquids. Eat a decent breakfast before weekend games, healthy snacks or meals at all times, including between tournament games and double-headers – concession stand hot dogs, hamburgers and nachos are for fans, officials, opposition teams – not for you. Smoking, drinking or drug use will NOT be tolerated. Failure to comply is an AUTOMATIC league suspension.
3. **BE DRESSED TO PLAY.** Check your glove and spikes before each game or practice (in case repairs or replacement is needed). Arrive for games in a complete uniform, wear it smartly and with pride. Sloppy dress equals sloppy play.
4. **YOU PLAY, WE'LL COACH.** Let coaches handle disputes and disagreements while you focus on performance. Players are not to argue calls/decisions during games. Equipment throwing, abuse of park facilities, or swearing, will get you removed from the game. Insubordination will put you on the bench. Cooperation in practice is just as important.

### Player's Code of Conduct

Every successful team has rules, some established by RABA and others by the coaches. We expect strict adherence to the rules. Failure to follow the rules leads to discipline problems that erode the positive results. Failure to follow rules can also result in suspension from some or all remaining games. We're here for baseball, not conflict management.

## Coaches

### Coach's Guidelines & Responsibilities

Congratulations on having been selected as a Head Coach. Thank you for attending the coaches meeting and for volunteering so much of your time to give the youth of our community the benefit of your knowledge, leadership and enthusiasm. The quality of life for our children depends upon the effort we as parents are willing to provide. Your contribution to the community is greatly appreciated by everyone in the community.

Safety must always be a primary concern and should never be compromised for any reason! In addition to safety, RABA does endorse and is committed to the principles of the CHARACTER COUNTS and the "Pursuing Victory with Honor" programs. Information on these programs is located on the website <http://www.charactercounts.org/sports/>

Over the years, RABA and RGSA have made many investments in improving our facilities and equipment. These improvements are the result of a lot of effort by many dedicated people. But just as important as this volunteer effort, is the fund raising efforts critical to financing these upgrades. We must have your enthusiastic support for this to succeed. Please make sure this message gets delivered to your parents during your pre-season meeting.

We are not here to produce major league ballplayers, or to win championships. This program is geared toward developing kids both physically and emotionally into healthy, responsible adults. The program's objectives and the conduct required to reach these objectives are summarized in Article VI of the RABA Bylaws reads in part:

*"...to provide a competitive baseball program for young people based on the teaching and practice of sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and reverence."*

## **Coach's Code of Conduct**

All members of RABA shall be guided by its Bylaws and most importantly, common sense in conducting themselves in such a manner as to bring credit upon themselves as well as to the program. Emotional conduct which praises good play or demonstrates positive attitudes is encouraged, whereas conduct which stresses negative attitudes is unacceptable and should be corrected immediately.

Article VI (Safety and Conduct) of the RABA Bylaws reads in part:

*"It shall be the policy of the Executive Committee to promote safe and sportsmanlike play throughout the RABA program."*

Article VI continues:

*"No manager, coach, or player shall:*

- 1. ride, abuse, heckle, or make any uncomplimentary remark to any opposing team or official*
- 2. use profane language*
- 3. make any unnecessary gesture in protesting an umpire's decision*
- 4. throw bats or other equipment*
- 5. make unnecessary gestures to fans or opposing players*
- 6. resort to unnecessary roughness on the playing field*

Article VI (Discipline) of the RABA Bylaws reads in part:

*"Disciplinary actions may result in any of the following penalties. These penalties are not necessarily progressive and may be imposed by the Executive Committee as circumstances dictate.*

- 1. **Warning.** The offending person will be advised in writing of the offense and further advised that repetition of the offense will result in a more severe penalty.*
- 2. **Suspension.** The offending person will be advised in writing that he or she has been suspended from all RABA activities for a specified time period.*
- 3. **Discharge.** The offending person will be advised in writing that he or she has been discharged from all RABA activities for the remainder of the current playing season.*
- 4. **Barred.** The offending person will be advised in writing that he or she has been barred from all RABA activities permanently or for a number of years.*

*All decisions of the Executive Committee involving discipline shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal."*

Some specific examples of unacceptable behavior are:

- Publicly finding fault with umpires, managers or any other individual who is attempting, to the best of his ability, to make this program effective. Constructive criticism is acceptable when submitted through the proper channels.
- Harassing batters, pitchers or any other participant.
- Instructing players to take any action which would be considered unethical or unsportsmanlike.

## **General Responsibilities & Behaviors Standards of Coaches**

1. Basic Coaching responsibilities include:
  - a. Teach each player the game of baseball and the meaning of playing together as a team.
  - b. Teach each player the meaning of good sportsmanship by precept and example.
  - c. Develop, to the best of your ability, the athletic skill of each player on the team.
  - d. Organize the parents of the players of your team to carry out work necessary for the team's function. These job assignments are typically those of Assistant Coach, Scorekeeper and Team Parent.
  - e. Provide a qualified scorekeeper, except in Shetland & Yearling Leagues, for each scheduled game.
  - f. Be responsible for notifying the League Commissioner of game results so league standings can be maintained.
  - g. Maintain discipline at all practices and games for the players, parents and spectators of the team under your jurisdiction.

- h. Publish a practice schedule and notify parents of cancelled practices and games. Pre-season practices may not exceed 3 per week.
  - i. Ensure parent participation in keeping areas around bleachers and dugouts clean.
  - j. Maintain a summary of player participation; i.e., games and innings played, at bats, etc.
  - k. Maintain order in the dugout by having a coach or yourself in the dugout at all times.
  - l. Clean up the dugout and field at the conclusion of the game.
2. The Head Coach shall also be responsible to:
- a. Assure that equipment in their possession is in safe and serviceable condition.
  - b. Be accountable for your team's equipment, which will be made available to you on a specified date, and which must be returned as directed by the League Commissioner as soon as possible after the conclusion of the baseball season.
  - c. Notify your commissioner if an umpire is late or does not show up to work a game.
  - d. Appoint one Assistant Coach who will serve as acting Head Coach in your absence.
3. The Head Coach, in order to exhibit proper behavior in the RABA program, must:
- a. By precept and example, demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times.
  - b. When necessary, discipline team members in such a manner as to bring about the desired response without attacking the team member's character.
  - c. NEVER imply, directly or indirectly, by action or comments, that any particular player was personally responsible for the win or loss of a game.
  - d. Be accountable that all Assistant Coaches under your jurisdiction, exhibit behavior consistent with the behavior required of the Head Coach and in accordance with RABA guidelines.

**ALONE AT THE PLATE**

HE PULLS ON A HELMET, PICKS UP THE BAT,  
AND WALKS TO THE PLATE, "GOTTA HIT, AND  
THAT'S THAT!"  
THE CROWD STARTS TO YELL, THE GAMES ON  
THE LINE,  
LAST INNING, TOW OUTS, THE SCORE'S NINE TO  
NINE.  
DAD YELLS, "GO GET IT!", AND MOM WRINGS HER  
HANDS,  
COACH HOLLERS, "HIT IT!", BUT ALONE THERE HE  
STANDS.  
HEROES ARE MADE IN SECONDS SUCH AS THIS,  
BUT HE'S JUST A LITTLE BOY, WHAT IF HE  
SHOULD MISS?  
YEARS AFTER THIS GAME'S ENDED AND HE'S  
LITTLE NO MORE,  
WILL HE REMEMBER THE OUTCOME OR EVEN THE  
SCORE?  
NO, HE'LL HAVE FORGOTTEN IF HE WAS OUT, HIT,  
OR A RUN,  
HE'LL ONLY LOOK BACK ON HIS FRIENDS AND  
THE FUN.  
SO CHEER THIS BOY ON, ALONE WITH HIS FATE;  
HELP HIM REMEMBER WITH FONDNESS THIS  
STAND AT THE PLATE.  
SPEND YOUR TIME WISELY AND HELP IN HIS  
QUEST  
TO BE A HITTER WITH CONFIDENCE AND ALWAYS  
HIS BEST.  
AND WHEN THE GAME'S OVER, THIS BOY CAN  
STAND TALL,  
FOR YOU'VE HELPED HIM PREPARE TO GIVE IT  
HIS ALL!

*-- TAKEN FROM "YOU CAN TEACH HITTING" BY DUSTY BAKER*

## Parents

### Parent's Guidelines & Responsibilities

One parent of each player is encouraged to perform one of the following team support functions:

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Scorekeeper
- Assistant Scorekeeper
- Team Parent
- Refreshment Coordinator

**Concession Stand:** In addition to the team support functions listed above, parents of each Bronco and Pony League player will be asked to donate their time to the operation of the Concession Stand during their player's home games at Pierson Field. The Head Coach and Team Parent are responsible to encourage volunteers to participate. The Head Coach should be provided a copy of the parents scheduled to operate the Concession Stand during each home game.

**Uniforms and Equipment:** Parents and coaches are responsible for uniforms and equipment issued to players and managers. Said equipment (other than items clearly identified as becoming the property of the players) must be returned at the end of the season. If equipment is not returned, those responsible may be billed at the current rate of replacement, and Team Pictures will be withheld from distribution until equipment is returned or replaced.

**Fund Raising:** Should the RABA Board of Directors decide that a fund raiser event or project is needed in order for the program to remain fiscally sound, all parents will be responsible to support that activity. For the 2008 season, the RABA Board of Directors has initiated a raffle as the main fund raising event for this season. Please see our website, <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org> for details, or the previous section "Fund Raising" in this packet.

### Parent's Code of Conduct

**The conduct of parents when in contact with the Head Coach, Assistant Coach(es), players, and especially when in attendance at any games, will be that of a responsible adult, modeling good sportsmanship, common sense, and conducting themselves in such a manner as to bring credit upon themselves as well as the RABA Program.** Any parent or spectator ordered removed from the field area by the umpire, Head Coach, or League Commissioner after one warning is issued, will be suspended from attending the remainder of that game and may also be suspended for the next game as well. Refusal to leave the field area may result in forfeiture of the game at the discretion of the umpire, Head Coach, or League Commissioner, in addition to game suspensions.

**Dealing with Coaches:** If a parent has any problem with a coach or coaches, they should first attempt to resolve the issue with a meeting between the parent and coach(es). This should take place away from the field and not in front of players. If a further meeting becomes necessary, the coach or parent can arrange a meeting between the parties involved and the League Commissioner to resolve the problem. The next step would be to take the problem before the Vice President of Player Personnel and finally, to the RABA Board of Directors, if required.

### Ten Tips for Parents

Perhaps you have heard some horror stories about overbearing "Little League" parents and coaches. A good experience for your child begins with us, The Parents. It is up to us to make youth more enjoyable and a greater learning experience for the kids. And, after all, no matter how much we enjoy it, baseball is for the kids.

The RABA Board of Directors would like to share ten thoughts on how to make this a better learning experience for you as well. We believe that these ideas will help to make the next few months more fun for your children, more enjoyable for you and a heck of a lot easier on those people who volunteer their time and skills. We hope these ideas can help!

1. ***Work with your child.*** There really is little more satisfying than going out at least a few evenings a week and playing ball with your kids. This gives quality time, and helps your child improve their abilities and skills. The better your

child can play, the more they will enjoy the baseball experience. Some day, your child will look back fondly on the spring evenings spent playing catch with mom and dad.

2. *Get involved with RABA.* The program is run on a volunteer basis and we can use all the help we can get. Anything you can do to pitch in (helping practices, scorekeeping, concessions, field preparation umpiring, etc.) will make the program run more smoothly. If your child sees that baseball is that important to you, they will learn that it is important to the kids, too. The RABA Board Members have all had experience at many levels of the organization and are an excellent source of information on what it takes to volunteer at any of the many positions available. Everyone can find a place to help!
3. *Show up for the games AND practices.* In today's busy world, it is sometimes hard to juggle schedules, but this is your child. We have numerous stories of kids who are on a team but never really try to excel at baseball, and inevitably, these are kids that are dropped off at practices and picked up afterwards without the parent(s) ever watching a single practice. It is only a couple hours a week during a couple months of the year. And, if you are watching or involved in practices, you will see and learn the coach's philosophy used to work with and develop the players giving you an understanding of how the coach will manage the team during a game. This should help alleviate most if not all the questions that will sometimes come up in relation to a coach's decision on the field.
4. *Respect the Rules!* This is one of the most important things the kids should be learning. If you don't agree with an umpire's call, keep it to yourself. You did not buy a ticket and with it the right to complain. If there is a rule that you question, or a serious problem, speak with the Head Coach or League Commissioner privately, after the game or practice and away from the field and the players. Do not take time away from the players.
5. *Don't create pressure.* Just about every father and/or mother, dreams of their child becoming a major league star. Remember, they are only children and deserve the opportunity to enjoy the game as children. Don't expect more than they can deliver. Give positive encouragement and be there when they need you. Besides, often a child in early years will lack certain skills and blossom later on. Don't fight Mother Nature, or the kids.
6. *Losing is a normal result of competition.* Help your child learn to accept defeat and that it is part of the game. No one likes to lose, but the nature of a team sport is that one team will win and one team will lose. Teach your child that *they* didn't lose, the team lost; and that they lost to a team that just happened to play better that day. There is always next time. The important lesson is to learn from our defeats! One of life's most interesting truisms is that we learn more in failure than in success. It is okay to analyze why your team lost and how they can do better next time; but it is *never* okay to place blame on a player!
7. *HAVE FUN!* Baseball should be a positive experience for everyone: Kids, coaches, support staff, parents, and players. Winning is nice, but losing is inevitable. Being a star is fun, but being a bench player is just as important. As a coach, don't get focused on winning as being the only way to have fun. If you can't enjoy the game without winning, you are missing out on some of the best things about coaching. One of the most rewarding experiences possible is to take a player with little baseball skill, no confidence in their self, and help them develop over the course of the season to the point they look forward to their turns at bat because they know they can succeed. That player, who came to practice with his head hanging, now stands tall with pride and a big smile on his face. Take the opportunity to enjoy your child's childhood and to teach some important life lessons!
8. *Don't panic if your child is injured.* Although baseball is considered a 'non-contact' sport, there are occasions when players collide, or non-contact injuries occur. We are all concerned about our children's safety, but if your child suffers an injury, remember, kids are able to sustain a lot more than adults; and coaches are probably familiar with the usual baseball injuries. Let the coach(es) assess the situation. If they feel they need the parent on the field, they will call you from the stands.
9. *The program only gets better when people like you volunteer.* As mentioned throughout this packet of information, we are an organization of VOLUNTEERS, and we need *you!* Please reframe from being one of those parents who is quick to criticize, but is unwilling to give of their time to help. If you can't be a part of the solution, don't be a part of the problem. Get involved, help us to continue to make this program the best it can be.
10. *Speak up if you think your coach is not being fair.* One of the most frustrating situations for a coach, League Commissioner, or board member, is to hear from parents *after* the season, "...the program is really great but my son's coach kept doing something that really bothered me." A coach, League Commissioner, or board member, cannot address a problem or issue if they don't know the problem or issue exists. Coaches should welcome your input. If you don't make progress with the coaches in voicing your concerns, contact your League Commissioner and/or any RABA Board Member.

## Parent's Frequently Asked Questions about RABA

### Who can play?

Any boy or girl who will be no younger than age 5 or older than age 14 on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the season they will play, is eligible to play in RABA. The T-Ball program includes girls ages 5, 6, & 7. Older girls are eligible to play in the other RABA leagues but are encouraged to participate in the Ralston Girls Softball Association (RGSA) Programs.

### **Do I have to buy any equipment?**

Players only need a baseball glove. A protective cup is recommended as are shoes with cleats (non-steal cleats for all leagues with the exception of Pony League, which can use metal cleats). Players should wear baseball pants and socks when playing to help protect their legs. Colors are usually decided between the parents and coaches once the jerseys and hats are issued. Many players bring their own bat; however, if a bat is brought into the dugout, it is considered available for use by all players on the team. The league provides baseballs, batting helmets, and catchers gear. Each player gets a uniform consisting of a Ralston Baseball cap and jersey, which players keep at the end of the season.

### **Does the league carry insurance?**

The league carries liability and accident insurance as required by sanctioning organizations and as prudent to protect the interests of the players, parents, coaches and directors of the organization. Further details may be obtained from any member of the RABA Executive Committee. Generally speaking, we as parents are each responsible for any costs for healthcare incurred due to injury as a result of our child participating in any RABA program.

### **How much will my child get to play?**

All leagues utilize round robin batting which means all players present, bat in the order determined by the Head Coach, guaranteeing every player a turn at bat. Our league rules specify minimum defensive playing time requirements. In the Shetland, Yearling and Mustang Leagues, each player must play three defensive innings as time allows. In Bronco and Pony Leagues, players must play three defensive innings as time allows. When 10 or 11 players are present, each player must sit at least one defensive inning. With 12 players, one player can play the entire game. Exceptions are made for games that end prematurely. Playing time rules are very important and the penalties for not adhering to them are strong. If you believe your child has not been given his fair amount of playing time, check with the Head Coach immediately.

### **How are balanced teams created?**

League teams are formed by the League Commissioners using individual player skill rating information to distribute players to the best of their ability, and establish teams of near equal talent (see "Player Draft/Selection of Teams").

### **Can I request or refuse a certain league or coach?**

If you or your child had a bad experience with a certain coach, your written request that they not be on that individual's team should be given to the League Commissioner at sign-ups. Coach requests are reviewed by League Commissioners and/or Executive Board members, and only approved based on substantial justification (see "Player Draft/Selection of Teams").

### **What types of awards are given?**

The league does not provide participation trophies; however, parents of individual teams are welcome to provide this type of recognition, if all parents agree. It is strongly recommended that these awards be of a very limited cost, so as not to become a financial burden to parents.

## *Volunteer Information Form*

_____	_____	
First Name	Last Name	
_____		
Street Address		
_____	_____	_____
City	State	Zip Code
_____	_____	
Home Telephone	Work Telephone/ext.	
_____	_____	
Cell Phone	Fax	
_____		
Email Address		
_____		
Player(s) Name(s)		

Please indicate all areas with which you are willing to help:

_____	Board Member	_____	Head Coach
_____	Board Officer	_____	Assistant Coach
_____	Fund Raising	_____	Team Parent
_____	League Sponsor	_____	Refreshment Coordinator
_____	League Commissioner	_____	Concessions

\_\_\_\_\_ Umpiring (paid position and/or  
community  
service)

\_\_\_\_\_ Field Preparation

***Please return this completed form to your League Commissioner,  
or the RABA Secretary, or email the information through the  
website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>***

### ***RABA Sponsorship Form***

\_\_\_\_\_   
First Name

\_\_\_\_\_   
Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_   
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_   
City

\_\_\_\_\_   
State

\_\_\_\_\_   
Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_   
Home Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_   
Work Telephone/ext.

\_\_\_\_\_   
Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_   
Fax

\_\_\_\_\_   
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_   
Company Name

\_\_\_\_\_   
Contact Person

\_\_\_\_\_   
Company Address

\_\_\_\_\_   
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_   
City

\_\_\_\_\_   
State

\_\_\_\_\_   
Zip Code

The above named person and/or company has agreed to a sponsorship for the Ralston Area Baseball Association for the upcoming 2009 Baseball season. The amount of sponsorship and type, is indicated below. Please make checks out to RABA. Tax ID # will be provided when funds are received.

#### **Sponsorship Dollar Amount**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$150

\_\_\_\_\_ \$300

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ Other amount indicated

#### **Sponsorship Type**

\_\_\_\_\_ General Fund

\_\_\_\_\_ Team (indicate team) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Player (indicate name and league) \_\_\_\_\_

Banner on outfield fence at Pierson Field. Three year commitment required. Banner remains up throughout the season. Cost is \$350 1st year which includes the cost of the banner. 2nd and 3rd year cost is \$200. You will be contacted by the Director of Fund Raising to review the design and placement of your banner.

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***Please return this completed form to your League Commissioner, or the RABA Secretary, or email the information through the website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org>***