

Athens Sandlot League
All Star Teams and Sunday League for the 12U League
in the 2008 Baseball Season

By

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Overview

In the past, there has not been a standard, formal procedure for determining the selection and operation of the Sandlot All Star Team. As can be expected, there have been some criticisms of the way that things have been handled, mostly regarding suggestions that the process needs to be more open and communicated well to all parties involved.

In addition to the All Star teams, a recent development has been the formation of a “Sunday League” team. This Sunday league has operated as sort of a pre-season to the All Stars, allowing more skilled players to play on selected Sundays against invited teams from the region. Although attempts have been made to make clear to all parties involved that this “Sunday League” has nothing to do with Sandlot, and that it is not affiliated in any way with the league, the perception is that it is affiliated with Sandlot All Stars – in the past, all of the coaches of the Sunday League are the eventual All Star coaches, the Sunday League players are the ones that eventually are on the All Star team, the Sunday League teams wear Sandlot All Star uniforms, they play on Sandlot fields and use Sandlot umpires.

In the coming years, there will be a transition of the board of directors of the league as their children become older and no longer participate in Sandlot. Up to this point, the boards intimate involvement (since their players are on the teams and they coach the teams) has given the Board some assurance that things have been handled “The Sandlot Way.”

In reflecting the philosophy of the League (as published on the web site) this league should provide for all players of all skill levels. The regular season does this well, particularly for the less skilled players. In addition, it is stated that our league also provides for the more skilled players. This is where the Sunday League and All Star have the most importance for the continuation of this league. If the needs of those players are ignored, then they will turn to alternatives such as forming their own teams outside of Sandlot, and they will not participate at all. Therefore, there needs to be provisions made for these higher skilled players for the good of the league.

Now is the time to formalize the procedures so that the wishes of the board are passed down for years to come. If there are not more formal procedures adopted now, the future direction of the league will be driven by those that have the strongest personalities.

Goals of the All Star and Sunday League

- All of the policies will be communicated to all parents, coaches and players in advance of the commencement of the Sunday League and All Star seasons. We suggest that they are published on the web site.
- Both the All Star and Sunday League are part of Sandlot. They are not separate and provide opportunities that are consistent with the league philosophy.
- Both the All Star and Sunday League represent Sandlot to other communities. We should strive to have similar high standards with the way we conduct ourselves, play the game of baseball, and look on the field.
- The Sunday League should be viewed as a way to provide an outlet for the more skilled players to play with and against their peers (based on skill levels).
- The primary motivation of the Sunday League is to develop the baseball skills of the more skilled players.
- The Sunday League should be selective and should include roughly the top 30% – 40% of the league, based on skill levels. It should encompass roughly twice the number of players that are ultimately selected to the All Star team.
- The Sunday League should be viewed as a way to observe players, coaches and parents to evaluate them prior to All Star selection. Participation in Sunday League is not required to participate in All Star, but it strongly encouraged. This is a great opportunity to see how coaches' coach, players practice and play against better competition and parents handle a higher level of competition than the regular season presents.
- The Sunday League and All Star are the primary way for Sandlot to provide for the development of the future high school players as a feeder program.

Sunday League Selection Procedures

- **Coach Selection** - All coaches that are interested in being considered as All Star coaches must volunteer to coach in the Sunday League.
- This roster of coaches will help run the Sunday League practices, coach in games. The league commissioners will review this list of Sunday League coaches and will recommend the roster of coaches for board approval. It will be encouraged to have all coaches' work together in the Sunday League, and it may be the case that a manager will need to be appointed, or that the manager duty will rotate among different coaches.

- **Player Selection** – Players will be chosen by the following method:
 - At the start of the regular season practices, the parents are informed about the Sunday League and All Star processes. They will be asked if they want to have their players considered for Sunday League. It will be stressed that they will have to be selected for this, and that it is skill based.
 - At a designated time (probably after a few practices) Sandlot coaches will provide the commissioners a list of players that they nominate for Sunday League, ranked in order of ability. The commissioners will look at the nominations and come up with a list of 20-25 players per age group that will comprise the initial Sunday League participants.
 - Players can be removed from the Sunday League at any time by the commissioners. Normally this would be due to player or parent misconduct, or if their skills are much lower than originally identified.
 - During the course of the season, players that were not initially nominated can be nominated later by their Sandlot coach if their play improves from the initial evaluation. This way, a child can “play their way” on to the Sunday League team if they did not make the initial placement.
 - Since Sunday League has a limited number of slots, and requires additional time commitments, players that participate in other leagues simultaneous with Sandlot (leagues in other towns) are not eligible for Sunday League. Those children already have another opportunity for additional baseball, and it is not fair to take an available spot from a Sandlot kid to be awarded to a child that is already having that opportunity.
 - The end of season All Star teams will be voted on by the coaches and commissioners based on regular season, tournament, and Sunday League performance, attitude, and level of commitment.

Sunday League Operation

- The goal of the Sunday League is the development of all of the players that participate. Since all of the players selected are already the more skilled players, the coaches will be able to practice more advanced topics.
- Sunday League is not to be viewed as the All Star team preseason. Ideally, to foster the development of the players, not to be the precursor to the All Star team. Players should be used in a variety of positions and situations. Just because the coach knows that certain players will likely play a certain position in All Star, that player should not be used solely in that position for Sunday League. Likewise, it should be encouraged that as many pitchers are used as possible. This will let the coaches see more players and reduce the number of innings that a kid will pitch in a week (because they will be simultaneously pitching in Sandlot).
- Sunday League will hold one, and only one, practice other than on Sunday. The day will be chosen by the commissioner and must not conflict with any other Sandlot events (in the past Sunday League teams have held practices that have directly competed with Sandlot team practices or games). Parents will not be forced to choose between having their kid participate in Sunday League events and Sandlot events.
- Participation in Sunday League will mean that players will be playing baseball 5 times a week – two days of Sandlot games, one day of Sandlot practice, one day of Sunday League practice plus Sunday. Coaches and parents of players that participate in Sunday League should be strongly encouraged not to hold other (non Sandlot) baseball events during Sunday League such as informal travel league teams, etc. We don't want to have parents have to choose between other baseball activities and those officially sponsored Sandlot activities.
- Only Athens Sandlot players are eligible for Sunday League.
- During Sunday League games, players must wear their regular season Sandlot jerseys. No current or past All Star jerseys are permitted at games. This will help drive home the point that Sunday League is not related to All Star teams.
- Sunday sessions should be an all afternoon session. There should be a "skill and drill" type practice session. This session is more important than any games that will be played. This is where both the player development will occur and will enable the coaches to really assess the player's abilities for the purpose of eventually selecting the All Star team.
- Since there will be enough players to form a couple of Sunday League teams, the teams that will play games will be something that changes week to week. There will not be an "A" and "B" team based on ability. If all of the "Good" players are on one Sunday League team, the players and parents will sense that the All Star team selection has started. Again, the goal of Sunday League is to develop players, not to have a winning Sunday League team. The goal of winning occurs during the All Star season – the Sunday League is the way to achieve that goal.

- If there are multiple coaches that want to be considered to manage the All Star team, they will be given the opportunity to manage during Sunday League. This will give the commissioners the chance to judge the coaches' ability in running a practice, teaching skills and managing a game.
- Since umpires will need to be paid, there will be an additional fee that parents must pay to participate in Sunday League. If the player qualifies for a fee waiver for Sandlot, they will also receive a Sunday League fee waiver.

All Star Team Coach Selection

- Coaches that have participated in the Sunday League can put their name in for nomination to coach on the All Star team. They will state whether they want to be considered for the position(s) of manager and/or coach.
- Commissioners will place names in to the board for the positions of manager and coaches of the All Star team. The commissioner will use the following sources for this nomination:
 - Commissioners views of how well they teach the game and conduct themselves with players and parents. We want positive role models for our players.
 - Opinions of fellow Sunday League coaches.
- The board and commissioners will then work together to choose the manager and coaches of the All Star team. Coaches will be appointed once it is determined that their child makes the team.
- There will be one person chosen as manager. He will be ultimately responsible for all baseball decisions. Coaches will serve under his direction.

All Star Team Selection

- The All Star team recommendations will come from the commissioners, for approval by the board.
- The team must be finalized and announced within 3 days of the conclusion of the regular season. It can be announced as early as the first day of the Sandlot post season tournament.
- If at all possible, each age group will have two teams. For the 12U league, there should be a 12 year old team and an 11 year old team. This is not a hard and fast rule, but should be the goal. The exception is when there are 11 year olds currently in the 6th grade. Those 11 year olds will play with the 12 year old 6th graders. The rationale is to keep players together who will play together in the 7th grade the following season.

- All parents will be asked by their regular season coach as to whether they want their child eligible for the team or not. They will be told as to the time and financial commitment. The parents must then tell their coach whether they want their players included or excluded from consideration. After having this list, the coaches will know the eligible players.
- The process will begin by asking regular season coaches to submit names for nomination. Players on the list that did not participate in Sunday League will be harder to evaluate, as they have not been seen against better competition.
- The next step will be a meeting of the regular season coaches, Sunday League coaches, and commissioners. Player's abilities and attitudes will be discussed and each coach will be asked by the commissioners for their list of players that they recommend. When all discussion is complete and before the meeting ends, a final All Star roster will be developed and submitted to the Board.
- The managers or coaches children do not automatically make the All Star team.
- The board has 2 days to approve the list. If they want to make changes, they must consult with the commissioners.
- The commissioners publish the list to the League Website.

All Star Team Playing

- Only the team chosen as the Athens Sandlot All Star team can refer to themselves as that team. Any other outside teams can not refer to themselves as the Athens Sandlot All Star team or wear Athens Sandlot All Star uniforms.
- The All Star teams will all wear uniforms purchased by Athens Sandlot. The team colors will be green and gold.
- Only players that play in the Sandlot regular season are eligible to be on the All Star team.
- All Star teams will submit to the Board a tournament schedule (tournaments they plan to attend) prior to entering. The majority of tournament travel should be to local tournaments. The selection of tournaments should be based on the team's ability to be competitive (i.e. choose the tournaments that best suit your team's ability level).
- Each Athens Sandlot All Star team must host at least one tournament. The Board will assist in scheduling Sandlot tournaments. It will be the commissioner's and coaches' responsibilities to advertise the tournament, prepare the fields, provide concessions (stand and trailer) and parking staffs, cleanup, and generally run the tournament.