

**RALSTON
AREA
BASEBALL
ASSOCIATION**



2020 HANDBOOK

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Hello Parents, players and fans,

Welcome to Ralston Area Baseball Association. 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 along with LaVista Recreational Baseball program, 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 players 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. 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. Field space is reserved on both Ralston and LaVista fields in the fall for recreational and competitive teams. Recreational teams are organized and coaches selected in late February/early March, and practices begin around April 1st. The playing season begins the last Saturday of April, with approximately 300+ players on 30+ teams across seven in-house leagues, playing two to three scheduled games a week until in-house tournaments start mid to late June and end approximately the first week of July. Each year RABA Board of Directors authorize All-Star Tournament Teams to participate in the Iowa/Nebraska recreational tournament. The tournament takes place in Carter Lake, Iowa each year in Mid-July for one week. The VP of Recreational League along with the League Commissioners and coaches will follow a selection process during June for additional play after the regular season/tournament play.

RABA offers Competitive Teams where players earn roster positions through a tryout process during July of the previous year. RABA Competitive Teams compete against other area, in-state, and out-of-state teams at age levels from 9U through 14U. Mandatory practices start in January in various Ralston Public school buildings. Play begins in April for most teams, and continues through July and ending with a state tournament showing.

We are solely volunteer organization! It's staggering to think of the work of registering, finding and selecting coaches and assistants, uniforming, training, and scheduling 300+ players and 40 umpires for well over 500 games and practices. And don't forget running the concession stands, Night at the Storm Chasers, or rounding up league sponsors! A lot goes into the administrative side as well. Having volunteers to receive and respond to emails and addressing concerns along with managing rainouts all while trying to rehab fields to be playable and updating all websites. .

The city of Ralston maintains the outfield for Pierson only. Ralston Public Schools along with RABA and RGSA work and contribute funds and volunteers to assist in the improvement and maintenance of the all softball and baseball fields on Park Drive. Our facilities are the envy of other organizations and are the pride of Ralston Baseball! RABA started in 1961 with providing a quality youth sports program for the young athletes of the Ralston area. 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 we use. In 2019, Crown, Wager and Orval Smith field all received updated fields. Pierson field will be updated in 2020 spring as the season starts. We continue to enjoy the cooperation we have shared with the City of Ralston, Ralston School District, Ralston Girls Softball Association, Legion Baseball 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 over 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!

Respectfully,

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>

2020 RABA Officers and Board Members

(* denotes members of Executive Committee)

Board President *: Aaron Savine

Webmaster: Ed Stark

Secretary *: Racheal Murray

Treasurer *: Mel Hoy

Concessions: Deanna Thompson and Mel Hoy

VP Administration *: Tammi Bray

Director of Field Scheduling: Tammi Bray

Director of Public Relations: Open

Director of Sportsmanship: Jason Nihsen

VP Recreation League *: Tammi Bray

Equipment and Uniform Management: Matt Means

Shetland Commissioner: Open 000-0000

Yearling Commissioner: Sal Christy

Mustang Commissioner: Jayme Wiederin

Bronco Commissioner: Open 000-0000

Pony Commissioner: Open

Rams 16 & 18 Commissioner: Chris Rachow

Chief Umpire: Mike Hempel

VP Competitive Teams *: Aaron Savine

Oversight of Field Maintenance: Scott Bray

Ralston Rams 10U: No teams at this age

Ralston Rams 11U: Marc Fuccio

Ralston Rams 12U: Aaron Savine

Ralston Rams 13U: No teams at this age

Ralston Rams 14U: Sarah Foran/Kirk Broggie

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>

Board meetings:

Board meetings are held quarterly as scheduled by the executive board. If you would like to attend a meeting or call a meeting, please email the secretary for the next scheduled quarterly meeting date or to schedule a meeting.

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 player's program be successful.

The *League Commissioners* are responsible for the organization and operation of one of five leagues. Each league commissioner will determine how many teams can be made from all of the players registered. The commissioner will select the head coach and work with them to assign assistant coaches. The commissioner will attend the draft and manage their league draft meeting. Once the season is started, they make sure all team are following league rules, work with the Vice-President of Recreation League 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 with the director of scheduling, maintain the team's equipment, determine playing positions and batting order, act as positive role model for sportsmanship, and maintain team discipline. The head coach is strongly encouraged to have a team parent to help with communications to the team and any other details that do not directly involve coaching a team.

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 role 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". Assistant coaches will be responsible for coaching a base and for the younger players, coaching in the outfield.

The *Team Parent* is responsible for the "off the field" organization of the team. Duties include scheduling and reminding parents about their concession duty, 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 will also create the the post game drink and snack schedule & reminds each parent before their turn.

Volunteer Information Form

The Volunteer Information Form located at the end of this document may be used to assist you in signing up to volunteer for your player's team. Please return the completed form to the Commissioner of your player's league, or to the Vice-President of Recreation League. 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

The "League Age" of a player is determined to be the player's age in years as of April 30th 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 player's age as of April 30th 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. Exceptions may be granted to consider younger players to move up based on player skills. All requests to move up must have a board member perform a skills assessment to approve the move. This is required for insurance purposes to ensure the safety of our players.

The below information 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 30TH)

Shetland (T-Ball & Soft toss) 4yr-6yr boys and 4yr -7yr girls

Yearling (coach pitch & kid pitch) 7yr – 8yr

Mustang (starts all kid pitch all season) 9yr – 10yr

Bronco 11yr – 12yr

Pony 13yr – 14yr

Our yearling league rules are reviewed annually by a panel of coaches from both RABA and LaVista teams to ensure a collaborative plan for the upcoming season. In an effort to develop skills sooner to create more competitive metro area teams, we have developed a plan that allows kids to build on skills learned at tball in the first month of play. Starting in June, the players will have the ability to start pitching and hitting off of kid pitches. For a more in-depth description, you are encouraged to read the rules for yearling league.

Season Sign-Up Information

Please register on line at www.ralstonbaseball.org and pay by credit card online. Checks are only accepted at live registration on Sunday, February 16th, 2020 at Ralston Middle School cafeteria from 2pm – 4pm.

Regular registration period is January 1st to February 16th, 2020.

Registrations made after February 16, 2020 will be subject to a \$10 Late Fee.

Starting Dates

Practice normally begins around April 1st and as field conditions permit. The playing season begins around the last week of April and ends before July 4th, depending on rainouts and tournament schedules.

League Line-Up

RABA League Rules included below are supplemental to the USSSA Official Baseball National Bylaws and Rules 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 4-6, and girls ages 4-7), 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. Although this is t-ball, the kids may begin receiving soft toss pitches from the coach when the player is ready. Starting in June, all teams are expected to soft toss 3 balls to each batter then using the tee as needed. 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 less informal league which is intended to build on the teachings from the tball league. Players will learn and build on the fundamentals of baseball to beginning players by the simplest method possible. Yearling League starts off as coach pitch in

May and changes to kid pitch in June. We encourage you to review the rules to understand how this works for kids of all ages and skill levels. Our yearling league rules are reviewed annually by a panel of coaches from both RABA and LaVista teams to ensure a collaborative plan for the upcoming season

Mustang League

Mustang League (ages 9 & 10), introduces the young person to the complete game of baseball. This is the first full time “kid pitch” league. Runners **CAN** lead off and are allowed to steal bases and play the complete game of baseball. Field bases are 65 feet apart and the pitching distance is 46 feet.

Bronco League

Bronco League (ages 11 & 12). This league allows players to play the game at it’s full scope. All pitching rules set by USSSA must be followed to ensure player safety. 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 50 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.

Rams 16U

Rams 16U (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 Rams 16U is JULY 31st!***

Rams 18U

Rams 18U (ages 17 & 18), is a competitive baseball opportunity for the older high school player. In addition to being a wholesome summer fun activity, players have the opportunity to continue to play the game they love while preparing for future academics or work. ***The league age cut-off date for the Rams 18U is JULY 31!***

Teams

Player Draft/Selection of Teams

The purpose of drafting players is the answer to a long standing historical complaint that teams are stacked. By allowing all coaches to come together and draft their players, this stops teams from being “stacked”. All coaches must agree to each pick for each team. When all kids are designated to a team, each coach confirms they have reasonable pitching and catching players. Please see “draft rules” on our website to gain additional details of this process.

Requests: Many parents will make requests such as “we want coach xxx, he coached him last year”, “wanting to play with friends”, playing on the same team because “they all go to school together”, or “carpooling”. The requests are considered at the draft but not normally considered substantial justification as this sometimes creates a stacked team.

Selection of All-Star Tournament Teams

Should the Board of Directors authorize an All-Star Tournament Team, the VP of Recreational League will meet with the League Commissioners to select an All-Star Team to participate in a

sanctioned post-season tournament. Post season tournaments begin after July 4th. 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. Coaches will select up to 4 top players from their team and ask each parent if they will be available to participate. Players selected from each team is dependent on how many players selected are available and not out of town.

Concession Stand

RABA has a concession stand at Pierson field. Each year this concession is opened and operated by volunteer parents during the season. The purpose of the stand is to raise funds to help maintain the fields and equipment, as well as 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.

Sponsors & Fund Raising

We are currently in need of a fund raising board volunteer. We have everything one needs to start fund raising except the person! We envision this person will use the predetermined letter along with the predetermined businesses along with a predetermined level of support. The director of fund raising would simply update the forms with the addresses and send out the letters with stamps provided by RABA and then follow up after a few weeks to see if the business was able to support our organization. If you are interested, please contact any board member.

With operating costs increasing every year, sponsorships and program advertising funds are a necessity. Sponsorships are essential to maintain the fields and equipment, as well as 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.

For a thank you of your support, we will thank you kindly by:

- _ Charitable Tax deduction letter with our 501C3 information for your records
- _ Sponsor's banner displayed at league and tournament games
- _ 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 through our website at <http://www.RalstonBaseball.org> or mail the Sponsor Form at the back of this document to the address indicated on the form. Thank you for your anticipated support. Let's make this the best season ever at RABA!

Competitive Team Tryouts

RABA provides the opportunity for players to compete on competitive teams. These teams play an expanded schedule and begin practicing starting in January and the playing season starts in March 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. Competitive Teams operate under the RABA Vice President of Competitive Teams who directly supervises the coaches of each team and reports to the RABA Board of Directors.

Practices are mandatory starting in January. Positions on the team and on the field are earned by skill, outstanding play, commitment to attendance, working hard and a positive attitude. 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, illness or absence.

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 Guidelines & Responsibilities

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. 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.
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.

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/>

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 titles are those of Assistant Coach, Scorekeeper and Team Parent.
- e. Provide a qualified scorekeeper, except in Shetland Leagues, for each scheduled game.
- f. Maintain discipline at all practices and games for the players, parents and spectators of the team under your jurisdiction
- g.. Publish a practice schedule and notify parents of cancelled practices and games.
- h. Ensure parent participation in keeping areas around bleachers and dugouts clean.
- i. Maintain a summary of player participation; i.e., games and innings played, at bats, etc.
- j. Maintain order in the dugout by having at least one and no more than 3 coaches in the dugout at all times.
- k. 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 not at your field 10 minutes before the game starts.
- 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

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

Pierson Concession Stand: In addition to the team support functions listed above, parents of each Mustang, 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 create a schedule for your team players parents to volunteer in the concession stand. The Head Coach should be provided a copy of the parents scheduled to operate the Concession Stand during each home game.

Pierson Press box: In addition to the team support functions listed above, parents of each Mustang, Bronco and Pony League player will be asked to donate their time to the operation of the press box during their player's home games at Pierson Field. The Head Coach and Team Parent are responsible to create a schedule for your team players parents to volunteer in the press box. Duties for press box include operating the score board and managing the music. There is a microphone for those who want to announce batters and call plays. The Head Coach should be provided a copy of the parents scheduled to operate the press box 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.

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 asked to support that activity.

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 any games at any fields sponsored by RABA or LaVista. Violating adults 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.

Parents 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

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. Someday, 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.

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. All coaches are mandated to take a concussion and heat exposure course via CDC website and no coach is allowed to work with our players until the certificate is turned in. This certification is mandated annually.

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 problem cannot be addressed if nobody is aware that one 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. Please be sure to not talk to your player about your feelings. Young players may adopt your opinion and may share it with other players.

Parent's Frequently Asked Questions about RABA

Who can play?

Any boy or girl who will be no younger than age 4 or older than age 14 on April 30th of the season they will play, is eligible to play in RABA.

Do I have to buy any equipment?

Players need a baseball glove, a protective cup (yearling and up leagues), baseball pants as color designated by the head coach, baseball cleats (tennis shoes find for Shetland and non-steal cleats for all leagues with the exception of Pony League, which can use metal cleats). 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. Your registration fees help cover the cost of purchasing this added level of security. Generally speaking, we as parents are each responsible for any costs for healthcare incurred due to injury as a result of your child participating in any RABA program and claims can be made to our policy for review for additional payment.

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. The head coach will determine the best positions for each player. This is decided based on player skill and safety of

the player in that position. Many kids may want to pitch or catch or have an infield position. It is important for parents to help build that skill at home so it can be shown at practice and opportunism are extended at games when acceptable.

How are balanced teams created?

League teams are formed by the leadership of the League Commissioners at a coaches meeting. See “draft rules” for additional information on how teams are created.

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 or noted on the website registration box.

What types of awards are given?

Medals will go to the first and second teams in the blind seed draw bracket tournament at the end of the year. The league does not provide participation trophies; however, parents of individual teams are welcome to provide this type of recognition, if all parents agree.

We need your support!

Ralston Area Baseball Association (RABA) is proud to be entering our 59th year of providing our youth ages 4 – 18, the opportunity to experience quality baseball in a small community atmosphere. We are committed to providing a strong tradition, as well as providing each player education in, and development of, life skills through teamwork, good sportsmanship and work ethic. Your sponsorship is the cornerstone in building a strong foundation of character, sportsmanship, discipline, independence and responsibility – qualities to become successful in life, much as you have been successful in your business.

With the 2020 baseball season fast approaching, your support and sponsorship are an important piece in helping us continue to provide these opportunities to our youth. The funds raised from sponsorships help us cover the cost of uniforms, equipment, field maintenance and various other costs associated with a quality program. Also with your help, we are able to keep the player registration fees reasonable and affordable for our youth.

Below, you will find our sponsorship program package. Each sponsorship option has been tailored to give each sponsor the exposure they would like that fits their company's support of RABA. All sponsors will receive recognition at our opening day ceremonies and throughout the season. RABA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. A copy of our tax-exempt certificate will be forwarded upon receipt of your donation.

If you are interested in sponsoring a team or teams in our Recreational League, please contact us directly for information. You can visit our website at www.ralstonbaseball.org , or email our treasurer at treasurer@ralstonbaseball.org

Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

Ralston Baseball Board Members
Ralston Area Baseball Association

Ralston Area Baseball Association Sponsorship Program

Perfect Game \$1000

Our Wall of Honor Special Recognition at Pierson Field and during our opening day ceremonies, company name listed on our Home Plate banner, advertising banner for 3 years on Pierson Field outfield fence, listing as a supporter and sponsor on our webpage along with a link to your company, and listing on our Facebook page.

Grand Slam \$500

Company name will be engraved on a large brick paver surrounding our Wall of Honor, company name listed on our Home Plate banner, advertising banner for 2-years on Pierson Field outfield fence, listing as a supporter and sponsor on our webpage along with a link to your company, and listing on our Facebook page.

Home Run \$350

Company name will be engraved on a small brick paver surrounding our Wall of Honor, company name listed on our Home Plate banner, advertising banner for 1-year on Pierson Field outfield fence, listing as a supporter and sponsor on our webpage along with a link to your company.

Double Play \$150

Company name will be engraved on a small brick paver surrounding our Wall of Honor and company name listed on our Home Plate banner, listing as a supporter and sponsor on our webpage.

Line-Drive \$75

Company name will be displayed on a small brick paver surrounding our Wall of Honor and company name listed on our Home Plate banner.

**Ralston Area Baseball Association
Sponsorship Program Form**

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Website Address: _____

Contact Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Please select your sponsorship option:

_____ **Perfect Game - \$1000**

_____ **Grand Slam - \$500**

_____ **Home Run - \$350**

_____ **Double Play - \$150**

_____ **Line Drive - \$75**

_____ **Other - \$ _____**

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please make checks payable to: RABA

Mailing Address: RABA

Attn: Fundraising

PO Box 27103

Ralston, NE 68127

You can also contact our league president to take a credit card pledge.

Please Note: For banner inclusion, all sponsor information and logo are due by March 18, 2020 to ensure printing. Listing on website and Facebook page will be completed upon receipt of sponsorship.