



# **Buddy Ball Baseball Program**

**For**

**Mentally and Physically Challenged Youth**

**Ages 5 to 16**

## **Purpose:**

*DYB "Buddy Ball"* is a program for mentally and physically challenged youth to enjoy the full benefits of participation in the game of baseball. It is designed to provide instruction while enjoying participation in an athletic environment. Effort will be made for reasonable accommodations where necessary. It is encouraged that uniforms and other privileges that are provided other DYB age divisions be provided.

## **Playing Field:**

- (A) Baselines shall be 50 feet.
- (B) Recommend minimum distance for the outfield fence to be 150 feet or maximum 160 feet from home plate.
- (C) Field may be grass, dirt or artificial surface. Field surface must be smooth and allow for safe play of wheel chairs, walkers and crutches. Artificial surface is recommended when possible.

## **Coaches:**

- (A) Head Coach shall ensure that each player on the team has an assigned buddy at each game and that each buddy is instructed on his or her responsibility for the player and his/her safety.
- (B) The Assistant Coaches shall verify that each player has a buddy at all times during the game and help with the coordination of playing activities.

## **Parents:**

- (A) A parent or guardian **MUST** be present at practices and games.

## **Players:**

- (A) Teams may not consist of more than 10 players.
- (B) Level of play may be based upon player's age, size or skill level where numbers allow.
- (C) Where numbers do not allow, play may include all ages and skill levels.

## **Buddies:**

- (A) Each player will have a companion or "buddy" assigned to him or her for practices and games. A buddy can be a parent, sibling or volunteer.
- (B) All buddies must be a maximum of sixteen (16) years old by May 1 and completed a Parent Authorization form.
- (C) It is suggested that a firm commitment be made, as it is extremely important to have consistent help on the field both during practices and games.

- (D) Buddies will be positioned behind their assigned player and may not be further than one foot from the player at all times.
- (E) Buddies are encouraged not to play the game for the players, but to assist them in the game. They must not catch a fly or ground ball unless a player is in danger of being struck by a ball.
- (F) If the Buddy catches a fly ball or fields a grounder, the ball is considered dead and the batter is awarded the base and any base runners will advance to the next base.
- (G) A Buddy may only handle a ball when assisting a player in a wheelchair after it touches the wheelchair or the player.
- (H) A Buddy may throw a ball (underhand or rolled) for a player who is unable to do so on his or her own after the player has had contact with the ball or the Buddy has tagged the player.

**Playing Rules:**

- (A) Play will consist of 3 innings or 45 minutes of play.
- (B) No score may be kept during the game.
- (C) No outs will be counted.
- (D) Every player on the roster is in the batting order and shall play defensively.
- (E) The side is retired when the offense has batted through the roster.
- (F) Coaches are encouraged to rotate players through various positions on a fair and regular basis, with safety factors being considered first.
- (G) No bunting is permitted
- (H) No stealing of bases is permitted.
- (I) Players may not pitch. A coach may pitch to batters or the batter may hit off a tee.
- (J) When hitting off the tee, no strikes are counted.
- (K) The bat must make contact with the ball to be a hit. If the bat strikes a tee, the ball is foul.
- (L) There are no walks.
- (M) A Buddy may assist the batter in hitting the ball (help the batter hold the bat and help the batter swing the bat).
- (N) No extra bases are allowed on an overthrow.
- (O) When a ball is hit into the outfield, the base runner can continue running the bases until the ball is thrown into the infield.
- (P) For the purpose of continuity of play, when a player needs to leave the field for any reason, play will continue (without stopping the game) with the position not being filled or a player may come into the game off the bench.
- (Q) A level 1 or 2 safety ball shall be used for play.