

GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

Opening, Using, & Closing WMLL Fields & Batting Cages

Before Practice

- **Field Conditions:** There are several ways to check on the conditions of WMLL fields before a practice - including if the field is unplayable (closed) due to weather:
 - Check the field condition page on WMLL's website ([HERE](#))
 - Sign up for field condition email alerts ([HERE](#))
 - Call WMLL's field condition hotline at 608/274-6556

Opening the Field (first practice of the day on any field or at the batting cage)

- **Field Inspection:** Walk the field & dugouts to make sure that they are safe & hazard-free. Report any items needing attention to your league coordinator or a ground crew member. If safety issues are present, do NOT practice until repairs are made or restrict the practice to safe areas of the field.
- **Tarps:** Remove the tarps from the mound and batter's box, fold them up, put the tarps and pegs (or weights on the Minor Field) on the storage cart and roll the cart to its standard storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field
- **Bases:** Take the bases from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the base plugs and place the bases in the holes. Put the base plugs in the dugout on top of the helmet box.

All Practices

- **Practice Start & End Times:** Practices must start & end within the time period of the reserved practice slot – they cannot begin earlier or go later even if the field appears to be open.
- **Arrival & Departure:** To prevent gatherings & preventable interactions for safety reasons, players & coaches should not arrive at the ballpark more than 15 minutes before the start of the reserved practice time & must leave no more than 15 minutes after its end.
- **Hand Sanitizer:** While WMLL is providing hand sanitizer at each practice location, every coach and player should still bring their own hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for personal use.
- **Player & Team Equipment Storage:** Each coach & player should keep all individual equipment (including water bottles) together and at least six feet away from the individual equipment of others.
- **Mandatory Practice Requirements:** Be careful, use good judgment and adhere to the mandatory practice requirements in affect at the time of the practice. Practice requirements are available on the WMLL website ([HERE](#)) & from league coordinators.
- **Batting Cage Area Practices:** Only whiffle balls, tennis balls, or other soft surface balls are permitted for soft toss. Players are not permitted to enter Ch 15 property for any reason at any time. Coaches & other adults are allowed on Ch 15 property only to retrieve balls.
- **Pitching Machine:** Teams practicing on the Minor Field or in the batting cage may use a pitching machine. Pitching machines & extension cords are stored in the equipment room (formerly Coach's Mailroom) which will be unlocked. To use a pitching machine, a coach must get it from the equipment room before practice & return it after practice.
 - **Batting Cage Power Supply:** Use an extension cord to connect the pitching machine to the outlet on the light post between the batting cage & the parking lot.
 - **Minor Field Power Supply:** Connect the pitching machine directly to the in-ground outlet behind the pitcher's mound (no extension cord is needed). Be sure to turn on the power to the outlet via the switch on the right post supporting the scoreboard before practice & off after practice.
- **Ground Crew Work:** If the ground crew needs to perform work in the area of your practice, please follow the instructions given by Head Groundskeeper Torrie Lindner or any crew member.
- **Cleanup:** After every practice, teams must clean up all trash & belongings from the practice field & the area used for storing player & team equipment

- **Issue Reporting:** If hand sanitizer or restroom supplies need refilling or there are other hygiene issues or safety concerns, please notify your league coordinator immediately.
- **Weather Safety**
 - **Lightning:** If there is visible lightning during practice, coaches must take immediate action to keep everyone safe:
 - Cancel practice in which case everyone must leave the ballpark immediately.
 - Suspended practice for 30 minutes & have everyone take immediate shelter in a dugout, restroom or private vehicle or under the covered portion of the concession stand or picnic porch (NOT under trees!) Be sure to maintain social distancing while doing so. If subsequent lightning is seen, the 30 minute delay must start anew.
 - **Rain:** When rain occurs during practice, coaches have the primary responsibility to evaluate field conditions & determine if practice can continue. Be careful to not cause damage when making evaluations & stay off the infield as soon as you determine it is unplayable. If a ground crew or Board member is present at the field, they can provide assistance & coaches must abide by their decision.
 - **A field is unplayable when:** (1) there are puddles on the infield or it is muddy, (2) water seeps up/into your footprint when you put your full weight down in any areas that appear damp, (3) any area of the infield gives or is slippery or loose under foot when you plant your foot sideways & push off (like you are cutting to move laterally) or (4) other indicators suggest that the field is unsafe or prone to damage. If the infield is unplayable, check the outfield. If it is not soft or muddy, you may practice in the outfield area only. Please refrain from any drills that might damage the outfield grass. **Please error on the side of player safety & caution in determining field conditions.**
 - **When a field is unplayable, please text 608/535-0001 to report that field conditions are unplayable so the weather hotline can be updated & preform the simple tasks identified in the "Closing the Field" section below.**
- **Injury Response**
 - **First-Aid:** If an injury occurs, stay calm & keep the injured person calm (keep others not helping away.) The injured player's parent/guardian, if available, should attend to the injury. All players and coaches should maintain social distancing except for the minimum number of adults with masks necessary to ensure that proper medical attention is provided - knowing your first aid limitations & seeking trained medical assistance as needed.
 - **Contacting EMS, Fire or Police:**
 - **Designate someone at the scene to quickly call 9-1-1** & provide key information, answer questions, relay information (have them stay on the line until the dispatcher hangs up.)
 - **Continue to care for the victim** until professional help arrives.
 - **Appoint someone to go to the street and wait for the first responders**, flagging them down if necessary. This saves valuable time. Remember, every minute counts.
 - **Injury Reporting:** Any injury that causes a player, coach, umpire or spectator to receive medical attention must be reported to WMLL's Safety Officer, President or Executive Director within 48-hours of the incident.

Closing the Field (last practice of the day on any field or if your practice is cut short due to rain or lightning)

- **Bases:** Take the base plugs from the dugout to the base locations. Remove the bases and place the base plugs in the holes. Put the bases in the dugout. *It is important to replace the plugs so the infield can be groomed without plugging/losing the holes.*
- **Tarps:** Cover the mound and batter's box with the correct tarp (with the seam/dirty-side down) so that only the dirt is covered, then secure the tarp & as follows.
 - **Battista & Senior Fields:** Place pegs in every whole of the mound tarp & every other hole of the batter's box tarp.
 - **Minor Field:** Place black weights on the batter's box tarp around its perimeter. The mound tarp is weighted internally and does not need supplemental weights.

Move the cart to its standard storage location - behind the 1B dugout on the Minor & Senior Fields & behind the 3B dugout on the Battista (Major) Field. *Tarps must be put down at the end of the day even if no rain is forecasted. Tarps are designed to hold moisture in the dirt as much as to keep rain out. Pitching mounds & batter's boxes left uncovered overnight quickly become rock hard.*
- **Restrooms & Equipment Room** (formerly Coach's Mailroom): If you are the last scheduled practice of the day at the ballpark or if your practice is cut short due to rain or lightning, please close the ballpark facility.
 - **Restrooms:** Turn off the light & then lock the restroom by turning the lock on the inside knob & closing the door.
 - **Equipment Room** (formerly Coach's Mailroom): Turn off the light & lock the equipment room by pulling down the overhead door, sliding the lock mechanism so that the door cannot be opened (test this) & then locking the padlock thru the mechanism. *The lock will be stored in a mailbox cubby near the door. The light switch is inside the door to the left as you face the door.*