

May 1, 2010

Dear Youth Baseball Players and Parents:

Greetings. For those who don't know me, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mark Mainini. As manager and head coach of the "South Bay Stallions" I am pleased to announce that I am forming an eleven and under team which will be based in Palos Verdes, but open to players from surrounding communities in the South Bay. Players are eligible if they were 11 years old or younger on April 30, 2010.

Baseball has always been an important part of my life. My father played in the Phillies organization for five years and then for the Yankees organization for three years. I learned so much from him, his teammates, and coaches. After youth baseball my high school team won the New York Championship at Yankee Stadium. I played college ball in Florida for a short time. While playing in the Colonial League and the Stan Musial League on the east coast, Joe Torre invited me to Shea Stadium for private workouts with Joe Torre and Rube Walker of the New York Mets. Rube Walker was the pitching coach at the time who coached Nolan Ryan, Tom Seaver, Jerry Koosman, and Phil Niekro. I was recruited as an outfielder / pitcher by the Winter League in Puerto Rico and signed shortly thereafter with the Cleveland Indians organization. When released due to injury, I continued playing competitively until the age of thirty one. Tommy Lasorda asked me to throw pre-game batting practice for his L.A Dodgers when they played at Shea. I have been coaching since 1991; my two sons and my daughter's regular season teams, All Star teams, club teams, ("South Bay Seals", "Pirates", "South Bay Seahawks", and "South Bay Stallions"), 2004 – Assistant coach at Peninsula High School. I have been coaching and teaching baseball professionally in the South Bay as well as out of state for fifteen years. Many of the travel ball players, league players and All Stars on my teams as well as many private students were placed on their high schools Junior Varsity team as freshmen and excelled during their high school career. During the last six years, in addition to teaching baseball I have been working with Don Slaught, a sixteen year Major League player and hitting coach of the 2006 American League Champion Detroit Tigers. He created the only instructional video analysis system licensed by Major League Baseball, (This travel team will be utilizing and benefitting from this video analysis system). I have had the good fortune of working the Chicago White Sox spring training sessions, several MLB All Star Games, NCAA Softball, and Major League Baseball Conventions.

The club team is being formed to give the participating players the opportunity to play at a higher level of competition. It is not our intent to provide a replacement for Little League programs, but rather to supplement them during the off season. Practice will begin in July. The team intends to start playing games in July and the season will end in December and resume next July.

For those of you who are not familiar with youth club baseball, I'll provide a brief introduction. Youth club baseball is not affiliated with Little League or PONY. Rather, it is administered through the United States Specialty Sports

Association¹. Teams are formed by the managers and coaches. Unlike Little League, player eligibility is not geographically limited. Also unlike Little League, children are not automatically permitted to play if they meet geographic and age requirements. Instead, they must accept an invitation to join a team.

Because player selection is not geographically limited and may be based upon competitive tryouts, club teams are generally made up of children who are more skilled and serious baseball players and are often coached by more experienced individuals. As a result, games are generally competitive.

The club team practice will be held locally in the Palos Verdes area, and will be held either twice or three times a week, depending on whether the team is playing games that week. The games are played in weekend tournaments.

The team will play in local South Bay tournaments, Orange County or Riverside County, with games on Saturday and Sunday. Occasionally, the tournaments take place during three day holiday weekends. The games are generally played in well maintained venues and some may be replicas of major league stadiums. .

Because of the travel involved, this club team will play games on either one or two weekends a month. Parents will be required to arrange for transportation of the players to the tournaments.

I am committed to teaching the players proper fundamental baseball with the goal of helping to prepare them to excel at higher levels of competition. This team is not to represent any success that I have with a team or the success of any training facility. Instead, it is the improvement and development of individual players that counts. I want to emphasize how important it is to have fun while working hard playing this incredible game. I do not intend to “go over the top.” I have had fun playing and coaching baseball my entire life. Baseball is a cerebral game where players need to feel relaxed, prepared, and confident when on the field or at the plate.

While attendance at practice is required, I recognize that families go on summer vacations, and that some players participate in other sports. Participation in other sports is not discouraged. I will make an effort to schedule additional practices for those who were unable to make the regular practice due to other sporting events. The team does not expect attendance at practice when families are on their vacations. I ask that families advise us of any concurrent involvement that players have in other sports and hope they understand that there needs to be a commitment to this team. Please be mindful of the fact that we need a certain amount of players to play in tournaments. We will be carrying enough players on the squad so we can participate in tournaments even if some players cannot make it. I will do my best to choose tournaments that do not conflict with your other sports. There is no guarantee that it will always suit everyone’s schedule.

Player families will be required to pay for their uniforms, (approximately \$125.00), and to pay monthly dues to remain on the team. There are a number of costs associated with the maintenance of the team, which include tournament fees paid to the organizing body, insurance, and compensation for my time as the professional head coach along with another coach. The monthly dues will be \$215.

¹ For more information on club baseball, visit www.baseballfirst.com.

per month per player. If the team receives donations, private or corporate sponsorships, we may be able to lower the dues.

It is my hope that eligible young players will consider seeking a position on this team. If your player is interested in trying out for the team or if you have any questions, please call me at (310) 833-3311, 489-4222, or e-mail me at mmainini@sbcglobal.net. Please include your son's birthday in correspondence. Also, please respond as soon as possible as we are hoping to get the ball rolling. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Best regards,

Mark Mainini

“When parents and coaches ask me who can really reach and train their players or teams I recommend Mark Mainini.”

- Don Slaught