



2018 Season Newsletter



Verona Little League, Inc., PO Box 930281, Verona, WI 53593

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Welcome to the 2018 season! Verona Little League (VLL) continues our commitment to kids learning, developing, and —most importantly—having fun playing the game of baseball. Below is some important information on the upcoming season.

Online Registration, League Website, and Online Credit Card Payments

Registration for the 2018 season will open on Feb. 1st and will run until Feb. 28th at 11:59pm. Registrations after Feb. 28th are subject to a \$25 late fee and late registrants are not guaranteed a roster spot. Refunds will be given if the league is unable to place the player on a team. Registration will be done online with the ability to pay by credit card or a check can be mailed to the PO Box address listed above. Please refer to our league's website at veronalittleleague.org for additional information. You can also "Like" the Verona Little League page on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@VeronaLL](#) and [@VLLinfo](#) (weather/field cancellations, delays, and updates).



Parent Informational Meetings

League informational meetings for parents will be held on Wednesday, February 7th at 7pm at Savanna Oaks Middle School and Tuesday, February 13th at 7pm at Badger Ridge Middle School. VLL Board members will provide a general league overview and discuss divisions of play, schedule, player assessments and drafts, player fees and equipment needed. Parents are encouraged to attend one of the meetings and ask any questions about the upcoming season.

Important Registration Information

All families participating in VLL for the 2018 season are asked to purchase five (5) \$10 raffle cards (per family only, not per player). These first 5 raffle tickets are included in your online registration. Families are welcome to re-sell the raffle cards to friends and family or to keep them for their own use. This is one of our biggest fund-raisers with all proceeds going into our field development fund, which helps keep the complex one of the best in the area. Families are also required to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours per player (8 hour max per family) at the complex's concession stand or other league-

approved event. Families can buy out of this volunteer commitment for an extra fee of \$150 per family. Watch for several online volunteer opportunities throughout this season.



Division Structure and Grade Guidelines

In most cases, players will be ready to move up a division after 2 seasons. Some exceptions may apply. Please attend a parent info meeting or contact vllpresident@gmail.com if you wish to discuss.

Rookies Division – *Advanced Kindergarteners, 1st Graders and developing 2nd graders* - An introductory league for beginning players that uses a pitching machine and compressed safety ball. The focus is for kids to have fun and learn the fundamentals of the game. Ten fielders are allowed and players will rotate to different positions in the field and in the batting order. 3rd graders that are new to baseball may also be considered for this division. Kindergartners with advanced skill and/or previous baseball experience may be considered for this league as well based on space available and player ability.

Minors Division – *Advanced 2nd graders, 3rd graders and developing 4th Graders* - Players will experience live pitching (kid pitch) with continued emphasis on fundamentals and learning the game. Coaches will introduce baseball strategies with nine players in the field and limited stealing of bases allowed. Players will continue to play multiple positions and rotate through the batting order. 2nd graders may register to play in this division, but roster spots will be based on space available and player ability.

Majors Division – *Advanced 4th graders, 5th graders and developing 6th Graders* - This division is the highest level of baseball on a Little League regulation field - 60-foot bases and a 46-foot pitching mound. Stealing all bases will be allowed with a strong emphasis on baseball strategy. 6th graders needing more baseball development may remain in this league but are encouraged to play in the Intermediate division.

Intermediate Division – *Advanced 5th, 6th graders and developing 7th Graders* - Intermediate players will play with 70-foot bases and a 50-foot pitching mound. Players will be able to lead off and begin the adjustment to playing on a larger field. 7th graders needing more development will be considered for play in this league but are encouraged to play in the Juniors division. 5th graders may register to play in this division, but roster spots will be based on space available and player ability.

Juniors Division - *Current 7th through 9th Graders* - This division introduces players to a regulation size High School/Major League Baseball field (60-foot, 6-inch mound and 90-foot bases) and uses all the rules of the game. 7th graders with 2 years of experience in Intermediate are ready to play in this division.

2018 Fees

	Division*	Calendar Raffle	
Rookies	\$180+\$50 raffle = \$230	*Reminder: Raffle tickets may be kept or sold to friends/family	
Minors	\$180+\$50 raffle = \$230	Extra Raffle Tickets	\$10 each
Majors	\$180+\$50 raffle = \$230		
Intermediate	\$190+\$50 raffle = \$240	Volunteer Hours Buyout	\$150/family
Juniors	\$190+\$50 raffle = \$240	Late Fee (begins 3/1/17)	\$25

* Only the first two players in a family pay the division fee

You can pay with credit card online at the end of the registration process. Or, send a check payable to "Verona Little League" to Verona Little League, PO Box 930281, Verona, WI 53593. Mailed payments must be postmarked by February 28th to ensure a spot for your player and avoid the late fee.

If parents have questions about which division would be best for their child, please attend one of the parent meetings in February (see dates above) or contact vllpresident@gmail.com.

Registration Day & Assessments ****New Process for 2018 – Please Read****

All players/families should plan to attend Registration day Sunday, March 4th at Country View Elementary School between Noon and 4pm to pick up raffle tickets, sign up for volunteer shifts, try on samples and shop the VLL Merchandise store, purchase new & used equipment, receive additional information on special events and more.

****NEW** All players registering for Rookies and Minors, and players who were not in VLL in 2017 will participate in skills assessments. Returning 2017 VLL players registering for Majors, Intermediate, and Juniors will not need to re-assess this season.** Prior year

assessment data and coach evaluations will be

used to create the draft boards for the Majors, Intermediate, and Juniors divisions.

All Rookies, Minors and new VLL players will receive an email with their assessment time a few days prior to the assessment date. Skill assessments take about 45 minutes and assist VLL in creating the most balanced and competitive teams while allowing players to experience success in the most appropriate division. Parents will not be allowed in the gym for assessments.



Playing Up/Down a Division Level

The intent of the VLL division system is to create a competitive environment where the play will be enhanced on all levels, but with an emphasis on keeping grade level players together and reducing the need to “play up”. VLL encourages players to play within the current grade structures described by our league guidelines. For players wishing to play outside of his or her recommended grade level, placement is not guaranteed in the division for which you register. Exceptions may be made only for players where a gross disparity in that player’s ability hinders the player’s ability to improve or grow his/her playing skills. These limited exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis as determined by the VLL Board.

Opening Day, Spring Clean-up and Season Scheduling

Opening Day Ceremonies will be held on April 21st at 11am with all teams scheduled to play. Our annual spring clean-up scheduled for April 7th, with a rain/makeup date of April 14th to prepare our complex for the 2018 season. Consistent league playing schedules, player



development with more practice time, and the desire to create more open weekends for families will continue for the 2018 season.

Memorial Day and time around the July 4th will continue to be open dates with no league games on the schedule. The end-of-season tournament in all divisions will begin at the end of June and will run into mid-July. A team skills competition, homerun derby and other fun activities will occur at the mid-season event on a weeknight in early June (more info to come). The season schedule will be complete and available before the league drafts in March.

New 2018 USA Baseball Bat Rules

On January 1, 2018, Little League International (and all other organized youth leagues) adopted the new USA Baseball bat standards. ALL bats from 2017 or earlier are no longer legal for play in VLL. All bats must comply with the new USA Baseball standards. Please refer to the [bat section on our webpage](#) for additional details and a list of approved bats for 2018.



2018 Field Improvements & Complex Renovations

The VLL Board spent a considerable amount of time and focus over the past two years assessing the needs of the complex and equipment and how to best prepare for the future. Our goal has been to improve an already great facility and make changes to help decrease the time and resources needed to maintain it. During the offseason, we renovated Frank & Homan field to make it playable for Intermediate games utilizing 70 foot bases and a 50 foot pitching mound. We removed the mound, added a section of field turf, and purchased a portable mound making this field playable for Rookies, Minors, Majors, and Intermediate games. This will greatly improve our scheduling abilities for all divisions within VLL. It also allows us to better host tournaments showcasing our complex, generating outside revenue, and enhance our sponsorship offerings by bringing our community partners additional outside business. You may have also noticed the new fences on Heartland and Frank & Homan and the sod work on the three grass infields. Coming this spring, we will be installing Bleacher Defenders to provide shade and foul ball protection over all of our bleachers. We are upgrading our batting cages to include doorways and concrete slabs along the sides that will accommodate added soft-toss & tee work nets. This means no more mud puddles during warmups! We also plan to install new protective netting around our playground, purchase new field maintenance equipment, and add rubber drainage mats in all batters boxes. These are just a few of our planned improvements. I plan to create a more comprehensive list and will get that added to the webpage. There are lots of exciting things happening here.

Sponsorship and Development Opportunities

VLL is engaged this year in renewed efforts to gain sponsorships. Our league cannot operate without the generous sponsorships of our community and business partners. This includes major field donors such as Heartland Credit Union, 5th Quarter Sports Bar & Grill, and the Lund and Frank families. It also includes the many businesses you see represented on our outfield fences and team sponsors. There are many opportunities to sponsor or donate to VLL - large or small; we have needs in many areas.

If you, your business, or your employer are interested in sponsoring a team, part of a field, a new bat rack or helmet cubby or many other possibilities, please reach out to our VP of Development and Fundraising, Andy DeTienne at VLLVPDevelopment@gmail.com. Don't forget, your donations are tax deductible.

Pave The Path - Buy a Brick

Join friends, neighbors and other community members in our brick courtyard in the donor recognition area of the VLL Complex. There are 3 sizes of bricks available: 12"x12" for \$500, 8"x8" for \$250 and 4"x8" for \$125. Inscriptions can be Family names, Business/Organization names, and Memorial Gifts as just a few examples. If you are interested, please use this [link to the form](#) or visit the website/support tab to learn more. Please contact VLL Treasurer, Gary Nilles at garyn@tds.net or call 608.279.7597 with any additional questions.



Board and League Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are the foundation of our league and it takes as many as we can find to successfully operate each season. Whether people can commit a lot or even just a little time, we would love to have you join us. A full listing of all board positions and duties are on the league's website. We have several committees still looking for help this season. This is a great way to fulfill the league volunteer requirement on your own schedule. Following this season, many of our board members will have fulfilled their term. If you are interested in helping this season, are considering a future position, or have questions about the time and position responsibilities, please contact any current board members or feel free to email vllpresident@gmail.com for additional information.

Final Note

The current VLL Board and I are working hard to continue the great tradition that is Verona Little League. I would like to thank all of the board members and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to seeing all of you at one of the parent meetings in February, on Registration & Assessment day March 4th, or down at the complex for Opening Day April 21st. As the season progresses, or if questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the VLL Board or you can always reach me at vllpresident@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to a great 2018 Season!

Neal Rozga

VLL President

