

Get Ready for Some Baseball!

by: Todd Williams

Down here in Houston, TX baseball registration has already begun. Coaches are getting ready to start organizing their teams and everyone is getting ready for the season to start.

Here are a few suggestions for you as you get ready for your season to start:

- **Get a practice field lined up!** Do it today! The good places usually fill up fast, and you'll be able to have much better practices on a good field with a good backstop. Most schools have decent facilities, some churches do, some local parks do. Find out who schedules the facility and reserve at least one weekday evening and a couple of hours on Saturday for the entire season. Once the season starts, you'll be playing games and won't use the practice field as much, but you'll need it before the games start.
- **Give every player a call!** As soon as you have a roster, give every player a call and introduce yourself to them and at least one parent. Tell them you're excited about having them on your team, and how much you look forward to seeing them at your first team meeting. This is an exciting time for kids, and you can score a lot of brownie points by calling early!
- **Line up assistant coaches.** Get them to commit to helping you for the entire season. If you're lucky, you'll have some dads (or moms) who will be more than happy to help you. If you're really lucky, they'll even have some experience. It'll make your life a lot easier and much less hectic if you can get some good help.
- **Attend any and all coach's meetings** or training that your league provides. The information is valuable, and you'll see who the competition is. You'll also meet some coaches who you'll be able to scrimmage with prior to the start of the season. Start building relationships early. You can learn a lot by watching what others do, and you'll enjoy the camaraderie.
- **Conduct a parent's meeting** to introduce the players to each other, convey your expectations, discuss your philosophies, review your goals, etc. This meeting is a good opportunity to recruit assistant coaches and get other volunteers, as needed, like an assistant to help with the phone calls, rosters, schedules, etc.
- **Meet with your assistant coaches** and begin developing your practice plan. You should have a practice plan for at least your first practice, and possibly your first few practices. As you assess your player's abilities and needs, you'll be able to refine your plan to meet those needs.

The beginning of the season is always an up-beat, exciting and optimistic time. Your expectations and ambitions are high, and everyone is anxious to get going. Your success, in large part, will be determined by your ability to focus this energy by setting the proper tone and expectations for your team. Get started right, and it's easier to stay the course. Remember to lead, not herd. Your player's will catch your vision and work hard for you