



**WITTE** Little League baseball scheduled for Brownsville this summer under the sponsorship of the Kiwanis Club, we did some checking up on the program and would like to devote this space to explaining some of the things we found out. We believe using the space is justified since the Little League are intended to be community undertakings and many Brownsvilleites will be involved or indirectly during the coming season.

**FORD FRICK**, former president of the National League and now commissioner of baseball, has said, "Little League baseball properly conducted is the best thing that has happened to baseball that ever happened to this country." The main objective of that ever happened to the boys and through the boys for the good of the community. True, good ballplayers—the Jimmie and Bob Peppers of the future will come from Little League but that isn't the objective. The objective is to build good citizens and good Americans. Little League don't claim to be a cure-all for delinquency but they undoubtedly help cut down on juvenile delinquency.

**LITTLE LEAGUE** baseball isn't a small-time thing despite the fact that its players are all of the pint-sized variety. (12 years of age or under) It was organized in Williamsport, Pa., in 1939 by Carl E. Hixie who is now president and commissioner of the organization. That first league had three teams. Last season there were 718 leagues made up of 3,333 teams and involving about 60,000 boys. National Little League headquarters is located in Williamsport. It's Little League is same but actually is more a Big League with small players.

**NATURALLY** nine-to-twelve-year-olds can't compete on full-sized fields. Outfield fences must be 40 feet from the pitcher's mound. It is recommended that outfield fences be approximately four feet high. Outfield fences must not be more than 120 feet from home down the foul lines and 150 feet from home as the distance to the center field fence. Obsolete Little League baseball all the way. Teams must be fully uniformed. Teams must comply with players limits, players are bought, sold and traded (through the use of player credits), each team has its adult manager and official statistics are kept up.

**WHO** is eligible to play?—Any boy who will not have reached his twelfth birthday prior to August 31 of the year in which he is participating is eligible. In the case of the Brownsville league now being set up, any boy whose twelfth birthday comes after July 31 can try out for the team. Team tryouts will be scheduled and announced later by the Kiwanis club sports committee which is handling Little League baseball here. To insure that no team is made up of all the Major League, Little League rules say that no team can have more than five twelve-year-olds and must have at least five players age 10 and under at all times.

**PARENTS** may be concerned about the possibility of injury to youngsters in the program. The Little League organization has taken all possible steps to prevent injuries. Rubber-soled cleats are recommended and shoes with metal cleats are prohibited. It is mandatory for all players to wear protective baseball caps or helmets while at bat in batting practice and in regular games and it is recommended that the leagues provide at least one first aid kit at all public sessions and games. Participating in a league is a healthy activity. No one may pitch more than once in a game.

**PLAYERS** are selected through tryouts and each manager gets a fair choice of players to equilibrate the teams and make for closer competition. Playing ability is the chief requisite for selection. Choosing players in this way also helps to break up cliques and neighborhood gangs. Youngsters from all walks of life are eligible to try out and selections are made through a player committee with managers holding a player credit for each boy according to his playing ability alone. Boys who don't make the first team may still play through a system of minor leagues set up. The Kiwanis here plans to set up such a minor league.

**NATURALLY** the Little League program costs money. First year equipment of a eleven-league will cost about \$1,000. Some \$300 of that amount goes toward buying the necessary equipment—uniforms, bats, balls, catcher's equipment, field equipment and protective headgear. Other expenses are incurred with such things as field rental or purchase where center or buying a field is necessary, group accident insurance and maintenance of minor leagues. In subsequent years the cost is less since most of the equipment may be used more than one season.

**SPONSORS** have over most of those expenses. The usual sponsorship fee is \$250 for the first season and proportionately less as the expense decreases. Other income may come from contributions from merchants, bag boys, table sales and other money-raising enterprises. It is also recommended that the bat be placed at home to help offset expense of travel and sleeping accommodations during tournament play. Charging admission is applied to Little League play and that problem also arises from selling their team's uniforms and items they buy advertising space on Little League park fences but the commercial angle is discouraged.

**ALL** in all, it sounds like a good deal for Brownsville and for the kids. It's a community project on legs all got behind the Little League here in Brownsville. Everyone can hold its nose and

Clipped By:



dinoxc  
Tue, Apr 21, 2020