

2014 FALMOUTH T-BALL (Ages 5-6) Q & A



Note: For Age 4 T-ball players, please see other page for age 4 Q & A as they differ slightly.

What age does my child need be to play T-ball? Are there any exceptions?

T-ball is for children baseball ages 5 and 6 years old although beginning in 2014 FLL was required to allow players baseball age 4 to play. Those children who are baseball age 4 will play in a separate T-ball league. Baseball age is defined as the age the child will be by April 30, 2014 and not turn age 7 before April 30, 2014 – with a few exceptions.

1. Girls who turn 7 after December 31, 2013 and before April 30, 2014, can chose to play either AA softball or T-ball. Little League International sets the DOB eligibility dates different for baseball and softball - which is why we allow the girls who fall under this scenario - the option of T-ball or AA softball.
2. Due to a safety concern, there have instances where permission was given to a child who turned age 7 just prior to April 30th, to participate at the T-ball level versus AA baseball or AA softball.

Unfortunately, we cannot allow any children that turn age 5 after April 30, 2014 to participate. No exceptions. All questions regarding player registration can be directed to FLL Player Agent, Renée Daniels at FLLPlayerAgent@gmail.com. For 4 year-old league, see page for those rules.

Do you accept requests for one child to play on the same team as another child or be placed with a specific coach?

T-ball is the only league where requests are permitted. While we try to fulfill all requests, it is a challenge to fill all requests. We aren't able to accommodate every request, due to numbers, but do review each one. We appreciate everyone's flexibility and understanding as teams are formed and again we'll do our best to make sure as many requests are granted as possible.

When will we be notified which team my child is assigned to?

By late March/early April, T-ball teams will be formed and parents will be notified by the T-ball VP. Once teams have been communicated, each coach will be responsible for making contact with their players. Once the season begins, we would encourage all parents to work directly with their child's coach, however, please feel free to contact the T-Ball VP, Kevin Grimes at any time throughout the season.

How many players on each team?

First, we encourage parents to sign up their children as soon as possible. Early registration gives the T-Ball coordinators time to establish teams early in the process and keep teams manageable at 8-10 players per team. The goal is to have more teams with fewer players on each team. We want to give as many children as possible the opportunity to play, but once the season begins, it becomes more difficult to add players. When there are full teams (10 or greater), it can become a safety concern and with too many players per team, there are less opportunities for each child to regularly field a ball at game time.

Will there be co-ed teams? All girls' teams?

In 2010 FLL began offering the option for all girls and all boys teams, in addition to keeping with co-ed teams. These options will be available contingent on the registration numbers to support multiple options. If you want your daughter to play on an all girls team or your son to play on an all boys team, you must sign up for the Mon/Wed day of play. All girls and all boys teams will be formed on Mon/Wed day of play - again contingent on the number of registrations. For Tues/Thurs day of play, all teams will be co-ed. Feedback we've had in the past is split on all girls, all boys, and finally co-ed teams. We do know that no matter what the makeup of the team might have been, their T-ball experience was a positive one. You know your child best and what she/he might be most comfortable with. For many it may not matter either way.

Where are T-ball games played?

All T-ball games are played at Big Legion Field at **the Legion Complex** of fields which is located on Depot Road near the Falmouth Library.

How many games are played and what are the season dates?

A total of 12 games are scheduled for each T-ball team. T-ball season begins on Monday, May 5th or Tuesday, May 6th, depending on which nights you are signed up to play. The season will conclude the week of June 9th, with the final games being played on June 11th or 12th. The T-ball schedule is set up separately than the other leagues. Once the schedule is finalized, it will be communicated to T-ball parents and posted on the FLL website. We expect the schedule to be finalized by mid-April. Based on the dates above, everyone already knows their own child's schedule based on what days you signed up to play (M/W or Tu/Th). The only thing we don't know is which team and what area (right field, center, left field) of Big Legion field.

Does T-ball participate in the opening day event?

Absolutely, T-ball is an important part of Falmouth Little League and the players seem to really enjoy being a part of opening day (Saturday, May 3, 2014, 10 am; Legion Field Complex).

What is the practice or game format?

Players should arrive at the field about 5:30 pm. Coaches should run some practice drills for 30 minutes. Games will begin about 6:00 pm and run for about an hour. Every child gets to hit and then teams switch and the other team bats through their order. All kids get a single advancing 1 base at a time and the last hitter gets to hit the GRAND SLAM! There are no outs. Each game is roughly 2-3 innings – mutually decided by the coaches depending on time (a hard stop at 7:00 pm). We encourage coaches to provide as much instruction as time permits.

Is my child required to hit from the tee or will he/she be given a coach pitch option?

T-ball is an instructional league with no outs. All children develop at different times, whether it is academically, socially or athletically. The tee will be every player's first option and it is strongly recommended T-Ball players hit from the tee for the first few games. At some point in the season, depending on the player's comfort level, each player will be given a second option when batting – a coach-pitch. If they aren't having success with a live pitch after a certain number of pitches (i.e. 5), a coach should bring the tee back and ask them to hit from the tee. Some players may not be ready to hit from a live pitch all season – and that is perfectly fine. Coaches and parents need to support this. If a coach is throwing too many pitches to one player, it can eventually become a safety issue with those playing the outfield where they start to lose focus on the batter.

Equipment: What is provided by the league and what am I required to have my child bring?

Your registration includes a hat and t-shirt for each player. Each child should to wear sneakers or cleats and bring a fielder's mitt to every game. Athletic/sweat pants or baseball pants are recommended. The league will provide balls, a bat and helmets for players to use. If your son/daughter prefers to bring their own helmet, please make sure it is properly labeled. We realize players will want to bring their own bat, however, we strongly discourage due to safety reasons. We prefer player's leave their own bats at home. More bats create a greater safety risk. A water bottle, a light jacket, sunscreen and bug spray is also recommended. Please make sure your child has eaten prior to the game – even a light snack. They do tend to get hungry and having food during the games isn't appropriate.

When will uniforms be available and how can I collect my son/daughter's?

Each T-ball player is given a hat and t-shirt and are expected to wear this to every game. Once the teams have been formed, your coach will make contact with you to make arrangements on how he/she will distribute each player's hat and shirt. They will be given out prior to Opening Day ceremonies as they should be worn at the event to show team unity.

What is the process for cancellation notifications due to inclement weather, etc.?

Each team should set up their own process for communicating any cancellations during the season. You can always access the town website at www.town.falmouth.me.us to give you immediate field conditions information. Please DO NOT call the town office. The league VP will notify teams once information is available. In general, if the fields are deemed not playable, information is posted on the website by 4:00 pm. There are situations where conditions change after 4:00 pm and coaches will need to decide if a game will be played.

If we do have a cancellation, will we be required to make up those games?

This can vary from season to season depending on the number of cancellations. If, for example, the start of the season gets delayed, it is unlikely that fields will be available toward the end of the season for makeup games. The league VP will communicate as necessary on field availability should there be cancellations throughout season.

Is it true T-ball players get to participate in the Falmouth Memorial Day Parade?

Yes, in the past T-ball was the only group from FLL invited to march in the Memorial Day Parade (Monday, May 26th), however last year it was expanded to all teams. More details will be made available to coaches and teams as we get closer to that date. Participation is optional for the parade but this has been a big hit for those children that did participate in previous years.

My son/daughter's games are on Mon/Wed. With the Memorial Day holiday on a Monday, will they still play their game?

For those signed up to play on Mon/Wed, you will be scheduled to play on the Memorial Day holiday. We leave it to each team to decide if they have enough players to field a team and want to play. Coaches from all teams should poll their teams at the beginning of the season.

Is there an end of season award, gift, etc., given to each player?

Not at this time. Also, Falmouth Little League does not reimburse teams for trophies or awards.

I am interested in coaching my daughter/son's team. What are my responsibilities as a coach and how much of a time commitment is it?

T-Ball tends to be one of the first team sports for most children, and there is a high level of adult support and enthusiasm. T-Ball has proven to be a natural transition into standard baseball and softball. We hope every parent will consider coaching, whether it is a head coach or an assistant. You don't have to have played baseball/softball to coach T-ball.

Key elements to coaching are organization, dedication, teambuilding and role-model.

ORGANIZATION: Communication is a key element. As a coach, your role is to support the overall purpose of the league, while managing your team and its players. You are responsible for communicating to your players and ensure that your team takes proper care of equipment, uniforms, and our playing fields. When questions or problems arrive, be sure to discuss them with the appropriate people as soon as possible.

DEDICATION: You are expected to take an active interest in the game of baseball/softball. Increase your knowledge by reading the rule book, periodicals, and books from the library. *Focus on the fundamentals.*

Understand that each of your players comes to you with his own set of abilities and potential. *Motivate* each player to give 100%; to be his/her best. *Pride* yourself in seeing players *grow* and *develop*.

Allow the kids to have **fun!** We are here to provide opportunities to kids, not make professional athletes out of them.

TEAM BUILDING: Your challenge is to *get your players to work together*. Recognize that the team is more than a group of individuals; that each player is dependent upon the others. Never criticize a player in public for poor play or making an error. A *positive private, discussion* can transmit good information, reduce the sense of personal loss, and foster the improvement sought. Remember, kids will respond more to encouragement than to demeaning remarks.

ROLE-MODEL: When personnel issues arise, assess the situations quickly, calmly and carefully. Let players know *what is expected* of them and *how they are doing*. Offer to *help them improve*.

If you are concerned only about winning, you will, no doubt, *humiliate* those players with less than average talent. Conversely, if you are concerned only about feelings, you will deprive those players who want to grow, learn and excel. **Balance your desire to win with a sincere concern for the feelings of your players.** To the kids, you are in a *power position*. **Be respectful toward players, coaches, umpires and fans.** Promote pride in the program.

Anyone interested in coaching must register through the Coaches Icon (this is separate from the player registration icon) at www.falmouthlittleleague.net. For any questions regarding coaching, please contact FLL's coaching coordinator, Peter McCluskey at pmclusk@maine.rr.com.

For those interested in coaching, and have not participated in the NYSCA certification clinic in the past, you will be required to participate in a coaching certification program. Additional information will be sent to you by the coaching coordinator, once you have registered as a coach on the FLL website.

TEAM MOTTOS

1. **BE SAFE**
2. **HAVE FUN**
3. **DO YOUR BEST**
4. **BE A GOOD SPORT & TEAMMATE**

www.falmouthlittleleague.net

Please contact Falmouth Little League VP with any questions:

Kevin Grimes
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