



AROUND THE HORN

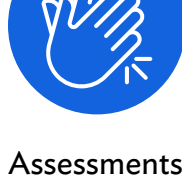
Little Mountain Baseball's Community Newsletter

MARCH 2024 EDITION

GETTING READY FOR SEASON OPENING!

The League has been very busy this past month with all the preparations for season opening. Assessments for Majors A, Majors B, Minors and Mini Minor A are complete, drafting of Majors A and B teams are complete, Minors draft will be completed by March 8th, and all other divisions will be rostered by March 30th. We also launched our 2024 Sponsorship Package and secured our field permits for Challenger, Main Diamond, Oak Park North, Columbia Park NE, Kensington Park NNW and Braemar Park.

LMB is a volunteer-run organization that takes MANY hands to run successfully. Many members have already donated hours of their time this year to prepare for the launch of the season. In this edition of Around the Horn we wanted to acknowledge their efforts and get to know a couple of them a bit better. We hope that you are inspired by the efforts of your fellow community members to get involved during this season — there is so much you can do. Please reach out to **Audrey White** at opsmanager@littlemountain.com



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

A very BIG THANK YOU to all the volunteers who helped with the player assessments in February.

Assessments were held over two weekends and took four full days. A special shout out to Audrey White, LMB's Operations Manager who organized and attended all the assessments where she corralled the kids, fed and watered our volunteer assessors — and so much more. They were all so busy there was no time to take a picture!

Thank you to the following coaches and alumni players: Dave Banns, Steve Black, Connor Dong, Brad Dorwat, Phil English, Ari Froelich, John Hibbard, Kelly Ireland, Lee Iverson, Brent Jackson, Derek Jones, Damon King, Sebastian Kondratowski, Des Kwan, Arthur Lee, Grant Matsuda, Eli McLaughlin, AJ Mezzaroba, Bruce Mitchell, Rob Mah Ming, Steve Nantel, Chris Ross, Levi Schmitz, Chris Sharples, Kevin Smith, Gary Tsang, Mike Ventresca, Lee Waddell, Doug Weibel and Llory Yip.

UPCOMING KEY DATES

SEASON OPENING & GAMES BEGIN

April 13-14 weekend.

GEAR SWAP DAY

Saturday, April 13 (more details to follow).

OPENING DAY CEREMONY & TEAM PICTURE DAY

Saturday, April 20

LMB TOURNAMENT DATES:

Majors A – Ross Dower Tournament April 3-7

Majors B – Howard Matsumoto Tournament April 10-14

Minors – Chris Havard Tournament May 15-20 (May long weekend)

A reminder that all teams are expected to participate in their division's tournaments, and families are expected to volunteer. More information on volunteer roles and schedules will follow from your Division Coordinator.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Lee Iverson

LMB's Player Agent

Lee Iverson has been a member of LMB since 2009, when his two boys began playing with LMB. Before becoming LMB's Player Agent in 2019, Lee volunteered as a Divisional Coordinator and coached several teams. Lee continues to coach in our Majors B division even after his youngest son, Thomas' last year of Little League. The apple doesn't fall far in this family. This year Thomas will join Lee to help coach in Majors B.

We asked Lee some questions to get to know him and better understand the role of the Player Agent.

Q: So Lee, what exactly is the role of the Player Agent?

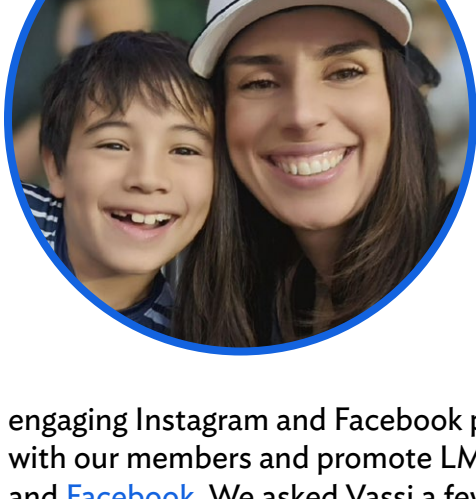
Lee: The Player Agent role has specific responsibilities outlined by Little League, like verifying eligibility of players and overseeing the assessment and drafting process, but what is more meaningful for me is being an advocate for players and families to ensure they have a positive experience. At this time of year when teams are being formed, my focus is on creating equitable team compositions and ensuring players are playing in the right division for their skill level. During the season, I am here for any player when the player/family needs help voicing their concerns to a team official or League.

Q: What do you think makes for a positive experience for players and families?

Lee: When players are being treated fairly and respectfully, and families come together through volunteer efforts. LMB puts a lot of effort into providing a fun and inclusive experience for all families, no matter the skill level or motivation of each player. This means providing a house season where all players have opportunities to develop, competitive post-season opportunities for those players looking for more competition, training programs for players and coaches, and targeted programs like Girls in Baseball and the Challenger Program. All of this could not happen without our community volunteers.

Q: Can you share one of your most memorable positive experiences at LMB?

Lee: There are many, but one of them has to be when my son Thomas played on the 9-10 All Star team and won the provincial championship in Victoria. He was the only 9-year-old on the team, and had to pitch in the must-win game, it was a stretch moment for him where he struggled but persevered. A proud Dad moment for the books.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Vassi Balatico

LMB's Sponsorship & Social Media Coordinator

Vassi joined LMB in 2019 when her son Kai started Blastball. Vassi is a member of the LMB Board and has taken on two volunteer roles! Vassi is our League's Sponsorship Coordinator and Social Media Coordinator. She recently launched LMB's 2024 Sponsorship Package, which includes opportunities to sponsor LMB at the team, division, and league levels. Please help get the word out and send along our sponsorship package to any businesses that could be interested in sponsoring LMB. You can find the package [here](#).

Vassi has also been busy revising our social media presence through engaging Instagram and Facebook posts. This year, LMB will be using our socials to regularly communicate with our members and promote LMB. So, if you want to be kept in the loop, please follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). We asked Vassi a few questions to get to know her a bit better and learn how we can support her in her volunteer roles.

Q: Hi Vassi, you've been working hard behind the scenes to prepare for our 2024 season. Can you tell us a little more about the 2024 Sponsorship Package that you just released?

Vassi: This year's package includes opportunities to sponsor at the team, division, and league level from as low as \$250. We LOVE to support and receive support from local businesses and organizations in our community. There is so much generosity and in-kind services that are provided behind the scenes, and sponsorship is a fantastic way for LMB to give public recognition and strengthen the community.

Q: Is there anything you want LMB families to know about sponsorship for LMB?

Vassi: We rely on sponsors to fund the maintenance of our fields, purchase new equipment, and create new programs. This year's target is to raise \$25,000 through sponsorships. I do my best to directly reach out to businesses immediately surrounding our fields and would love help to expand our reach to our entire catchment. As the largest little league in Canada, our catchment spans from Marine Drive to Coal Harbour, and roughly Burrard to Fraser St. It's also important to know that individuals can sponsor on behalf of an organization. If you're a part of a local club or you want to support your favourite coffee shop, we welcome individuals to sponsor on their behalf.

Q: What about Social Media? How can we support your role as Social Media Coordinator?

Vassi: The easiest way to help is to follow, share, like, and tag LMB on our Instagram & Facebook accounts. This year you can expect our social media accounts to be VERY active, and we encourage everyone to contribute to our feed. Also, it is important to note that an active social media presence helps to support our sponsorship goals by promoting our sponsors and making connections within the LMB community.

Q: How about a personal question to get to know you better. Did you play baseball as a kid?

Vassi: I did. I played little league from the time I was 5-12 years old. Catcher and 3rd base were my favourite positions. I look back so fondly on my little league years, and following our first season in Selects summer ball last year, I grew a strong appreciation for the level of work that goes on behind the scenes to make LMB run. It brings me immense joy to be able to help create new memories for my son and the 800+ families within the league.

Q: Ok, last question. What is one of your favourite LMB memories?

Vassi: I have two so far: Kai's first game of Blastball where he could barely keep his hat on, and a final moment during a winning game this past summer. Our summer crew was simply outstanding to be a part of. I am looking forward to creating more memories this year!



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Opening Day Ceremony Coordinator Needed

We are in immediate need of an Opening Day Ceremony Coordinator to work with the Operations Manager to coordinate and plan this Opening Day Event. The Coordinator will help to schedule a group of volunteers that have put up their hands to participate in Opening Day responsibilities. The Opening Day Ceremony is guaranteed to be a fun event for the whole community. Please contact **Audrey White** at opsmanager@littlemountainbaseball.com

Paid Concession Stand Shifts Available

Call out to any LMB alumni who want to work at our concession stand. Pay rate is \$17/hr, and shifts are at least 4 hrs long. Workers must be at least 15 yrs old, and commit to at least one shift per week, ideally two. Please send resumes to **Audrey** at opsmanager@littlemountainbaseball.com.

Calling all 12s — Be a League Leader!

Every year we celebrate our 12-year-old players. This is their last year at LMB, and we want to offer opportunities for them to be leaders and give back to the community. Little league is about more than baseball, at Little Mountain we believe in community and showing up with action. We would love to see you more at the fields or behind the scenes. Let us know what your passion is, whether it's scorekeeper, helping pitchers/catchers, announcing games, groundskeeping, sorting equipment, DJ'ing games, help with a practice etc. Let us know and we will work with you to get you doing something outside of your team. Please contact Audrey at opsmanager@littlemountainbaseball.com.

SPONSORSHIP

Want to sponsor LMB? LMB relies on our communitysponsors to support the operation of the league, upkeep our facilities and support the developmentof our players. Please find our 2024 Sponsorship Package [here](#). If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested, please contact **Vassi Balatico, LMB Sponsorship Coordinator**, sponsorship@littlemountainbaseball.com. **Vassi Balatico, LMB Sponsorship Coordinator**, sponsorship@littlemountainbaseball.com.



A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF OUR LMB FAN WEAR STORE

Thank you to all the families that placed orders through our new Fan Wear store. We had approximately 50 orders that raised over \$500 for LMB. A special shout out to Brent Jackson, LMB's Merchandise Coordinator for organizing! We are planning another opening of the store during the season – more details to come. In the meantime, we will be selling some vintage LMB apparel during the Chris Dower and Howard Matsumoto tournaments in April.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A reminder to all families that the following organizations can assist with registration costs for organized sports.

Athletics for Kids (A4K)

As a privately funded charity, Athletics for Kids is able to disperse funds into the hands of those who need it most, quickly and effectively. They help families with children ages 5 to 18 who are currently enrolled in school and basic registration fees are paid for a multitude of approved sports, including baseball, up to an annual maximum.

[A4K Apply Here!](#)

KidSport Vancouver

With their partnership with LMB, KidSport will manage applications to ensure families can have access to sports such as baseball. KidSport offers grants for kids who live in Vancouver.

[KidSport Apply Here!](#)

Canadian Tire Jump Start

Jumpstart is a National Charity with a commitment to local communities. Canadian Tire Corporation is Jumpstart's biggest supporter as it funds all the general administrative expenses of Jumpstart, which means 100% of customer donations go directly to help kids in need and they make sure that money raised stays where it is donated.

[Jump Start Apply Here!](#)

Thanks for reading to the end of the newsletter! If you have any feedback or suggestions on the content of this newsletter we would love to hear them.

Sophia Lee, LMB Communications Coordinator @ communications@littlemountainbaseball.com .

A very special thank you to Lisa Thé for volunteering her graphic design services for the LMB Newsletter.

