

Atascadero Little League
2018Spring Player Evaluation Survival Guide

The purpose of this short guide is to prepare you and your child for the A.L.L Player Evaluation (PE) session and help put them at ease if they've never been through the PE process before.

What to bring

Each player should bring their fielder's mitt, *not* a catcher's mitt or first baseman's mitt! Bats are optional, and will be provided if a player doesn't bring their own. If a player has his own batting helmet they can bring that, too, otherwise one will be provided (most players do not have their own helmets). All equipment should be labeled with player's name and phone number.

What to wear

Dress the same as you would for an baseball practice: cleats if you have them, tee shirt or sweatshirt, baseball pants or sweatpants. Leave the jewelry behind.

How it works

The players will be evaluated in five baseball skills. Formal evaluations are conducted by a group of A.L.L volunteers, who will rate each player in each skill on a 1-to-10 scale. These ratings, along with coaches' opinion, are used to help determine the proper league placement for each player. Each coach may also conduct his own informal evaluation of each player. In draft leagues (Majors and above), the coach will determine how much weight to give his own evaluation vs. the league evaluation to decide which players he selects for his team. Each coach is given a copy of the league's evaluation of each player, so if a coach is unable to attend a PE or misses certain players for whatever reason, he can refer to the league evaluation.

The players are rotated through three skill stations. In the 8-10 age groups, multiple stations will be in operation simultaneously to "keep things moving", so coaches will not necessarily see each player in each skill station. In the 11-12 age groups, the coaches will be able to evaluate each player at each station. Regardless, the League evaluators will see each player at each station.

The skill stations are: (3 primary skill stations are finalized; other details subject to refinement prior to PE dates)

Batting - Each player is given five swings in the batting cage against soft toss pitching. They are evaluated based on how well they swing the bat and their technique (swing mechanics), how well they hit the ball (contact), and how hard / how far they hit the ball (power). They are assigned one overall rating for batting.

Pitching - Each player is given three pitches from a pitcher's mound. They are evaluated on how hard they throw (velocity), and how accurately they hit the strike zone (control), and assigned ratings for each. In addition, most coaches will evaluate them on their form and technique (pitching mechanics), though they will not receive a formal rating for each.

Fielding - Each player will be thrown three ground balls and three pop flies. While the player's success in catching the ball is factored in, the evaluators are mainly looking at the player's form, technique, and footwork (fielding mechanics) to come up with a ground ball rating and a fly ball rating. They are also assigned a throwing rating, which includes their throwing accuracy, throwing mechanics, and release (how quickly they get in position to throw and get rid of the ball after fielding it). The throwing rating and pitching rating are distinct, which allows us to differentiate between a player who doesn't throw well and one who does throw well but has either not learned how to pitch or lacks pitching experience.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Under no circumstances will any A.L.L board member, evaluator, or coach reveal the ratings or ranking of any individual player.

How to make a good impression on the coaches

- If at all possible, make it to your assigned PE time. The coaches have set aside a good chunk of their Saturday(s) to watch *your* child. If your child is League Age 9 but the only PE time you can make is for players of League Age 11, your child will still receive a formal league evaluation but chances are the coaches at your child's level will not be there to evaluate him. If your child is, say, on the borderline between A and AA, it may hurt his chances of being selected by a AA team.

- If at all possible, show up at the time designated for your place in the alphabet. We understand conflicts happen, but if your last name starts with "B" and you show up in time to try out with the "A through L" group, coaches may wonder whether your child will be on time for practice. Coaches love players who arrive on time!

- Follow the directions of the volunteer running the drill station. Coaches also love players who listen and follow directions!
- Have your child come prepared and dressed appropriately. Nothing screams, "Rookie!" like showing up to a PE in jeans and a flannel shirt, or going through the fielding station with a catcher's mitt!
- Practice, practice, practice! Most players put the bat and mitt away after the Fall season ended and won't take it out again until PE's. Mistake! Get out there the weekend before and take some light batting practice and throw the ball around, no matter how cold it is. Or at least visit a batting cage. Shake the rust off so when PE's come the coaches will see "the real you".
- Most importantly, HAVE FUN! Let the coaches see what a great kid you are and how much you love the game. SMILE! RUN to and from your position at the fielding station. If you make a mistake, shake it off, grit your teeth, and give it another try. Make it clear you love the game and you're ready to learn. Most coaches would rather have a player with average skills and a great attitude than a player with very good skills and a poor attitude.