



FAQs about Growing Baseball in Lake Oswego

August 2024

Q: What is happening with baseball in Lake Oswego?

A: Lake Oswego Little League, Pacer Youth Baseball (including JBO, Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth) and Lake Oswego JBO are forging closer relationships with two goals

1. Create more opportunities for kids to play baseball at various levels
2. Foster a strong community of baseball players, fans and families.

Q: Are LOLL, PYB, and LOJBO organizations merging?

A: Yes and No. LOJBO and Lakeridge JBO will be merging into a single organization that governs the 7th and 8th grade divisions.

No related to LOLL and Pacer Youth. Those youth organizations are forging closer relationships to ensure kids can access a range of baseball options. Some programs will overlap, while other options will remain the same. By forging better relationships, we strengthen baseball in the community overall, ensure kids with competitive aspirations have options and alternatives to clubs, offer community-based baseball, and realize efficiencies in operations.

Q: What efficiencies are you looking to gain?

A: We will have better access to field reservations. Combining orders will give us more buying power on uniforms and equipment such as balls, tees. We can create more training opportunities for coaches who want to hone their craft. We can invest more training into the pool of umpires.

Q: Where should kids sign up for Fall Ball?

LOLL will offer fall ball for kids entering 2-6th grade in the 2024/2025 school year. Generally, kids should sign up for the league they will enter in Spring 2025.

Guidelines

Rising 2nd graders – Pacific League (AA) Sandlot style

Rising 3rd graders – Pacific League if new to baseball. National League if have played previously



Rising 4th graders – National League. Consider the American League if you have a more advanced skill level.

Rising 5th graders – American League. Consider the National League if you are new to baseball.

Rising 6th graders – American League. Consider the National League if you are new to baseball.

Pacer Youth Baseball will offer competitive fall ball for kids entering 5-8th grade in the 2024/2025 school year.

Rising 5th Graders – Cal Ripken Majors (70' bases, 50' pitching)

Rising 6th graders – Cal Ripken Majors (70' bases, 50' pitching)

Rising 7th graders – JBO (90' bases, 60'6" pitching)

Rising 8th graders – JBO

Pacer Youth Baseball will also offer non-competitive, recreational, fall ball for kids entering 1st-6th grade who want to play, but need more development in a non-competitive environment (one per week for 60-90 minutes).

Q: Why are you doing this now?

A: This is a recognition that by combining energy, we can offer kids various levels of community baseball and there is synergy among the leadership of the organizations.

Q: My kid goes to LOJH and does not want to wear Pacer Blue | My kid goes to Lakeridge Middle School and doesn't want to wear Laker Navy.

A: We are offering baseball options. By making the pool bigger, we can have more teams playing baseball. Within Little League's District 4, we compete against leagues with twice as many kids. They pull kids from multiple schools. By combining our energy, we can offer more baseball and more competitive teams.

Q: Why not just merge all organizations together?

A: Lake Oswego Junior Baseball and Pacer Junior Baseball (a division under Pacer Youth Baseball) will combine into one chartered group. LOLL and Pacer Youth will maintain their unique identities and attributes, and staying separate allows for choice and options. Additionally, these are three separate 501.3c's and merging budgets, boards, insurance and reserves would take additional planning and organization to complete.



Q: What are the differences between the different leagues? How am I supposed to decide where is best for my kid?

A: There are differences between Little League and Cal Ripken. The governing organizations each work to ensure player safety, and each approaches growth differently.

Key differences: Little League's pitching mound is 46' and bases are 60'. LL does not allow leadoffs. Balks are not called. Instead, LL calls an illegal pitch as there is no lead-off. AAA has run mercy rules.

Rules at the 3rd/4th grade level in Cal Ripken are the same as Little League. However, at the 5th/6th grade level, Cal Ripken pitches from 50' and bases are 70'. Leadoffs are allowed and balks are called. Cal Ripken Spring rec ball has a 5 run/inning limit and mercy rules. Summer Cal Ripken tournaments do not have a run-per-inning limit but do have mercy rules after the 3rd inning.

There are pros and cons to each model. You need to choose what you think is right for your kid at their stage of their baseball development.

Q: Is this a reaction to declining enrollment for both organizations?

Enrollment patterns changed during COVID because private clubs had different rules than nonprofits. Club has also grown in popularity for the perception it is "where competitors go." In Little League, district-wide, the kids who were locked out by Covid and are 11 and 12 now haven't come back in the same numbers. However, there is definite growth in the younger age brackets. By combining the energy of our LOLL and PYB organizations, we give kids and families options, including the option of fielding highly competitive teams.

In conversations with our respective communities, there is enthusiasm for this synergy. While the club has its place, it's not community-based and is cost-prohibitive for many families. LOLL and PYB are focused on providing a range of options.

Q: Will you merge your boards?

A: Not at this time. Like Oswego Little League will maintain its board. Pacer Youth Baseball will also maintain its board. LO JBO is winding down its operations and those kids will find a home on the newly formed and branded JBO and Babe Ruth teams. Members of our board will continue to collaborate, find synergy, and offer more baseball to more kids in LO.

Q: What will happen with LOJBO?



In the past, LOJBO fielded an average of two teams, and Lakeridge JBO also typically fields two to three teams. By combining these organizations, which already play for the same league with the same rules, we will bring those organizations together under one umbrella. We are hoping to field teams across all three levels of JBO, including Federal, National, and American leagues. We hope to offer traditional Little League participants a clear path to the next level by forging a better relationship.

Q: Where is Lake Oswego JBO going?

A: The kids who played Lake Oswego JBO should register via the [Pacer Youth Baseball site](#) as the Lake Oswego JBO organizers will be winding down their operations. Running a league is a large undertaking. The key volunteers of LO JBO's kids have aged out of JBO and while they continue to love baseball, they have other life commitments now.

Q: If I coached Pacer Youth Baseball can I sign up to coach for LOLL and vice versa?

A: Yes.

Q: Why is this happening now?

A: Leaders of all three of the organizations have been having conversations and have shared goals to

1. Grow baseball in Lake Oswego
2. Foster the growth of the baseball community.

Q: If my kid played LOLL in the past, could he play Pacer ball now?

A: Kids in Lake Oswego have always had the option to play for either organization. The boundaries of each organization include the whole city of LO. Little League includes Dunthrope. LOLL will offer programs for kids in grades K-6. Pacer Youth Baseball will offer programs for kids in grades 4-8th.

Q: Are you changing the name of either organization?

A: We have a long-term goal to rebrand but are not tackling that at this moment. In the very short term, our goal is to get Fall Ball up and running. For Spring 2025, we will offer a range of competitive offerings for kids in Lake Oswego. Branding will be tackled down the road.

Q: Is this Lake Oswego Little League / Pacer Youth Ball response to club ball?

A: Club ball has grown. Every family will make the decision they need to based on their individual kids. Club ball is cost-prohibitive for some families with competitive aspirations.



If we can field teams from across the entire city, we believe we can make an attractive offering for kids who want to play competitively.

Q: What will this do to fees?

Our goal is to avoid massive fee increases. Fees have gone up for both organizations as everything has gotten more expensive, from the balls we purchased for the leagues to the uniforms to the field reservations. By channeling our resources together, we aim to gain efficiencies through bulk ordering and a more favorable tier field of reservations.