Why should a young baseball player go to summer camp?

Now that's a great question. The reasons are many. Along with that question, I am always asked why ballfields aren't filled with young players in the summertime as they were in days gone by.

Today's young players play many games but practice very little. In this scenario, they can be nervous and unprepared. Often, the only baseball they play is during those games. In between, there is no drill work, repetitions or batting practice. Often the bright lights of game time make players, coaches and parents rather uptight.

Kids that like baseball nowadays aren't really any different than they were years ago. They would play the game all day long if they could. Their parents, however, would never let them go and stay at the park all day long. That is definitely not possible nowadays.

That's where summer camp comes in. It's design is to put kids in charge (within reason) and let them play baseball in a fun, safe, closely supervised setting.

Camp is held Monday thru Friday from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM for players ages 5-15. Players 7 and younger attend the special half-day program from 8:30 to 11:30 AM.

Each day begins with a group stretch followed by Coach Niles and his morning lecture. The Rookies (half-day) are the first to break out and start playing baseball. The day's plans are put in place along with the morning matchups. Friends get to play with friends. After morning drill work, game time is 10:00 AM.

All games are coach pitch, which ensures plenty of action. Better players can be challenged and strikeouts are few and far between. All games are 90 minutes long. We do keep score and standings are announced throughout the week. The batting order picks up where it left off in the previous game. A camp champion is crowned each week.

The levels of play are broken out by age, size and experience. Generally all half day (Rookies) kids play together. 8 and 9 year olds play in Double A, 10 to 12's play in Triple A and 13 and older play on the Big Diamond.

Lunch is at 11:30 each day. Kids can bring their own lunch or purchase one at the lunch concession.

Specific after lunch activities include The Rules of Baseball, Instant Cash Trivia, Coaches Batting Practice (with a champ chosen by the campers) and Box Score Madness.

Again, the design is to be safe, have fun, play lots of games, take chances, play with friends, do fun and challenging drill work and forget about the real world. It'll be there when baseball is over. In my opinion, this is the best way to develop players. Every type of situation comes up sooner or later. As soon as you think you've seen it all, wait another day.

I hope to see you at camp!  
  
Yours in baseball,   
Coach Niles