

## EXPECTATIONS OF CHALLENGER BUDDIES

### **BE THERE**

Your presence is VERY important! Your buddy will need you and your team will need you. Please do everything possible to attend all games and practices.

### **BE ON TIME**

Plan to arrive 15 minutes before game time. Most games last 60-75 minutes.

### **KNOW YOUR PLAYER**

Attend the buddy training. Read the information shared by the family on the registration form. Talk with family members. Talk with the coaches. Talk with your player—find out what he or she likes, what elicits a smile, what he or she can do if encouraged and supported, and what cues indicate you should back off.

### **PROTECT YOUR PLAYER**

Your role as a buddy involves being a friend, cheerleader, coach, and helper, but, above all, you must be a protector. **Be alert at all times** to the location of the ball and the baserunners so you can do what is necessary to ensure the safety of your athlete.

### **BRING A GLOVE**

Be sure to bring a glove to all practices and games. You will sometimes need to protect your player by deflecting balls that are hit toward the two of you. Your safety is important, too! Let your coaches know if you need to borrow a glove.

### **ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT AND INDEPENDENCE**

Remember...it is THEIR game! Do everything possible to encourage your athlete to be involved at his or her level of ability. Focus on what your player is able to do and recognize all positive efforts.

### **SHARE YOUR CONCERNS**

Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Talk with the coaches if you have concerns or problems.

### **MODEL AN ATTITUDE OF RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE FOR EACH PLAYER**

Encourage and support the development of friendships among players. Some will know each other, but for others, everyone and everything will be new. Let the coaches know if you observe teasing or comments that may cause hurt feelings.

### **BE OPEN**

Sometimes the coaches or other adults will make suggestions on how you can be more helpful to your player. Don't take this as criticism. We are all working and learning together.

### **BE CONFIDENT**

Some of the athletes express themselves easily, but for many this is very difficult. It may be hard sometimes to know how your athlete is feeling or if he or she appreciates the help you are trying to provide. All of us, including your player, appreciate your patience and your best effort to be helpful, even if this cannot be expressed.

### **NOTIFY THE COACHES AND THE FAMILY OF ABSENCES**

If you must miss a game, ask if a family member can substitute for you. If this is not possible, the coaches will assist you in finding someone to take your place.

### **CHECK AVAILABLE SOURCES FOR CANCELLATION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

When weather conditions make play questionable, a group text will be sent. You can also refer to your email, the Bridgewater Challenger website, or WSVA radio.

### **BE FLEXIBLE**

In some situations, buddies will be assigned in pairs. If both are present, a coach may ask one to help in another way in order to avoid overwhelming the player or overcrowding the dugout.