

# Buddy Guidelines

**Be There and Be On Time** – Your presence is VERY important! Your buddy will need you and your team will need you. Player First

**Know Your Player** - Attend the buddy training. Read the written material on your player's condition. Talk with your player and family members on Match Day. You will have sample questions to get to know them.

**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 base runners so you can do what is necessary to ensure the safety of your athlete.

**Bring a Glove** – You will sometimes need to protect your player by deflecting balls that are hit toward the two of you. Your safety is important too!

**Encourage Involvement and Independence** – Remember ... It is THEIR game! Do everything possible to encourage your athlete to be involved at his or her ability. Focus on what your player is able to do and recognize all positive effort.

**Share Your Concerns** – Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Talk with 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. Above all, practice "person-first language" (kids with special needs, not special needs kids) and keep in mind that each player is a person-not their disability.

**Be Open to Suggestions**– 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 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.

*HAVE FUN!*

## Play Ball!