Becoming an owner of a Franchise in LWA has many perks, but also responsibility. As an owner you get to see the internal workings of the league, control your brand, and most importantly decide who you get to play with. This does come with responsibility though including managing players and salaries, keeping scoresheets for games, being active on Facebook, and many more. This document will have everything you need to know about responsibilities, rules, salaries, etc. Becoming an owner opens the door to a whole new experience with the league, but not taking seriously could have a serious impact on not only your team, but the integrity of the league. When you choose to become an owner, your mind MUST shift from what is best for yourself, to what is best for the league. Whether that is discussing a play on the field with another owner in a timely matter that is fair, or whether that be helping your opponent who messed up on the scoresheet and correcting it for him. When everyone, especially the leaders, work towards building a league brand and product instead of their own, that's when you see growth, excitement, competitiveness, and most importantly different backgrounds, skill level, and people enjoying themselves each week no matter win or loss.

As we grow each year I like to remind people that this league will grow as far as the owner's and players take it. This league has been a blessing to me and it has been amazing to see the growth while watching others buy in to the vision I had when we started. For many who know me when I see people dump time and energy into this league it fuels me to make this league the best it can be. Also, on the contrary, when people say they are going to do something and don't, I blow up and lose interest fast. When I ask for help or in this case becoming an owner I honestly don't have a bias or care who it is. All I care about is that you back up what your going to say. All I care about is that if you become an owner you take it seriously, because otherwise your wasting my time and everyone else's. I am more than willing to help you out and make sure you understand every rule and salaries. I want the most competitive league but want the most passionate owners as well.

Finally, you not have to do all of what is being said in this handbook, but you are responsible. I don't care how things get done I just want them done. Everything in this handbook is on you to get done no matter how you want to do. You can do it all yourself or delegate people on your team to do it. Some things will be new this year, and some things have always been the same so if you are a returning owner be sure to read as well. We are growing to 14 Teams next season and it will take us all to make 2019 the best year yet.

Let's begin with the offseason, the unseen part of the league that will determine what 2019 will hold. This is the most crucial part of the year and with the help of you guys and members of the board we will lay a solid foundation. August 31 will be the deadline to sign up to be an owner for the 2019 season. Basically, there are 2 requirements; Active on Facebook Messenger and have played 4 Games in the 2018 Season. After all the people interested have signed up I will use the Ironman Ranking to decide which 14 players will become owners.

The only requirement for September is to come up with a team name(s) and colors that must be approved. When you get the name and colors approved you are responsible for getting a logo whether that be from Jared or using someone else to make one. The Background of the logo must be your jersey color. The text for your team name must be the main color of your logo and text on the jersey.

In October we will have an owner's meeting that you must attend or have someone attend for you. The meeting will begin with the draft order being selected. It will be streamed lived and each representative from each team selecting a Wiffle ball out of a bucket with a draft number on it. The draft will be 5 rounds in a serpentine style. This mean's the owner with the #1 pick won't pick again until #28.

The next order of business will be to determine a schedule. The season will run from May 8 to July 17 with a Death Bracket and Playoffs following all the way into Mid-August. For the last 3 weeks in the month of June (ending the week before July 4), we will have games on Monday and Thursday instead of Wednesday. With the majority of the league still in college and more inconsistent weather and lighting in early May I am still hesitant on expanding the overall length of the season. With that being said of the 14 days of regular season days, each team will have 4 days where they won't have games with each team still having a 20-game season. No longer will teams be coming for only 1 game, each time you play the team will play 2 games that night. The schedules will be set at this point and we will pick out of the bucket again to determine who gets what schedule.

Next, we come up with a date that works to have our Bowling Classic/Draft Night. Discuss ideas to promote the event. Team Logo's must be complete by the night of the owner's meeting.

We will end the night going over rule changes and discuss everything in here again to make sure everyone is on the same page. We will go over what a week will look like and go over the spreadsheet I will send all owners each week. This is where I will discuss salaries and explain how all the numbers work, it sounds confusing, but in reality it's very simple and keeps the league competitive.

In November and December basically, all you have to do is scout and talk to potential players you are interested in drafting. I will give send an excel sheet with everyone who signs up and its up to you how much scouting and recruiting you plan to do. The one change to the draft this year will be owner's with get $1 salary penalties right away if they or the players they draft are not present at the draft.

The first season we had 19, year 2 we had 38, this past season we had 50, this season I want 75. We had 80 players this past season, and I would love to get as many of those players present for the event. Like I mentioned early, media is going to be a big movement for us as a league and having the players being drafted present will be huge. This season, bowling will run from 5 to 7, with the draft following in a conference room located at the bowling alley right after. With that being said we might hold a tournament in the Crown Point Dome instead of going bowling, more details to follow in the upcoming months.

This year we will be collecting a fee to play for the first time. We have become an LLC and I want to make some serious upgrades. Next year my focus will be on sponsorship and the legality of the league, but at the same time all of that is can't be projected. It will be $25 per person to play in the league next year with some exceptions. Players will be reimbursed money if they don't play 20 games at season end.

At the event, you will get five cards to make your selections on. Each owner will get 1 minute, when the timer sounds he will bring his card to the podium where I will announce the pick. Following the pick, the player selected will come forward with the owner for a picture if both are present. I highly encourage getting least a shirt with your team color, if you get a logo that would be even better. That way when we take the picture we could have something to hold up. The event will be broadcast live on Facebook, it will also be taped with other cameras for a highlight video after.

I will send a general packet with all the players available with numbers to get ahold of them sometime soon. If you want any information on a player I will be happy to give that information. I recommend coming up with a type of team you would like to create, print out the season stats from last year and determine which players would fit your system and if they fit under the cap. It is the job of the owner to scout and interview players they want on their team. Talk to players before hand to see how interested they are in playing this season. One thing I really want to stress this year is keep the inside information to a minimum. I understand winning is something everyone enjoys, but at the same time the goal of this league, and should be all of yours, is to create the most competitive atmosphere. I expect all owners to encourage everyone to play no matter who the owner is and no matter who is on the team. Promote the league in every way possible and when it comes to people playing, talk to them as a representative for the league, not your team.

This year we will be adding a 4th and 5th round to the draft. The first 3 rounds will be similar to year's past. All owner's must draft a team under the $126.00 salary cap. The only change to that is if one of your players you draft isn't there you will be hit with a one dollar penalty per player. Each penalty in the draft and throughout the season gets divided by 14 and redistributed back into each team's salaries to make sure the league average will always be $126. If there is no player available to sign you must sign the player with the lowest salary that is available. We had 61 players play 4 games or more in 2018 that are eligible to be drafted in the first 3 rounds. After the 3rd round the 5 players not drafted who have a salary lose it and become free agents. Owner's may select any free agent they want who has registered for the remaining 2 spots in the draft and they will enter the season with a $0.00 salary until they have played 4 games. Team's must have 4 players present at each game or they will get hit with a fine so draft players in those two rounds who can be your subs when needed.

I will say this over and over again, draft a team who is committed. This year it is mandatory that every team has 4 players every week. You have a roster of 6 guys and can sign and release players to your "Kermit" roster without penalties. If people can't make it on your team, ask your teammates to find someone who can show up for the week. By 6:00 PM Central time on the night before the games each owner must message me their roster and lineup. It will stay the same with the next pitcher due up to pitch at the end of game 1, starting game 2. Regular Season games will be 5 innings long, and Playoffs will be 6 innings.

Games will start no later than 6:20, each field will have 2 buckets, one completely full of balls, the other half full. At 6:05 everyone starts bucketing balls, and getting things ready to go. Making sure each field has a bucket next to the backstop half full and a bucket on the mound full ready to go.   If your full team is ready to go, then you grab your score sheet from me and get set up to start. Team's must warm up on the field they are going to play on, share the time to warm up with the other team. The away team is allowed to have the field from 5:45-5:55, the home team is allowed to have the field from 5:55 -6:05. Any time before that is up for grabs.

If your team is not present you have until 6:15 to make a decision. The game must start no later than 6:20, you have to get ahold of the players not present and make a decision by 6:15. Here are your two options.

1. Start the game with the player(s) in the lineup that haven't arrived. When the player not present is due up to bat, the opposing pitcher must pitch the at bat as if the player is there. If the pitcher throws ten balls before a strikeout the team can choose a single for that player. When the player not present is due up to pitch, the opposing team's next batter must step into the box. When he steps in the box a countdown of thirty seconds begins. After that 30 seconds, the batter is given a home run. The next batter must step to the box, when he touches the box, the clock starts again. This happens until either the player shows up or max runs are hit.   When the player who is not present sets foot in the field the countdown ends, he gets a few warmups and you continue the game where it stands.
2. The second option is to start the game without the player, this will come at a price this year. If you choose to take someone out of your lineup you will be hit with a $1 deduction to your salary cap. To start the season everyone's salary cap will be $126, if you choose to remove that player from your lineup your cap will move down to $125. Say for example your roster is $125.56, you will have to make a trade or release a player to get under the cap. This might not seem like a big hit, but with the new "Kermit" player option you will have for the playoffs it could add up quick. This is where I want to once again point out that it is crucial to get a team that comes, if they are reliable and come every week you won't have to deal with this.

This sounds intense, but in reality, its feasible. I get people have jobs, and things going on, but I feel we as a league have built a product that deserves priority. With the influx of outsiders last year, and the numerous players I know will be playing this upcoming year who didn't last year we are moving our priorities to players who are committed rather than players who are skilled. I will continue to create rules and enforce rules that benefit teams and players that are committed and reliable rather than players and teams who are skilled. You have a team of 4 players, you are responsible to get 3 players to the field. It isn't hard. If one of your players isn't sure he can make it, don't put him in your lineup.

The owners are responsible for cleaning up the last field they play on. Last year each team had a job, this year both owners who play at a field have to collectively clean up the field they play on and they can then leave. We will have a golf cart this year with a trailer that everything will be put on.

These jobs are mandatory and if the next day I come out to the field and they are not done, each owner on that field will be hit with a $1 fine against their cap.

       a. Turf – the turf can stay on the field. The Batting turf needs to be stacked at home plate, the pitching turf needs to be folded over so I can mow around it.
       b. Bases – the bases must be put on the trailer in the designed spot
       c. Backstop – Every field will have a backstop this year, this is the only thing that will have to be carried into barn.
       d. Balls – Must put both buckets on the trailer, one completely full, the other half full.
       e. Garbage – retrieve all garbage and put into the garbage can.

Next up on the list is scoresheets. If the scoresheet is wrong in any way the team will be hit with a $1 penalty against the cap. I would highly recommend training one or two guys on your team on how to do the scoresheet for two reasons. One you don't have to worry about it every game, if you aren't there someone knows how to do it. Remember if the batting stats are not right for a team, it also affects the pitching stats for your team. Make sure you stay on top of them every inning. During the inning switch make sure you have three outs during the inning. After your team pitches, check the opposing team's batting stats to double check them before flipping the page over to do your own. Also it will be mandatory to put the score on top for each inning. This will help making sure the game is right so both teams don't get confused, as well as help me determine if the right number of runs are scored in the stats as stated on top. The biggest things missed last year were added runs scored and RBI's. I will go into detail at the owner's meeting on how to do them.

The last order of business for game day will be announcing. This year team's will no longer have to be in the booth, instead each team will be in charge of the snapchat for the night. I am working out the logistics on how many pictures or video's the team has to present in the platform, but I think it will be way more beneficial to our league exposure than broadcasting.

This sounds like a lot, but with discipline and creating habits with your players it will become simple and easy throughout the year. I also want to stress keeping games moving, when pitchers get into a slow pitch count keep the at bat going. When players are sitting have them pick up balls so when we need to swap its ready to go. Part of having all the games at the same time is so we can all have fun together and talk, but at the same time keep everything moving and try to do the majority of talking after the game.

POST GAME REQUIREMENTS

During the days preceding the games I will tally up the scoresheets and give a list of players available that are free agents. Based on the waiver wire owners will be able to make signings from players that are available. Owners can make trades at any point after the games are finished. Usually this happens Saturday and Sunday so make sure your available on Facebook. With 14 Owners it could take awhile to get through waivers.

KERMIT

New to the 2018 season was the addition of a "Kermit" player. This will be our way of incorporating expanded rosters. Each team will be allowed to have a 6 man roster, the 2 extra players will be considered the "Kermit" players. This will do two things for the league. First it will get 28 more players on a team that wouldn't be. Second it gives owner's a chance to be able to field a four-man team each week and especially in the playoffs . If someone from the team can't make it, then the Kermit will take that player's spot.

Every team's Kermit player will be available to sign to an actual roster if they have 4 games played. This will also apply to game day during the season. If a team has all four players going, and the Kermit is also available to play, he may sign up to play as a free agent for that day and play for another team. I am thinking of adding a rule allowing team's to sign another team's if they need a player for that week, and that Kermit Player hasn't played in the last 2 weeks. More details to come.

PLAYOFFS

Last Year we added the death bracket and it was a hit. So this year we will have 2 death brackets which will intensify the importance of the regular season and give us more action to start the playoffs. The bottom 8 teams will play a single game elimination bracket with 2 teams moving on to make the playoffs as the #7 and #8 seed. The higher seed that makes it out will be the #7 seed, the lower seed that makes it out will be the #8. The 8,9,10, and 11 seeds will play a single elimination tournament the Wednesday following the end of the season leading into the playoffs. If you lose the first game you will play another game that will affect stats and team stats. This will be the same format as the season where lineups will continue from the first game so play accordingly. Games will be six innings long. Team's must have 4 players for the games or they forfeit the game.

After the bracket, we will have the same format as year's past. You guys are responsible for setting up a roster that can make the playoffs, you have a two Kermit players that will be allowed to use if one of the four is unable to make a series, if those players have played 4 games in the regular season. All playoff games must be six innings.