



MLB First Pitch Festivals – Toolkit for Organizers

This Toolkit has been developed to help you organize an MLB First Pitch Festival that is fun, safe, and engaging for participants, staff, and volunteers.

It will provide you with guidance on how to organize your Festival, from venue considerations to volunteer recruitment to running it on the day.

The following guidance can be adapted as needed to best fit the needs of your participants, your organization and your MLB First Pitch Festival!

VENUE SELECTION

MLB First Pitch Festivals can be held at a variety of venues, from school sports halls or playgrounds to your local sport center or sport pitch, or a field at your local community baseball or softball club.

The venue should be large enough to fit the five activity stations (or multiple sets of the 5 stations, for larger events) comfortably and safely.

You should also consider the nearest toilets and water fountains for use during the event, as well as any additional spaces you may need for example, shaded areas in the event of extreme weather, storage space for any belongings, rest areas for volunteers and participants, or a registration area.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

Make sure you provide adequate first aid cover in the event of an incident.

Your event should also have a safeguarding lead and a safeguarding policy in place. Volunteers should be properly vetted, and access to the event space on the day should be limited to participants and approved members of staff and volunteers only.

EQUIPMENT AND SET-UP

When confirming the activity stations, make a list of equipment that is needed to run each station, taking into consideration the number of participants.

You will need the MLB First Pitch equipment bag, plus any extra balls (i.e. tennis balls), cones, bats or racquets you may have on hand to help run the event.

You may wish to add additional batting tees to your hitting station to ensure participants have multiple turns. For additional base sets, you can substitute with rubber discs.

Your event host and activity station volunteers should help set up your activity stations. During set up, be sure to consider what direction participants are batting, throwing, and running, to limit the risk of collisions, other accidents, or damage.

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It is best practice to have the stations fully set up before participants arrive to start building a positive experience for the event. Example layouts for the activity stations can be found in the MLB First Pitch Festivals pack.

Be sure to allow time for the set-up of any other event areas, such as registration, directional signage, or any activity station signage.

FESTIVAL ROLES

When recruiting volunteers and assigning roles for the MLB First Pitch Festival, be sure to consider the volunteer's experience, and knowledge and skills. Use the suggested 'Roles and Responsibilities' below to support your recruitment and for briefing volunteers for the event.

Event Host – should ideally have a bit of baseball knowledge, coaching experience and experience working with young people.

- Brief the activity station volunteers at the start of the event, answering any questions they may have and ensuring they are comfortable with their roles and how their station works.
- Help activity station volunteers lay out the stations.
- At the start of the event, gather the participants, welcoming them to the event, explaining where the toilets, water and first aid stations are, explaining the format of the day, and helping them move to their first station*.
- Act as timekeeper, starting the timer at the beginning of each rotation, giving warnings at the halfway point, 2 minutes to go, and keeping time in-between stations for any breaks.
- At the end of the event, gather the participants again to thank them for attending, thank the volunteers and conclude the event.

*Whether you have split participants into teams or are keeping school groups together as they rotate through the stations, it is best to assign starting stations to each group ahead of time and brief them on their starting station on arrival.

An example timetable can be found in the 'Templates' section of this toolkit.

Event Support Volunteers

- Assist with set up of the registration desk pre-event.
- Check schools into the event, providing them with any printed event info and giving a basic event briefing (i.e. location of toilets, first aid, water stations, as well as their assigned starting station).
- Collect participation and/or photography waivers (if applicable)
- Direct participants to toilets, water, rest areas, first aid, etc. as required throughout the event.
- Help with the activity rotations, ensuring schools know where they are going next.

"I liked the opportunity to meet and interact with baseball and softball volunteers and helpers. The festival brought the baseball and softball community together."

*- MLB First Pitch
Festival Volunteer*

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- Oversee any rest areas and water stations for staff, teachers, and participants.
- Make the teachers and participants feel welcome and engaged.
- Provide general event support as required.

Activity Station Volunteers

- Assist with the set-up of the activity stations pre-event and check that the appropriate equipment is in place, with the assistance of the Event Host
- Be positive and energetic throughout the Festival, ensure participants are active at each station, and get the participants excited about baseball.
- Lead participants through the baseball activity stations, coaching as appropriate.
- Use the STEP Principle to adapt activities where needed, to ensure participants have a sense of achievement and increased confidence in the sport, and a positive experience of the Festival.
- Reset the stations between rotations.
- Help gather kit at the end of the event.

"I enjoyed the interaction with the children, knowing that they are the potential future of our sport."

*- MLB First Pitch
Festival Volunteer*

You may also wish to write a detailed brief for your chosen activity stations or provide copies of the activity cards to your activity station volunteers.

Young Leaders

- Act as Event Support Volunteers or Activity Station Volunteers, dependent upon training, knowledge, and confidence.
- Be positive and energetic throughout the festival, acting as role-models for the younger children.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT, REGISTRATION AND EVENT INFORMATION

To ensure your MLB First Pitch Festival is a positive experience for your participating schools, there are a few areas of consideration when engaging with schools throughout the planning process.

Promoting your event

Schools need advance notice for events so they can plan their calendars accordingly, so you may wish to send a save the date as soon as your Festival date is confirmed.

If other event details are confirmed, such as timings and venue, you can include this in your Save the Date.

You may also choose to write a brief event description and give details on how schools can sign-up later when registration opens.

A downloadable Save the Date template can be found in the 'Templates' section of this toolkit. This template can also be used as an invitation.

School registration

You may already have a process you follow for inviting schools to your events, but to aid your planning, below is some guidance for event registration.

You may wish to create a registration form that is circulated to your schools, along with some further event information which can help them plan their attendance

Think about what information they need from you about the event before registering, for example:

- Event details – confirm the event venue and timings.
- Transportation/Parking details if applicable
- Permission forms or participation waivers – does the event require any special permission forms from parents/guardians in order for participants to take part.
- Photography – if the event has a photographer, will participants need to bring photographic permission.
- Event risk assessments and safeguarding policies
- Anything else that may help them with planning i.e. any restrictions on the number of participants they can bring or a specific age group

Think about what information you need from registrants in order to plan for their attendance, for example:

- Number of attendees they're planning to bring.
- Age group – will help decide whether you need to adapt your activities, or plan for any giveaways (for example, event t-shirts)
- Lead contact information
- Anything else that may help you with planning i.e. any access requirements or travel/parking requirements.

Final Event Information

It is important that your attendees have all the information they will need ahead of the event to ensure a smooth arrival and provide a great event day experience.

An example Final Event Pack can be found in the 'Templates' section of this toolkit. This can be adapted to fit your specific event, as all areas might not be relevant to you.

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EVENT TEMPLATES

The below templates have been created to assist with event planning and are available to download at: <https://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/firstpitchfestivaltoolkit>.

Festival Station Signage (Size A1) – downloadable PDF

Save the Date/Invitation template – downloadable PowerPoint slide

Example Timetable – 15 minutes per station, morning session

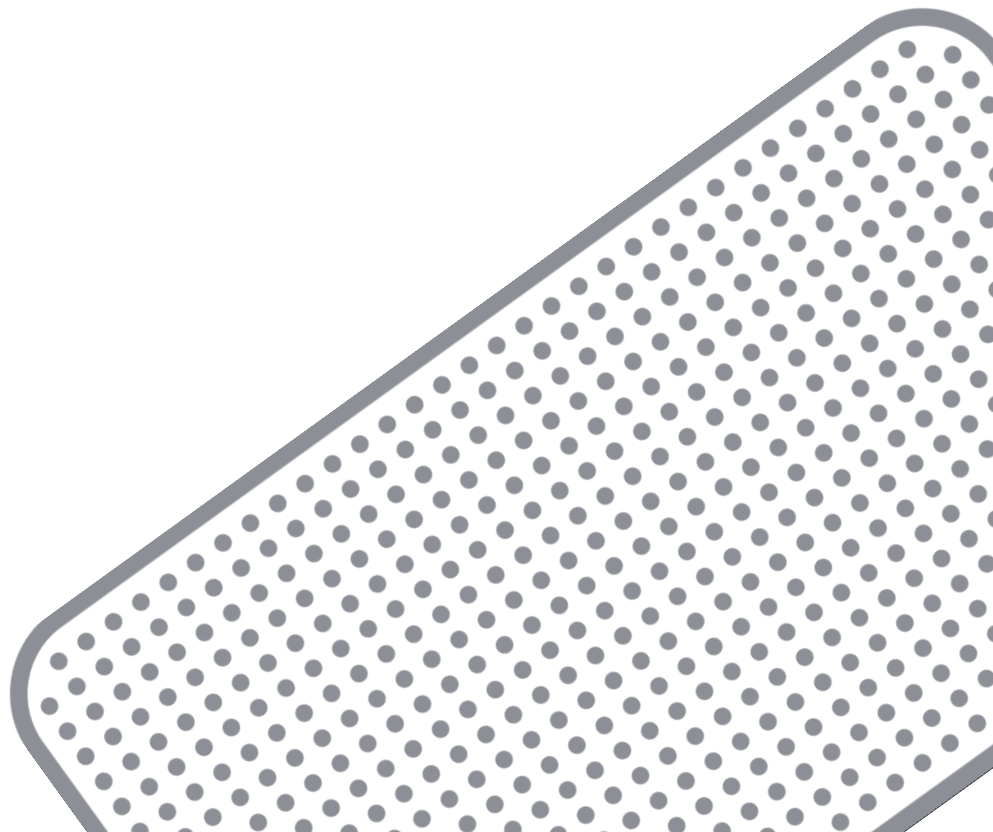
Time	Duration	Activity
PRE-EVENT		
7.00 AM		Event Team Arrives
8.15 AM	15 mins	Volunteers Arrive
8.30 AM	15 mins	Volunteer Briefing – Event Support
		Volunteer Briefing – Activity Station Volunteers
8.45 AM	15 mins	Activity Stations and Registration Desk Set-Up
ARRIVALS AND REGISTRATION		
9.30 AM	20 mins	Arrival and Registration
9.50 AM	10 mins	Welcome and Intro to the Day by Event Host
ACTIVITIES BEGIN		
10.00 AM	15 mins	Rotation 1
10.15 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
10.20 AM	15 mins	Rotation 2
10.35 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
10.40 AM	15 mins	Rotation 3
10.55 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
11.00 AM	15 mins	Rotation 4
11.15 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
11.20 AM	15 mins	Rotation 5
ACTIVITIES CONCLUDE		
11.35 PM	15 mins	Closing remarks and Thank You
By 11.55 AM		Session Concludes and Participants Depart
12.15 PM		Activity Stations are cleared of equipment Volunteers Depart



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Example Timetable – 20 minutes per station, morning session

Time	Duration	Activity
PRE-EVENT		
7.00 AM		Event Team Arrives
8.15 AM	15 mins	Volunteers Arrive
8.30 AM	15 mins	Volunteer Briefing – Event Support
		Volunteer Briefing – Activity Station Volunteers
8.45 AM	15 mins	Activity Stations and Registration Desk Set-Up
ARRIVALS AND REGISTRATION		
9.30 AM	20 mins	Arrival and Registration
9.50 AM	10 mins	Welcome and Intro to the Day by Event Host
ACTIVITIES BEGIN		
10.00 AM	20 mins	Rotation 1
10.20 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
10.25 AM	20 mins	Rotation 2
10.45 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
10.50 AM	20 mins	Rotation 3
11.10 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
11.15 AM	20 mins	Rotation 4
11.35 AM	5 mins	Break/Rotate
11.55 AM	20 mins	Rotation 5
ACTIVITIES CONCLUDE		
12.00 PM	15 mins	Closing remarks and Thank You's
By 12.15 PM		Session Concludes and Participants Depart
12.30 PM		Activity Stations are cleared of equipment Volunteers Depart





Example Final Event Information Pack for Schools

When organizing MLB First Pitch Festival, be sure to consider the following topics and use the below suggested copy in your Final Information pack to schools. Please adapt as appropriate. Text highlighted in red, for example, should be updated with details specific to your event.

Event Overview

The MLB First Pitch Festival will be a celebration of baseball, with young people coming together to have fun and play ball!

The Festival is made up of five stations that are built around the five baseball skills learned in the First Pitch program: Hitting, Fielding, Running, Pitching, Gameplay.

Participants will stay within their school groups and be assigned to a playing area which has a set of five stations. The groups will have the opportunity to experience each station for approximately 15 minutes, at which point an announcement to change stations will be made over the PA system/megaphone.

Key Information

Date: ADD DETAIL

Arrival Time: ADD DETAIL

Please ensure you have plenty of time for your school group to register, store any belongings, and use the toilets before the session begins.

Session Time: ADD DETAIL

Location

The event will take place at ADD DETAIL. The exact location using What3Words is: ADD DETAIL.

Travelling to and from the venue

ADD DETAIL INCLUDING WALKING, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, MINIBUS/COACH PARKING, PARKING RESTRICTIONS OR COSTS, WEBSITE LINK TO VENUE.

Venue Site Map

ADD DETAIL PARTICULARLY FOR LARGE/CONFUSING SITES

Registration on Event Day

A member of school staff should register their school group upon arrival. You will be given an overview of the event and the activity stations, as well as which station your group will start on.

Photography Consent

Teachers/Staff are asked to let the registration team know whether any of your participants should NOT be photographed. These pupils will be issued a neon wristband so any event photographers can easily identify them. ADD DETAIL OF PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY AND CONSENT FORMS IF APPLICABLE.

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First Aid

First aid provision will be present on the day and clearly signposted. In the event of an emergency, the nearest hospital is **NAME AND LOCATION OF HOSPITAL**.

Child Safety and Welfare

At all times, it is the school's responsibility for the safety and welfare of your pupils and to be mindful of where pupils are at all times.

Equipment and Clothing

Please ensure all participants are wearing clothing suitable for sports and activities.

Extreme Weather

In the event of extreme weather conditions, we will decide to cancel the event if it no longer becomes safe to run and schools will be informed as soon as possible.

Additional Information

Food/Snacks – There will be no food or snack provision for participants. Please note, it is the school's responsibility to ensure students/school brings refreshments with them if required.

Water – **ADD DETAIL OF CLOSEST WATER REFILL STATIONS IF APPLICABLE**. Please ensure your pupils bring a water bottle to the event.

Protection – Please ensure your pupils have adequate clothing and protection (including sunscreen) to cater for all weather options on the event day. **The event site will have limited shaded areas, but breaks will be given to participants between activities.**

Non-attendance

Should your plans change for any reason, and your school is no longer able to take part, please notify **ADD DETAIL** at the earliest possible opportunity.

We look forward to welcoming you and your school to the MLB First Pitch Festival!

