



## OAKLANDON YOUTH ORGANIZATION

January 26, 2020

OYO Fans:

Greetings! I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and your New Year is off to a wonderful start. While it doesn't seem like it with the frigid temperatures of late, our 46th Annual Spring Season is just around the corner...and less than 50 days away!

**Why This Letter?** | I encourage you to read this entire letter, which is written very specifically for you...a member of our OYO Family. In 2019, OYO experienced continued growth in the service offerings to our families as well as extremely high number of young ballplayers throughout our spring season, travel season and fall ball season. This is a testament to the trust and confidence you have in us as a league – and one we accept with great responsibility.

**Excitement Everywhere** | As the OYO Board President, I am very excited about what we are doing across the organization. However, we did experience some growth pains. What's more, some of our goals associated with overall satisfaction were not met. Please know, each and every member of the OYO Board of Directors – including me – have heard your feedback. Your opinion matters. I have conveyed the importance of our actions going forward to the leaders of OYO's baseball and softball divisions as well as the OYO Board.

**Your Opinion Counts** | After our 11th Annual Fall Ball Season concluded in October, we returned to some of our roots. We resumed our annual customer satisfaction survey. This decision was based on some of the anecdotal, but not quantifiable, information and feedback we received during and following the spring season. We heard from hundreds of our families, which eclipsed a 40% response rate. In the world of customer feedback surveys, this represents a robust response and validates the data trends and feedback we received. We truly appreciate all our families who invested approximately 10 minutes to share their feedback. Your input and insight are pivotal to our growth and commitment to our families. The information we gathered – and conclusions we drew from it – provided the OYO Board with actionable improvement areas for where we fell short, and enhancement opportunities for where we knocked it out of the park.

**What You Value at OYO** | In reviewing the results in detail, an extremely high percentage of OYO's families love to call OYO home for their youth baseball and softball experience – and we're proud to call you OYO Fans, too! You feel safe, welcomed, a sense of value for your money spent, appreciative of the proximity of concessions and restrooms, and lucky to have the camaraderie around the park for your players, especially on both sides of the diamond. You also noticed the field conditions are in better overall condition, and they also resisted Mother Nature's attempts to disrupt our game schedules through more care and preparation. We will continue to build process and infrastructure around those concepts to meet and exceed your expectations – and retain your participation.

**Plenty of Room for Improvement** | It also makes sense for me to address where we fell short. As the OYO Board President, I delivered a very strong message to the leadership of our divisions and the requirement and necessity for fair and balanced teams. These were not easy conversations to deliver, nor were they easy words for our leadership to hear. In this same conversation, I also communicated a need to improve our:

- coach selection process
- coach support process
- overall ability to provide development opportunities
- surrounding all players on all teams with coaches who are committed to excellence and fun

**The OYO Commitment** | We have opportunities to tighten those processes, and we will. I commit to all OYO families we are revisiting our team selection process to drive higher probabilities of team competitiveness throughout the divisions. We are looking at how we incorporate off-season travel players into rec teams for both the spring and fall. And, we are also assessing the data around our evaluation processes and player ranking processes.

We also are examining our marketing programs that are designed to grow overall player numbers, and what, if any, effect these efforts have on our team balance. It is obvious from the survey results OYO family members want a broad number of teams to compete against, and we strive to meet that objective. Those efforts will be aligned with our continued commitment to establish appropriately balanced squads. Overall, this was not a pervasive issue in the league, but we acknowledge a few divisions spread across the OYO age spectrum in both baseball and softball had a less-than-ideal balance.

**What's OYO's Go-Forward Plan?** | We are excited about the 2020 Spring and Fall seasons, and are very committed to your overall experience. Here are just a few examples of how our all-volunteer board of directors has spent this very important offseason to retain – or in some cases, regain – your trust and participation:

- **Baseball and softball leadership** – and their commissioners – are currently working on support systems for all coaches, standardized video vaults for practice drills and concepts, communication tools and most importantly, coach selection
- **Grounds committee** has expanded and undertaken a massive fencing renovation and dugout repair project to increase overall appearance and safety
- **Travel committee** has developed new processes that will allow for great consistency and growth of our successful Bombers and Red Storm programs
- **Umpire leadership** is working on recruitment, training and mentor development programs
- **Financial committee** continues to drive deeper sponsorship opportunities and programs, all while keeping the overall cost to our OYO families at a very low level and being good stewards of your dollars – and making additional investments at Veterans Memorial Park

**My Final Ask Is Simple** | The OYO experience is entirely provided by volunteer leaders, some who log hours that resemble a second full-time job outside of their normal careers to make OYO what it is. They will likely log more hours in order to make OYO what it can be! If you have additional ideas and insights about change, then please consider becoming a volunteer for change. Most specifically, help drive positive change by participating as a coach, team parent, umpire, park preparation, board member, etc.

I have expressed with this letter a Board tolerance to listen to your thoughts, and I reinforce that with an openness to your help. There is plenty for us to do and plenty for you to do to help us, too. On a final note, we recognize change is never easy, but necessary to adapt and thrive. As one notable leader once said...

*“Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” – John F. Kennedy*

Thank you for reading this letter, please consider and evaluate what you can personally do at OYO. I look forward to seeing you all at the fields soon.

As always, thank you for choosing OYO as your place for baseball and softball!

Sincerely,

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