

PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION
WOOD BAT POLICY
(BASEBALL ONLY)

If you listen closely in Prospect Park next spring, you will hear more of a satisfying "crack" than a hollow "ping" when young players from one of the largest baseball organizations in New York City take the field.

The Prospect Park Baseball Association (PPBA) has voted to have players in its Super Bantam (13U), Grasshopper (14U), and Freshmen (16U) baseball divisions use wood bats only. Metal bats in these divisions are no longer allowed.

The PPBA's new policy will not apply to players in the Cub (10U) and Bantam (12U) divisions, who will continue to be allowed to use non-wood bats. Of course, players in these divisions also have the option to use wood if they prefer. The PPBA's youngest divisions, Pony (8U) and Pee Wee (6U) have long been wood-only divisions and will continue that tradition. Girls Softball divisions will not be affected by this decision.

Across the country, the debate over traditional wood bats versus metal bats has been going on for several years. Several high-profile cases of serious injuries caused to young players related to the use of metal bats has sparked many communities to consider returning to the sport's roots -- wood bats.

Locally, the New York City Council is considering a bill aimed at outlawing the use of metal bats in the city's high schools. These are the same children for which the new PPBA policy of wood bats applies. Proposal 341-A, as it is known, states, "...the trend toward the use of new high performance materials in the construction of metal baseball bats has dramatically increased the speed at which baseballs are propelled off bats. Such increase in speed has shortened the necessary reaction time needed by defensive players in the field, placing players in compromising and dangerous positions." It goes on to state "...the use of non-wood bats places children, particularly those of high school age, at an unacceptable risk of injury."

The PPBA has decided to roll out a partial conversion to wood in 2007 for three important reasons:

First, the greatest concern about the increased risk of injury to players using metal versus wood bats lies with older players, who hit the ball harder than younger players.

Second, there is the issue of economics. Metal bats are more expensive to buy than wood bats, often costing over \$100 a bat, but they last longer, usually for years. Wood bats are less expensive, but they break and need to be replaced more often than metal bats. Our Cub and Bantam divisions have the greatest number of players, and would require the greatest increase in cost for each of the member organizations in the PPBA to replace all their metal bats with wood. However, if the change to wood bats in the older divisions in 2007 is a success PPBA will consider a league-wide move to wood bats in 2008.

Third, there are a lot of families who will be happy to return to the traditional roots of the game. Many coaches & fans alike believe that the game is just more fun played with wood bats, giving kids a better chance at fielding the ball, which often leads to closer, more exciting games.

If the conversion to wood bats in the older divisions in 2007 proves successful, the PPBA will reconsider a league-wide move to wood in 2008. Organizations that play in the PPBA league include: 78th Precinct Youth Council, St. Francis Xavier Youth Sports, Camp Friendship, Holy Name Fathers Guild, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Brooklyn Angels, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Sacred Heart Youth Program and South Brooklyn Youth Organization.