



LOWE'S GROVE, NC POST 416

2026 PARENT GUIDE

Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball at Post 416



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Our Mission 3

Our Coaches 4

Our Why 5

Our Value 6

Our Expectations 7

Dedicated to building **“citizenship through sportsmanship,”** the Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball program at Post 416 has a winning tradition of mentoring and developing youth for success at life. We have developed this guide to help parents better understand: (1) why we believe the Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball Program at Post 416 offers a superior product for player development, (2) why we offer a better value for parents in terms of time, money and player impact, (3) and communicate the expectations and role of parents while your 13-19 year old is in our program.

We are excited to partner with you and your young adult, and are ready for an awesome 2026 season!



OUR MISSION

Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball at Post 416 is the most visible community program sponsored annually by Lowe's Grove American Legion Post 416. American Legion Baseball enjoys a reputation as one of the most successful and tradition-rich amateur athletic leagues. Since its national inception in 1925, the league has helped millions of players between the ages of 13 and 19, including countless who have gone on to play in college and professional baseball. The Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball program at Post 416 provides an environment of teamwork, confidence, personal growth and life experience to our players, building championship teams in our community to carry on the 100-year history, traditions and patriotic principals of American Legion Baseball.

The purpose of American Legion Baseball is:

- To inculcate in youth a better understanding of the American way of life and promote 100% Americanism
- To instill in the nation's youth a desire to develop feelings of citizenship, sportsmanship, loyalty and team spirit
- To aid in the improvement and development of the physical fitness of our country's youth
- To build the nation's future through our youth





OUR COACHES



Derrick DePriest - Head Coach and Pitching Coach

Derrick DePriest, Head Coach of Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball at Post 416, brings a powerhouse blend of athletic excellence and coaching mastery. A full-scholarship dual-sport athlete at the University of North Carolina, DePriest lettered in both football and baseball all four years, earning a reputation as one of UNC's most dominant late-inning pitchers. His record-setting performance in the Cape Cod League—including 15 saves and a perfect ERA—led to his induction into the league's Hall of Fame and selection by the Montreal Expos in the 2000 MLB Draft.

DePriest's professional career spanned multiple leagues where he consistently delivered as a reliable closer. His journey through the minors, including standout seasons with the Cape Fear Crocs, Jupiter Hammerheads, and North Shore Spirit, was shaped by resilience and a deep commitment to the game—even through injury and recovery. His rehab experience with elite trainers gave him unique insight into athlete conditioning and injury prevention, which now informs his coaching philosophy.

Now returning to Post 416, DePriest offers students and players a rare opportunity to learn from someone who's lived every phase of the game—from college glory to professional grit. His expertise in pitching mechanics, game strategy, and player development makes him an invaluable mentor for aspiring athletes ready to elevate their performance and pursue their baseball dreams.



Jimmy Smith - Coach

Jimmy Smith brings elite-level experience and a passion for player development to Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball at Post 416. As a former professional catcher with six seasons in the Florida Marlins organization, Jimmy offers students firsthand insight into the demands and discipline of high-level baseball. His deep understanding of the game—from behind the plate to the dugout—shapes a coaching style that's both strategic and inspiring.

Currently serving as Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach at Voyager Academy, Jimmy is known for his commitment to youth development. He's coached in the Nike RBI Program and Bull City Little League, helping young athletes build strong fundamentals and confidence on and off the field. His approachable leadership and dedication to teaching make him a trusted mentor for players at every level.

Whether you're just starting out or looking to refine your skills, being coached by Jimmy means learning from someone who's lived the game. His experience, energy, and focus on helping players reach their full potential make him a standout coach and an ideal guide for students ready to take their baseball journey to the next level.



Jason Beaulieu, CSCS, USAW Founder of B.E.S.T. Sports Performance

Jason Beaulieu is a premier performance specialist with three decades of experience training the world's most elite athletes. Currently leading the strength and conditioning program for North Carolina Central University Men's Basketball, Jason's resume includes significant coaching stops at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a track record of developing talent for professional leagues (NBA, NFL, MLB) and Olympic competition.

Jason founded B.E.S.T. Sports Performance to bring a rigorous, science-based approach to athletic training. Drawing on his background as a dual-sport athlete and captain at the University of Delaware, he combines firsthand competitive experience with advanced Exercise Science to help athletes reach their absolute ceiling.



OUR WHY

Baseball is arguably one of the hardest sports in the world. Where else does a 33% success rate get you into a professional hall of fame? If you want to use this game to teach your young adult these nine things, then we have the program for you:

- (1) how to separate confidence from performance
- (2) how to handle challenges without giving up
- (3) mistakes are feedback, not failure
- (4) effort creates opportunity
- (5) emotions are not the enemy
- (6) being coachable matters everywhere in life
- (7) leadership starts with serving
- (8) accountability builds trust
- (9) find joy in the process

Conversations with collegiate coaches have all stated that as young athletes grow and develop, their athletic skill levels become more identical to their peers. So what attracts the attention of college coaches and differentiates your young adult from others? Things like how they react to a strikeout or error, how they accept feedback and direction from their coaches, how they support their teammates when not playing, and how hard they train in the gym and at ball practice. These are life skills your young adult will be exposed to in the Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball Program at Post 416.

Winning comes as a result of doing all those things on and off the field right, and we have the coaching team with the most experience and organizational support to open opportunities wherever baseball may take you. This is a game that mirrors life and in our book that's the real win... preparing young adults to be amazing people who will make our nation a better place!





OUR VALUE

We believe American Legion Baseball differs from travel ball opportunities in two ways: (1) the amount of travel to/from games is significantly less, and (2) the expense of the program is much lower. As stated earlier, we believe our coaching is the same or better than most travel ball programs, which means you'll get significantly more "bang for your buck" in terms of player development.

American Legion Baseball games begin immediately after most public schools conclude their academic year, typically during the Memorial Day weekend. Most games are within 30 minutes - 2 hours driving distance, so you'll be home in your own bed most every night. The actual game schedule is usually not published until the 3rd week of May, and the regular season will have about 12-16 games. Divisional playoffs begin in late June, regional playoffs after the 4th of July, transitioning to state playoffs which are historically held in Western NC, and then onto national playoffs in front of an ESPN televised audience in Shelby, NC at the top of August.

For the 2026 season, the Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball Program at Post 416 has the following dues/expenses:

Senior Team dues: \$250/player
Junior Team dues: \$500/player

Since travel is greatly reduced and is typically in-state, costs are much less as well.

All home games have a gate fee of \$10 per person for everyone, but the program offers multiple "booster club" options to make supporting your athlete more affordable. Please read the separate Booster Club booklet for program details. In addition, parents can serve in concession/ticket sales roles and earn a \$25 per game refund at the end of the season (not to exceed total dues and booster club fees paid).

As a member of our organization, your athlete is also eligible for a discounted rate to regularly train with Coach Jason Beaulieu at B.E.S.T, located at Post 416.

In addition, if you are eligible to join The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or The Sons of The American Legion at Post 416, the annual dues spent to join can be refunded at the end of the season as well.



OUR EXPECTATIONS

In conversations with college coaches, all have said the attitude of parents greatly impacts their young adult's opportunities. So what effort are we expecting from *you* that is way more important than the financial support needed for this endeavor?

First, allow your athlete to be coached. Allow them to be taught some of these life lessons without coming to their rescue at the dinner table. Instead, encourage ownership by asking questions like, "what do you think about what your coach said," or "what if what your coach said is right?"

Second, accept you don't have to solve every disappointment your young adult faces. As parents, it's natural to say, "don't worry about it," or "we'll get them next game." However, in sports it's more important that you're willing to walk beside them when it happens (see how in the next paragraph).

Third, don't be another coach to your young adult. When you do that and mistakes happen (and they will), you've unintentionally added more pressure onto them because they don't want to disappoint you. Baseball is built on failure and the best in the world fail seven out of ten times. When young adults are under constant criticism it doesn't build resilience, it builds fear and doubt. It doesn't mean you can't hold them accountable because you should, but that should take the form of preparation, work ethic, determination, commitment, attitude, sportsmanship, being coachable, and being a good teammate. Give them the support and encouragement especially when the game tests them. When young adults stop worrying about disappointing their parents, they play more carefree and a lot more confident, and that's when they perform at their best (and that's what colleges see).

Fourth, in American Legion Baseball we never openly disagree with the umpires or the coaches during games. Part of developing good citizenship is accepting authority, and while we may occasionally disagree with a decision it is a chance for parents to model behavior we'd like to see from our young adult. Use the moment as a learning opportunity later. Should you feel compelled to discuss the development of your young adult with the coach, please do so after practices or ask them to call you to discuss your concerns. But never do so in front of the team or on gamedays as it imparts the wrong lesson to your athlete.



Lowe's Grove American Legion Post 416 is a 501(c)(19) tax-exempt organization, and as such all contributions made can be deducted according to 26 U.S.C. 170(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Learn more about the Bull City Lollygaggers Baseball Program
at Post 416 on our webpage at
<https://al416nc.wixsite.com/al416nc/about/baseball>



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Veterans ★ Defense ★ Youth ★ Americanism ★ Community