



WITH A LITTLE HELP, Breckin Sauvage (above) lined up to hit the ball off the tee during a game last month. Tyler Nichols (below left) fielded a ball as Gage VanMeter jumped

onto first base. Jacqueline Marshall (below right) held her glove up high in the outfield.



## Young kids learn how to hit the baseball

The pitcher sends the ball across the plate. The batter swings and misses for the fifth time. A coach comes over and sets up a T to give the batter a little edge.

Welcome to T-Ball, where kids 4 to 6 learn the basics of baseball.

The Decatur County Recreation program had five teams in its T-Ball program this summer, with about 10 children on each.

Recreation Director Joe Dreher said he had about 50 boys and girls learning how to play the great American pastime each Tuesday evening in June.

The youngsters learned to hit, run the bases and field, he said, with lots of encouragement from coaches and parents. To encourage the kids, the rules for T-ball are a little different.

No three strikes and you're out. A batter doesn't get unlimited chances, he said, but the coach/pitcher will give the hitter up to eight or nine swings.

Practice starts about the third week in May, Mr. Dreher said, after the coaches have divided the youngsters into teams. If there aren't enough coaches, the director said, he gets on the phone to find more help. This year there was no problem, he added; he had lots of volunteers to coach T-ball.

No scores are kept, so everyone wins. After each game, the opposing players line up to high five the other team, just like the big kids. Then they head for the locker room, which in this case, might be a cooler under the bleachers. Each week, parents provide snacks and drinks after the games.

This year, the T-ball teams were sponsored by Stanley Hardware, Addleman Drug, Custom Trophy and Engraving, Pauls Funeral Home and the Bank.

Other youth baseball teams were sponsored by R&M Service Center, Crossroads Express, Raye's Grocery, Decatur County Feed Yard, First National Bank, Ultimate Fertilizer, Fredrickson Insurance and Countryside Veterinary Clinic.



AFTER THE GAME, members of the Stanley Hardware and Pauls Funeral Home teams high-fived each other before running off to treats.

— Herald staff photos by Sarah Marcuson