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## 'Sportys' DVD Explains Basics Of Baseball

Watching baseball is easy. Playing and understanding the rules behind it is a whole different ballgame.

Here in Florida, one of the best ways to introduce the sport is during the annual rite that is spring training, which started last week when pitchers and catchers reported for duty. Optimistic major leaguers, perfect weather and Cracker Jack create an atmosphere that children of all ages love.

But seeing elite athletes field and hit doesn't necessarily mean kids will pick up the ins and outs of the game — a reality that's frustrated plenty of Little League parents who have watched their youngsters run the bases in the wrong direction.

A new DVD, "Sportys Baseball" ([www.thesportys.com](http://www.thesportys.com), \$19.99) uses cartoon kids and live instructional video to bridge that gap.

A 21-minute cartoon — comparable to preschool shows such as Nick Jr.'s "The Backyardigans" — shows nine pals playing their

first game, thanks to a talking baseball named Stitch. He explains the basics — from player positions to the four ways you can get an out.

There's also a 30-minute instructional video with Major League Baseball hitting coach Kevin Long. He talks children through the steps necessary for fielding, base running and hitting and demonstrates them with a crew of youngsters.

Tampa Bay Rays fans also will like that the DVD comes with a poster of Sportys spokesman, 2008 Rookie of the Year and Rays third baseman Evan Longoria.

*Mary Shedden*

