



Spring T-Ball Division (5/6): Rules

Batting

- All players will hit off a tee...even those players (and parents) who think they should be hitting a pitched ball
- The batting coach should stand behind the tee to give instructions to the hitter, placing the ball on the tee when the fielding team is ready.
- No bunting allowed
- A ball hit off the tee that only travels a couple of feet in front of the plate should be called “foul” by the batting coach...and the batter should be given another chance to swing.
- The batting team should also position a coach at 1st and 3rd to assist base runners. These coaches will also serve to as the umpires, making all “safe” or “out” calls at bases. As outs are made, runners will be instructed to return to the bench.
- All players from each team will have a turn at bat every inning, regardless of how many outs have been made by the opposing team in the field.
- If the opposing teams have a different number of players present, the team with the fewest players will bat additional players to make up the difference. The additional players batted each inning must be rotated throughout the game so the *same* kids don’t get an extra “at bat” each inning.
(For example: If one team has 14 players and the other team has only 12, the team with 12 would bat their players 1 through 12 in the first inning plus allowing the 1st and 2nd batters to bat again. In the 2nd inning, the team with 12 could either start where they left off in the batting order and bat players 3 through 12, and then 1 through 4...or bat 1 through 12 again, followed by 3 and 4.)
- Coaches are free to alter their batting order each inning to prevent the last batter from being the same player each inning.
- “Last Batter”: The last batter will be treated no differently than any other batter. Once an infielder has control of the ball in the infield or at a base, coaches will hold their runners and not permit them to advance unless the runner is already halfway to a base when the ball is brought under control by the infielder. And yes, that includes holding a runner at 3rd on the last batter in lieu of scoring a run at the end of an inning! Some leagues allow the last batter to continue running until he or she is tagged out. We feel this encourages poor decision-making in the field (i.e. leftfielder running the ball to home plate) as well as reckless-abandon base running. It also penalizes a last batter who hits a nice double to the outfield with a man on second, but is then forced to run to third to get tagged out to end the inning.
- Big barrel bats are not allowed. Maximum barrel size is 2 ¼”.

Base Running

- No stealing or lead-offs are permitted.
- Runners may not advance on an overthrow at a base.
- Sliding is allowed with an emphasis on safety...no head-first slides into any base. Running over the catcher at home plate is not allowed and will result in the player being called out.
- Once an infielder has control of the ball either at a base, or inside the base paths, runners will not be allowed to advance to the next base unless the runner is already halfway to that base. For example, if a runner has just rounded 3rd when the 2nd baseman gets the ball in from the outfielder at 2nd base, the runner should be held at 3rd...regardless of whether or not he can make it safely home. If the runner continues home, he/she will be asked to return to 3rd base...unless the runner was already halfway home when the ball was brought under control. The intent of this rule is to prevent the game from turning into a “track meet” and thus encouraging errant throws around the field. The batting coach is the judge as to whether the runner was beyond the halfway mark when the ball came under control in the infield.

- Coaches, at this level, if in doubt...hold the runner. Chances are the runner will score on the next hit anyway!
- Pinch runners, as well as courtesy runners for the catcher, are not permitted unless they are due to injury. We feel strongly that when a young ballplayer earns his or her way on base, he or she deserves, and needs to learn, to run the bases.

Fielding

- The fielding team will place 5 players in conventional infield positions (no catcher). The remaining players on the fielding team will be spread out in the outfield. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield. The intent of having all players in the field is to allow more playing time...not to “create new positions”. Outfielders must play “outfield” and not be positioned as “short-fielders”. (i.e. You may not position an outfielder right behind 2nd to cover the bag.) The pitcher should stand slightly in front of the pitching mound.
- All players should be encouraged to throw (overhand) to a base if they feel they have a chance of getting an out...regardless if the player covering the base can catch it. Outfielders should be instructed to either throw the ball to a base or to the cut-off man...not the pitcher. The cut-off man can “run the ball” into the infield to stop play vs. throwing it to the pitcher.
- Fielding team coaches should be positioned behind 1st and 3rd at the edge of the grass. The fielding coaches should not attempt to field a hit or thrown ball, unless of course he is doing so to protect the safety of a child.
- Certainly at the T-ball level, coaches are encouraged to allow kids to play a variety of positions throughout the season. Of course, it’s up to the coaches whether they elect to rotate kids in the field during a game or from one game to the next. Regardless, while keeping the kids’ safety in mind, move your players around some in the field as it’s way too early in these kids’ lives to peg them as a pure infielder or outfielder.

General Rules

- Every game should begin with both teams lining up on their respective foul lines with the Home team coach offering a brief prayer. Teams should then pass by one another and shake hands...exchanging “have a good game” types of comments to their opponents to set the tone of the game for the players, coaches, parents and fans.
- The Home team is responsible for having the field ready to play at game time and for providing game balls. In the event of a rained-out game, the home team will coordinate with the visiting team and the Scheduling/Facilities team lead to schedule a make-up game.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the dugout...other than the team cooler.
- All players are to be properly dressed to play in their appropriate game uniforms. This means shirts tucked-in, hats on straight, pants pulled-up below the knee to expose the socks, black cleats, etc. This rule is intended to promote teamwork, encourage players to look like a team AND play like a team...and discourage players from developing into prima-donnas.
- If weather is a factor, use common sense in determining whether to play the game or not. Make every effort to play all games unless the safety of the children is in jeopardy.
- Base paths are 50 feet.
- If a team would like to take infield practice before the game, they should do so prior to the scheduled start time of the game, coordinating this with the opposing coach.
- Games should end after five innings or 90 minutes of play...whichever comes first. To ensure both teams get an equal number of “at-bats”, do not start a new inning after 1 hr. 15 minutes of play.
- All coaches should make an extra effort to ensure the safety of the kids during practices and games. Accidents will happen, but let’s make sure it’s not due to anything we as coaches could have prevented. For example...
 - Please make sure all batters and runners keep their helmets on until they get back inside their dugout.
 - On-deck hitters should always be well behind the hitter regardless of which dugout their team is in. (i.e. On-deck hitters should be on the 1st base side when a left-handed hitter is at bat and on the 3rd base side when a right-handed hitter is at bat.
 - All other players, including the batter “in-the-hole”, should remain inside the dugout.

- When a “strong” hitter steps up to the plate, the batting coach should alert the opposing team that a big hitter is up. The fielding coach might want to encourage his players to take a step or two back.
- Don’t play a kid at first base who’s afraid of catching a thrown ball.
- Scorekeeping is not necessary in T-Ball. Who “won” and who “lost” should not be the primary focus of the game. The focus instead should be on demonstrating good fundamental baseball skills, extra effort and continuous improvement. Remember, the coach sets the tone for the degree of focus on “winning & losing”. Kids are smarter and more attentive than we sometimes realize. Kids notice when a coach inquires about the score or urges his team to “catch up”. If the coach puts too much emphasis on the score...then so will the kids. We should all be able to make this fun and instructional, while at the same time allowing for healthy competition.
- After the game, players should line up on their respective foul lines in single file to congratulate their opponents. Of course, all comments should be encouraging in nature (ie. “good game”), with no remarks about who won or lost.
- Any conduct of a player or parent causing a problem should be corrected by his/her coach only.
- Kids should be encouraged to cheer “for” their teammates, as well as their opponents. Chatter directed “against” the opponents is not permitted. This goes for parents as well.
- If a player is ejected from a game, he will not be allowed to play in the next game. If a coach is ejected from a game, he must leave the park immediately and will not be allowed to attend the next two games. If a coach is ejected twice in one season, he will be removed as coach of that team for the remainder of the season.
- Trophy Guidelines (End of season): At the T-Ball and Rookie levels, if parents would like to pool their resources and purchase some type of modest participation memento (i.e. Baseball on a trophy pedestal for players and coaches to sign one another’s, plaque with team picture, etc), that’s fine. At the 9 and up levels, however, we would encourage trophies to be limited to “achievements” like winning a championship or making All-Stars...so these mementos actually hold some special meaning over time.
- **NO TOBACCO or ALCOHOL** products of any kind are allowed on the playing field, or in the dugout, at games or practices. Coaches and parents...use good judgment here. Impressionable kids, who look up to you, are watching.

Of course, these rules cannot possibly cover everything that can happen out on the field. If ever in doubt on a rule, simply put the kids’ best interest at heart, and let good judgment prevail.

First, and foremost, all coaches should remember that the game is for the kids....not the adults. Our primary goal at this level is to build strong character, have fun and ensure that the players have such a good experience that they come back again next year for another fun-filled season of baseball. It is also incumbent on us as coaches that we concentrate on teaching these kids good, sound fundamental baseball skills that will help them reach their full God-given potential as a ballplayer.

Please remember...as the coach, you set the tone for your players and their parents. Please take time along the way to teach your players, both in words and in actions, not only about the game of baseball...but also important “faith-based” life lessons (i.e. sportsmanship, teamwork, perseverance, sacrifice, hard work, etc.) that will serve them well in all facets of their life. Team devotionals are both a privilege and an integral component of Stewards of the Game baseball.....so please seize the precious opportunities you have as a coach to share your heart for Christ with your players.

So... work hard, play fair...and HAVE FUN!! And remember, the kids are watching!

Thanks again for all your time and effort in coaching baseball!

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