



Spring Minors Division (9/10): Baseball Rules

Batting

- Real baseball rules except for:
 - Five balls / Three strikes
 - All players will remain in the batting lineup throughout the game. If a player comes late to the game, that player will be inserted at the bottom of the line-up without a penalty.
 - Infield fly rule not in effect
 - Dropped 3rd strike rule not in effect...batter is out regardless if catcher catches the 3rd strike or not.
 - 10 run rule per inning. Once the 10th run is scored in a single inning, we will retire the side regardless of the number of outs. Any runs scored in excess of 10 on the last hit of an inning will not be counted in the scorebook. There is no run limit in the last inning of a game.
 - Big barrel bats are not allowed. Maximum barrel size is 2 ¼”.

Base Running

- No lead-offs are permitted.
- Stealing is permitted once the ball has crossed the plate. If in the umpire’s judgment, the first time a runner leaves early, the runner will have to go back. After a player receives one such warning on “leaving early”, he will be called out on subsequent infractions in that game.
- Runners may steal home...either on a passed ball, lazy throw back from the catcher or a pitcher caught sleeping on the mound.
- Any ball thrown back to the pitcher is live; runners can advance at their own risk on an overthrow.
- Sliding is allowed with an emphasis on safety. Head-first slides are not allowed; except for a runner diving back to a base that he has already reached safely. If a runner attempts a head-first slide into a base he has not yet reached safely, he will be called out.
- Running over the catcher at home plate is not allowed...and will result in the player being called-out and ejected from the game.
- Runners are awarded one base on any ball that goes under the fence, under the backstop, in a dugout, etc.
- 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.
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Pitching

- Pitching Distance: 46’
- No balks will be called.
- Pitchers can throw no more than 3 innings per day. A single pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning.
- Regardless of innings pitched, pitchers in this age division can throw no more than 50 pitches per day. Coaches are responsible for monitoring pitch counts...and must remove the pitcher from the mound when he reaches the 50 pitch limit. No pitcher may pitch to a new batter after his pitch count has reached 50 pitches. Once a pitcher reaches 50 pitches, he may finish pitching to that batter....but **MUST** then be taken off the mound after that at-bat, regardless of the situation
- Scorekeepers should be encouraged to keep count of balls, strikes and total pitch counts for both teams. In the event the pitch count gets away from the head coach of the pitcher, a reminder

from the opposing coach is appropriate. But let's not have that happen. Bottom line...keep track of your pitchers' pitch counts. Winning a game is not worth wearing out a kid's arm for life!

- Once a pitcher throws at least 30 pitches (and up to the 50 pitch limit), he must have 48 hours rest before his next outing on the mound. (i.e. A pitcher who throws anywhere from 30-50 pitches on Saturday evening cannot pitch again until Monday evening.)
- Intentional walks are not allowed
- Pitchers must be removed from the mound after hitting 3 batters in a game and will not be allowed to pitch again in that game.
- Pitchers must be removed from the mound upon a coach's second trip to the mound in an inning. They cannot return to the mound that same inning.
- When a pitcher is removed from the mound, he can return to the mound again in a later inning of the game. However, his pitch count and innings pitched from earlier in the game count towards his game maximums.
- Catchers will catch no more than 4 innings per game.
- No player can pitch or catch a combination of more than 4 innings in total per day. (For instance, if a catcher catches three innings, he can only pitch one. If he pitches two, then he can only catch two.) Pitching and catching in the same inning counts as only one inning towards the 4 inning pitch/catch limit.

Fielding

- Each team can only play 9 players in the field at one time.
- A player may not stay on the bench more than 1 consecutive inning when they are playing the field. Every player on the team does not have to sit out an inning. . (Exception: If a player misses both practices prior to a game without providing his coach advanced notice of his absence, and then the player shows up for the game...the player can be benched at the coach's discretion. The coach should alert the opposing coach prior to the game if this occurs.)
- Free substitution is allowed in the field throughout the game
- 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.
- All catchers are required to wear conventional catcher's gear. Catcher's masks must have some type of throat guard. Catchers must wear cups...good idea to encourage all players to do so.

General Rules / Guidelines

- Every game should begin with both teams lining up on their respective foul lines with the Home team coach offering an opening 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, the Scheduling/Facilities team lead and the head umpire 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. If a game is called in progress by the head umpire due to the weather before the end of the 4th inning, then the game will rescheduled by the home team coach. When the game is rescheduled, the game will resume at the precise point where it left off; with the score, count, pitch counts, substitutions, etc resuming where you left them at the point of the rain delay. If a player was not in attendance at the original game, he cannot play in the make-up game. If a game is called in progress by the head umpire due to the weather after the end of the 4th inning, the game will be called and not

replayed. The score at the end of the last complete inning will prevail as the final score and outcome of the game. If the game was tied, it goes down in the records book as a tie.

- Base paths are 60 feet.
- A team must have at least 8 players to start an “official” game. However, an “out” will be recorded each inning when the missing 9th batter is due up. If a team starts a game with 8 players, and a player gets hurt...they may finish the game with less than 8 players; but will record outs for the missing players below nine. In the event a team has less than eight players to start a game, a scrimmage game should be played...but the game is officially a forfeit. 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...and being respectful of one another’s warm-up time. Live batting practice is not allowed on the game field before the game. Either find a batting cage, another vacant field...or use your whiffle balls to warm-up your players’ bats on one side of the outfield before the game.
- If a player is hurt during the game and is not able to bat when his turn comes you may skip to the next batter without penalty. He retains his position in the batting order and may bat again later in the game if he recovers.
- A game is complete after six innings of play. Only ties will continue after 6 innings of play. , assuming there is sufficient light to continue play. If play must be called due to darkness, and the game is tied, the game will be recorded as a tie game in the standings...and will not be replayed on another day.
- No new inning will be started after 1 hr. 45 minutes. An inning officially starts when the 3rd out of the prior inning is recorded. In the final inning of play, if the visiting team is ahead after they bat, the home team will be allowed to complete their at-bat. If the visiting team is behind after their at-bat in the last inning, the game will be called and the home team will not bat.
- Both coaches should make a concerted effort to move the game along quickly. Get the players on and off the field quickly between innings and limit warm-up pitches before innings to 6 or less pitches. The clock is an unnatural, but necessary, part of youth baseball. Coaches must resist the temptation to intentionally slow down a game to limit the number of innings played in order to secure a win.
- The game will be called after 4 complete innings if a team is ahead by 10 or more runs. (3.5 innings if the home team is ahead)
- Mercy Rule: If the 2-hour time limit has expired and one team is 15 runs ahead, the game will be called automatically regardless of how many innings have been played...or who is at bat. If the visiting team is at bat and ahead by 15 or more runs when the time limit expires, the game will still be called and the home team will not get to bat in the final inning.
- Defensive coaches must remain in the dugout, or just outside the fence...and are not allowed on the field unless time has been called. Offensive coaches should remain in the 1st and 3rd base coaches’ box area. The other offensive coach must be in the dugout. Teams may only have a total of three coaches on the field, or in the dugout.
- 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.
- 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 by the umpire, he will not be allowed to play in the next game. If a player loses his temper and throws his bat, helmet, glove, etc, then his coach should immediately put him on the bench for the rest of the game....don’t wait for the umpire to make that call.

- 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 9 and up levels, 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. Stewards of the Game will provide end of season trophies for Regular Season Champions, Tournament Champions, Tournament Runner-Ups and All-Star players at the end of the season.
- **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!

Revised: 1-29-06

Special Post-Season Tournament Rules

- Early-Round Games: No new inning is started after 2 hours.
- Championship Game: No time limit....full six inning game.
- No run rule per inning. 10-run rule is replaced with a 15-run mercy rule after 2 hours of play.
- Regular season pitching and catching rules still apply in tournament play.
- Highest seed from regular season play will be home team in post-season tournament games.
- Each team to supply one game ball at each tournament game.