

## A. Rookie Baseball / Softball Local Rules

### 1. General Rules

- a. Normal baseball & softball rules apply, except for specifically noted within the By-Laws, NBR Rules and below.
- b. Each team must field a minimum of eight (8) players to avoid a forfeit. These eight players must be ready to play no later than 10 minutes following the scheduled start time.

### 2. Pitching Machine

- a. **The pitching machine** concept has been added to demonstrate the positive playing effects which will directly affect players at this younger level. Fear of actually being hit by a pitched ball is eliminated and makes the game safer, more fun, and improves playing confidence and ability of all participants.
  - b. Pitching will be machine pitch via use of mechanical pitching machines provided by the league. Teams may opt to use other pitching machines and/or coach pitch provided that BOTH coaches agree prior to the start of the game. Pitching machines will be placed so that the **front** legs of the pitching machine are directly behind the pitching rubber or forty-six (46') feet from the front of home plate. Pitching machines should be anchored when possible using tent stakes or sandbags to produce consistent performance. Pitch speed should be set so as to produce consistent performance and should be agreed upon by both coaches prior to the start of the game.
  - c. If machine malfunctions, umpire may declare "no pitch" and the pitch will be done over
- 3. Player Roster:** A suggested 12-man roster with all players placed in the batting order. (Game can be played with as few as 8 players)
- a. A fourth outfielder and fifth infielder will be placed on the field defensively.
  - b. A player is placed on either side of the pitching machine assuming the defensive position of the pitcher.
  - c. The catcher takes his normal position.
  - d. This now means 11 players have been placed on the field defensively. The extra 12<sup>th</sup> player is in the batting order and will be placed in the field defensively after the first inning. With each new inning the team coach must rotate the extra player in the field and a new player sits on the bench for the next half inning.
  - e. Using this concept, no player is permitted to sit on the bench more than once unless a special situation warrants such action, and is usually an injury. This allows all players to take part in almost the entire game. At this age level it is most important players actively participate every moment and not waste time sitting on the bench and growing bored.
- 4. Game Length:**
- a. A regulation game is six innings..
  - b. A called game is complete if 3 ½ or 4 innings are completed.
  - c. No new inning will start after 1hr 40 minutes or six innings, whichever comes first.
- 5. Field Dimension:** Standard youth base lengths of 60 feet; the pitching machine is placed at 46 feet. (If the machine is set for a slower speed then the machine will have to be placed closer.)
- 6. Umpires:** Only one umpire is necessary since the calling of balls and strikes is eliminated. (At this level the TTCC suggests using a parent or coach as an umpire – no umpires are supplied at this level) The pitching machine always throws strikes. The umpire may be used to feed the machine and at the same time act as the base umpire. Much time is saved in this area as time for the warm-up pitches between innings and umpire/coaches discussions are eliminated.
- 7. Playing Rules:**
- a. Normal youth baseball rules are applied with the exception stealing will not be permitted.

- b. The basic concept of this type of program is to make the game **safer, more fun** and **interesting** for these young players by using the proper-sized, safer equipment and keeping their interest active in playing baseball. The idea of placing 11 players in the field or having a 12-player batting line-up may be “nontraditional baseball,” but at this age level tradition should not be considered. Keeping all the kids safely in the game all of the time should be our primary concern. The Rookie League program equalizes the main problem, the pitching domination of bigger players versus the average or small sized players. **Hitting, fielding and running the bases** are the primary objectives of this concept.
- c. FAILURE to promote and provide a safer and genuine interest for the game opens the door for these very same youngsters to seek out another activity, which may provide more fun for them. Babe Ruth League, Inc. highly encourages the Rookie League concept because it betters the game from the kid’s point of view, rather than the coaches.

## **8. Coach Positioning**

- a. While on offense, coaches are allowed on the field as first and third base coaches, to feed the pitching machine, and to back up the catcher. Other than the pitcher, no other coach may be in fair territory. Coach at the pitching machine must remain silent when ball is fed into the machine until umpire calls time. Coach may instruct batter from the machine just prior to the pitch.
- b. The manager of the team can allow parents to back up home plate, as well as serve as a dugout coach.
- c. While on defense only two coaches are allowed on the field. They can position themselves in foul territory approximately where first base and third base coach’s box would be. They cannot stand in fair territory. Prior to the start of each inning, coaches are permitted on the field to position their Players, but after each inning starts, coaches are not permitted in fair territory to position their player; they must offer verbal instructions except as noted below.
  - i. A coach may be stationed beyond the infielders in order to provide instruction to all defensive players.
- d. Coach at pitching machine must make an attempt to get out of the player’s way when fielding or throwing. Standing straight up and forcing a player to throw over the coach is not displaying good sportsmanship. In the umpires’ judgment if the coach intentionally hinders a player fielding or throwing the ball interference may be called.

## **9. Batting**

- a. All players are in the batting order (continuous batting order). The batting order may not change after the game is started. TIP: Set one lineup for the entire year. The player up after the last out in the previous game leads off in the next game. (You will be amazed at the positive impact this has on all the kids and especially the parents.)
- b. Each batter receives a maximum of five pitches. If the ball has not been hit into fair territory, then the batter is out.
- c. If a player swings and misses at three pitchers, the player is out. Third strike foul balls do not constitute an out unless the pitch count is five pitches.
- d. There is a seven (7) run limit per inning.
- e. Bunting (intentional) is not allowed during any part of the game.
- f. Any ball hitting the pitching machine will be declared a dead ball. Batter and each runner will be awarded one base.

## **10. Defensive Positioning**

- a. The defense may field 11 players. Before the additional 2 players are positioned, the normal 9 positions must be filled. These would be: a fourth outfielder and fifth infielder (2<sup>nd</sup> defensive pitcher)
- b. If a team has 13 players, 11 will be on the field defensively and two will have to sit out each inning. A different player must sit out each inning. No player should sit out more

than 1 inning. All players will be in the batting order. If a team has 11 or less, all players will play defensively and be in the batting order.

- c. The defensive pitcher/pitchers must be positioned with at least one shoe inside the dirt portion of the pitcher's mound, but may not be closer to home plate than the pitching rubber and should be either to the 1st base or 3rd base or both sides of the mound.
- d. The defensive catcher is a legitimate defensive player and can field 'short' hits. He is positioned directly behind home plate.
- e. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd basemen and the shortstop may be no closer to home plate than 3 feet inside the baseline (or at the grass line), which is the imaginary line connecting the bases. Defensive players must give the right of way to the runner. They may only "charge" once the ball is in play.
- f. Only 7 players (pitchers, catcher, 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, shortstop, and 3rd baseman) can play infield. It is the responsibility of the umpire to check positioning. Only infielders can make a play in the infield (i.e.: an outfielder can not intentionally run in on a batted ball and cover a base for a force play or to make a tag). An outfielder is allowed to back up a base and in case of an overthrow or a 'pickle' situation get involved in the play. The will be an umpires judgment call dependent on the situation and the result (if deemed intentional coverage on a batted ball) will be that the runner is safe on the play for the location where the outfielder was covering.
- g. Outfielders, including the extra defensive players, must be positioned fifteen feet (15') beyond the grass line at the start of the outfield or the imaginary baseline connecting 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases (whichever is greater).
- h. Each player must play in the field for 1 complete inning (3 OUTS IN THE SAME INNING or 6 RUNS) prior to the 4th inning. If on a team with 13 players, the inning that a player is on the bench (not in the game) will be considered as his/her playing an inning in the outfield. Failure to meet this requirement results in forfeiture of the game. If a player arrives after an inning is played, he/she will be considered to have played in the outfield during the inning that he/she was not present. If a player arrives in the middle of the first inning, he/she should be placed in the outfield and it will be considered that he/she played the outfield that entire inning. If he/she is placed in the infield, it will be considered that he/she played the infield that entire inning.

#### **11. Beginning and Ending Play**

- a. Any ball hit by a batter, fair or foul, is in play regardless of distance (per normal baseball rules).
- b. When the coach is pitching, he/she must attempt to move themselves into foul territory away from the ball during the play (after the ball is hit), until play ends.
- c. If at any time during the game a coach pitcher accidentally interferes with the ball in play, the play is void and treated as never occurring. The players return to their previous positions, the play is 'done over', and the pitch count does not change. If the coach interferes intentionally, the batter or runner is out.
- d. Play is ended and time out occurs when the defensive player-pitcher (NOT the coach pitcher) has control of the ball in the pitcher's mound dirt, and is not attempting a defensive play. Play is then stopped when the umpire verbally calls "time-out". The player-pitcher should request time out from the umpire by raising his hands and yelling 'time' (when he has the ball and is in the proper location)
- e. Play can also be ended by the umpire calling 'time-out' at any time he deems necessary, positioning of runners will be determined by the halfway rule as defined below.
- f. The umpire may call time out when, in his judgment, play has stopped and there is no action occurring on the field (i.e.: batter hits a single and relay comes to 2nd base where 2nd baseman walks runner back to first. As runner has stopped and cannot advance, umpire can call time out due to no action on the field. However, if there is

also a runner on 3rd base at this same time, stopping the play at 1st base may not stop the action as the runner on 3rd could score while the ball is being held at 1st base. The umpire will determine (his judgment) when play has stopped.)

- g.** The advancement of the runners is determined by their position in the base path at the time the play is ended and time-out called by the umpire, as per above. The determination point is the mid-point between the bases. The runner must earn the next base. He should never stop halfway as he can be tagged out if the play is still ongoing. Once the umpire calls 'Time out', the play is ended and the runner cannot be tagged out and he is either sent to the next base or returned to the previous base dependent on their position.
- h.** At the point play is ended and the runner is not halfway between any two bases, then he must return to the previous base.
- i.** Conversely, if the runner is halfway or further, he is entitled to the base he was running towards, this is of course assuming he is entitled to that base as per the instructions above. The umpire will make this determination on the field.

## **12. Base Running**

- a.** Sliding is permitted. Care should be used to teach the players how to slide safely. 'Taking Out' a defensive player or spiking is strictly prohibited.
- b.** Leading off and stealing is prohibited. The runner can only leave the base when the batter puts the ball in play.
- c.** Tagging up (after a caught fly ball) is permitted.
- d.** Running out of the base path and runner interference should be enforced.
- e.** Infield Fly rule is not enforced.

## **13. Overthrows**

- a.** In the event of an overthrow, the runner may advance only ONE base beyond the base he was attempting at the time of the overthrow. The advancement is at the runner's own risk, and he/she can be tagged out.
- b.** An overthrow is defined as a dropped or passed ball during a defensive attempt to throw out a runner at any base. This includes any passed ball that may come to rest in the infield, outfield or foul territory after the defensive attempt.
- c.** A relay from one player to another, which is dropped, is not an overthrow; play is continued until ended by the player-pitcher controlling the ball on the mound or the defensive team stopping the offensive players from any further advancement. Only defensive attempts to throw out a runner at a base can result in an overthrow.
- d.** Multiple overthrows CANNOT occur on the same play; a player may not advance on a second overthrow.
- e.** The base advance must be earned, whereby if the runner chooses not to attempt the next base, the base is not automatically awarded. (EXAMPLE) - The batter hits the ball to the shortstop, who fields the ball and throws to first base. The first baseman misses the ball; the batter/runner can now advance to second base at his own risk. First baseman retrieves the ball, throws to second base, where the second baseman misses the ball. The runner may not advance any further.
- f.** Balls thrown to the pitcher (so that play can be stopped) are considered as live balls and NOT an overthrow. Runners can advance multiple bases on an overthrow to the pitcher.