

2021 Fall Ball

Rookie Ball Rules

Rookie Ball Rules “Handbook”

Welcome to 2021 Fall Ball Rookie Ball and thank you for volunteering as a coach. Coaching youth sports is an exciting and rewarding way to be involved with youth sports. It is not always easy though.

This handbook will assist you with some basic information and rules for Rookie Ball.

First off - why do we call it Rookie Ball. In the past this division has been called both Machine Pitch and Coach Pitch. There has long been a discussion around the mechanism of pitching adhering to whatever the division was called - rather than focusing on the skill development and fun of the players. We called it Rookie Ball so that coaches can have the discretion on either choosing the Pitching Machine OR having the coach Pitch.

Head Coach: The Head Coach is to be the communicator with the team and between other Head Coaches for deciding cancellations due to weather. The head coach should also prepare a practice plan for practices.

Weather Conditions: The head coaches from the 2 teams scheduled to play are to decide between them if they need to cancel due to bad weather. This decision should be left until late afternoon (between 4:30 and 5:00) as the weather changes so quickly.

Machine Pitch General Information

- Practice time is allocated on the weekdays. You each have a Diamond and Day scheduled - you may use the diamond at any time you would like on your scheduled day.
- Each child is to have their own batting helmet and glove.
- Batting Helmets, Protective Cups, and catching gear must be worn.
- The home team is responsible for setting up and taking down the diamond (i.e. pitching machine if wanted, bases, plate. No base lines will need to be painted/chalked. It is recommended that you create a volunteer schedule for 2 or 3 parents to take care of this for each home game.
- The home team shall take the bench along the 1st baseline and the visiting team will take the bench along the 3rd baseline.
- Each team shall provide a coach/parent operator as either the machine pitch operator or the Coach Pitcher for their turn at bat. Only adults may operate the machine.
- Teams must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game. If a team is only able to field eight (8) players at the start of the game, the ninth (9th) batter shall be declared out when it is the ninth (9th) batter's turn at bat. If you have less than the prerequisite number of players, share players amongst both team - the important thing is to get the kids playing!

General Rules

3 outs per inning as per little league rules, Maximum 6 inning game or 1 ½ hr time limit.

Scoring: 5 runs maximum. No Stats will be kept.

Bases: Bases should be a distance of 60 feet apart.

Batting: All players will bat in the lineup and must wear a batting helmet when on the bench, at bat or

on base. Sit the players on the bench in the batting order. No one should have a bat in their hands until it is their turn to bat. There should be no horsing around on the bench.

A pitching 'machine' or Coach Pitcher will be used to deliver the pitches. A maximum of 7 pitches will be used for each player, therefore the player has to try to make contact with the ball. If a player does not hit the ball after 7 pitches they shall be called out.

Have 7 balls at the machine, to avoid waiting on the catcher and throwing balls back to the pitcher and machine operator.

If the batter hits a foul ball on the 7th pitch he is entitled to another pitch.

If the batter receives a pitch that is deemed un-hittable by the machine operator/Coach Pitcher, the pitch shall not be counted as one of their 7 pitches.

There are no walks.

No bunting.

A batter who is hit by a pitch is either entitled to first base or can remain at the plate to hit as determined by the coach's assessment of the player's status.

Throwing of Bats: A batter who throws a bat is to be given a warning the first time and if he does this again he is to be called out.

On deck: For safety reasons, there is no on-deck circle. No practice swings until up to bat.

Base Running: Mandatory sliding is in effect for close plays at home plate. Players are expected and should be encouraged to slide at any base, other than first, whenever there is a play. No head first slides.

Stealing: There is no leading off or stealing at this level Runners cannot advance once an infielder is in control of the ball.

Defensive play: Recommend that defensive players are rotated each inning. No player is to sit out more than 2 innings.

Every player should have the opportunity to play every position, however coaches are responsible for safety and not all players may be able to play each position without risk of injury.

Throws: Every attempt must be made to throw the ball to make a defensive play. It is highly recommended that this be taught to help develop the player and better prepare them for the next level of play.

If an overthrow occurs at 1st or 3rd base runners are entitled to the base they were approaching at the time of the throw (regardless of whether the ball remains in play or not).

The pitcher is to be positioned on either side of the pitching machine/coach pitcher, but not in front of it and may not move until the ball is hit.

Defensive coaches are encouraged to be on the field to help direct play, teach kids, and keep their focus. Any balls contacting a coach will be declared a dead ball and players may advance to the base they were running to at the time of contact

Catchers: Must wear full catcher's equipment.

Coaching and Practice Tips

1. Make your players' safety your #1 concern at all times.
2. Make every player feel like an important member of the team.
3. Teach every player some basic baseball skills.
4. Be patient with your players. Especially when teaching new skills. Baseball skills take years to develop.
5. Encourage team spirit and camaraderie. Praise the performance of your team and players.
6. Every improvement, however small, deserves a compliment.
7. Try to make practices more fun and interesting for all your players. Plan practices and keep them moving and organized.
8. Don't assume anything, go over all the basics: Where all the bases are, the defensive positions, which way to run to first, when to start and stop running, how to hold a bat and glove etc.