

Rookie Ball House League Rules

Wexford - Agincourt Baseball League

1. PURPOSE

ROOKIE BALL BASEBALL is a game of baseball which uses a pitching machine as the pitcher. It is played between two teams of 10 players, with a sufficient number of alternatives under the direction of at least one manager and/or coach using special Playing Rules called ROOKIE BALL Rules under the authority of an umpire on a regulation sized ROOKIE BALL playing field.

1. Rules Common to all age groups

1.1. CONDUCT

1.1.1. UMPIRES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL. NO PROTESTS WILL BE ALLOWED.

1.1.2. The actions of players, manager, coaches and parents must be consistent with the spirit, principles and objectives of good sportsmanship. Participants in a scheduled game are not permitted to deliberately harass or direct any discourteous remarks at the officials or any member of the opposing team. Conversations with officials regarding judgements, rules, or other game situations must be conducted only after calling a timeout, and must be conducted in normal speaking terms away from the players.

1.1.3. Participants engaging in conduct unfavourable to good sportsmanship will be warned. Persisting in such conduct may result in ejection.

1.1.4. Managers and coaches are responsible for the conduct of their parents and spectators. If such conduct by a parent or spectator is clearly attributable to a particular team, managers or coaches may be warned or ejected for the conduct of the parent or spectator.

1.1.5. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the playing field, benches and dugouts.

1.2. GAME START AND END

1.2.1. Games start at the time scheduled (6:30 p.m. for most house league games) if umpires are present on the field. Home plate umpire may delay the official time if umpires are late, and will announce the official time at the home plate meeting. At least 8 players must be present 15 minutes after the scheduled time, throughout the game or the game will be defaulted. *If only one team has the minimum number of players at game start, that team becomes the home team regardless of scheduled home team. Play is to begin at game start time with players present.* If neither team has the minimum 8 players 15 minutes after the scheduled start time, then both teams will receive a loss. The game will not be rescheduled. Delays due to late players do not affect Game Start Time or Curfew Time.

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- 1.2.2. A Regulation Game will consist of seven (7) complete innings. There will be no extra innings. In case of a tie each team will be awarded one (1) point.
- 1.2.3. No inning will start after 1 hour 45 minutes from the scheduled start time (Curfew time, usually 8:15 for house league games). Unless a hard stop has been imposed because of a subsequent game on the same diamond, any inning started must be finished, subject to rules regarding weather and darkness below. If the home team is ahead, the bottom half of an inning started after curfew is not played.
- 1.2.4. When lightning is sighted, the home plate umpire will rule the game is over. Players and coaches will be asked to leave the playing field immediately. The game will be re-scheduled unless complete game criteria have been satisfied (see 1.2.5).
- 1.2.5. The home plate umpire, or either coach, may call the game because of darkness or bad weather, if in his judgment, it is not safe to play. If a game is called due to bad weather or darkness, it will be considered a complete game if
  - \* curfew has been reached
  - \* 2 1/2 innings have been completed, home team is winning or tied.
  - \* Three (3) innings have been completed, home team is behind.

If the game is called because of darkness or bad weather, the score will revert back to the last complete inning, unless the home team is at bat, and winning or tied.
- 1.2.6. If a game is called due to darkness or bad weather before complete game criteria have been reached, the game will be rescheduled in its entirety. The coaches must inform the Convenor, who will advise the coaches of a new date. This applies to games which may or may not have started to be played.

### 1.3. COMMUNICATION

- 1.3.1. Playing conditions vary and some games are cancelled in advance. The League Website ([www.wexfordbaseball.com](http://www.wexfordbaseball.com)) will be updated when weather conditions warrant, indicating whether games are cancelled in advance. Please check there first if there are concerns about conditions.
- 1.3.2. Coaches will be informed by their convenor, etc.
- 1.3.3. Reporting Scores. Coaches log to the League Website. Under 'Today's Games', there is an option to report the score of the game.
- 1.3.4. Reporting Problems (Equipment, Umpires, Conduct) . When submitting scores, include any comments relating to the game, equipment, conduct of participants or spectators that need attention or comment.

1.4. GENERAL PLAYING RULES NOT SPECIFIC TO ROOKIE BALL

- 1.4.1. Out of bounds. An imaginary extension of the backstop fences along the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base sides of the field defines the playing area. Overthrows past these imaginary extensions will be ruled out of bounds, and play will be stopped. Catches in the out of bounds area will not be considered outs, and will be ruled foul balls.
- 1.4.2. The on deck batter, the batter and base runners must wear a prescribed protective helmet with flaps covering both ears. Chin straps are mandatory and will be worn as designed by the manufacturer.
- 1.4.3. Shoes with metal cleats are prohibited. Penalty, player is removed from the game until satisfactory footwear is worn.
- 1.4.4. Catchers are required to wear full catcher's gear during the game and during any warm-ups. Catcher's mitt: To be used only by the catcher (optional in Rookie Ball).
- 1.4.5. Athletic supporter required for all players. Penalty, player to be removed from the game until proper equipment is worn.
- 1.4.6. In addition to wooden bats, metal bats shall be allowed. These bats shall meet the dimensional requirements, specified in Rule 1:10 of the Official Rules of Baseball. The maximum diameter of the bat barrel is 2-3/4".
- 1.4.7. Players must wear team sweater, pants and hat. All regular coaches must wear coach's sweater and hat. If all coaches are not present at a game, assisting parent will not be required to have a sweater, but should wear a hat if one is available. All players must wear long pants. Before the game begins, each manager must give a copy of his/her batting line up to the official scorekeeper. The Home team manager designates the Official Scorekeeper.
- 1.4.8. All players present for the game shall be in the batting line up. Players not present may not be listed. If a player shows up late, the player will be placed at the end of the batting order. If a player leaves the game, (e.g. due to injury), the spot in the batting order is skipped (not recorded as an out) and the player may not return.
- 1.4.9. All players must play equal defensive time. No player may sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning. No player may sit out a third inning until all players have sat out two innings and so on. No player may sit out two innings in a row. A supplementary score sheet is available from the league with space to record the defensive player rotation and teams are encouraged to check the defensive rotations during each inning by inning check.

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### 2. Rookie Ball Specific Rules

Regular OBA baseball rules apply on points not mentioned in these rules.

#### 2.1. Game Preparations and Equipment

- 2.1.1. The base lengths are 65 feet;
- 2.1.2. The diagonal measurements (1st to 3rd base or home plate to centre of 2nd base) are 91 feet, 11 inches;
- 2.1.3. A safety base (double bag) may be used at first base with the white base in fair territory and the coloured base in foul territory. If used, the coloured part of the bag is for the use of the batter/runner, the white part of the bag is for the use of the fielders. On a play where a collision is possible, a batter/runner may be called out for failure to use the correct part of the bag. Similarly, a runner may be called safe if the fielder fails to use the correct part of the bag on a play where a collision is possible. For plays not involving a potential collision, either part of the bag is acceptable.
- 2.1.4. The pitching machine is placed directly in front of home plate at a distance of 44 feet. Speed is set to between 35 and 40 mph (setting is marked on faceplate).
- 2.1.5. An 8-foot diameter safety circle shall be marked off directly in front of home plate and its centre shall be 44 feet from home plate. No play is permitted inside the Safety Circle, which is considered a Dead Ball area (not Out of Bounds).
- 2.1.6. The electrical cord or generator used to power the pitching machine must be placed so as not to interfere with play outside the safety circle. Electrical cord (if used) must run under the ground from the pitching machine to the electrical outlet on the 3rd base side of the diamond. Generator will be below or behind the pitching machine.
- 2.1.7. The Home team is responsible for setup of the diamond and pitching machine prior to the scheduled start time, and is responsible for equipment return at the end of the game. The visiting team must have the opportunity to review and agree to pitching machine set up (aim and speed) before the game starts.
- 2.1.8. The home team is responsible for providing one new ball and one good ball for each game, and sufficient replacements as necessary for balls damaged or lost during play. Any baseball approved for Mosquito play may be used.
- 2.1.9. The catcher may use either a catcher's mitt or a regular baseball glove.

#### 2.2. Defensive Play

- 2.2.1. Each team may field a catcher, 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, 3rd baseman, shortstop, left fielder, a right fielder, a pitcher, and two centre fielders in the line-up.
- 2.2.2. The pitcher must stand beside the pitching machine outside of the safety circle, and behind the release point of the pitching machine. The pitcher must be within 4 feet of the safety circle until the ball is released from the

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machine. The pitcher must wear a regulation batting helmet with an attached chin strap.

- 2.2.3. Before the ball is hit, 1st, 2nd, 3rd base and shortstop must stand in the dirt area behind the base lines. Outfielders must stand in the grass area. Once the ball is hit, fielders may move where appropriate to make a play.
- 2.2.4. Prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, the defensive team will be allowed no more than 2 coaches in the outfield grass area, to give verbal instruction to the fielders. The coaches are not to interfere with the ball or the play of the game. The penalties for intentional interference shall be: 1) the batter is awarded a double, 2) runners are awarded 2 bases from time of pitch, 3) the defensive team is charged with an out during their next turn at bat. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, coaches are restricted to the bench/dugout area, and the usual 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> base coaching positions, when on offense
- 2.2.5. Every player must play at least 1 inning in the outfield and at least 1 inning in the infield in each game. Defensive substitution may be made in the case of injury. No player shall play at the same position for more than two innings in each game. For purposes of this rule, catcher is considered an outfield position, giving 5 infield and 5 outfield positions each inning.
- 2.2.6. Any coach found using defensive players improperly will be assessed an automatic team out during their next at bat and have the proper player placed on the field immediately. Continual violation of this rule may result in ejection or suspension.
- 2.2.7. Appeals. A defensive team that wishes to appeal a missed base or tag up while the ball is live may do so in the ordinary manner by throwing to the base in question and asking the umpire for judgement. When the ball is dead, the defensive coach or pitcher may simply ask the umpire for a ruling by indicating the base and player (by number or name) in question.

### 2.3. Offensive Play (Batter and Runners)

- 2.3.1. An inning shall be three (3) outs or maximum of five (5) runs. When the fifth run has crossed home plate the inning is over even if there are fewer than 3 out.
- 2.3.2. Each batter shall receive a maximum of 5 pitches as called by the Home plate umpire. If a batter does not hit a fair ball within 5 pitches, the batter is called out. NOTE: if a pitch is clearly unhittable (e.g. crosses the plate over a batter's head or bounces into the dirt, or is clearly not over the plate), the HP umpire will not count it as a pitch unless the batter swings at the pitch.
- 2.3.3. The Pitching machine's speed and aim cannot be altered except at the end of an inning. If the machine is malfunctioning it may be adjusted at the discretion of the umpire. Any tampering with the machine by the coach feeding the machine shall result in a warning on the first offence and ejection on additional offences. Adults operating the pitching machine may instruct the batter before feeding the machine. (Penalty, warning on first offence,

removed from the game on repeated violations).

- 2.3.4. If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, generator, electrical cord, or adult in the safety circle, or a fielder making a defensive play makes contact with the ball inside the safety circle, then the ball is declared dead and the batter is awarded first base with the corresponding move of any base runners who may be forced to move. A batted ball that passes through the Safety Circle without making contact (other than with the ground) is a live ball and play continues.
- 2.3.5. If a batter throws his bat in the process of swinging at the ball, the batter will be warned by the umpire on the first occasion, and the umpire will record the incident with the scorekeeper. On succeeding incidents during the game for that batter, the batter will be called out. Runners will not be allowed to advance when the batter is called out for this offence.
- 2.3.6. Batters cannot walk or bunt. Attempted, fake, or actual bunts will be called outs by the umpire. Note that a weakly hit ball or ball hit on a check swing is not necessarily a bunt. It is a bunt or attempted bunt if the batter's actions indicate intent to direct the ball to a particular area of the infield immediately in front of home plate. Usually this intent is indicated by sliding the hands on the bat or repositioning the feet in the batter's box. If a batter is called out for a bunt or bunt attempt, the ball is dead and runners cannot advance.
- 2.3.7. If a batter is injured during his time at bat, before being declared out or hitting a fair ball, the next batter in the order takes his place and assumes the injured batter's count and the at-bat continues. The injured batter is not declared out, but simply skipped in the batting order and may bat during subsequent passes through the batting order.
- 2.3.8. Batters may move forward (toward the pitching machine) or backward, to better adjust their strike zone, without regard for batters box boundaries.
- 2.3.9. If a batter bats out of turn, before the ball is hit, correct batter will come to bat with the same count. If the ball was hit, the batter is out and he/she misses his/her turn. Runners may not advance on the play. Once the next batter takes a pitch, there is no penalty, and any 'skipped batters' lose their turn at bat.
- 2.3.10. Base runners cannot lead-off, steal bases, or leave the base until the ball crosses the plate (penalty: runner is out.)
- 2.3.11. Time will be called, usually by the base umpire, when one of the following occurs.
  - \* an infielder, in the area outlined by the base paths, and in possession of the ball, raises his hands and requests 'Time'.
  - \* the ball is thrown to the adult operating the pitching machine with the intent to end the play
  - \* the ball is batted or thrown out of bounds
  - \* the ball makes contact (other than with the ground) with anything inside the Safety Circle, or comes to rest inside the Safety Circle

If the ball is hit to a pitcher, the pitcher has the option to either make a play

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for an out, or, concede a single by raising his hands and calling for time. If a single is conceded, all base runners advance one (1) base. If he opts to make a play, one of the above events must occur before the umpire will call time.

2.3.12. If time is called, and a base runner has passed the halfway point towards the next base, he will be awarded that next base. The lead runner will determine the position of trailing runners.

2.3.13. Overthrown balls (i.e. thrown out of bounds or into the safety circle) shall be treated as in the Official Rules of Baseball (i.e. runner may advance one base beyond the base they were attempting to reach). Balls that do not go out of bounds are live balls and runners may attempt to advance until the umpire calls time.

2.3.14. Any base runner struck by a batted ball shall be called out (whether standing on a base or not, or whether the ball has passed an infielder or not).

2.3.15. The infield fly rule does not apply in Rookie Ball.