

# Instructional Divisional Rules

The purpose of this program is to teach participants the fundamental skills needed to play baseball and start to learn good sportsmanship. During the first half of the season there will be no keeping of score. Beginning with the second half of the season Coaches will score the games and track wins and losses. The teams will then be seeded for the playoffs.

## Regular Baseball Rules Apply Except as Noted Below

**1. Eligibility**– to play in the instructional league is determined by the players’ age as of September 1st of the year. A player is eligible to play at grade level as long as they are not playing with younger children.

**2. The Field of Play** – Base distance shall be 50-foot base paths. The pitcher’s circle/mound shall be at a distance between 35 and 40 feet measured from home plate. Whichever distance is comfortable for the Coach and his players. All balls hit in fair territory are fair balls.

**3. Defensive Players** – There shall be 9 defensive players in the field at a time. During league play, all players are to play a minimum of 2 defensive innings, and not more than two innings at same position. The player playing the “pitcher” position must be positioned within 5 feet of the pitcher’s circle before the ball is put into play. This player is not to interfere with the coach pitching. There is to be 4 outfielders (Right, Right Center, Left Center and Left). Outfielders must stay at least 25 feet behind the infield baseline and are not to interfere with infield play. At no time is a coach to place more than 9 players in the field at a time.

- When your team is in the field only two coaches are allowed in the field with the players
- Players must play an actual position in the field. No shifts are allowed.
- Outfielders must be in the outfield and cannot be closer than 25 feet of any base or base path.
- Outfielders are not allowed to cover bases for force outs.
- Players may not play any position more than two innings and **every player is required to play two innings in the Infield**
- For the teams with 9 players, the alignment is to have 4 outfielders (an extra infield player is not allowed)
- For the teams with 8 players, the alignment is to have 3 outfielders.
- If a team has more than 9 players, any additional players must sit. No player can sit more than 1 inning in a game.

**4. Offensive Players** – All players shall be eligible to bat. A late arrival is put at the end of the batting order.

- Infield hits are all singles, players already on base cannot advance more than one base
- Outfield hits - players can advance until the ball is returned to the infield. The ball only must cross the base path to be considered in the infield. Run must reach the next base before the ball crosses the base path. If runner has not reached the next base prior to the ball crossing the base path, the runner must return to the prior base.

- Base path is defined as the line between second base through first base and to the fence extended in foul territory. Also, the between second and through third base and to the fence extended in foul territory.
- Runners do not advance on overthrows.
- When your team is at bat, only the coach pitching is allowing on the field. A second coach is allowed to play catcher for pitches but is to not interfere with the progress of the ball after it is hit into play including but not limited to pop ups, ground balls or plays at home plate. Any plays at the plate should be covered by the pitcher. Other coaches are allowed at First and Third base only.
- Batters must maintain the same order throughout the game. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> out or the 5<sup>th</sup> running in an inning, the batter that was on deck will lead off the next inning.
- Base runners are not allowed to take lead offs and can not leave the base until contact is made.
- If a base runner leaves prior to contact, the fielding team can still make an out on any of the runners or batter, but the runners and batter can only advance 1 base from their original position before the pitch so matter where the ball is hit. Example, if the runner on first leaves before contact and the batter hits the ball into the outfield, the most the runner can advance is to second base and the batter to first base.
- If a runner leaves early and the ball stays in the infield, the runner can be called out if it is felt the runner could have been forced or tagged out if not for having left early.
- If a team has a runner leave early 3 or more times in a game, any future runners can be called out and runners do not advance.
- If a batter throws his bat after hitting, they will be called out after their third instants in a game and runners will return to their original bases.

**5. Change of Inning** – During the first half of the season an inning shall end after every child has batted once (the team has “batted around”). The Coach will announce “last batter” when the last hitter comes to the plate. Beginning with the second half of the season an inning will end after 3 outs have been recorded or five (5) runs have been scored.

**6. Game Length** – A complete game shall consist of 5 innings or 1&1/2 hours.

**7. Batting** – The first half of the season all players will be pitched 5 pitches. If after 5 pitches the batter has not hit the ball, the player will hit from the batting tee. The only except to this rule is if the batter fouls off the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, they can continue to receive a pitch if they continue to foul off the pitch. If the batter takes or swings and misses after the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch, the ball will be placed on the batting tee. Beginning with the second half of the season all players will be pitched 7 pitches. If after 7 pitches the batter has not hit the ball, the ball is put on a batting tee. During the playoffs, the batter is out. The only except to this rule is if the batter fouls off the 7<sup>th</sup> pitch, they can continue to receive a pitch if they continue to foul off the pitch. If the batter takes or swings and misses after the 7<sup>th</sup> pitch, the batter is out. A coach from the batting team shall pitch to their player, providing instruction during the player’s “at bat”. This coach shall cry “Batter Up!” prior to allowing the batter to strike the ball and this is also to ensure the defense is ready.

**8. Time Out** – Time shall be called when an infield defensive player is attempting to throw the ball to the (player) pitcher. The play is to stop, and the next batter is to be brought to the plate. No base runner will advance after the ball is in the infield of play.

Other Rules:

- There is no leading off or stealing.
- There is no infield fly rule.
- No drop third strike.
- There is to be 1st and 3rd base coaches only while their team is batting.
- The defensive team may have a maximum of 2 coaches in the outfield. These coaches are not to interfere with the progress of the ball.