BASEBALL RULEBOOK
ROOKIE BASES LOADED DIVISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A. 78 Youth Sports recreational leagues are structured to provide fun, fair, educational, and organized athletic competition for players of similar ages. The primary focus of each program is recreational enjoyment of a sport, coupled with player development (both individually and as part of a team). Competitive spirit, while understandable, is secondary to enjoyment of the game and learning fair play and sportsmanship.

B. Coaches' first responsibility is to help our participants attain these goals safely and joyously. Players are primarily motivated by the desire to have fun and be successful. Coaches should structure their teaching toward those ends and must treat each player with dignity and respect, regardless of athletic ability. To be successful, we expect our coaches to know and study the fundamentals of the sport; know the rules of the game; stress effort; keep their ego out of coaching; foster teamwork and sportsmanship; give all players a chance to become well rounded and to find their place in the sport by allowing them to play as many different positions as possible; and set performance goals that are related to the fundamentals of the game without regard for won/loss records or individual statistics. Moreover, coaches are not alone. Our organization is here to provide advice, help, encouragement and support.

II. CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Coaches, players, parents and other spectators are expected to display proper sportsmanship in accordance with the objectives and spirit of the program (as set out above) at all times.

B. Players, coaches and spectators may not taunt, negatively criticize nor distract players on opposing teams. Root for your team, not against the opposition. Only positive cheering for one's own team is permitted.

C. No coach, player, parent or other spectator may act in an unsportsmanlike manner at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive screaming; trash-talking; use of obscene language; abusing equipment; being disrespectful toward officials, players, coaches and/or spectators; and inappropriate physical contact.

D. Improper behavior by coaches and players is grounds for ejection from a game. Excessive bad behavior or multiple ejections are grounds for suspension or removal from the league. Improper behavior from spectators may also result in an ejection. Excessive bad behavior from fans may also result in forfeiture of a game. Anyone ejected from a game, including fans, will be banned from attending the next scheduled game.

E. Fighting between players warrants an automatic ejection from a game for all involved parties.

F. Anyone ejected from more than one game in a single season will be addressed by the Commissioner and potentially subject to further discipline, up to and including a permanent ban from all 78 Youth Sports programming.

G. Coaches are responsible for controlling fans who are disruptive, use foul language, or otherwise act in a manner that is contrary to the rules or spirit of the goals of our organization.

H. A game may be suspended or cancelled if coaches, parents, or spectators become abusive or hinder the playing of the game. Any such incident must be reported to the Commissioner.

I. Physical contact by any participant (including any spectator) with respect to a 78 Youth Sports official or coach will result in the offender's suspension from attendance for the remainder of the season and the filing of personal assault charges with the New York City Police Department.

J. Players and coaches must shake hands in Stanley Cup style after each game.

K. No parent is ever permitted on the field of play or in the dugout area for any reason, unless otherwise specified in our rules.

L. Except in the case of injury, touching of players by coaches can only be above the waist (pat on the shoulder, back, or head). In case of injury, the parent or guardian responsible for that player should be contacted and should take control of the situation.

III. DIVISIONS

A. 78 Youth Sports recreational baseball is separated into multiple age divisions with player ages determined as of December 31st of each season. This Rulebook applies to the Rookie (4- and 5-year old, co-ed) division.

B. Players may play up one birth year (in the next older division), and the registration system allows this automatically. Any other request, including playing down or playing up more than one birth year, is discouraged and requires the Commissioner’s approval.

IV. GROUND RULES

A. There are no umpires in the Rookie Division. Games are run and officiated by the coaches (see Section VI.P).

B. Prior to the start of all games, the head coaches shall confer to review the ground rules. The coaches shall:

1. Ask parents to help inspect and clean the field for dangerous objects (glass, etc.) before the start of the game;
2. Upon completion of the game, direct the teams to clean their dugouts and leave quickly so subsequent games can start on time;
3. After a ball is hit into play, clear the bat from the home plate area to eliminate tripping hazards;
4. Require all players to be properly attired (wearing their team hat and jersey, with their jerseys tucked in and their shoelaces tied);
5. Warn all first basemen not to put their foot across the base, but on the corner closest to the field;
6. Ensure that all areas in-play are clear of spectators.

V. COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Coaches must successfully complete a background check and AED/CPR certification, both of which are valid through the end of the season.

B. All teams must have their organization-provided defibrillator present, with an AED-certified coach, at all practices and games on New York City Parks Department fields. Practice safety first.

C. Coaches must notify each player of practice and game schedules. They must ensure that neither games nor practices are held without the supervision of an adult who specifically assumes such responsibility.

D. Use best efforts to reinforce safe practices and continuous play.

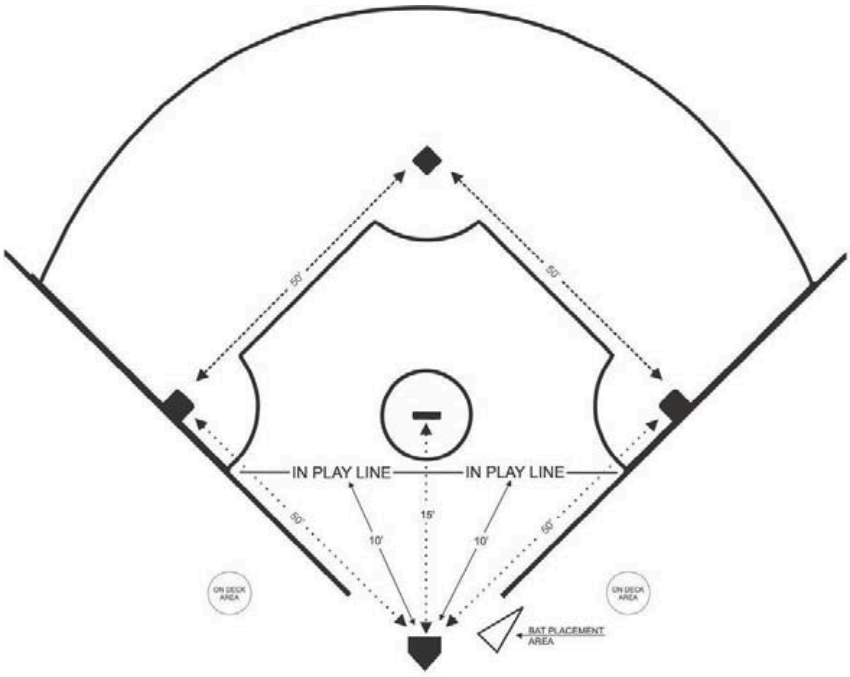
E. Properly manage and store equipment (e.g., catcher's gear, pitching mound, thin rubber bases, and backstop for Prospect Park Field A) on game days.

VI. RULES

A. Bases Loaded™. The Rookie Division plays a modified version of baseball called Bases Loaded™, a developmentally-appropriate game created with Sportstrata, the purpose of which is to transform baseball from a game of failure to a game of success.

By starting at bats with the bases loaded, batting off a tee, and having all defensive throws always to home plate, the game retains the aspects of the game that develop the basic skills of fielding, throwing, batting, and running while eliminating what to the youngest players are the slow, boring, and confusing aspects of the game.

B. Field Setup. Fifty (50') foot bases with an in-play line ten (10') feet in front of home plate, plus two on deck circles (one for each team) and an area, designated by a triangle, where players shall place their bats after putting a ball in play. Diagram below.



C. Time Limits. Games last five innings or one hour and forty-five minutes (1:45), whichever comes first. If the game reaches one hour and forty-five minutes, the game stops regardless of which team is at bat. If the home team is behind and does not get a chance to finish or take its last at bat, the score shall revert to the score at the close of the last complete inning.

D. Universal Batting. Each inning, every player gets a minimum of one at bat. (Coaches are encouraged to alter the batting order each game to provide players the opportunity to bat in different places in the order over the course of the season). All players hit off a batting tee. If the teams have a different number of players present, the team with fewer players should bat extra players so that the teams bat the same number of players each inning. The lineup sheet below illustrates how to plan the game in accordance with our recommendations.

PLAYERS		INNINGS									
Shirt #	NAME	1		2		3		4		5	
		BAT	FIELD	BAT	FIELD	BAT	FIELD	BAT	FIELD	BAT	FIELD
3	PETER	1	1st	13	2nd	10	sit	7	LF	4	sit
5	BILLY	2	3rd	14	sit	11	2nd	8	sit	5	LF
4	JOEY	3	2nd	15	sit	12	LF	9	sit	6	P
6	SAM	4	sit	1	3rd	13	1st	10	sit	7	LCF
9	HARRY	5	SS	2	sit	14	LCF	11	sit	8	1st
10	WILL	6	sit	3	SS	15	RCF	12	sit	9	2nd
12	MARY	7	LF	4	sit	1	P	13	SS	10	sit
13	JOSHUA	8	LCF	5	sit	2	SS	14	1st	11	sit
14	EZKIEL	9	sit	6	1st	3	3rd	15	LCF	12	sit
1	JANE	10	RCF	7	sit	4	RF	1	sit	13	SS
2	BEN	11	sit	8	LF	5	sit	2	2nd	14	RF
8	RONNIE	12	RF	9	LCF	6	sit	3	3rd	5	sit
7	MARIA	13	P	10	RCF	7	sit	4	RCF	1	sit
15	FRITZ	14	sit	11	P	8	sit	5	RF	2	3rd
11	JAMES	15	sit	12	RF	9	sit	6	P	3	RCF

E. Batting Outcomes. If the ball does not pass the 10' in-play line in front of home plate, the batter will continue to bat. Otherwise every batter reaches first base so long as they do not fly out.

F. Base Runners. Every inning begins with the bases loaded. If ever a base becomes empty because of a hit, the coach will fill the empty base(s) with any available offensive player who is not soon to bat.

On offense, batters will experience far more confidence-building success than with coach pitching. Players will also learn the basic baseball skill of picking up base coaches as they round the bases (and learning base running signs), something that is also a challenge for older players. By simplifying the rules, we maximize the number of players involved, give the kids a chance to play naturally and to enjoy practicing the skills they are learning, build their confidence, and have fun!

G. Strikes, Outs, etc. There are no strikes, balls, outs, bunting, stealing, leading or infield fly rule.

H. On Deck. Only the batter and on-deck batter are permitted to hold bats and the on-deck batter can only hold and swing a bat when inside the batting circle.

I. Defense. Plays are only made at home plate. Every contact past the in-play line results in players running the bases. All defensive plays are made at home plate to a coach-catcher of the defensive team. Before each at bat, third base always has a runner.

J. Defensive Positioning. Catcher is played by a coach from the defensive team. All other positions, including a fourth outfielder, are covered by the players. Players should get an opportunity to play different defensive positions throughout every game. Infielders must stay in the infield and outfielders must stay in the outfield when balls are put into play.

K. Runs. Runs score every time a ball is put in play except for the following:

1. When the throw from a fielder to the coach-catcher beats the baserunner from third base and the coach-catcher is standing inside the in-play area in front of home plate; or

2. If a fielder catches a batted ball before the ball touches the ground.

In both instances the run is not counted (it can be called an "out" but outs have no consequence). In all other instances, all baserunners advance to the following base(s).

L. Playing Time. No player shall sit out on defense more than one consecutive inning.

M. Coaching Offense.

1. Head Coach. The head coach shall set and manage the lineup; assign the baserunners at the start of each inning; and explain to the team what is happening in real time.
2. Bench Coach. Each inning, the bench coach shall identify the first three batters, make sure they are properly equipped (i.e., helmets and bats) and ready to hit. The bench coach shall also manage the bench and encourage cheering throughout the inning.
3. Base Coaches. The base coaches shall make sure that each base is occupied prior to an at bat and direct the baserunners (i.e., give go and stop signs) when balls are put in play.

N. Coaching Defense.

1. Head Coach. The head coach shall set and manage the defensive alignments and occupy the coach-catcher position on defense. As coach-catcher, the coach shall also be responsible for managing the tee when balls are in play, ensuring batters place their bats in the appropriate place after hitting and receiving defensive throws at home plate.
2. Bench Coach. The bench coach shall manage the bench and encourage cheering throughout the inning and explain to the bench players what is happening in real time.
3. Outfield Coach. The outfield coach is responsible for defensive positioning, coaching and enforcing the rule that infielders must stay in the infield and outfielders stay in the outfield.

O. Parents. Coaches shall encourage parents to help by backing up the catcher position and making sure the on-deck circle is limited to one player at a time.

P. Officiating. There are no umpires. Games shall be run and officiated by the coaches of both teams, who shall be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

Q. Scoring. Each team will keep their own score.

R. Handshake. Players and coaches must shake hands in Stanley Cup style after each game. Following the handshake lines, players shall turn to and thank their coaches.

S. Home Team. The home team occupies the first base dugout, and supplies the bases and the game ball (and keeps it at the end of the game).

T. These rules may not be amended by coaches at game time. Suggestions for rule changes should be brought to the attention of the Commissioner.

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A. When games are cancelled due to weather, the contest may be rescheduled subject to field availability and the consent of the Commissioner and both coaches.

For Schedules, Fields, Rules, FAQs and to Register for all our sports and other information:
www.78youthsports.org

To reach someone to ask a question, make a comment, or report an incident.
info@78youthsports.org