

Minors Fall Ball Rules

As we are getting ready to start our Fall Ball Season, we wanted to send out the rules and expectations for Fall Ball. Fall Ball is an instructional program, the rules are a little different than during the regular spring season. We want every player to have the opportunity to try new things and develop skills along the way. The Fall Ball rules that we have established in years past helps to facilitate these goals. Here are some house-keeping items for the upcoming season beginning:

Purpose

- It's all about the kids! -Have fun, play fair and ensure the kids learn and get better. Fall Ball is instructional, designed to develop skills, build confidence, and encourage kids to try new positions.
 - There are no wins or losses recorded, this season is all about developing the kids to prepare them for the division they will be playing in, in the spring. Scores will be recorded during each game for learning purposes but not turned in for wins or losses.
 - Standings will not be kept. Sportsmanship, effort, and learning are emphasized.
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Age Group

- Division: Minors (Ages 8–10)
 - Players use the league age they will be for the upcoming spring season (age on April 30th of the following year).
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Game Format

- Game Length: 6 innings or 90 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning will start after 75 minutes of game time. Hard stop at 90 minutes.
 - Run Rule per Inning: Maximum 6 runs per half-inning (no cap in the final inning).
 - Pitchers are allowed five warm-up pitches between innings and eight if a new pitcher enters the game.
 - Mercy Rule: Game ends if one team leads by 15 after 3 innings or 10 after 4 innings, unless both teams agree they want to keep the game going.
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General Rules

- Ten players on the field at a time. Seven-player minimum to begin to play. No rovers allowed. The extra player must play an additional spot in the outfield.
- Rotation Encouraged: Coaches should rotate kids through both infield and outfield positions.
- A player cannot play the same position for over two consecutive innings.
- All players will bat; if a player cannot continue to play, there will be no penalty to the offensive team when he is due up. If he is able, he can re-enter without penalty.
- Batting order from game to game will be continuous, meaning if the 7th batter made the last out of the previous game, then the 8th batter will lead off the next game.
- All players are limited to sitting out no more than one inning per game, unless they are late for the game or injured. All players must play at least one inning in the infield per game.
- Bunting is allowed, but no fake bunting. If a player fakes a bunt and then swings, they will be automatically called out.
- The batter cannot run on a dropped third strike.
- Players may only take one base on an overthrow. Runners cannot leave the base before a pitch crosses home plate. If they leave early, the runner will be sent back to their original base and given a warning. If this continues, umpires may use discretion and call the base runner out. *No runner may score on a ball overthrown from the catcher back to the pitcher.
- Stealing: Allowed, but no leading off (runner leaves when the ball crosses the plate).
- Advancing home on a wild pitch or passed ball will not be allowed.
 - a. If the catcher or another fielder retrieves the passed ball and returns the ball directly to the pitcher, the runner on third base cannot come home. This also applies if the pitcher muffs the return throw or the catcher throws the ball past the pitcher.
 - b. The only way a runner on third may advance home is if the catcher or pitcher attempts to make a play ON HIM at 3rd base OR he is hit home.
 - i. Attempting a play must include making a throw to put a base runner out. Pitchers and catchers should be instructed that no matter what the runner on third does, he will be required to return to his base before the next pitch if they ignore him and do not throw at him.
 - c. Runners on 1st or 2nd cannot steal on the throwback to the pitcher even if the pitcher muffs the throwback. However, it is not a dead ball. If the pitcher or any other fielder retrieves the muffed throw and attempts to make a play on any base runner, the ball is live, and any base runner off his base may be put out.
 - d. A ball is live, and all base runners may advance when the ball is within the fences and in play. Runners may not advance once the ball is in the pitcher's glove.

- Walks: No walks will be allowed during gameplay. The coach will come in after the 4th called “ball,” and pitch. The pitch count remains the same for the at-bat. Coaches should be coaching kids to swing at pitches throughout all at-bats. If the coach interferes with a live ball without reasonably attempting to get out of the play, it will be an automatic out. The exception would be a line drive back at the coach, at which point the ball is live off the deflection of the coach.
 - a. When a coach is pitching, the pitcher should remain within 5-7 feet of the coach to either the left or right side. Playing the “pitcher” as a second shortstop or 2nd baseman will not be allowed.
 - b. A coach who is pitching should be set up on or near the pitching rubber (46’).
 - c. No bunting is allowed when the coach is pitching.
 - d. If a pitch hits a player, the player can take their base or continue the at-bat with the coach coming in to pitch. If a coach (pitching) hits his player, the player must continue the at-bat.

Pitching Rules

- Pitching Limit: Max 2 innings per pitcher per game, 4 per week.
 - The coach or team parent must keep track of the kids pitch counts.
 - Pitch Counts (Little League guidelines):
 - 8–10 y/o: Max 60 pitches/game
 - Rest days required by pitch count:
 - 1–20 = 0 days
 - 21–35 = 1 day
 - 36–50 = 2 days
 - 51–65 = 3 days
 - 66+ = 4 days
 - Catcher/Pitcher Rule: Any player who catches 4+ innings may not pitch that day.
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Defense

- Infield Fly Rule: Not in effect.
 - Dropped 3rd Strike: Batter is out (keeps things moving at this level).
 - Overthrows: Runners may advance at their own risk (teaches awareness).
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Coaching & Umpiring

- Coaches may instruct from the field (esp. for base coaching and defensive positioning).
 - One umpire is acceptable; coaches may help call bases if needed.
 - Disputes are resolved by umps/coaches quickly to keep games moving.
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Sportsmanship

- Players, coaches, and fans must respect umpires, opponents, and the game.
 - Negative cheering, arguing with umpires, or unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
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- “Free Substitution” Rule: Players may re-enter the game defensively at any position.
- Speed-Up Rule: Courtesy runner for catcher when there are 2 outs.
- Ball Type: Use regulation hardballs (9 in, 5 oz).
- Uniforms: Jerseys and hats required. Color of pants/socks are optional, you can’t make these mandatory.
- The batter and base runner must wear helmets at all times. Runners are not allowed to advance on a wild pitch thrown by a coach.
- Rubber cleats or tennis shoes only. No metal cleats
- Bat Rule Updates: All bats must be certified by the new USA Baseball Bat Standard and have the USA Baseball stamp on them. 2 5/8” bats are allowed with no restriction of length to weight ratio (drop). 2 1/4” bats will still be allowed if they too are stamped with the USA Baseball stamp. NO EXCEPTIONS FALL BALL: USSSA BATS ARE ALLOWED
- Umpires can call games due to weather, darkness, or any other safety reason deemed necessary by the umpire.
- The field size is 46’ pitching rubber with 60’ base paths.
- The strike zone will be slightly modified and more significant than the standard to help encourage kids to swing at pitches. It will be roughly a ball inside and outside the plate wide and mid-shin to armpit tall.
- Umpires decisions are final. The head coach is the only coach allowed to consult the official on a call and must do so respectfully.
- Upon observation, the umpire will immediately call missed bases, leading off, etc. The defensive team does not have to make an appeal play.