

4U and 5U Recreation League Rules - 2009

Administrative Rules

The goal of the 4U & 5U Leagues is to begin to teach the fundamentals of the game of baseball. The leagues are competitive in nature, but it should be remembered that these are designed to be learner's leagues. While winning is an admirable goal for players at this age... "Winning at all costs" should never be the attitude of the players, the coaches, or the parents. It is much more important to teach the required basic skills of the games so that these young players may successfully take their first steps of what will hopefully be a journey of many years of enjoyable, competitive youth league baseball.

1. All players are expected to play both infield and outfield positions during each ballgame. A player should play no more than 2 innings in any single infield position. Repeated failure of any team to follow these guidelines may lead to review by the board of directors for possible disciplinary actions against the team manager. **Note:** this rule will apply only to regular season games. This rule will not apply to games played during the post season tournament.
2. No more than a total of 3 games and/or practices are allowed per calendar week.
3. No more than 5 members of a coaching staff are allowed on the field.
4. A game shall be "called" at the end of 4 innings or 1 hour. After time has expired, the inning in progress shall be completed unless either team is mathematically eliminated. After 1 hour, the game will be considered a complete game regardless of the number of innings played and no additional inning shall be started.
5. If a game is terminated or suspended for any reason, it shall be considered a complete game if 3 innings have been completed, or 2 and one-half innings if the home team is ahead.
6. Each team will be allowed a maximum of five runs or three outs per inning. There is no run rule. **Note:** The 4U League will bat the entire roster each inning and will not keep score during their games.
7. Under normal circumstances, the batting tee shall be placed directly on top of home plate. Only the permanently placed home plate will be in play for the scoring of runs, unless an alternate plate has specified by the umpire before the start of the game.
8. An injured or sick player may legally miss his turn at bat. The player is simply skipped and the batting order continues with the player listed next in the line up. An injured or sick player is not subject to the "Mandatory Play" rule.
9. The City Championship game will be played as 4 complete innings, with no time limit. If the game is tied after 4 innings, a maximum of 2 extra innings will be played to try to resolve the tie. If still tied after 2 extra innings, the tournament tiebreaker will be used to resolve the tie. There will be no run rule, but if either team is mathematically eliminated after 4 innings of play, the game is over.

Offensive rules

1. Any runner is out if the base coach at first base or third base physically assists that runner in returning to or leaving the base. This is a judgement call by the umpire.
2. A bat that is thrown or released in an unsafe manner is a hazard. If the umpire judges that a batter has released his bat in an unsafe manner, the player and the team manager will be given one warning. The warning should be noted by the player's name in the official scorebook. If the umpire subsequently judges that the same batter has released the bat in an unsafe manner, the ball will be declared dead, the player's turn at bat will be terminated, and the player will be removed from the batting lineup for the remainder of the ballgame. The player is not recorded as an out and he is expected to continue to play when his team is on defense.
3. The batter will be allowed a maximum of 4 strikes or attempts to put the ball in play.
4. The umpire will place the ball on the tee.
5. The batter must make a full swing when attempting to hit the ball. No bunting or partial swings will be allowed. Ruling: The batter will be out and the ball will be dead if the umpire judges a bunt or partial swing has been attempted. All runners will return to the bases occupied at the time of the illegal hit.
6. A ball knocked off the tee while "measuring up" is not considered an attempt or a strike.
7. If a batted ball does not pass the 10-foot arc, it is a strike. It is a strike if the batter makes contact with either the ball or the tee and the attempt does not result in a fair ball. If the ball goes beyond the arc and then rolls back inside the arc before being touched by a defensive player, it is a strike.
8. One of the coaches should assist the batters when the team is on offense. This coach is responsible for removing the batting tee after the ball is hit. Once the ball is in play, the coach may not be in the field of play. If the umpire judges that a coach has interfered with a play, the runner will be called out.
9. A coach may provide verbal or physical assistance to position the batter in the batter's box as long as it does not unnecessarily delay the game.
10. All players must remain in the dugout until called to the plate by the umpire. There will be one warning per team, per game. After the warning, the offending team will be charged with an out. No individual player is penalized. This is a team violation.
11. The ball will be called dead and play will be stopped when an infielder has control of the ball in the infield and the lead runner has stopped his attempt to advance to the next base. This is a judgement call by the umpire.
12. Any runner beyond halfway to the next base when the ball is declared dead will be entitled to the advance base.

13. A base runner may be called out for leaving the base before the ball is hit. Ruling: The ball is dead, the runner is out, all other runners return to the base last legally obtained, and the batter bats again. The swing attempt does not count against the batter. This is a judgment call by the umpire.

Defensive rules

1. The defensive team may have 2 coaches positioned in the outfield. These coaches may provide verbal assistance only. No physical assistance is allowed. The coaches must be positioned even with or behind the outfielders at all times. Ruling: One warning will be given to a team. Violation after a warning will result in the offending coach being removed for the remainder of that inning.
2. Teams may play with a maximum of 10 fielders while on defense. A maximum of 6 players may be positioned in the infield. The remaining defensive players must be positioned in the outfield. For the purpose of this rule, the outfield is defined as the area beginning 10 feet behind the base path. A team with 10 or more players must have a catcher.
3. All fielders must throw the ball to make a play on an advancing runner. Exception: If the runner being played upon is approaching or leaving the base covered by the fielder, the fielder is not required to make a throw, but may tag the runner or the base as required by rule to record an out. The shortstop is allowed to make a play on any runner approaching or leaving second base or on any runner approaching third base.
4. The pitcher must attempt to throw an advancing runner out (as opposed to chasing the runner around the base path) at first, second, or third if the natural play would require it. An “advancing runner” is defined as a runner who is advancing toward the next base, as opposed to a runner who is retreating or returning to a previously occupied base. The pitcher and catcher are the only players allowed to make a tag or play in the dirt area surrounding home plate. This will be a judgment call by the umpire and will be ruled accordingly.

Note: These rules are to be used as a guideline for play. The intent of the rules is to encourage and teach players to make a “natural play” in baseball. Players should be coached and taught to make a natural play as dictated by the game situation. A natural play will never involve any fielder chasing a runner around the base path to try to make a tag or play. A natural play should not involve, and this rule will not require an unnecessary throw by any fielder.

5. The catcher must wear approved protective headgear and must remain in the designated catcher's area while the batter is at bat. Ruling: If the batter hits a fair ball, this will result in a delayed dead ball situation. After play has ceased, the team at bat will be given the choice of accepting the result of the play or they may accept the penalty of advancing all base runners by one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If they elect to take the penalty, the pitch and/or attempted swing will not count against the batter.
6. The pitcher must have both feet in the dirt area of the pitchers mound, and both feet must be behind the pitching line until the ball is hit. Ruling: If the batter hits a fair ball, this will result in a delayed dead ball situation. After play has ceased, the team at bat will be given the choice of accepting the result of the play or they may accept the penalty of advancing all base runners by one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If they elect to take the penalty, the pitch and/or attempted swing will not count against the batter.

7. Outfielders must be positioned at least 10 feet behind the baseline when the ball is hit. They are then free to move as needed to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. Ruling: If the batter hits a fair ball, this will result in a delayed dead ball situation. After play has ceased, the team at bat will be given the choice of accepting the result of the play or they may accept the penalty of advancing all base runners by one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If they elect to take the penalty, the pitch and/or attempted swing will not count against the batter.
 8. Outfielders will not be allowed to make a tag play on any runner advancing to or returning to any base at any time.
 9. Infielders may not be positioned any closer to home plate than the front edge of the cutout area surrounding the base. The infielders must remain behind this line until the ball is hit. Ruling: If the batter hits a fair ball, this will result in a delayed dead ball situation. After play has ceased, the team at bat will be given the choice of accepting the result of the play or they may accept the penalty of advancing all base runners by one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If they elect to take the penalty, the pitch and/or attempted swing will not count against the batter.
 10. Overthrow lines will be determined by the first and third base foul lines. A thrown ball becomes an overthrow after it crosses the foul line. If the throw remains in fair territory, it is a live ball. If the infielder to whom the ball is being thrown, catches the ball in foul territory, he/she may continue to make a play. If he/she misses the ball, it is an overthrow and all runners will stop at the base obtained prior to the overthrow. A muff will be considered an overthrow unless the player who muffed the throw can make an immediate play at that base. A ball thrown by an outfielder and missed by an infielder will not be considered an overthrow.
- Note: This rule is intended to encourage the defense to attempt to make outs at the proper bases by not penalizing them for making an errant throw during the attempt. This will be a judgement call by the umpire.
11. The team manager may make a verbal appeal to the umpire if he believes a runner has missed a base or has left a base before legally tagging up after a caught fly ball.