

# COACH-PITCH GROUND RULES

## OBJECTIVES

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The main focus of the managers, coaches and parents in this division is to teach the fundamental skills of baseball and provide all the players with an opportunity to learn all positions, skills, good sportsmanship, and the rules of the game in a safe, positive and fun environment.

## GENERAL RULES

1. Players who attend practice must play a minimum of half the game in the field. Each team will employ a continuous batting order of all players able to play in the game. Once the batting order is established, no changes are allowed except for deletion of players unable to continue play in or removed from the game.
2. The manager is responsible for the conduct of his/her team's players, spectators and coaches. The manager should ensure that any person placed on the field as an assistant coach, first, third or pitching coach is aware of all the rules, all the requirements of proper instruction and displays good sportsmanship at all times. Parents of the players should be made aware of the rules and be instructed that they should conduct themselves properly at all times. Questions concerning rules, calls, etc. should first be addressed to their team manager and then the managers discuss and resolve any issues.
3. The first and third base coaches shall make the safe/out calls at those bases. The defensive fielding coach shall make all calls at second base. The coach/pitcher shall make the call at home plate. We know there will be mistakes and that there will be disagreements with some calls. Let's strive to always present a positive role model for those for whom this League exists. For any game in which an umpire is present, the umpire's decision is final.
4. Any game that is halted due to weather and has completed one full inning will be continued from that point until the game is complete. There will be no ending of the game in the bottom half of an inning if the home team is ahead since the score is not kept - finish the inning!
5. The regular season shall be played in an **instructional** format. Winning games should not be the goal. None of the regular season games are played for any standings or season records. That is, the scores of the games and the team's won-loss records shall not be kept.
6. First and third base coaches are to help "police" the base paths. They should notify the defensive coach of any impending obstruction of the base paths. Defensive coaches should be aware that the base coaches will be helping to keep infielders out of the base lines and should not be offended by another coach should he/she point out this type of situation. It should be noted that standing in the base path is not a violation of any rule, however, impeding a base runner from advancing to a base is. Therefore, this rule should apply primarily to a first baseman who positions himself in the base path with a base runner at first base, or a fielder who continually fails to clear the base path causing base runners to go around him/her. It should be noted that if a fielder is in the act of fielding a batted ball, the base runner must avoid the fielder.
7. All other Little League rules apply. Refer to the Little League rulebook for any situation that may arise.

8. Coach-pitch is an instructional League. Managers should be fairly rotating their players at all positions per the Rotation rule below. The goal should be to avoid playing a player twice at any one position until every other player has had an opportunity to play that position. Managers should give every player a chance to learn each position. If a player struggles at a skill or position, the manager should help the player improve and not dismiss the player from that position. Managers are to be sensitive to hiding players behind the plate or in the outfield. Avoiding “Hot Spots” in the name of safety is fine; however players must be rotated so that each of them has the opportunity to play all skilled positions. Keep good records of positions played by each player on your team to ensure minimum playing time requirements are met and that all players have played equally in all skilled positions.

## **GAME PLAY**

**Batter:** A batter shall be given three (3) pitches to put the ball into play, one extra pitch will be allowed if the third pitch is hit foul. If the ball is not put in to play after (3) three pitches, (4) four if one is fouled, the batter will hit off a tee.

A batter shall be called out when after hitting the ball and before reaching first base, he or the bat in any way touches the ball while in fair territory. If, in a game a batter throws or wildly slings his bat after hitting (or attempting to hit) the ball to the extent his/her coach believes other players are endangered, time-out will be called and the coach will discuss the infraction with the batter. If it happens during the game again, the batter will automatically be called out.

The batter/runner will always wear protective helmets.

**Batting Order:** A continuous batting order will be used. The batting order will consist of all eligible players. Once established, the order cannot be changed except for injury or players arriving late or leaving early. It is suggested that a Manager keep his batting order “fixed” and begin the next game with the player who was on deck when the prior game ended. Example: number five hitter made the last out, then number six hitter would lead off in the next game. This helps keep an equal number of AT BATS throughout the season.

**Stealing and sliding:** There is no stealing allowed. Players are allowed to slide, but head first sliding is not allowed.

**Throws from the outfield:** Once the ball reaches the infield and is in possession of the infielder, including the pitcher or catcher, runners may not advance.

**Overthrows at the bases:** Runners may advance one base on an overthrow and at their own risk if the ball remains in play. If the ball goes into dead ball territory, runners may advance one base without liability to be put out.

**Bunting:** There is no bunting allowed.

**Continuous batting order:**

**Infield fly:** Does not apply.

**On deck:** There is no on deck circle. Players **must** remain in the dugout until it is their turn to bat. Players **shall not** pick up a bat until it is their turn to hit.

**Game period:** The official game start time is the scheduled start time. The game consists of (5) five innings or 75 minutes. No new inning will start after 65 minutes of play. Only 1 minute will be given to each team between innings to get ready offensively and defensively. If your catcher is on base and there is two out or four runs scored you need to pinch run for that player to ensure he is ready to play at the start of the inning. The player who recorded the last out shall run for the catcher.

**Scoring:** There is a five (5) run limit per half-inning or three outs. The home team shall be allowed to bat in the bottom of the last inning even if they are behind by more than (5) five runs and prior to the 75 minute time restriction.

## **PLAYERS**

**The catcher:** The player shall be positioned at a minimum of three (3) feet behind the batter to avoid injury or interference. The catcher will **ALWAYS** wear a helmet/face mask with dangling throat protector, long-model chest protector, cup, and shin guards. This rule applies to games and team practices. Catchers must be used defensively and at least attempt to catch the pitched ball. Catchers should be positioned in the normal location behind home plate.

**The player pitcher:** When the ball is pitched, the player shall at all times have at least one foot on the pitching rubber and shall never be positioned in front of the coach pitcher.

**The infielders:** Each infield player must be in a “set position” ready to field the ball. They may not be placed on the grass part of the infield. This rule is in effect to give an otherwise less developed batter an equal chance to attain first base.

**The outfielders:** A team must field a minimum of 8 fielders, and may field up to 10 players. There shall be a maximum of four (4) outfielders, except when a team can field only 8 players, and then there must be a minimum of two (2) outfielders. In a normal 10 player roster, the positions shall be left fielder, left-centerfielder, right-centerfielder, and right fielder. The left-centerfielder and right-centerfielder shall position themselves left to right, respectively of an imaginary line drawn from home plate through second base to the outfield fence. **NO ROVING OUTFIELDER.** Outfielders can back up throws at the bases but cannot be the “main” put out man, e. ball is hit to 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman and left-centerfielders covers second base for a force out.

**Rotation:** No player shall be allowed to play the same position for the entire game and every player should play an infield position at least one (1) inning per game. A player should not be allowed to play an infield position when in the opinion of the Manager; the player may be at risk of injury **solely** because of a lack of skills. The Manager must present this option to the player's parents and to the League Rep. A player will be allowed to play a combination of two (2) total innings at pitcher and first base per game.

**Game playing time:** No player will sit out more than one (1) inning per game. A manager should ensure that a player rotation carries over from game to game and no one player plays every inning of every game.

## **COACHES**

**Dugout:** Each team should have a dugout coach who keeps track of the batting order and ensures batters are ready to hit when their turn arrives. Absolutely no food or drinks (with the exception of water or sports drinks) are allowed in the dugout during the game.

**Bases:** Adults must coach first and third base and must stay in foul territory in proximity of the base they are coaching. A base coach is not allowed to interfere with the defensive or offensive player. If they do, the runner will be called out. The base coach will be the umpire at their respective bases.

**The defensive outfield coaches:** Two defensive coaches may roam the outfield grass and give instructions to both the infielders and outfielders. These coaches are **not** allowed on the infield. One of these two coaches will be responsible for making the calls at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

**The offensive pitching coach:** The offensive pitching coach shall at all times remain in the pitching area between the pitching plate and home plate, except as may be necessary to allow infielders to field their respective positions. The offensive pitching coach is not permitted to verbally coach or instruct base runners. If a batted ball hits the coach the batter is awarded 1st base and all other runners advance one (1) base, if forced. The offensive pitching coach shall pitch the ball “overhand.” It is permissible to squat or kneel while pitching.

## UMPIRES

**Home plate:** A coach from the offensive team shall position himself directly behind the catcher when the batter is taking pitches (umpiring from the mound is not permitted). He is responsible for keeping track of strikes, number of pitches, and any calls at the plate. The coach is responsible for removing the batter’s tee if a runner is attempting to score and may also pick up passed balls to help speed up the game.

**Other bases:** See coach’s section above.

There will be no arguing with the umpires or opposing coaches. If there is a dispute, it should be handled professionally between innings or after the game. Coaches are to serve as role models to players and spectators. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the playing field, benches and dugouts. Smoking is not permitted on any League facilities. The use of alcoholic beverages or profanity is prohibited anywhere at the baseball complexes.

## PRE-GAME/POST-GAME

**Pre-game:** Home team is responsible for dragging the infield and re-chalking the baselines. Each team will also provide a new soft-core safety ball (e.g., “Incredi-ball”) for the game. Visitors should assist the home team in preparing the field.

**Post game:** Managers will be held responsible to clean up their respective side of the field following practices and games (including trash). It is the responsibility of the managers to get their equipment and players out of the dugout immediately after the game.

**Rescheduling:** It will be the responsibility of the managers to reschedule all games. Please check with the Coach Pitch Rep for field availability.

**Weekly Touches:** During the regular season, except for rain outs and other rescheduled games, each team will be limited to no more than (3) touches per week.

**Tobacco, Alcohol & Profanity:** The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the playing field, benches and dugouts. Smoking is not permitted on League facilities. The use of alcoholic beverages or profanity is prohibited anywhere at the League’s baseball complexes.